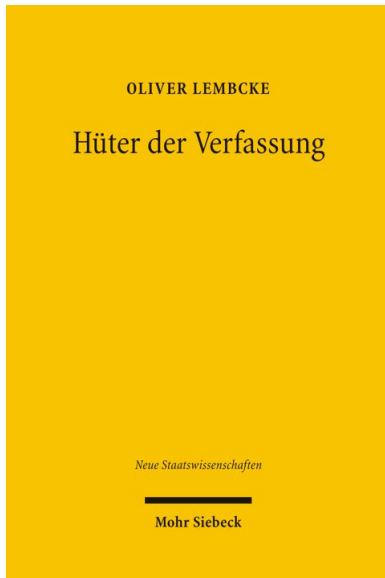


Oliver W. Lembcke

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The Federal Constitutional Court is expected to make wise decisions. Established for political reasons to interpret the constitution, it reinvented itself in the first disputes with the government - as a guardian of the constitution. Oliver Lembcke examines the processes which have led to the creation of this role as well as the specific rationality with which the Constitutional Court makes its decisions and regenerates itself as an authority. It is not so much the *res judicata* as it is the power of judgement which determines an authority. In the case of the Constitutional Court, the awareness of its own singularity as an institution is a part of this: it has to judge the political situation in order to make the right decision about a legal dispute.

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