

REPORT 2019-2020



A PLACE WHERE DISCIPLINES AND SOCIO-LEGAL SCHOLARS MEET



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# WELCOME FROM THE DIRECTOR



This report summarises the many achievements of the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies from January 2019 to December 2020 and reveals our plans as we move forward. It also reflects activity during my first two years as the Professor of Socio-Legal Studies in the Oxford Law Faculty and as the Director of the Centre.

It has been an enormous privilege to return to the Centre twenty-five years after I finished a four-year appointment as an early career researcher. Those years at the Centre were formative and transformed me from a lawyer who was interested in socio-legal studies to someone who thought like a social scientist. It has also been inspiring

to return to an organisation which continues to nurture young talent and place emphasis on building capacity in the field.

A key strength of the Centre continues to be its focus on exploring the interface between theory and practice. The last two years have seen the Centre raise external grant incomes from a range of prestigious funders such as the European Research Council, the Economic and Social Research Council, the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the Leverhulme Trust and the British Academy in support of our empirical work. The approach we adopt is informed by a range of disciplinary specialisms including Law, Anthropology, Sociology, Economics, Political Science, Art History, Media and Communications, and European Studies and is underpinned by the need to develop insights on socio-legal phenomena from the bottom up. A shared interest in methodology also informs much of what we do and the training we offer the students who study with us and form the largest cohort of young socio-legal researchers in the country.

Finally, we continue to be proud of the regional specialisms of staff and students which include America, Australia, South East Asia and Eastern Europe. Expanding our international reach has been a particular interest of mine during my first two years as Director as we have begun to forge exciting links with other international research centres such as the American Bar Foundation, the Center for Law and Society at Berkeley and RegNet in Australia.

It has been an absolute pleasure to use the publication of this annual report to celebrate our many successes. My thanks go to our many wonderful students and my colleagues for their help in bringing together the information contained in this report.

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

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**A PLACE WHERE DISCIPLINES AND  
SOCIO-LEGAL SCHOLARS MEET**



## STAFF AT THE CENTRE

### DR KIRA ALLMANN, RESEARCH FELLOW



Kira Allman is a Career Development Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Media Law & Policy. Her research explores the thorny debate around a “human right to internet access,” by studying grassroots solutions to closing the

digital divide. Kira brings an anthropological perspective and ethnographic methods to the question of how to achieve digital inclusion in a world where disparities in digital connectivity and skills are fast becoming key determinants of compound inequality. Kira leads three research projects examining digital exclusion from the ground up. [VIEW PROFILE HERE](#)

### DR UYANGA AMARSAIKHAN, EC PROJECT OFFICER



Uyanga Amarsaikhan oversees content for the Migration Observatory at the Programme in Comparative Media Law and Policy. She works with Dr Nicole Stremlau on the European Research Council funded project

on the Politics and Practice of Social Media in Conflict. [VIEW PROFILE HERE](#)

### CHARMAINE COLE, RESEARCH PROJECT OFFICER



Charmaine is a researcher on the civil justice programme overseen by Professor Christopher Hodges. She works on regulation and dispute resolution across a range of sectors drawing on

her experience working at Clifford Chance in London and Brussels as a public policy lawyer.

[VIEW PROFILE HERE](#)

### DR CHRISTOPHER DECKER, ASSOCIATE FELLOW



Christopher’s research interests include regulation, competition economics, law and economics, behavioural economics and institutional economics. He is also interested in the law and economics of development. His

academic research has been funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the Leverhulme Trust and the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC). Chris is actively interested in how regulation is designed and applied in practice. [VIEW PROFILE HERE](#)

### DR KEVIN GRECKSCH, RESEARCH FELLOW



Kevin Grecksch is a postdoctoral researcher and British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow. He is a social scientist who specialises in governance, especially with regard to water and climate change adaptation. His British

Academy project deals with sustainable underground space regulation. Previous work conducted at the Centre includes the multidisciplinary ENDOWS (ENGaging diverse stakeholders and publics with outputs from the UK DrOught and Water Scarcity programme) and MaRIUS (Governance of Water Scarcity and Drought in the UK) project. Kevin was also the principal investigator of a John Fell Fund supported project on Managing drought and water scarcity. He will shortly be taking up a lectureship in the School of Geography and the Environment at Oxford University. [VIEW PROFILE HERE](#)

# STAFF AT THE CENTRE



**KATIE HAYWARD,  
ADMINISTRATION OFFICER**



Katie is the administration officer at the Centre and takes responsibility for organising events, supporting the visitors programme and the research degrees admissions process.

Katie has a degree in English and has worked at the Centre for ten years. It is generally agreed that the Centre would fall apart without her. Katie is currently on maternity leave until January 2022.

