

# CENTRE FOR SOCIO-LEGAL STUDIES REPORT 2023–2024

A place where disciplines and  
socio-legal scholars meet



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# WELCOME FROM THE DIRECTOR

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**I am delighted to be writing the introduction for the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies' Report which charts our achievements and activities from January 2023 to December 2024. There is much for us to record and celebrate.**



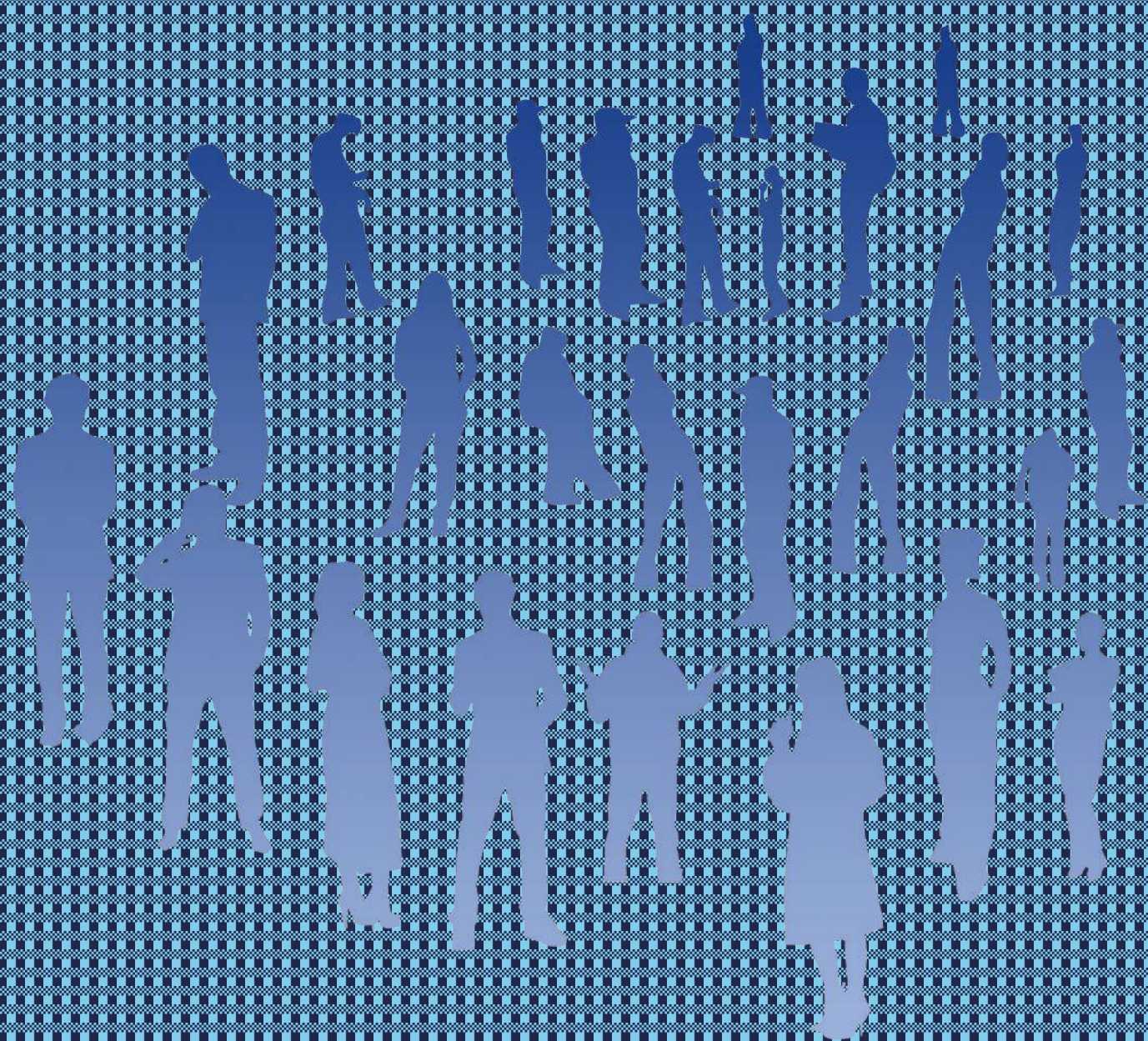
As this report goes to press, I will be standing down as Director of the Centre after a six-year term in order to devote more of my time to supervision, mentoring, writing and research. Having trained at the Centre in the 1990s, it has been incredibly rewarding to be able to return to Oxford as the Statutory Professor of Socio-Legal Studies and to play a role in leading the Centre in new directions. During my six years at the helm, I have had the privilege of working with some incredibly talented and inspiring colleagues and students. At the beginning of my term, we worked together to consolidate our many existing strengths before entering a period of growth. We now have more applications for our DPhil and MPhil programmes, more research grants, more postdoctoral fellows and more permanent staff. Our vibrant research culture is reflected in our extensive programme of events, publications, presence at conferences across the world, and the impact our work has in the academy and beyond. Closer to home, our approach to supporting early career academics continues to be seen in the day-to-day life of the Centre – during our weekly lunches on Mondays, afternoon tea on Thursdays and casual chats in the kitchen about the latest methodological dilemma a colleague is facing.

Three goals continue to lie at the heart of our mission. Firstly, we are committed to playing our part in building capacity for theoretically informed empirical work in the field of socio-legal studies. This involves training our students to work to the highest standards in the spaces where the social and legal interact. It is achieved within the Centre through our research degrees training programme and visiting students scheme. Beyond the Centre it is evident in the methodology class we run for the Law Faculty, our open access blog and podcast series, and the Economic and Social Research Council-funded Masterclass we host every year. Secondly, we aim to nurture young talent in pursuing a research programme of their choosing as they work towards a permanent academic post. We achieve this by providing a rich research culture and mentoring postdoctoral fellows who come to work on funded research projects or secure their own funding with our support. Thirdly, we strive to produce high-quality research through the competitive funding we attract and the publications we produce. Our research addresses some of the most pressing issues of the day, including climate change, law and the digital world, lack of access to justice and lived experiences of human rights. Details of all these activities can be discovered in the pages that follow, none of which would have been possible without a supportive community of students, postdoctoral fellows, senior academic colleagues and an incredibly able and hard-working professional support team. The many achievements recorded here are a testament to their hard work, loyalty and commitment.

**LINDA MULCAHY, STATUTORY PROFESSOR OF SOCIO-LEGAL STUDIES  
AND CSLS DIRECTOR**



# OUR STAFF





# OUR STAFF

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## UYANGA AMARSAIKHAN PROJECT OFFICER



Uyanga joined the Centre in 2018 and has worked with Nicole Stremlau on her ConflictNET project, funded by the European Research Council (ERC). Uyanga obtained her PhD from the

University of Vienna in 2004, where her dissertation focused on global human rights protection mechanisms. She left the Centre in 2024.

## MARIE BURTON SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW



Marie joined the Centre in April 2021. She is a Postdoctoral Researcher working with Linda Mulcahy on the project 'Enhancing Democratic Habits: An Oral History of the Law Centres Movement', funded by the Arts and

Humanities Research Council (AHRC). A former Law Centre solicitor and senior policy analyst, Marie has over 30 years' experience of working in and around the civil and criminal justice system. She specialises in access to justice, legal aid, the legal profession and social welfare law. Marie is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Socio-Legal Studies Association.

## MARGARITA AMAXOPOULOU RESEARCH FELLOW



Margarita is a postdoctoral researcher, working on emerging credibility contests between different professional communities (eg legal and computer science experts) in AI

regulation. She was a postdoctoral researcher on the legal and societal challenges of fact-checking in the online sphere, as part of the ReMeD Horizon project grant, and co-designed an executive education course on media and technology literacy for judges and policymakers for the European Media and Information Fund (EMIF) InfoLead project. Before joining the CSLS, she was a researcher on the Cloud Legal Project at QMUL.

## NAFAY CHOUDHURY RESEARCH FELLOW



Nafay is a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow whose work sits at the intersection of socio-legal studies, legal pluralism, economic development and the rule of law. He

explores the fragmented and plural forms of order that exist within the state, alongside the state and beyond the state. His current research looks at the role of market associations in providing normative order in fragile settings. He has conducted extended ethnographic fieldwork on market dynamics in Afghanistan. Nafay left the Centre in August 2023 to take up an assistant professorship at the LSE.

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### **CHRISTOPHER DECKER** ASSOCIATE FELLOW



Christopher is an economist with a long-standing relationship with the Centre. His research interests include economic regulation, law and economics and competition economics. His

most recent research has focused on the relationship between competition policy and inequality; dark patterns and consumer vulnerability; alternative dispute resolution; and the future regulation of digital markets, energy and the professions. His research has been funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the European Commission, United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI), the Leverhulme Trust and the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC).

### **FLORIAN GRISEL** SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW



Florian was an Associate Professor at CSLS from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2023. He is currently an Associate Research Professor at

the National Centre for Scientific Research, but he continues to be closely involved in the Centre through his role as a Senior Research Fellow. Amongst other things, this allows him to continue to supervise graduate students. He is currently engaged in two research projects on the evolution of the International Court of Justice and the regulation of digital spaces. Florian received his Habilitation from the Ecole Normale Supérieure.

### **NIKLAS EDER** RESEARCH FELLOW



Niklas is a Postdoctoral Researcher in Digital Policy. He also serves as a Visiting Lecturer at King's College London and is the co-founder of User Rights. While at the Centre, Niklas has

been working with Nicole Stremlau on the piloting of an EMIF-funded executive education course on media literacy. He has also been working on media pluralism and systemic risk assessments for social media platforms.

### **FANNI GYURKO** RESEARCH FELLOW



Fanni is a Postdoctoral Researcher working on the project 'No-fault Compensation Schemes for Covid-19 Vaccines', led by Sonia Macleod. Fanni's research lies at the intersection

of access to justice and migration. She explores the relationship between law and society, focusing on the social norms that drive people's interactions. Her PhD explored how migrants experience 'law' when they move into a new social context (University of Glasgow).





### BEÁTA HUSZKA RESEARCH FELLOW



Beáta is a Postdoctoral Researcher working on the Human Rights in Eastern Europe and Russia (HuRiEE) project. She joins us from UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies where

the project began in 2022. The project examines human rights mobilisation in five Eastern European countries and Beáta's research focuses on Romania and Hungary. From 2019 to 2021 she held a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Fellowship at ELIAMEP, Athens, Greece. Her MSCA research analysed the state of minority rights through the lens of litigation and legal mobilisation in Romania and Hungary.

### DOMINIK KRELL RESEARCH FELLOW



Dominik joined the Centre in May 2023 as a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow. His research explores Saudi Arabia's influence on the application of Islamic law in the margins

of the Muslim world. Trained in law, he also holds degrees in the History and Culture of the Middle East and Social Anthropology. His first book, *Islamic Law in Saudi Arabia* (Brill, 2025), examines how Saudi Islamic scholars and judges understand and apply Islamic law.

### BEHRAM KHAN RESEARCH ASSISTANT



Behram joined the Centre in 2024 and has been working with Marie Burton and Linda Mulcahy on their AHRC-funded project on the 'Law Centres Movement'. He has been

responsible for lodging a collection of documents collected for the project with the British Library and writing content summaries of long interviews. Behram is a graduate of the universities of Warwick, Oxford and the LSE. He has a particular interest in human rights.

### AGNIESZKA KUBAL ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR



Agnieszka is an interdisciplinary socio-legal scholar with area studies interest in Central Eastern Europe and Russia. She joined CSLS in 2024 and is Principal Investigator on the

HuRiEE project, funded by a UKRI/ERC Starting Grant, which is due to be completed in 2027. She also leads on the British Academy's Knowledge Frontiers Symposia follow-on funding for the project 'Activism as a Modality of Resistance and Communication? Comparing Judicial Activism across Eastern Europe'. She leads the Lived Experience of Human Rights Research Cluster for the Centre.





**MARINA KURKCHIYAN**  
EMERITUS RESEARCH FELLOW



Marina is a sociologist who specialises in comparative legal cultures, the post-communist transition and the impact of development issues on the rule of law. She has conducted research in many

European and Central Asian countries. As a consultant to the World Bank, the European Union, the Department for International Development, the Open Society Institute and the United Nations Development Programme, she has completed a number of official reports on the interaction between law and society in relation to development. Marina led the Law and Societies Research Cluster at Wolfson College until the summer of 2024.

**NATALIE KYNESWOOD**  
RESEARCH FELLOW



Natalie recently completed a one-year ESRC Postdoctoral Fellowship at the CSLS which consolidated her doctoral research investigating the piloting and roll-out of pre-recorded cross-

examination in sex offence cases. Natalie has secured a Wellcome Trust Early Career Award which will enable her to continue her work at the Centre (from January 2025 to September 2029) and to undertake a comparative, empirical project exploring the development of trauma-informed approaches to justice, both in the UK and internationally.

