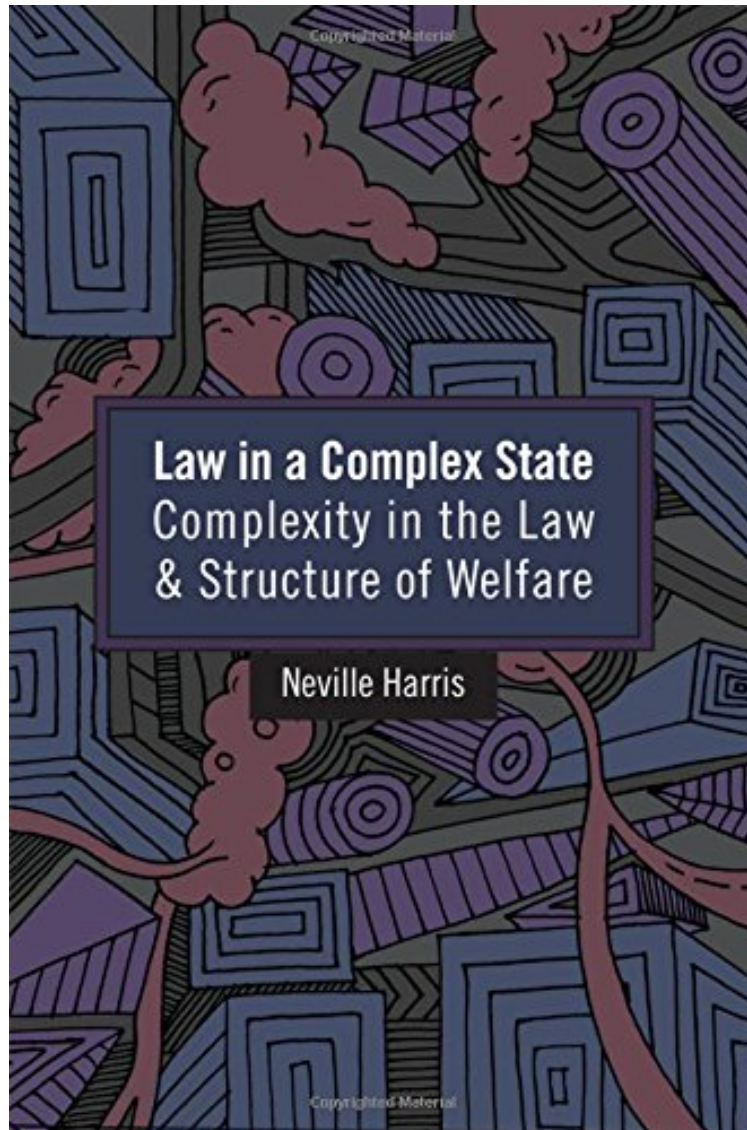


Law in a Complex State: Complexity in the Law and Structure of Welfare

Neville Harris

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Neville Harris : Law in a Complex State: Complexity in the Law and Structure of Welfare before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Law in a Complex State: Complexity in the Law and Structure of Welfare:

Approximately half of the total UK population is in receipt of one or more welfare benefits, giving rise to the largest single area of government expenditure. The law and structures of social security are highly complex, made more so by constant adjustments as the government pursues its often conflicting economic, political, and social policy objectives. This complexity is highly problematic. It contributes to errors in decision making and to increased administrative costs, and is seen as disempowering for citizens, thereby weakening enjoyment of a key social right. Current and previous UK administrations have had a commitment to simplify the benefits system. It is a specific objective underlying the introduction via the Welfare Reform Act 2012 of Universal Credit in place of diverse benefits, although it is not clear that the reformed system will be legally less complex and better for citizens to access. The book explains how and why complexity in modern welfare systems has grown. It identifies the different ways in which legal and associated administrative arrangements are classifiable as 'complex,' and it discusses the effects of complexity on the system's administration and its wider implications for rights and the citizen/state relationship. The book also considers the role that the law can play in the simplification of schemes of welfare. It makes reference not only to the UK welfare system, but also relevant policies and experiences in various other States. Law in a Complex State is an interesting and topical study for all those interested in welfare law.

In this extremely welcome and timely study, and providing numerous illustrative and pertinent examples, Professor Neville Harris uses the prism of welfare legislation (a sometimes neglected field of law) to embark on a denouement of the idea of complexity, forensically examining the concept in its component parts, and demonstrating that far from being attributable to one overall conceptual or practical legal, administrative or judicial factor, complexity is rather a multi-layered amalgam of all of these. The analysis itself brings some clarity to the definition of complexity, its existence in the UK welfare system, and a rationale for its presence. Timely and interesting, the central threads of the analysis may usefully be applied to other areas of law beset by the same complexity. (Dr Philip M. Larkin *Journal of Social Security Law*, Issue 2, 2014)Neville Harris's book is a masterwork.[it] is well researched, authoritative, and, surprisingly given the subject matter, very readable. It explains why complexity matters and what might be done to improve matters. It should be of interest to anyone who is involved in the design of social security rules, policy makers, welfare law practitioners as well as academics with an interest in legal philosophy or legal methodology. (Neil Bateman *Public Law*, April 2015)About the AuthorNeville Harris is a Professor of Law at the University of Manchester.