**THOMPSON KWARKYE**  
RESEARCH FELLOW



Thompson is a Postdoctoral Researcher working on the Politics and Practice of Social Media in Conflict project, where he focuses on the politics of AI governance and technology in Africa. Thompson

holds a PhD in Anthropology from Goethe University, Frankfurt, Germany, and a Master's in Human Security from Aarhus University, Denmark. His research interests include digitisation, new technologies, migration, gender and conflict studies. He also possesses a background in decolonial studies, African history, politics and religion. Thompson joined the Centre in January 2023 and left a year later to take up a position at University College Dublin.

**BETTINA LANGE**  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF LAW AND  
REGULATION



Bettina's research addresses interactions between nature and society in environmental law 'in action', building on systems theory and discourse analysis. She is particularly interested in

how knowledge practices of environmental science and economics inform environmental regulation, including the governance of water resources, in the context of a changing climate. She leads the Regulation and Governance Research Cluster for the Centre.





**SONIA MACLEOD**  
**SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW**



Sonia is a specialist in clinical negligence and no-fault compensation schemes. She is currently working with Fanni Gyurko on an international comparative project which

is looking at no-fault compensation schemes for adverse events following Covid vaccination. She was a specialist advisor on the 2024 Hughes Report, which considered redress options for those affected by sodium valproate and pelvic mesh. Alongside her academic interests Sonia has a strong focus on patient safety. She is the Co-Head of 'Saving Babies' Lives' at Sands, the baby loss charity.

**CAITLYN MCGEER**  
**RESEARCH FELLOW**



Caitlyn is a Postdoctoral Researcher and Principal Investigator on a British Academy Official Development Assistance International Interdisciplinary Research Project, entitled 'Gender

and Digital Repression: The Practice and Toll of Digital Repression on Women in the Authoritarian Turn', which deals with gender and technology, human rights, and security. She also works with Professor Nicole Stremlau on the EMIF-funded InfoLead executive education course.

**NIKKI MACMICHAEL**  
**SENIOR ADMINISTRATOR**



Nikki has been the Centre Administrator since April 2020 and has worked in university administration for over 14 years. She is responsible for overseeing the smooth running of the Centre's

finances, research administration and facilitation, and governance.

**JOSEPH MCAULAY**  
**RESEARCH FELLOW**



Joseph is a Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellow. His project, 'Dangerous Spectacles', examines the relationship between conspiracy theories, social media and crime in the UK.

He is also currently a co-convenor of the ConspirOX conspiracy theory discussion group, an interdisciplinary research group that works to share and disseminate cutting-edge research on the intersection of conspiracy theories, radicalisation and contemporary culture, and a co-convenor of the Alternative Political and Legal Theory Discussion Group. He previously worked with Professor Linda Mulcahy on a National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)-funded project which examined the experiences of complaint-making by patients in the National Health Service.





**NADINE MOUSTAFA**  
**ADMINISTRATION OFFICER**



Nadine joined CSLS as an Administration Officer in June 2024. She oversees graduate student admissions and progression, manages the Visitors' Programme,

coordinates seminars and events, and handles communications and social media updates. Additionally, Nadine provides financial administration support.

**HANNA OLIINYK**  
**RESEARCH ASSISTANT**



Hanna is a Research Assistant on the HuRiEE project. Her research interests span sociology of human rights, memory politics and the dissident movement in the Ukrainian

Soviet Socialist Republic. At CSLS, she examines human rights mobilisation in Ukraine, investigating actors' strategic use of the European Court of Human Rights to pursue justice and institutional change. Her research also traces the evolution and professionalisation of Ukraine's human rights movement from its roots in the Ukrainian Helsinki Group.

**LINDA MULCAHY**  
**STATUTORY PROFESSOR OF**  
**SOCIO-LEGAL STUDIES**



Qualified as a lawyer and sociologist, Linda focuses her work on lay experiences of the legal system. Her research spans a range of topics including the design of justice facilities, legal literacy, digital

disadvantage, online justice and legal aid. She is currently completing a four-year AHRC-funded study of the 'Law Centres Movement' with Marie Burton and will begin a project on funding models for free legal advice in 2025. Linda also works on the complaints and grievances strand of an NIHR-funded consortium led by the University of Kent. Linda is a former Chair of the Socio-Legal Studies Association and Trustee of the United States Law and Society Association. She is the lead editor on *Frontiers of Socio-Legal Studies* and takes responsibility for its podcast series. She also leads the Access to Justice Research Cluster.

**BRONWEN PHILLIPS**  
**ADMINISTRATION OFFICER**



Bronwen joined the Centre as an Administration Officer in 2022 and took responsibility for events, student on-course administration and supporting the Visitors' Programme and admission process. She

left in 2024 to take up a promotion in the Law Faculty's Institute for European and Comparative Law.



**FERNANDA PIRIE**  
**PROFESSOR OF THE ANTHROPOLOGY**  
**OF LAW**



Fernanda is an anthropologist and legal historian who specialises in Tibetan societies. She has conducted ethnographies of contemporary legal practices and carried out textual analysis

of historic legal traditions. Placing this work in comparative perspective, she has written monographs on *The Anthropology of Law* (Oxford University Press 2013) and on global legal history – *The Rule of Laws: A 4,000-Year Quest to Order the World* (Profile Books/Basic Books 2021). Fernanda was Director of Graduate Studies and took over as Director of the Centre from January 2025. She leads the Law Beyond the State Research Cluster at the Centre.

**JULIUS SCHNEIDER**  
**RESEARCH FELLOW**



Julius is a Postdoctoral Researcher and works with Bettina Lange on a project that investigates which types of knowledge are used in crisis governance, with a particular interest in

climate change and flooding policy in the UK and Germany. While at CSLS he will also investigate responses to the Covid pandemic through public health regulations. Julius is interested in social constructions and meaning-making broadly considered, often through discourse analytical lenses, as well as community-based responses to crises.

**NICOLE STREMLAU**  
**PROFESSOR OF LAW IN A DIGITAL**  
**WORLD**



Nicole is head of the Programme in Comparative Media Law and Policy at CSLS and leads the Law in a Digital World Research Cluster. She is also the project lead on the EMIF-funded project

on information literacy (InfoLead) and the ReMeD Horizon grant which looks at online fact-checking. She recently concluded an ERC project on Social Media and Conflict with a focus on Africa. Her current research focuses on online hate speech and mis/disinformation, particularly in areas of conflict and insecurity. She has also been leading a comparative study of the rise of internet shutdowns, particularly around elections and in response to protests and conflict. Nicole also continues her long-standing research on law and technology in areas of limited statehood and explores how governments attempt to engage citizens and communicate law-making processes, particularly constitution-making.



### FRANCESCA UBERTI RESEARCH FELLOW



Francesca is a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow whose research interests lie at the intersection of law, technology and citizenship. She is currently researching

the phenomenon of 'pseudo-law' in the UK, looking into how critical groups of citizens are making use of unorthodox interpretations of legal texts as a way of challenging state authority. Prior to taking up her BA Fellowship, Francesca worked at the Centre on the Covid no-fault compensation schemes project with Sonia Macleod. Francesca has a background in law and anthropology, and completed her PhD at the LSE in 2022.

### BENEDETTA ZOCCHI RESEARCH FELLOW



Benedetta is an interdisciplinary researcher interested in forced migration, frontiers and connections between local and mobile agencies across borders. While at CSLS she

worked with Nicole Stremlau on the ERC-funded ConflictNET project on the ways in which social media and information and communications technology innovation transformed migrants' agencies and transnational justice. She left the Centre in 2023.

### ELLIE WHITTINGDALE RESEARCH FELLOW



Ellie is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Centre who is currently working on an oral history of Rape Crisis centres in England and Wales with Linda Mulcahy. This

involves collecting 30 oral history interviews with Rape Crisis activists. The project is a partnership between CSLS and the national charity Rape Crisis England & Wales. Once complete, the interviews will be lodged with National Life Stories at the British Library. Ellie completed her DPhil at CSLS alongside working at Rape Crisis England & Wales and volunteering for a local Rape Crisis helpline.

### AND LAST, BUT NOT LEAST...

Our thanks go to the following for their research and administrative assistance during 2023–2024: ROXANNE AGON, JAMES CAMPBELL, URANIA CHIU, LUISE EDER, ANNA LÖBBERT, MARIA OBREBSKA, AYESHA PATRNAIK and LEONIE THIES.



# RESEARCH AT THE CENTRE





## OUR RESEARCH

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Since the Centre was first established in 1972, the field of socio-legal studies has expanded considerably and now encompasses a wide range of disciplinary intersections, theories and approaches. Against this broad backdrop, the Centre has developed an identity and reputation grounded in five key characteristics which run across all our research projects. These are:



theoretically informed empirical research



bottom-up perspectives to the study of law and legal phenomena



a range of disciplines including law, anthropology, sociology, economics, political science, art history and European studies



methodological approaches that sit at the interface of law and social sciences



regional specialisms, most notably Central Europe, Asia and East Africa

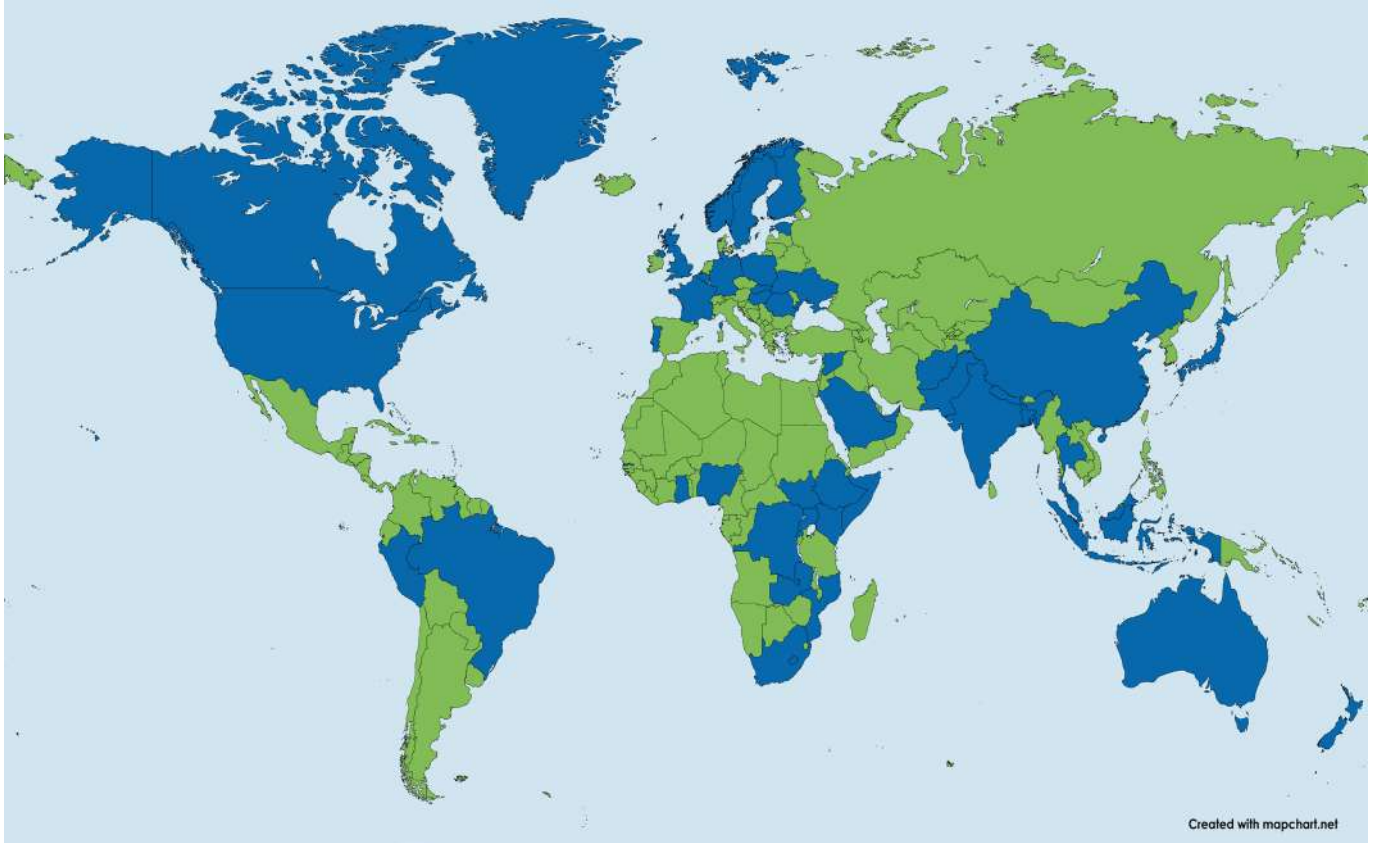
These interests manifest themselves in the fieldwork we undertake, the scholarly publications we produce, and the research grants we acquire. This section of the report provides more details on each of these aspects of our research.





# SCOPE AND REACH

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**Research conducted at the Centre is international in terms of its location and scope. In the last two years our diverse groups of staff and students have undertaken research across five continents and in over 50 countries across the globe (shown in blue above).**

These are Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Democratic Republic of Congo, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, the Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greenland, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Lesotho, Malaysia, Mozambique, Nepal, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sweden, Syria, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Uganda, Ukraine, the UAE, the UK, the USA and Zambia.

Developing an international outlook is essential to the training our research students undertake and most of them spend at least a year in the field. The international flavour of our work is also reflected in the interests of our postdoctoral fellows. The knowledge and experience they return with enriches our research culture, broadens our horizons and helps us to critique the sort of research questions we use as scholars based in the developed world.

In addition to the location of our research, the Centre has been working to integrate different ways of thinking about law and society in our training and research programmes, including a British Academy-funded workshop in Johannesburg in 2024 which brought together scholars from across Africa to talk about a range of local perspectives on research methods, practices and ethics. This has resulted in us commissioning a series of podcasts and posts for our Frontiers of Socio-Legal Studies blog and has fuelled an ongoing interest in decolonising research questions and methods. We hope to further these discussions in a new collaboration with a consortium of Chilean universities which has been funded by the Chilean Government with a view to establishing closer links with the CSLS and our sister Centre in Cardiff.

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# RESEARCH CLUSTERS

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In an attempt to better explain our research to the outside world, the Centre organises its research around five themes. These reflect the work that individual researchers and research teams undertake at the Centre.

- **Access to Civil and Administrative Justice**
- **Law Beyond the State**
- **Law in a Digital World**
- **Lived Experiences of Human Rights**
- **Regulation and Governance**

Each member of the senior team takes responsibility for a research cluster and organises at least one event a year. These provide us with an opportunity to gather in an informal forum in which Centre staff and students can workshop new ideas, present papers or discuss important work undertaken by others in our field. These meetings are invaluable opportunities to think about the links between projects and programmes within the Centre and to discuss the possibility of collaborative research. As a result many members of the Centre work across more than one cluster.

The Centre has a long-standing relationship with Wolfson College Oxford, and CSLS staff have been instrumental in setting up a new Law in Societies Cluster at the college. Led by Marina Kurkchyan and Linda Mulcahy, the Centre has collaborated with Wolfson in organising a series of events at the college. This CSLS–Wolfson College collaboration has given us the opportunity to retreat to the calm of Wolfson College to consider new interdisciplinary interactions which draw on a broader range of connections with the natural sciences, humanities and social sciences. Recent events included highly successful workshops on ‘Law and Islam’, and ‘Justice beyond the Courts: Music, Testimony, Sound and Voice’. We are grateful for the support of a long-standing friend of the Centre, John Adams, in being able to host this programme.





## RESEARCH OUTPUTS

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**Our research is published in a range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary journals details of which can be found on the webpages of individuals on the [Law Faculty website](#).**

Many of our research publications are co-authored and reflect our team-based approach to research. Outlets for our research for the period covered by this report include the *Journal of Environmental Law*, the *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory, Law and Social Inquiry*, the *Journal of Law and Society*, the *Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, *Global Policy and Information Technology for Development*, *Jurisprudence* and the *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*. In the remainder of this section, we profile a selection of publications which our staff consider to be important.

## A SELECTION OF SIGNIFICANT OUTPUTS

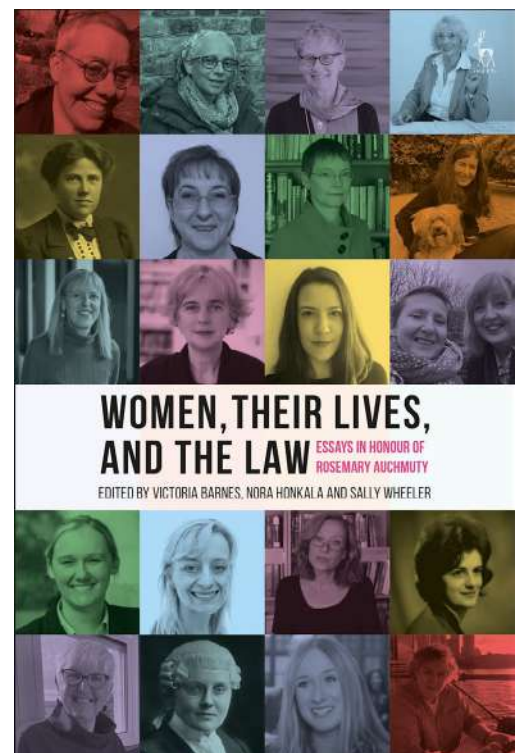
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### MARIE BURTON

M Burton and L Mulcahy, 'Gender, Feminism and Unsung Workers: The Early Years of the Law Centres Movement 1970–1980' in V Barnes, N Honkala and S Wheeler (eds), *Women, their Lives and the Law: Essays in Honour of Rosemary Auchmuty* (Hart Publishing 2023)

This chapter examines the history of women involved in the early Law Centres Movement in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It argues that Law Centres' role in giving prominence to the problems faced by women, and their structural origins, forms a relatively unexplored but critical part of the history of radical lawyering.

The authors consider how women workers began to challenge the way that Law Centres worked and the sort of work they did. Drawing on life story interviews with both men and women and a discourse analysis of Law Centre annual reports, this chapter discusses how women began to change the work undertaken by Law Centres and the ways in which structural inequalities associated with gender within the community were perceived.

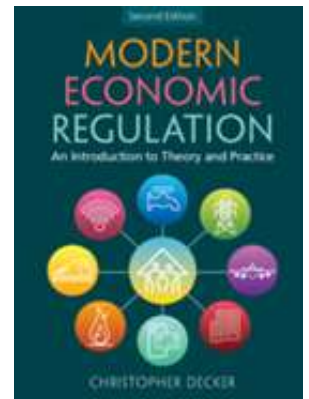




## CHRISTOPHER DECKER

### C Decker, *Modern Economic Regulation: An Introduction to Theory and Practice* (Cambridge University Press 2023)

The new edition of *Modern Economic Regulation* connects the most important insights from regulatory theory with real-world applications of economic regulation around the world. It comprehensively surveys the latest theoretical research and summarises the evidence on the effects of regulation, identifying policies that have been more, or less, effective in practice. In addition to five new chapters, covering behavioural economics and the regulation of rail, aviation, payment systems and digital platforms, all chapters are fully updated to reflect current issues such as the impacts of digitalisation, decentralisation and decarbonisation on economic regulation. The new edition features discussion questions at the end of each chapter intended to cement the reader's understanding of the most important themes and insights from each chapter.



## NIKLAS EDER

### N Eder, 'Making Systemic Risk Assessments Work: How the DSA Creates a Virtuous Loop to Address the Societal Harms of Content Moderation' *German Law Journal* (2023): 1–22

The European Union's (EU) Digital Services Act (DSA) introduces a new regulatory approach to address the societal harms of online platforms: systemic risk assessments. However, it remains unclear what these systemic risk assessments will entail in practice. This article develops a proposal as to how systemic risk assessments should be implemented. It situates systemic risk assessments as a critical step toward platform accountability because they address societal harms, while existing approaches, such as remedy mechanisms, only protect user rights. The article argues that the European Commission should foster a procedural framework or 'virtuous loop', which empowers civil society and allows it to specify and refine the standards governing systemic risks over time. Developing this framework, the article explains how systemic risk assessment can fix 'multistakeholderism', which can, in turn, help make systemic risk assessments work.

## FLORIAN GRISEL

### F Grisel, 'Canceling Disputes: How Social Capital Affects the Arbitration of Disputes on Wikipedia' *Law and Social Inquiry* 49(2) (2024): 1060–1081

This article examines how social capital affects the resolution of disputes by focusing on English Wikipedia's Arbitration Committee, sometimes described as 'Wikipedia's Supreme Court'. Drawing on quantitative and qualitative data, the article contends that the Committee not only examines the merits of the claims made by the disputants but also, and more crucially, considers the position of each disputant within the community of editors in its decision-making process. In doing so, the Committee does not simply decide or arbitrate disputes but also seeks to attenuate their impact on Wikipedia's social fabric. This data allows us to revisit sociological debates on the role of social capital, by revealing the ways in which well-connected individuals employ it strategically to obfuscate their noncompliance with norms, thus leading to what the author calls 'dispute cancellation'.



**FANNI GYURKO**

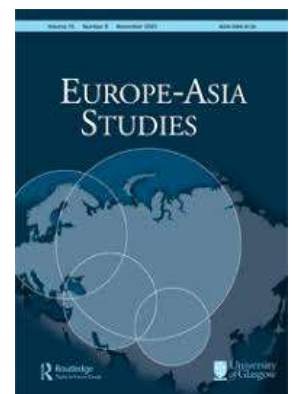
F Gyurko, 'Living Law, Normative Pluralism and "Fare Dodging" on Public Transport in Budapest' *Journal of Legal Pluralism and Critical Social Analysis* (2024): 1–20

This article contributes to socio-legal theoretical debates by applying seminal work in the field in a contemporary context. It explores a situation regulated by plural normative orders, which everyday public transport users and ticket inspectors experience and practise in Budapest. Based on rich empirical data, the article analyses everyday interactions between members of the public and public transport staff (typically ticket inspectors) in ways which are not only regulated by formal rules, but which manifest in a non-state regulated normative order. In doing so, the paper engages with the interplay between multiple normative orders and the urban dynamics in which they operate.

**BEÁTA HUSZKA**

B Huszka, 'Restitutio Interruptus: Minority Churches, Property Rights and Europeanisation in Romania' *Europe-Asia Studies* 75(9) (2023): 1453–1474

This article draws on an EU-funded Marie Skłodowska-Curie research project which assessed the agency of national minorities through court cases and mapped legal mobilization patterns in Central and Eastern Europe. This involved investigating the situation of minority rights through the lens of litigation and legal mobilization by focusing on the Roma and Hungarian minorities in Romania and the Roma minority in Hungary. This article focuses on the Hungarian minority and is based on extensive fieldwork that the author carried out in Romania, involving civil society activists, politicians, researchers, attorneys, church lawyers and anti-discrimination specialists. It concentrates on the property restitution process for Hungarian minority churches in Romania which has been neglected in the academic literature, both with regard to ethnic minorities and property restitution. The article argues that it constitutes an important aspect of the implementation of minority rights, while also illuminating some crucial aspects of property restitution and the (dysfunctional) operation of the rule of law in Romania.

**AGNIESZKA KUBAL**

A Kubal, 'Judicial Relational Legal Consciousness: Authoritarian Backsliding as a Catalyst of Change' *Journal of Law and Society* 24(1) (2024): 1–24

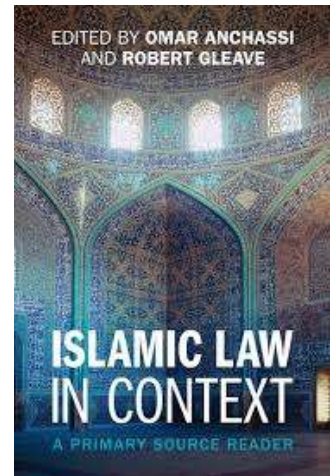
Between 2015 and 2023, Poland's authoritarian drift reshaped its judiciary, with judges increasingly turning to the European Court of Human Rights – not just as interpreters but as direct applicants challenging government actions. This article explores how judges' legal consciousness evolved through dynamic interactions with legal professionals, activists and civil society. By framing this shift within relational legal consciousness, it highlights how law and politics intertwine in times of crisis. The piece offers fresh insights into how judges navigate liminal spaces of legal uncertainty, redefining their roles amid political upheaval and using human rights law as a tool of resistance.



## DOMINIK KRELL

D Krell, 'Ibn Khunyan (b 1376/1956) on Adjudication and Judicial Organisation' in R Gleave and O Anchassi (eds), *Islamic Law in Context: A Primary Source Reader* (Cambridge University Press 2024)

The study of Islamic law is complicated by the multitude of languages used across the Muslim world and the complexity of both contemporary and premodern legal texts. This chapter is part of an innovative volume designed to help researchers and students bridge the language gap by providing commented translations of Islamic legal texts from a wide range of languages, thereby reflecting the diversity of Islamic law. Krell's contribution focuses on a text by Ibn Khunayn, one of the most prominent Saudi jurists of recent decades. In this text, Ibn Khunayn describes how the Saudi legal system is rooted in the sources of Islamic law and how royal decrees issued by the Saudi king are incorporated into the religious legal framework. The text illustrates how he draws upon works from various historical periods, demonstrating that, for him and other contemporary Saudi jurists, the validity of a legal argument is independent of its historical context.



## BETTINA LANGE

B Lange, B Bendall and P Williams, 'Increasing Access to Water through Flexible Entitlements?' *Environmental Law Review* 25(1) (2023): 28–42

How should abstracting water from the natural environment be reformed in order to provide a balance between the protection of habitats while also securing sustainable access to water for future generations? This article makes a case for a sliding scale of legal protection for abstractions that seeks to match the strength of legal protection to a range of factors, including how critical the abstraction is to business use, and how environmentally beneficial the abstraction is. It also argues for 'bubble licensing', namely promoting exchanges of water between abstractors, not just through trading, but also through reciprocity exchanges and bartering.

## SONIA MACLEOD AND FRANCESCA UBERTI

S Macleod, F Uberti and E Kameni, 'No-fault Compensation Schemes for Covid-19 Vaccine Injury: A Mixed Bag for Claimants and Citizens' *Journal of Medical Ethics* (18 June 2024)

This article examines the efficacy and fairness of no-fault compensation schemes (NFCS) for adverse events following Covid-19 vaccination. Based on an international comparative study of vaccine injury no-fault compensation, the article analyses the rapid expansion of NFCS globally, focusing on three multinational schemes – COVAX, AVAT and UNICEF – created in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. After assessing the ethical rationales behind the creation of NFCS for vaccine injuries, the authors discuss how NFCS can meet accessibility requirements and ensure adherence to justice principles. The article highlights concerns regarding access, transparency and the need for improved public oversight of these schemes, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Finally, some recommendations are made for enhancing future pandemic preparedness and NFCS design.

**JOE MCAULAY****J P McAulay, 'Less than Ideal Victims: Understanding Barriers to Queer Men's Recognition of Male-perpetrated Intimate Partner Violence through Christie's "Ideal Victim" Framework' *International Review of Victimology* 30(2) (2024): 282–297**

This article examines the experiences of Queer male victims of male-perpetrated intimate partner violence (IPV), a population whose experiences have been largely understudied within the wider relationship violence literature. It does so through the lens of Nils Christie's concept of the 'ideal victim'. The author draws on evidence taken from an interview study with 40 Queer male victims of IPV conducted remotely over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic. The findings demonstrate that victims often struggle to identify their experiences of relationship with larger cultural narratives of IPV which depict a highly feminised, weak and often stigmatised ideal victim. From these findings, it is argued that there is an urgent need to confront the public story of IPV and its related ideal victim to craft more inclusive public narratives of relationship abuse in which Queer male victims can find legitimacy and support for their experiences.

**CAITLYN MCGEER AND NICOLE STREMLAU****C McGeer and N Stremlau, 'Researching Hate Speech Online: Exploring the Potential and Limitations of Facebook as a Survey Tool in Africa' *Methodological Innovations* 17(3) (2024): 172–186**

This article discusses the issues which arose when conducting surveys with social media users in several African countries in order to gauge their definitional understandings of online hate and mis/disinformation, awareness of content moderation processes and flagging/reporting of issues. This raised challenges relating to how to conduct survey research in difficult-to-reach places, some of which are affected by violent conflict, and within a limited budget. Social media platforms present unique opportunities for researchers to recruit participants in these contexts. These platforms show promise in reaching participants who would otherwise be unreachable, but they pose significant limitations as well. Given the goal of the research to reach social media users, the authors used Facebook to advertise the survey, drawing on the breadth of research on using the platform as a research tool and the fact that it has a large user base in the targeted countries. In this article, they explore the practicalities, challenges, and limitations of Facebook as a tool for survey research in African countries.

**LINDA MULCAHY****L Mulcahy, 'Revisiting the Concept of Voice: Expression of Grievances across the English and Welsh National Health Service' *Law and Social Inquiry* 49(4) 2024: 2320–2349**

Drawing on research funded by the National Institute for Health Research, this article looks at all the data that patients and their carers presented to the National Health Service (NHS) about their experiences of care in one year. This ranged from medical negligence claims, complaints, patient satisfaction surveys and NHS-sponsored social media outlets. Examining the different logics underpinning these systems for voicing grievances and praise, this article considers the shift in ideology from redress systems which challenge existing practice to risk management systems in which aggrieved patients are data providers. Returning to seminal law and society texts on the antecedents of disputes and reflecting on the data gathered, it argues that insufficient attention has been paid to the act of voicing as an independent act divorced from the claiming or complaining process.

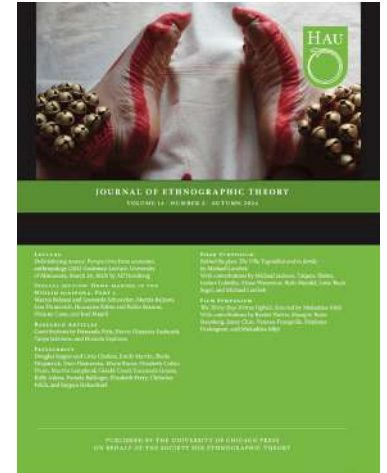
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## FERNANDA PIRIE

### F Pirie, 'Law as Ritual: Evoking an Ideal Order' *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 14 (2024): 403–417

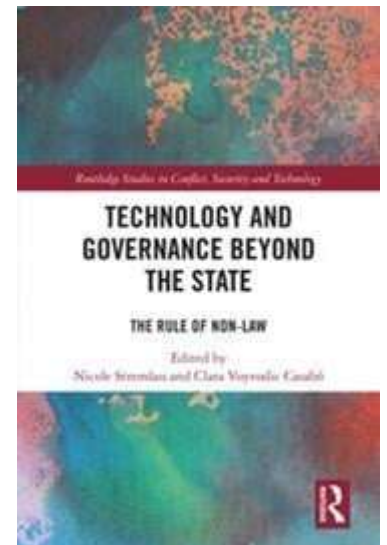
In the modern state most laws enshrine practical social norms in a way that everyone can be aware of. Laws take a legalistic form, as generalising rules and abstract categories. But, turning to historical and ethnographic examples, we find legalistic rules that do not bear a neat resemblance to the details and disputes of quotidian life. This raises questions about their purposes and effects. This article examines some of the earliest laws ever made, in Mesopotamia, Israel and Rome. These consisted of ostensibly practical rules, yet they evidently enshrined grander social visions. Asking about the aspirations and purposes of the law-makers, the article examines the connections between the practical and the symbolic. An analogy with ritual performance suggests that even partial sets of laws may connect people with visions of justice and order, thereby garnering loyalty and helping to legitimise the aspirations of the law-makers.



## NICOLE STREMLAU

### N Stremlau and C V Casabó (eds), *Technology and Governance Beyond the State: The Rule of Non-Law* (Taylor & Francis 2024)

This book explores how information and communications technologies are adapted, governed and reinterpreted in areas where the state has limited reach. It brings together an eclectic collection of cases from the favelas in Brazil to the border regions of Ethiopia and Somalia and markets in Thailand. In doing so, it teases out the broader arguments and logics about the ways in which diverse enabling environments for technology and innovation may evolve. It also considers the wide range of public authorities that may be involved in providing governance and security for such innovation, beyond the state. By looking at technologies and the rule of non-law in areas that are often seen as marginal or at the peripheries, from a profit and business perspective, this book reflects new insights back to more Western-dominated mainstream debates about law, technology and innovation.



# MAJOR GRANTS AWARDED

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**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: AGNIESZKA KUBAL**

## HuRiEE: Who Are the Humans behind Human Rights? A Sociology of Human Rights in Eastern Europe and Russia – an ERC Starting Grant funded by UKRI via the Horizon Europe Guarantee, 2022–2027

This five-year research breaks new ground in studying the unprecedented human rights mobilisation in five countries of Eastern Europe: Poland, Ukraine, Romania, Hungary and Russia. Citizens of these countries have brought more than 50 per cent of all the claims to the European Court of Human Rights. This project explores the relationship between human rights claims-making and the development of societies in Eastern Europe and Russia. To address the main research question, the project proposes a paradigmatic shift from a law-first approach in human rights scholarship to the study of the 'social life' and the everyday mobilisation of the European Convention on Human Rights, re-focusing from the law and



onto the people – the humans behind the human rights – the applicants, lawyers, activists from non-governmental organisations, and judges and state legal counsels in Eastern Europe and Russia. The first research monograph resulting from the project has been contracted with UCL Press (in open access). Please visit the [HuRiEE](#) website for publications, conference papers and op-eds.

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: SONIA MACLEOD**

## Covid Vaccines: No-fault Compensation Schemes – funded by the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations, 2021–2025

The Covid pandemic drove the widespread development of vaccine-injury compensation schemes. In January 2020, just 26 jurisdictions had no-fault compensation schemes that would cover Covid vaccine injuries. Eighteen months later there were over 140 jurisdictions covered. These schemes raise a number of socio-legal issues related to product liability and compensation for adverse events. Sonia Macleod was approached by the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations to undertake research into the scope and nature of no-fault compensation schemes for adverse events following Covid vaccination. During the first phase of this project she worked with Francesca Uberti to map these no-fault compensation schemes to allow for international comparisons on a number of key metrics. Phase two saw them compare key performance metrics for a selection of the schemes. The third and final phase, undertaken with Fanni Gyurko, takes a qualitative approach using surveys and interviews to examine wider societal attitudes towards compensation following vaccine injuries and the schemes. Please visit the [NFCS](#) website for further details.





## PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: BETTINA LANGE

### Regulating Floods and Pandemics: Knowing Socio-Legal Worlds? – funded by the Leverhulme Trust, 2024–2027

How do legal orders evolve during times of crises when human mastery over interconnected social and natural worlds is called into question? This research critically probes and builds on Ulrich Beck's idea that governance in the risk society is characterized by an abundance of natural science-based knowledge about the state of the environment. Are emergency scenarios an exception to this? Is legal ordering during exceptional, though 'new normal', states informed by a social science 'evidence base'?

What do legislators and regulators want to know before they pass legislation and put regulatory measures in place? The project will address these questions in two fields of crisis governance that are seldom considered together but are both associated with environmental degradation: pandemics and flooding. Deforestation not only increases the risk of climate change-related flooding, but also brings humans into contact with novel pathogens found in wild animals. Previous empirical research suggests that the social science evidence base for governing states of exception is too limited. The project focuses on how accounts of anticipated human behaviour in response to risk regulatory measures may feature in developing such measures. See the [Floods & Pandemics](#) website for further details.



## PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: CAITLYN MCGEER

### GenDR: The Practice and Toll of Digital Repression on Women in the Authoritarian Turn – funded by the British Academy ODA International Interdisciplinary Research Scheme, 2024–2026

Caitlyn McGeer has been awarded a British Academy ODA (Official Development Assistance) International Interdisciplinary Research grant alongside two co-investigators. Mesfin Fikre Woldmariam is Assistant Professor of Information Systems at Addis Ababa University and Researcher at the Institute of Development Policy Research. Mbongeni Msimanga is a Senior Post Doctoral Fellow at the Johannesburg Institute of Advanced Study, South Africa. This team's two-year project, 'Gender and Digital Repression (GenDR): The Practice and Toll of Digital Repression on Women in the Authoritarian Turn', builds on existing expertise from the CSLS ConflictNet project but goes in a new direction premised on the urgency of analysing the overlooked impact of the gender dimension of digital repression. It will use Ethiopia and Zimbabwe as case studies to explore not only how gender impacts the experience of digital repression, but also how gender intersects with other individual identities such as age, race/ethnicity, nationality, disability and religion to compound the impact of the experience of digital repression. It will assess the impact on women and on what makes this impact distinct from the experience of men. Please visit the [GenDR](#) website for details.





**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: LINDA MULCAHY**

## Enhancing Democratic Habits: An Oral History of the Law Centres Movement, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, 2021–2025

This four-year project managed by Marie Burton examines the role that the Law Centres Movement in England, Wales and Northern Ireland has played in facilitating access to justice for the most marginalised in society, increasing legal literacy, building communities, giving voice to collective grievances through social justice campaigns and developing new legal specialisms. The picture shows striking women in the Grunwick disputes which Brent Law Centre was involved with. Conducted in collaboration with Professors Anna Bryson and Kieran McIvoy at Queen's University Belfast, the Law Centres Network and the British Library, this project will have two major outputs in addition to academic articles and a book. The first of these is the creation of an archive of Law Centre reports from the early 1970s onwards which were lodged with the British Library in 2024. The second is a major new sound archive of life stories interviews with Law Centre workers which will form part of the legal lives audio collection curated and maintained by National Life Stories at the British Library. The project is due to end in 2025 and much of that year will be taken up in writing a book of the project. Please visit the [Law Centres](#) website for details.

**CO-INVESTIGATOR FOR OXFORD: LINDA MULCAHY**

## Pathways to Complaints, Quality, Safety and Outcomes of Care – Policy Research Unit, funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research 2019–2023, retender 2024–2028

The Centre is part of a consortium of universities which make up the National Institute for Health Research-funded **Policy Research Unit on Quality, Safety and Outcomes of Health and Social Care**. Within this unit Linda Mulcahy is the lead on work relating to grievances and complaints. The first stage of this work led to an article in *Law and Social Inquiry* which looked at all the feedback and complaints that the NHS received from patients in one year and the different ideologies underpinning these many feedback mechanisms. Most recently, Linda has been working with Joe McAulay on a discourse analysis of hundreds of official webpages which present information on how to complain about healthcare provision. Linda and Joe are also in the process of writing up the results of a survey of people who have complained to the General Medical Council, in an attempt to chart the complex routes that complainants make to and around healthcare grievance systems. Please visit the [OSO](#) website for details.





## PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: NICOLE STREMLAU

### The Politics and Practice of Social Media in Conflict (ConflictNET) – funded by the European Commission, 2017–2024



ConflictNET was an exciting and ambitious long-term project that focused on Africa as an entry point to understanding the complex relationship between new media, human rights and conflict. It came to a close in 2024. The project considered issues such as internet shutdowns, online hate speech, social media and migration, and the intersection between new technologies and non-state governance in regions where the state has limited reach. The team approached this issue through a variety of research streams. These included inequalities and online content moderation in the global south and the private ordering of fact-checking organisations that seek to address the challenges tech companies face in managing hateful content or misinformation. The research team also investigated the growing ethical and legal implications of anticipatory humanitarian action. This involved an examination of the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in humanitarian interventions and the ways in which new technologies are changing how disputes are resolved in refugee communities. ConflictNet undertook extensive empirical research in Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda and South Africa as well as organising impact workshops in South Africa and Ethiopia. The project included Oxford-based postdoctoral fellows as well as a number of researchers in Africa. Please visit the [ConflictNET](#) website for details.

## PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR FOR THE OXFORD WORK PACKAGE: NICOLE STREMLAU

### Resilient Media for Democracy in the Digital Age (ReMeD): A Consortium led by the University of Navarra – funded by the European Commission Horizon Scheme, 2023–2026

During the period covered by this report, the Centre continued work on the European Union (EU) Horizon project on Resilient Media for Democracy in the Digital Age (ReMeD). This large EU grant is being coordinated by the University of Navarra (Spain) and involves partners from across Europe. Oxford is leading the work package on Media Law and Regulation for Diversity and Pluralism. This part of the larger grant focuses on the responsibilities and regulation of content creators and algorithmic pluralism in an increasingly hybrid media environment. The Oxford team has a particular focus on how to better regulate diversity, including the role algorithms may have in both undermining the relationship between media and democracy but also as a potential tool for enacting democratic values. They are in conversation with the other research partners in the consortium who are examining the vast changes to more traditional media markets, ethics and journalistic practices. Please visit the [ReMeD](#) website for more details.



**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: NICOLE STREMLAU**

InfoLead: Information and Media Leadership Programme for Legal Professionals and Policy-makers – funded under the European Media and Information Fund of the Gulbenkian Foundation, 2023–2025



InfoLead is a new executive education programme at the Centre. Our approach is grounded on the belief that by enhancing the digital media and information literacy skills of legal professionals, including members of the judiciary and policy-makers, we will strengthen their ability to respond to some of the greatest challenges in the information age. This includes, for example, how to better understand what tools are available and how citizens assess the trustworthiness of information accessed or shared through social media, to fully comprehend the growing role of AI and mechanisms that shape online interactions and to take part in the public debates in a meaningful way.

The first executive education course took place in Oxford in December 2024 and the next course will be in April 2025. We anticipate that this will be an annual event. The InfoLead project, in partnership with the University of Florence and the University of Helsinki, is supported by the European Media and Information Fund. Over the course of the project, the team will be delivering a toolkit, an online simulator, a case studies book and an executive education programme. Please visit the [Infolead](#) website for details.





# POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS

**NAFAY CHOUDHURY, BRITISH ACADEMY POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, 2022–2023**

## Order at the End of the World: Neoliberal Orthodoxy, Economic Regulation, and Market Associations in Fragile Settings

This project explores the modes of governance that exist outside and alongside the state, particularly in fragile settings characterised by weak state institutions. It examines the role of market associations – non-state groups of businesses sharing a common set of interests – in defining the scope of rights possessed by their members. Associations are crucial for understanding the nature of rights and the operation of law in fragile settings, despite receiving scant attention in existing scholarship. Through an empirical study of four associations – two in Afghanistan and two in the Democratic Republic of Congo – this project considers the intermediary role played by associations between market actors and the state. By focusing on non-state legal ordering, governance becomes a dispersed project accomplished by both state and non-state actors and institutions; consequently, understanding legal order requires understanding the role of market associations in mediating the rights of individuals and businesses.



**NATALIE KYNESWOOD, ESRC POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, 2023–2024**

## The Extension of Pre-Recorded Cross-Examination to ‘Intimidated’ Complainants in Sex Offence Cases

This one-year project focused on disseminating findings from Natalie’s doctoral research exploring the impacts of pre-recorded evidence and related special measures on the treatment and questioning of adult complainants in sex offence cases. During the fellowship, Natalie produced a policy paper outlining her key findings, submitted evidence to the Justice Select Committee Inquiry into pre-recorded cross-examination and responded to the Law Commission’s Consultation on Evidence in Sex Offence Prosecutions. Natalie also worked with the legal profession and sexual violence training, support and safeguarding organisations to create an accessible video and related leaflet about giving evidence in sex offence cases. These resources were designed to help adult victim-survivors make informed decisions about when, where and how they give evidence and as an aid for frontline services to use when explaining special measures to victims and witnesses.



**JOSEPH MCAULAY, LEVERHULME TRUST EARLY CAREER FELLOW, 2023–2026**

## Dangerous Spectacles: Conspiracy Theories, Crime and the Law

This project examines the ways in which the so-called British 'Freedom' movement mobilises both against and in favour of the state and criminal justice systems. The world has seen a growth in social movements that forefront conspiracism and conspiratorial narratives as core parts of their political mobilisations. Britain is no exception to this. During the Covid-19 pandemic disparate groups coalesced into a sometimes incoherent but often very passionate force seeking to both remove government restrictions on movement and to



push for more reactionary or conservative political and social goals. In the aftermath of the pandemic, this Freedom movement remains a potent, if often deeply divided, social force which frequently clashes with the justice system and state whilst simultaneously calling for state violence against the movement's enemies. This project explores how this movement works to mobilise supporters against the state. It highlights the role that emotions, frames and narratives play in allowing the movement to identify enemies and friends whilst simultaneously providing a space within which cultural, political and economic divisions between believers can be debated and contested. With this focus, the project aims to provide new insight into how conspiracy theories can produce powerful and dangerous spectacles.

**DOMINIK KRELL, LEVERHULME TRUST EARLY CAREER FELLOW, 2023–2026**

## Saudi Arabia and the Globalisation of Islamic Law

Dominik's research investigates the global development of Islamic law in the twenty-first century, with a specific focus on the role of Saudi Arabia. By providing free Islamic education and judicial training programmes, Saudi Arabia has established a transregional network of Islamic jurists and judges to promote its interpretation of Islam. The project uses two case studies from the margins of the Muslim world, the Gambia and Sri Lanka, to examine Saudi Arabia's influence on the application of Islamic law in local contexts. Through ethnographic data and analysis of legal literature and court judgments, the project explores two key issues. Firstly, how Islamic law is evolving as a result of the growing exchange of people and ideas between the centres of the Muslim world and its margins. Secondly, the political implications this has in an increasingly multipolar world.





**FRANCESCA UBERTI, BRITISH ACADEMY POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, 2023–2026**

## Law and Conspiracy: Exploring the Use of Legalistic Rhetoric and Narratives in Anti-authority Worldviews



This research project investigates the phenomenon of ‘pseudo-law’ in the UK. Francesca is looking into how critical groups of citizens are using unorthodox interpretations of historical legal texts, such as the Magna Carta, as well as legalistic formalities, ‘outsider’ legal theories and narratives to challenge the authority of the state. The use of pseudo-legal arguments is often associated with broader anti-establishment worldviews based on idiosyncratic ideals of an ancient, hidden but still valid ‘common law’, purportedly superior to statutory legislation.

Despite the alarm raised by media and academic commentators, especially in the recent context of rising populist sentiment and the spread of online misinformation, little is known about the movement’s current activities, especially in the UK context. The main research goal is to better understand pseudo-law as an unconventional form of challenge to sovereign authority, enabling an evidence-informed assessment of the implications that pseudo-legal arguments may carry for public institutions, third-sector organisations and individual citizens. To achieve this goal, Francesca is adopting a qualitative methodological approach based on internet ethnography, using thematic analysis, legal-archival research and survey methods to look into online and ‘real-world’ dimensions of pseudo-law.



## MEDIUM GRANTS AWARDED

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In the period covered by this report, staff at the Centre have also been successful in attracting medium and small grants of less than £100,000.

### AGNIESZKA KUBAL

Activism as a Modality of Resistance and Communication? – funded by the British Academy Knowledge Frontiers Symposium (follow-on funding scheme), 2023–2025

This research builds on the seed-funding project on judicial activism in times of crisis funded by the British Academy, in which judicial responses to different forms of crises in Poland and Germany – the rule of law crisis (2015–ongoing) and the ‘refugee crisis’ (2015–2016) – were compared. This resulted in an innovative theoretical conceptualisation of activism: both as a modality of resistance and coalition-making against attacks on judicial independence and a preferred mode of communication as judges strove to balance the requirements of neutrality, comprehensibility and appearing approachable to laypersons during decision-making.



In the context of European democratic crises and increasing authoritarianism, where power and the autonomy of judges are contested for various reasons and with different implications, this new project significantly expands its original empirical scope to test the explanatory value of this new conceptualisation of activism across four different cases: Hungary, Romania, Poland and Germany.

### ELEANOR WHITTINGDALE AND LINDA MULCAHY

Exploring the Herstories and Futures of the Rape Crisis Movement – funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, 2023–2025

This research is being undertaken in partnership with Rape Crisis England & Wales and National Life Stories. It aims to fill an important gap in scholarship on the history of the rape crisis movement and feminist ways of working. The research component of this project is focusing on life story interviews with a representative sample of people within the rape crisis movement who have been invited to reflect on their motivations for becoming involved in the movement and experiences of it. On completion, this sound archive will be lodged with the National Life Stories collection based at the British Library. The project also provides the research team with the opportunity to train local rape crisis centres in oral history methods so that they can produce their own accounts of centres. Other creative outputs include the writing of a script based on the interviews which will be used in outreach work by the movement.

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**NICOLE STREMLAU, CAITLYN MCGEER AND LINDA MULCAHY**

**Crafting Socio-Legal Methods: Local Realities and Global Debates – funded by the British Academy International Writing Workshop scheme, 2023–2025**

This grant enabled a team from the Centre to work with project partners at the universities of Johannesburg and Witwatersrand to host a workshop for early career scholars in Johannesburg. This event allowed organisers to bring together scholars from across Africa to present papers and discuss the origin and influences of African socio-legal scholarship, how academics from the global north can form equitable relationships with African scholars and the methodological approaches adopted when undertaking research in fragile states which are research grant poor. Co-sponsored by the *Journal of Law and Society*, Professor Rachel Cahill O’Callaghan joined the team on the trip to discuss publishing conventions. Nafay Choudhury also joined the group to discuss funding opportunities. At the time of going to press, the team is working on arranging a second African-based, and led, conference in 2025.



**FERNANDA PIRIE**

**Law in Historic Tibet: Translating the Dalai Lamas’ Legal Texts – funded by the John Fell Fund, 2024–2025**

Tibet formed one of the most uniformly Buddhist civilisations the world has known. However, while aspects of Tibetan law were nominally based on Buddhist principles, they are not easily comparable with the legal regimes of other Buddhist regions. Tibetan elites developed unique concepts of law, creating legal texts and formulating ideological accounts within their own political and religious landscape. This project focuses on a series of important legal texts known as *zhé ché*, which were foundational to the establishment of the political regime of the Dalai Lamas in the seventeenth century. Fernanda is working with postdoctoral researcher, Daniel Wojahn, to investigate, collect and collate known versions of these texts, to identify the earliest versions, and produce preliminary translations. This work will shed new light on the legal and political thinking of the period and contribute to our understanding of what law meant in wider Tibet.



**FLORIAN GRISEL AND GIOVANNI DE GREGORIO**

**Codifying Digital Conduct around the World – funded by Wikimedia Research Foundation, 2023–2025**

This research project aims to examine the Wikimedia Universal Code of Conduct as a critical step for the governance of online behaviour across Wikimedia projects. The research team is investigating the codification process of the code of conduct, focusing on its origins, its structure and the narratives guiding its enforcement. Based on empirical data collected through interviews and document analysis, this project analyses the dynamics surrounding the adoption of the code of conduct and debates concerning its enforcement. The results of this research will be disseminated through various channels, including conferences, a final report and a paper published in an international journal.





## SMALL GRANTS AWARDED

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**In addition to the projects described above, grants staff were also successful in obtaining small grants of under £10,000.**

These include a grant submitted by Florian Grisel for an Astor Visiting Lectureship which gave the CSLS the opportunity to bring Professor Lawrence Lessig from Harvard to Oxford in 2023 to talk about the links between the emerging business model of media and the possibility of democracy. While in Oxford, Professor Lessig also took part in a CSLS Law in a Digital World Cluster event in which a number of early career academics presented 'lightening talks'.

Nicole Stremlau was also successful in gaining a small grant funded by the Returning Carers' Fund to examine the technopolitics of non-invasive prenatal tests.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD AROUND US

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**Researchers at the Centre focus on undertaking theoretically informed empirical work, but we commonly find ourselves mingling with practitioners, policy-makers, activists and legal subjects in the course of our research. Some groups, such as the Law Centres Network, the Access to Justice Foundation, Rape Crisis England & Wales and the British Library also appear on externally funded research grants as partners, meaning that, while our research is not policy-led, it is often policy-relevant and develops theory out of practice. As a result, it frequently has the potential to make a difference to the world around us. In this section, we provide just two examples of several successful knowledge exchange and impact activities over the last two years.**

### **CHRISTOPHER HODGES OBE, EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF JUSTICE SYSTEMS** The Post Office Scandal

Christopher Hodges is an expert in dispute resolution and regulatory systems who is currently at the heart of advising the Government on delivering full and fair compensation to the 3500 or more sub-postmasters and mistresses who are victims of the Post Office's Horizon computer system scandal. He chairs the Horizon Compensation Advisory Board, which advises ministers on the oversight of the three existing compensation schemes for different categories of claimants. The Board called for radical steps to be taken to overturn all the convictions, since the great majority appear unjust, for reasons which are continuing to emerge in the Public Inquiry, and constitute fresh grounds for appeal.

Popular outrage was triggered in January 2024 in response to a four-part ITV drama on the stories of key individuals and civil litigation that had led to setting up the current Public Inquiry. On 10 January 2024, the Government announced that it would legislate to overturn all convictions and make improvements in some compensation arrangements. This proposal has cross-party support in Parliament and popular support from the general public, as the only sure way to right the serious wrongs which have occurred, and in a timely manner. The Advisory Board and Professor Hodges continue to be fully engaged, advising Government and giving media interviews.

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## DR NATALIE KYNESWOOD, RESEARCH FELLOW Supporting Victim Survivors

During the course of her Economic and Social Research Council Fellowship, Natalie has developed an accessible video and related leaflet for adult victim-survivors about giving evidence to the police and at court, including 'special measures' available to support them. Special measures were introduced under the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 to help 'vulnerable' and 'intimidated' witnesses testify in criminal proceedings. This includes screening the witness box, using a live-link to give evidence from outside the courtroom and pre-recording the cross-examination. Natalie created these resources in response to her findings that adult victim-survivors lack timely, impartial and detailed information about the range of safeguards available to help them give their best evidence, including pre-recorded cross-examination. Commenting on the project, Caroline Birkett, Head of Service, Victim Support said:

*Knowing what to expect helps witnesses to mentally prepare, easing stress and anxiety and enabling them to give their best evidence. This guide will be an invaluable resource both for those giving evidence and for the services supporting witnesses through the criminal justice system.*

The video and leaflet are publicly available for victim-survivors to view or download directly via the [Extension of Pre-recorded Cross-Examination](#) website. The resources have also been produced as an aid for frontline services who work with victim-survivors to help guide special measures conversations, including the police, independent sexual violence advisors, the Witness Service and the legal profession. Over 2000 hard-copy leaflets have also been provided to sexual violence training, support and safeguarding organisations in England and Wales.



# CAPACITY BUILDING





## OUR CAPACITY BUILDING

The Centre has a long-standing reputation for capacity building in the field of socio-legal studies, and this continues to be at the heart of everything we do. Our efforts begin at the Centre but extend to both national and international initiatives. In this section we outline the various forms this work takes.

## FRONTIERS OF SOCIO-LEGAL STUDIES

Frontiers of  
Socio-Legal Studies



Borderlands

Methodological Musings

A Good Read

Talking about Methods



BORDERLANDS

### Attentional Rhythms and the Safer Phones Bill

In this Borderlands piece, Conor Heaney (Kent) considers the Safer Phones Bill through the frame of rhythm analysis.

by Conor Heaney | 22 January 2025

METHODOLOGICAL MUSINGS

### Discourse analysis of court judgments: An effective (and sufficient) method for critically analysing judicial conceptions of justice

In this post for Methodological Musings, Bhavna Ramji explores using a text analysis of verdicts to understand how judges construct justice.

by Bhavna Ramji | 15 January 2025



In our last report we described the launch of a new socio-legal blog hosted by the Centre. Since then this new initiative has gone from strength to strength. The purpose of the blog is to provide a discussion space for socio-legal scholars from around the world at all stages of their career. Three senior editors, currently Linda Mulcahy, Agnieszka Kubal and Fanni Gyurko, oversee the production of the blog. They are supported by a team of able research students, including lead student editor James Campbell. Working on the blog provides student editors with an excellent opportunity to expand their networks and hone their editorial and writing skills.

The blog had over 8500 views in the last three months of 2024 and almost 4500 active visitors to each of the four sections outlined opposite. The majority of our visitors come from the UK, followed by the USA, South Africa, India, Australia, Canada and Germany. We are particularly keen to attract contributions from outside the English-speaking world and published our first post in two languages (English and Portuguese) in 2024. A CSLS-sponsored workshop in South Africa and a trip by the Director to Chile in 2024 have also led to the commissioning of a series of posts from those locations.



The production of occasional newsletters has provided us with the opportunity to bring together material on a particular set of issues, and we regularly produce themed newsletters to coincide with Pride, International Women's Day and Black History Month. December 2024 saw the production of our first special issue devoted to disability studies.

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### Borderlands ...

**Student Editor: James Campbell**

This section focuses on new directions in socio-legal studies which might include new disciplinary interfaces, unexplored subjects or approaches, or discussion of new research programmes or projects. It also includes conversations about the findings of recently completed projects and publications. In the last two years in 49 original posts we have covered topics as broad-ranging as law and political economy, relational ontology, audio-visibility, queer legal praxis and colour and law.

### Methodological Musings ...

**Student Editor: Anna Löbbert**

This section is dedicated to discussion of methodologies and methods used in the production and analysis of empirical studies of law and legal phenomena. In an attempt to demystify fieldwork, we place a particular emphasis on authors writing about dilemmas which have occurred in the field or problems they have faced and overcome. At the time of going to press we have published 46 blogposts on issues as diverse as signature fetishism, the parasitic tendencies of researchers, overcoming class boundaries in the field, being overwhelmed by data and the challenges of translating interview data.

### Talking about Methods ...

**Student Editor: Leonie Thies**

This is a 46-episode podcast series in which Linda Mulcahy is recorded in conversation with leading socio-legal scholars about a particular method they have used and their experiences of that method in the field. In time, the aim of this section is to put together integrated introductory courses in qualitative and quantitative methods. From surveys to semi-structured interviews and beyond, we delve into the challenges, dilemmas and unexpected twists and turns of empirical research. A short publications list accompanies each talk to guide future reading. This series is now close to providing a complete lecture series on qualitative methods and our focus for the future will be on developing the smaller number of quantitative topics covered.

### A Good Read ...

**Student Editor: Ayesha Pattnaik**

This features reviews of recent theoretically informed empirical socio-legal publications which we are often able to approach faster than journals. Whilst this section is mainly dedicated to book reviews, reviews of recent socio-legal articles are also welcomed. We have been delighted by the fact that extracts from our reviews are increasingly being used by publishers in their promotional materials.

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## CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOPS

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### ESRC Methodology Masterclasses, Oxford 2023 and 2024

Using a four-year grant provided by the Economic and Social Research Council and match-funding provided by the *Journal of Law and Society*, the Centre runs an annual Methodology Masterclass for research students from across the UK and beyond. This two-day event allows 20 students a year, selected through an international competition, to discuss published works and workshop ideas with established socio-legal researchers. Students selected came from across the UK, Europe and Asia to attend the Masterclasses held in Oxford in September 2023 and July 2024. The programme included discussion of topics as varied as theory and praxis in ethical socio-legal research, conducting socio-legal research in authoritarian contexts, positionality and identity in reflexive ethnography, legal judgments as data and studying inanimate objects. Reflecting on the experience of attending the Masterclass one student said:

*I most enjoyed the open and collegial environment of the event. The structure of the workshop provided space for open discussions and sharing of experiences with each other. This I think was also due to the fact that the professors shared their own research experiences and were open to discuss not just what worked, but also what didn't!*

The Centre is grateful to the many colleagues from across the UK who give up their time to lead Masterclass sessions, including Phil Thomas, Rachel Cahill O'Callaghan, Rosie Harding, Marie Burton, Fred Cram, Agnieszka Kubal and Dave Cowan. The Centre is also grateful for the ongoing support for this event provided by the *Journal of Law and Society* and the Welsh Doctoral Training Partnership. We are currently seeking long-term funding for this initiative.





## Law in Context Early Career Workshop, Oxford 2023

This event is generously sponsored by Cambridge University Press and is organised in Oxford by the Centre in collaboration with the Wolfson College Law in Societies Cluster. The event provides 10 early career academics with the opportunity to present a paper to other delegates and receive detailed feedback from established academics. Delegates are selected for inclusion in a national competition advertised on our website and in the



Socio-Legal Studies Association newsletter. Delegates are encouraged to use the feedback to improve their paper and submit it for publication. A 'Getting Published' session led by an editor of the *International Journal of Law in Context* and an articles editor from Cambridge University Press provides support in navigating the submission and refereeing process.

## POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS

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**The Centre actively seeks out excellent candidates for postdoctoral fellowships and is always interested in hearing from potential applicants. Unfortunately, we get many more approaches in a year than we can accommodate, but we give feedback on their proposals to all those that approach us. The resources we have devoted to developing our postdoctoral community have proven extremely successful in recent years, and at the time of writing we have a record number of 13 externally funded postdoctoral fellows. These early career academics provide an additional bridge between students and established staff and regularly invigorate our research clusters with new ideas and approaches.**

Postdoctoral fellows come to us through two different routes. The first of these are postdoctoral fellows who want to focus on their own independent research project. The organisations which have funded this group of research fellows in the last two years include the British Academy, the Economic and Social Research Council and the Leverhulme Trust. From January 2025 we will also, for the first time, be hosting a Wellcome Trust Postdoctoral Fellow for five years. Other postdoctoral fellows are recruited to work on externally funded project grants secured by established Centre staff. Writing about her experience of being a postdoc at the Centre, Fanni Gyurko said:





*In my experience the Centre provides a supportive, intellectually stimulating and friendly environment. The members of the senior research team are always listening and genuinely interested in what you have to say during research seminars or the Centre's weekly afternoon tea. They are approachable and always ready to give you feedback on your research, career development and share their experiences with academic publishing and conferences. I especially enjoyed the interaction and exchanging ideas with academic visitors to the Centre and the DPhil and MPhil researchers. I benefitted from discussing my research with these highly intelligent people, who are at different stages of their career development, and hopefully I also have given some good advice too.*

Postdoctoral fellows are all mentored by a senior member of staff and have two formal one-to-one sessions with them every year, and many more informal interactions. They can also make use of professional development courses run by the Centre, Law Faculty and Social Sciences Division.

If you are interested in joining the Centre as a postdoctoral fellow undertaking independent research, please check funder websites to identify which schemes you are eligible to apply for and application deadline dates. We usually begin selecting candidates we want to support well in advance of these deadlines, so it is a good idea to check the Faculty website for expression of interest deadlines.

## RESEARCH STUDENTS – DPHIL

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### **SELINA ABÄCHERLI, LINCOLN COLLEGE**

Making 'Good' Law: An Anthropological Analysis of Debates about Legislative Standards in the UK: Supervisor – Professor Fernanda Pirie

### **ROXANE AGON, WOLFSON COLLEGE**

Supervisor – Dr Florian Grisel

### **NOUF ALBINHASSAN, LINACRE COLLEGE**

Corporate Governance and the Sovereign: What Corporate Governance Role Do Sovereign Wealth Funds Play?: Supervisor – Dr Florian Grisel

### **KARA APLAND, BALLIOL COLLEGE: PART-TIME**

The Limits of Legal Protection: A Study of the Use of Institutions in Sri Lanka's Child Justice System: Supervisor – Professor Fernanda Pirie

### **MUHAMMAD ATCHA, KEBLE COLLEGE**

Supervisor – Dr Florian Grisel

### **BENEDIKT BARTHELMESS, EXETER COLLEGE**

Domestic Law-making and the Transnational Anti-money Laundering Governmentality: Supervisor – Dr Bettina Lange

### **JAMES CAMPBELL, WOLFSON COLLEGE: PART-TIME**

The Laws of Motion: Towards a Sensational Jurisprudence of Movement within the Court: Supervisor – Linda Mulcahy

### **URANIA CHIU, EXETER COLLEGE**

At the Frontiers Between Penal and Psy Discourses: Judicial Constructions of the Mentally Dis/Ordered Defendant in Hong Kong Sentencing Judgments: Supervisors – Linda Mulcahy, Dr Charles Foster and Dr Michael Dunn



**FREYA COLE NORTON, LINCOLN COLLEGE**

The Local Welfare Safety Net: Fit for Purpose?: Supervisor – Professor Linda Mulcahy

**MARCUS DAHL, ST EDMUND HALL**

Indigenous Political Voice, the Uluru Statement and the Demand for a Constitutionally Protected Voice to Parliament in Australia: Supervisors – Professor Fernanda Pirie and Professor Asmi Wood

**ANA CAROLINA DALL'AGNOL, WOLFSON COLLEGE**

An Itinerary of Laws: The Transnational Legal Assemblage for Extracting Gas in the Rovuma Basin, Mozambique: Supervisors – Dr Florian Grisel and Dr Chris Decker

**ANN-MARIE DEBRAH, EXETER COLLEGE**

Phenotype, Scientific Racism and Colonialism: The Reintroduction of Colonial Categories of Race in Tribunal Proceedings in Brazil: Supervisors – Professor Linda Mulcahy and Dr Marie Burton

**LUISE EDER, EXETER COLLEGE**

Transnational Dynamics in AI Governance: Creating Normative Frameworks Beyond the State: Supervisor – Professor Fernanda Pirie

**EKIN GENC, KEBLE COLLEGE: PART-TIME**

Trust, Code, and Degeneracy: An Empirical Inquiry into the Fragile Private Order of Decentralized Finance: Supervisor – Professor Fernanda Pirie

**REBEKKA GEREMEW MANKESHE, QUEEN'S COLLEGE**

Law Beyond the State: How Climate Change Activists Position Themselves towards the Law and Why They Choose to Break It – Supervisor: Professor Fernanda Pirie

**IRENE HAN, ST ANTONY'S COLLEGE**

Costs in Civil Litigation: The Impact of Incentives on Lawyer Behaviour and the Operation of the Civil Procedure Rules: Supervisor – Professor Linda Mulcahy





### **ETIENNE HANELT, WOLFSON COLLEGE**

Supranational Tug of War: European Union and the Future of the Authoritarian Equilibrium: Supervisors – Professor Fernanda Pirie and Professor Ezequiel Gonzalez Ocantos

### **DANIEL HERSZBERG, ST CROSS COLLEGE**

Supervisor – Dr Florian Grisel

### **SHRUTI IYER, ST ANTONY'S COLLEGE**

Silicosis and the State: Reframing Contestations between Capital and Labour in Contemporary India: Supervisor – Professor Linda Mulcahy

### **LAMA KARAME, EXETER COLLEGE**

Age and the Law: A Critical Approach to Ageing under Legal Pluralism: Supervisors – Professor Linda Mulcahy and Professor Jonathan Herring

### **CHARLOTTE KELLY, EXETER COLLEGE**

How Has Law and Regulation, Both Formal and Informal, Regulated Key Issues of Female Bodily Autonomy in the Transition from Childhood to Adulthood in Singapore?: Supervisor – Professor Jonathan Herring

### **ISRAR KHAN, REGENT'S PARK COLLEGE**

Analysing China's Approach to Investor–State Disputes under the Belt and Road Initiative – Supervisor: Dr Bettina Lange

### **STEPHEN KNIGHT, WOLFSON COLLEGE: PART-TIME**

Humanely Treating Terrorist Prisoners: How the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria Observes International Humanitarian Law after the End of Hostilities: Supervisor – Dr Florian Grisel

### **VENDULA KOLAŘÍK MEZEIOVÁ, REGENT'S PARK COLLEGE**

Constructing the Legitimacy of Behavioural Regulatory Tools: A Post-structuralist Analysis of Tools to Promote the MMR Vaccination in France: Supervisor – Dr Bettina Lange

### **NAGI KORIKI, ST ANTONY'S COLLEGE**

Land, Being and Law: The Naturalised Link between Self-Determination and Territoriality in International Law: Supervisor – Professor Fernanda Pirie

### **JADE KOSCHE, WOLFSON COLLEGE**

Behind the Seams: Private Labour Ordering and Gender-Based Violence in Lesotho's Garment Factories – A Work-centred Legal Ethnography: Supervisor – Professor Fernanda Pirie

### **FIDELIS LEITE MAGALHAES, WOLFSON COLLEGE: PART-TIME**

Transitional Justice in the Age of Social Media in Timor-Leste: Supervisor – Professor Nicole Stremlau

### **SARAH LEVY, GREEN TEMPLETON COLLEGE**

A Tale of Two Seal Hunts: Contesting the Conflation of Canadian Sealing Activities in Law and Policy: Supervisor – Dr Bettina Lange

### **AMANDA LINDSTROM, ST ANTONY'S COLLEGE: PART-TIME**

Socio-Legal Aspects of Global Health Governance and Networks: Regulatory Intermediaries: Supervisors – Professor Linda Mulcahy and Professor Anne Davies

### **JUNYU LIU: LOVEDAY, REGENT'S PARK COLLEGE**

A Farm, and a Firm: Ethnography of a Chinese Agricultural Corporation: Supervisor – Dr Florian Grisel



**KRZYSZTOF LUKASZEK, NEW COLLEGE**

Property Discourses in a Post-communist Society: A Socio-legal Case Study of Land Reprivatisation in Warsaw: 1990–2021: Supervisors – Dr Bettina Lange and Professor Antonia Layard

**CAIO MACHADO, WOLFSON COLLEGE**

Disinformation Driving Brazil's Covid-19 Response: A Networked Mobilisation against Evidence-based Policy-making: Supervisor – Dr Bettina Lange

**ANGELA MOORE, BRASENOSE COLLEGE: PART-TIME**

Regulating Asylum: The CEAS, the Refugee Crisis, and the Search for Common Standards: Supervisors – Dr Marina Kurkchyan and Dr Chris Decker

**MARIA OBREBSKA, REUBEN COLLEGE**

To What Extent Does Anti-gender Discourse in Poland Highlight the Tensions around Implementing the Istanbul Convention?: Supervisor – Dr Agnieszka Kubal

**HARSHITA PANDEY, ST ANTONY'S COLLEGE: PART-TIME**

Beyond Consent and Coercion: Socialization and Law: Supervisor – Professor Nicole Stremlau

**AYESHA PATTNAIK, ST ANTONY'S COLLEGE**

Concealed Claims, Contested Citizens: A Study of India's Informal Internal Migrant Workers: Supervisor – Professor Fernanda Pirie

**PABLO PEÑA ALEGRIA, GREEN TEMPLETON COLLEGE**

Property Law and Deforestation in the Agricultural Frontier of the Peruvian Amazon: Supervisor – Dr Bettina Lange

**AASTHA PRASAD, GREEN TEMPLETON COLLEGE**

Navigating Transformations: Adivasi Identity, Agency and the Law in South Gujarat, India: Supervisor – Professor Fernanda Pirie

**MIHIR RAJAMANE RAJENDRA, EXETER COLLEGE**

'Transgender' in India: Dynamics of State Law and Gender as Institutions: Supervisor – Dr Agnieszka Kubal

**VIDYA RAMACHANDRAN, ST PETER'S COLLEGE**

Tracing Women's Return to India Following Domestic Abuse: Supervisors – Professor Fernanda Pirie and Dr Lena Rose

**CHIARA ROHLFS, HERTFORD COLLEGE**

Who Defines Corporate Climate Obligations? An Exploration of the Blind Spots and Reciprocal Interaction of Private Regulatory Initiatives and Corporate Climate Law: Supervisor – Dr Bettina Lange

**ELSA SAVOUREY, EXETER COLLEGE: PART-TIME**

Advancing the Respect of Human Rights in Global Value Chains: Assessing the Effectiveness of Mandatory Human Rights Due Diligence – Supervisor: Dr Florian Grisel

**JOHANNES VÖHLER, REUBEN COLLEGE**

Informal Safeguards of Judicial Independence in the EU: Supervisor – Dr Agnieszka Kubal

**LISA VÖLZMANN, ST ANTONY'S COLLEGE**

Data Access and Use of EU Public Sector Bodies: Supervisor – Dr Bettina Lange

**SUPAKORN WILARTRATSAMI, ST ANTONY'S COLLEGE**

Myanmar Migrants in Thailand: Supervisor – Professor Nicole Stremlau





## RESEARCH STUDENTS – MPhil

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### MOHAMMAD ZAYAAN ASMI, ORIEL COLLEGE

Internet Shutdowns from the Lens of Sovereignty: A Comparative Study of India, Nigeria, and Brazil: Supervisor – Professor Nicole Stremlau

### ETHAN OSTROW, REUBEN COLLEGE

Restorative Justice as Legal-Governance: Tracing Technique through Institutional Politics: Supervisor – Dr Agnieszka Kubal

### SACHIN SIWAKOTI, REUBEN COLLEGE

Evaluating Socio-Economic Rights Realization: A Study of the Inequality Jurisprudence and Implementation Status in Nepal: Supervisor – Dr Bettina Lange

### LUCY TU, ORIEL COLLEGE

Pregnancy by Design: The Influence of Noninvasive Prenatal Testing and Genomic Technologies on Reproductive Choice: Supervisor – Professor Nicole Stremlau

## 2023–2024 GRADUATES

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### DPHIL IN SOCIO-LEGAL STUDIES

#### RANGGA ADITYA DACHLAN, EXETER

Unity in Spite of Diversity: Heritage as a Nation-Building Strategy in Indonesia: Supervisor – Dr Marina Kurkchian

#### MIKOLAJ JAKUB, ST CROSS

The Problematisation of Autonomous Weapon Systems – A Case Study of the US Department of Defense: Supervisor – Dr Bettina Lange

#### ANNA LÖBBERT, LINCOLN

Denying the State Through Law: The Case of the German Reichsbürger Movement: Supervisor – Professor Fernanda Pirie

#### TOBY JAMES SHEVLANE, EXETER

The Artefacts of Intelligence: Governing Scientists' Contribution to AI Proliferation: Supervisor – Dr Bettina Lange

#### SILA ULUCAY, ST CATHERINE'S

Navigating Precarity: The Case of the Publishing Sector in Turkey: Supervisor – Dr Marina Kurkchian

### ELEANOR MAY WHITTINGDALE, LADY MARGARET HALL

Outside the Criminal Justice System? Narratives about Sexual Violence within English Sexual Violence Support Services: Supervisor – Professor Linda Mulcahy

### MPHIL IN SOCIO-LEGAL STUDIES

#### NOUR ALKAUTHER ALHUSAINY, GREEN TEMPLETON

Formalising Belonging: On the Conditions of German Citizenship: Supervisor – Dr Bettina Lange

#### FREYA MAY COLE NORTON, LINCOLN

The Local Welfare Safety Net: Fit for Purpose?: Supervisor – Professor Linda Mulcahy

#### JULIA COYLE GILL, ST ANTONY'S

'Not our Homeschoolers': The Unusual Case of Homeschooling Re-regulation in Georgia, USA: Supervisor – Dr Bettina Lange

#### GENKI KIMURA, WOLFSON

Changing Society in International Courts: The Complicated Roles of NGOs before the European Court of Human Rights: Supervisor – Dr Florian Grisel

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**BARATHI NAKKEERAN, ST HILDA'S**

Empire of Dirt: Colonial Madras City through its Waste: Supervisor – Professor Fernanda Pirie

**JULIAN REGIS APPLEBAUM, LINACRE**

Law in the Darkroom: Legal Interpretation and Negotiation of London's Queer Sex-On-Premises Sites: Supervisor – Professor Linda Mulcahy

**ILHAM ABDALLA TAGELSIR ALI, MANSFIELD**

No Country for a Sudani Woman: A Socio-legal Exploration of the Use of Cultural Patriarchy in the Policing of Sudanese Women's Bodies and Behaviour under the Public Order Laws in Khartoum: Supervisor – Dr Florian Grisel

**QIANDAI WANG, ST HILDA'S**

Sustainability Challenges for EU Competition Law and Policy: Competition and Consumer Welfare in a Circular Economy: Supervisor – Dr Bettina Lange

**ANNA SHI PUI WONG, ST CROSS**

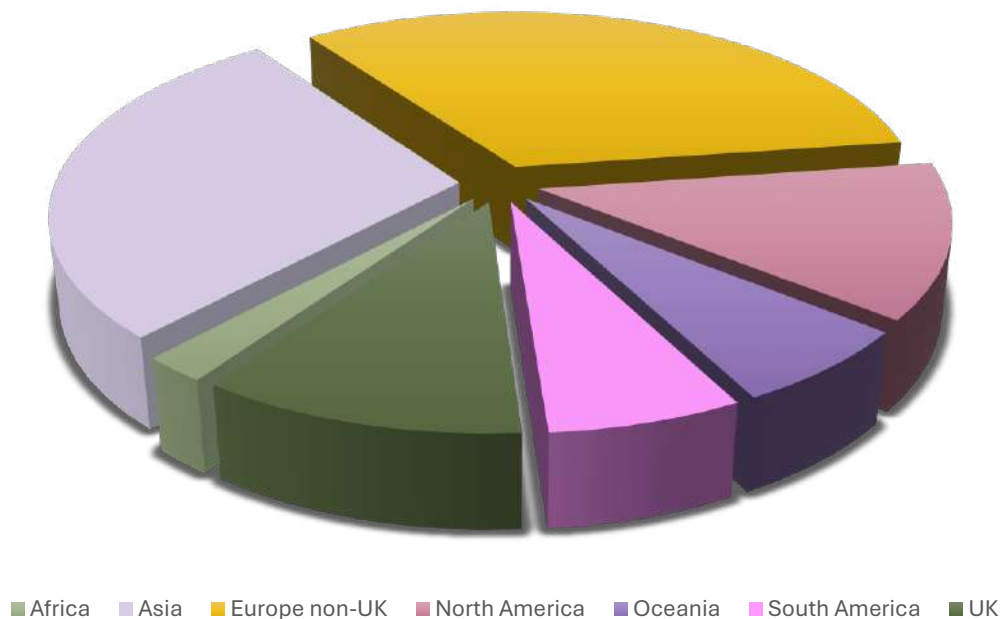
Virtual Court Hearings: Judicial Perspective from Ontario Judgments: Supervisor – Professor Linda Mulcahy

## WHERE DO OUR STUDENTS COME FROM AND WHERE DO THEY GO?

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**The Centre is proud to be able to recruit a diverse and international group of students to its research degrees programme.**

Gaining a place on our research degrees programme is highly competitive, with applicants having to get through a desk-based review and interview if shortlisted. This allows us to hand pick the very best students from a growing number of applicants. The infographic below shows the countries of origin of our student body over the last two years.



On completion of their degrees around half of our alumni decide to stay in academia. A smaller proportion embark on careers in government, the private sector and non-governmental organisations. Our graduates can now be found pursuing careers in Europe, Australia, South America, North America, Asia and Africa.

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# EVENTS HIGHLIGHTS



## OUR EVENTS 2023–2024

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Each year the Centre organises in excess of 25 events. Our regular Monday morning seminars are run in hybrid mode, allowing those outside of Oxford to take part, and frequently attract 40 people. This seminar series, at which a mix of external and internal speakers present, provides us with an opportunity to showcase some of the best and most challenging socio-legal research being undertaken. Our students also organise a socio-legal discussion group which takes place every two weeks during term time and offers an opportunity for students to present to their peers and act as critical friends. In addition, Fernanda Pirie hosts *ad hoc* reading group sessions in her home, and other colleagues lead specialist reading and discussion groups which reflect their own particular research interests.

An example of the latter is the discussion group on 'Alternative Legal and Political Theory' run by Joe McAulay and Dominik Krell. The Comparative Media Law and Policy team at the Centre also continue to run a highly successful summer school which attracts delegates from all over the world, half of whom come from the global south. In the remainder of this section, we outline a small sample of highlights of the events programme over the last two years.

## ANNUAL LECTURES

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The annual lecture provides an opportunity to engage with, and celebrate, the work of a prominent socio-legal scholar. In 2023 and 2024 they were organised in collaboration with the Law in Societies Cluster at Wolfson College

2024: Professor Annelise Riles, Northwestern University, Illinois, USA:  
'Everyday Ambassadors: Lessons from Socio-legal Studies for a Fractured World'

This lecture was based on a book of the same title which discusses the challenges of democratising the tacit knowledge of insiders in global affairs. Drawing on three decades of socio-legal research in global governance, this work discusses the tricks of the trade that activists, international lawyers and diplomats use where institutions fail – tools and moves to create new pathways to progress. These are moves that each of us can put into practice, from where we are, to further meaningful change. The aim is to encourage and equip each of us in our ongoing work as everyday ambassadors.

The recording of the [CSLS 2024 annual lecture](#) can be viewed online.





## 2023: Professor Des Manderson, Australian National University, Canberra: 'Possession Island: Queering Art, Queering Law'

This lecture focused on the work of Australian artist Gordon Bennett, an artist who produced a body of work which reflected on colonial law; unpacking the complex temporal logic that underpinned Australian colonialism and the central role of images in creating myths about it.

In addition to his lecture, Professor Manderson also gave a talk at New College about the images of Justitia in painted glass in the New College Chapel. Designed by Joshua Reynolds, the depiction was one which Professor Manderson had written about but never seen *in situ*. While in Oxford he also ran a workshop with research students on the topic of 'Law and Art'. The Centre was delighted to host such an eminent scholar and leading expert on law and aesthetics. The recording of the [CSLS 2023 annual lecture](#) can be viewed online.



## OTHER EVENTS

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### Justice Beyond the Courts: Music, Testimony, Sound and Voice, 2024

This one-day event and evening performance brought together poets, folk singers, rappers, film-makers and academics to consider how people talk about and seek justice beyond the formal legal system, what it means to testify publicly and the role that music, sound and voice play in the articulation of injustices? The examples of racism, sexual abuse, marginalisation by the legal system and thresholds of hearing discussed by Damian Gorman, Carey Young, Rawz and Naomi Waltham-Smith served to highlight the often-fraught relationship between formal testimony and listening. They also showcased the ways in which artists and ordinary citizens find extra-legal means to tell their stories about injustices. Organised by Linda Mulcahy and former visitor to the Centre Nomi Dave, the workshop culminated with an evening performance and conversation with renowned folk singer, writer and activist, Sam Lee. Sam spoke about his work as a song collector, in the UK and beyond, to bring life to stories of injustice contained within song.

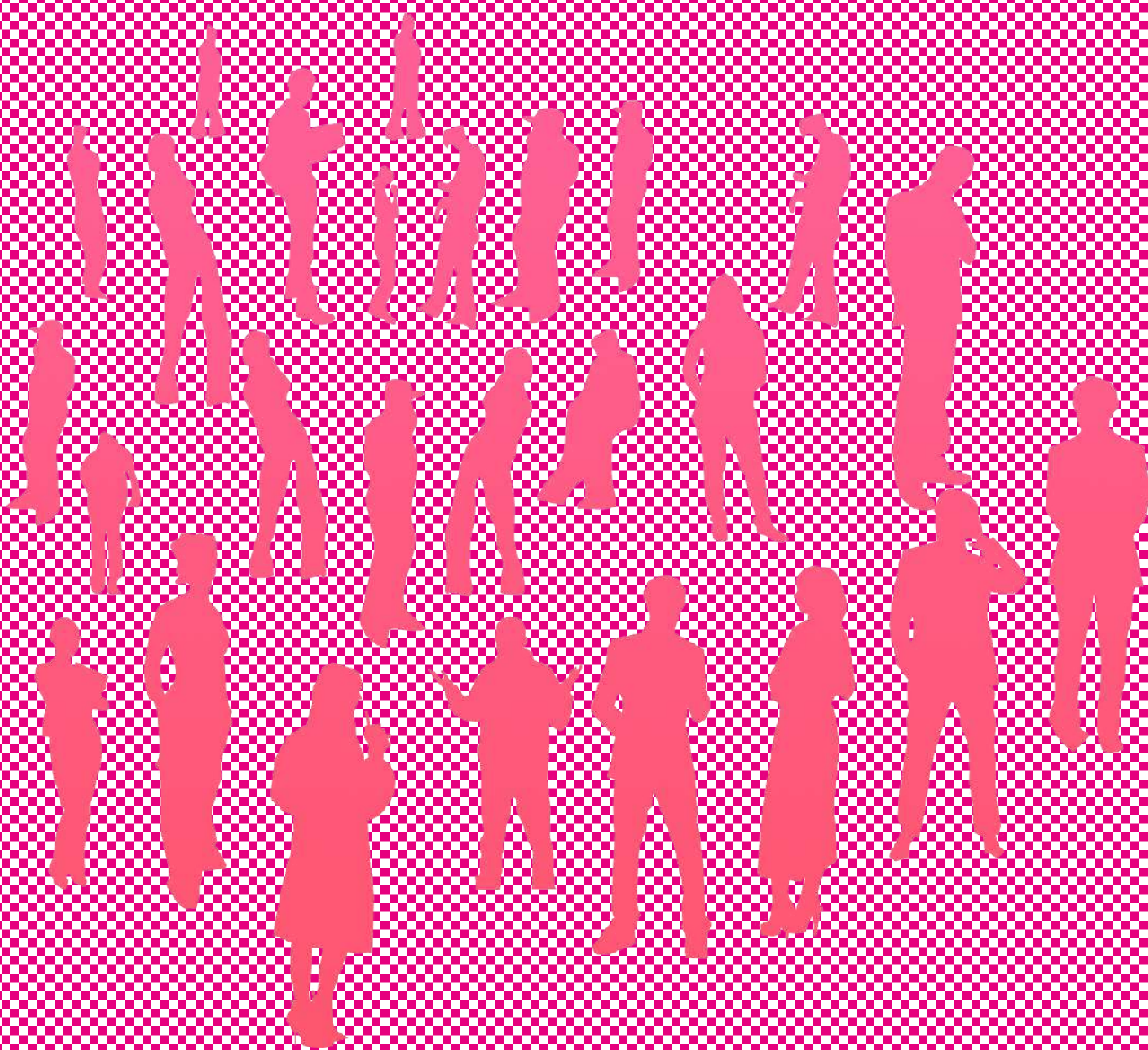
### Islamic Law, 2024

The Law in Societies Cluster at Wolfson devoted Hilary term 2024 to the theme of Islamic Law. This started with a discussion of the relation between Islamic law and the modern state. Morgan Clark from the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Oxford, Rob Gleave from the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter, and Dominik Krell from the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, Oxford, shared their ideas with us in short presentations, before opening out discussion to a packed room of attendees. The panel discussion was followed by a lecture entitled 'Is There Such a Thing as Islamic Law? A Conceptual Question and a Praxeological Answer', given by Baudouin Dupret from the French National Centre for Scientific Research.

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# OUR WIDER FAMILY





## OUR ASSOCIATES

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The intellectual life of the Centre is also enhanced by those who participate as Associates of the Centre. These include Senior and University Associates who take part in events, chair advisory groups or contribute to our events programme. In the period covered by this report, we are particularly pleased to have added research collaborators Mesfin Fikre Woldmariam, from Addis Ababa University, and Mbongeni Jonny Msimanga, from the University of Johannesburg, as Associates at the Centre.

## OUR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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The Centre is also grateful for the input of members of the Centre Management Committee who oversee our activities and act as critical friends. Special thanks go to Professor Kate O'Regan, Professor John Armour, Professor Joshua Getzler and Professor Loren Landau.

## OUR VISITORS

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The Centre has a vibrant visitors' programme which provides opportunities for research students and established academics to spend time at the Centre and engage in our activities.

The Centre is able to make office space available for our visitors so that they can be exposed to the full range of daily activities. Visitors commonly contribute to the intellectual life of the Centre by giving presentations, joining in the discussion at our events or just chatting about research and fieldwork over a cup of tea and piece of cake at our weekly Thursday afternoon sessions.

Speaking of her time as a visitor at the Centre, Professor Nicole Busby said:

*I thoroughly enjoyed my time as a Visitor in the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies. The office accommodation was perfect and the staff and students were very welcoming. I was able to make use of the outstanding resources that Oxford's Faculty of Law and the wider University offer and my research definitely benefitted from the vibrant and inclusive environment within the Centre. It was a wonderful experience.*

Professor Nomi Dave from the University of Virginia added:

*I had the pleasure of being an Academic Visitor at the Centre in Michaelmas 2023 and Hilary 2024. The community was lively, generous, and diverse, and there were many opportunities to engage with others, from workshops and weekly seminars to social events*





*and afternoon teas. I had the opportunity to share my work in an Access to Justice workshop, and in many meetings and conversations with students, staff, and other Visitors throughout my time there. It was a wonderfully enriching experience, and I came away with a deepened understanding of socio-legal studies and a new network of colleagues and friends.*

We have recently created a Practitioner in Residence, and Lindsey Poole, Director of the Advice Service Alliance, has honoured us by becoming the first holder of this post. While at the Centre, Lindsey has been working on an analysis of *pro bono*. She has been of incredible value to students and researchers seeking out connections in the advice sector and organised us all in a bake sale in support of National Pro Bono week.

## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

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Staff and students at CSLS value this opportunity to reassert our commitment to confronting racism, sexism and all forms of unfair discrimination through education, research, discussion and peaceful protest. Interrogating the interface between the rhetoric of formal rights and the lived reality of legal process is at the heart of everything we do. Issues around race, sexism and law are currently being explored in a number of projects at CSLS.

Staff and students at the Centre acknowledge that we can and should do more. In the spirit of taking time to listen to, and amplify, the voices of a diverse community in the last two years we have:

- committed to inviting a broad range of speakers to present in our seminar series;
- obtained funding from the British Academy to collaborate with colleagues in Africa in the hosting of a methodology seminar series focusing on undertaking research from the global south;
- entered into a partnership with a consortium of universities in Chile which will result in a staff and student exchange programme;
- actively engaged in fundraising to facilitate scholars, activists and practitioners from the global south to attend the annual Media Law and Policy Summer Institute;
- introduced sessions on feminist methodology and decolonising research questions into our compulsory Theory and Methods course;
- used the open access Frontiers of Socio-Legal Studies blog to foreground the voices of those who have traditionally been marginalised in the Western academy;
- recorded podcasts on decolonising research questions and sought out contributions to the blog from scholars in the global south; and
- changed the timings of our regular Monday seminar series and introduced a hybrid format in order to maximise the chances of colleagues with caring responsibilities being able to attend.

We are committed to ongoing debate to ensure that we are not complicit in the silencing of marginalised voices. We encourage you to engage in debate with us and to critique our efforts to facilitate inclusivity.





A place where disciplines and  
socio-legal scholars meet