**CHRISTOPHER HODGES,  
PROFESSOR OF JUSTICE SYSTEMS**



Christopher Hodges is Professor of Justice Systems and Head of the Swiss Re Research Programme on Civil Justice Systems and a founder of the International Network for Delivery of Regulation. His expertise

is in regulatory, enforcement and dispute resolution systems, and he advises many governments and businesses. He has held Visiting Chairs at Erasmus University, the China University of Political Science and Law, Beijing, Leuven University and ANU Canberra.

[VIEW PROFILE HERE](#)

**DR LIVIA HOLDEN,  
SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW**



During her time at the Centre Livia led the European Research Council's funded project Cultural Expertise in Europe: What is it useful for? (EURO-EXPERT) and a spin out project funded by Global Challenges

Research Funds, UK Gender Sensitisation for Judicial Education in Pakistan and Indonesia. Livia is now Director of Research at the Centre of History and Anthropology of Law (CHAD) Paris Nanterre and tenured full professor at the University of Padua. [VIEW PROFILE HERE](#)

**DR MARINA KURKCHIYAN,  
SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW**



Marina has conducted research in many European and Central Asian countries. As a consultant to the World Bank, the EU, the DfID, the Open Society Institute and the UNDP, she has

completed a number of official reports on the interaction between law and society in relation to development. Her empirical work includes a large-scale international project that scrutinised the differences in the way people perceive, interpret and use law in their everyday life among EU countries. The research included an ethnographic study of the operation of the lowest level civil courts in a range of countries. Marina is also interested in the Russian socio-legal tradition from the medieval period to the present. [VIEW PROFILE HERE](#)

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



Bettina's research addresses interactions between nature and society in environmental law 'in action'. She is particularly interested in how the knowledge practices of environmental science

and economics organize the regulation of water resources in the context of a changing climate. Her recent empirical research has prompted reflection and publications about ways in which socio-legal analysis might engage with environmental science data. This work has included engagement with third sector organisations, such as the Rivers Trust. Bettina's research also explores a range of social-theoretical perspectives for understanding regulation, and she has recently published a book chapter on how Niklas Luhmann's systems-theory understands the 'interests' of regulatory actors. Bettina currently overseas our Visitors Programme at the Centre. [VIEW PROFILE HERE](#)

**DR DVORA LIBERMAN,  
RESEARCH FELLOW**



Dvora is an oral historian and arts practitioner, and has developed numerous oral history and participatory arts projects with government departments, charities and cultural institutions

in the UK, India, Australia, Bosnia, Israel and Palestine. She has shared the life stories of marginalised communities with a wide variety of audiences through theatre, film, books and exhibitions. Since joining the Centre she has been engaged in an oral history project on pioneering legal women with Linda Mulcahy. This work has been undertaken in partnership with National Life Stories at the British Library.

[VIEW PROFILE HERE](#)

**DR ELEANOR MARCHANT,  
RESEARCH FELLOW**



Eleanor is an internet ethnographer dedicated to using research to build a better, safer, and more relevant internet. On joining the Centre's ConflictNET project she brought over a decade of experience in research

in academia and applied settings, including for technology companies, humanitarian organizations, and the development sector, with particular expertise in Africa. She specializes in deep-dive qualitative research into the internet, rapidly changing new technologies, and the societies in the global south that shape and are shaped by them. Eleanor left the Centre in 2020 to join the research division at Facebook.

[VIEW PROFILE HERE](#)

**DR SONIA MACLEOD,  
RESEARCH FELLOW**



Sonia is a specialist in clinical negligence and no-fault compensation schemes. She is currently working on a project which is looking at the ways in which lay users of the justice system navigate

their way around and between complaints systems. This research forms part of a programme of work undertaken by a cross-institutional interdisciplinary Policy Research Unit which is funded by the National Institute for Healthcare Research. Alongside her academic work Sonia was recently seconded to work as a researcher for the Independent Medicines and Medical Device Safety Review, which has been set up to examine safety concerns raised by Primodos and other hormonal pregnancy tests, sodium valproate and vaginal mesh. [VIEW PROFILE HERE](#)

**NIKKI MACMICHAEL,  
CENTRE ADMINISTRATOR**



Nikki started at the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies in April 2020. She has worked in administration at the University for over 10 years and, most recently as Senior Project Manager at the

Department of Materials, where her portfolio included looking after a couple of multi-million pound grants and acting as facilitator in a services agreement between the University and an overseas charitable foundation. She is kept fully occupied overseeing the smooth running of the finances, research administration and governance at the Centre.

**DR LINDA MULCAHY,  
PROFESSOR OF SOCIO-LEGAL STUDIES**



Linda's work focuses on dispute resolution and lay experiences of the justice system. She has undertaken a number of empirical studies of disputes between business people in the car distribution industry,

divorcing couples, doctors and patients and neighbours on council estates. Her publications span a range of topics including the design of justice facilities, feminist and relational perspectives on contract law, visual representations of law and legal methodology. She is currently working on an oral history of radical lawyers, digital poverty and video hearings. Linda has recently been elected as Trustee to the US Law and Society Association 2020-2023. She has also been appointed as a member of the Ministry of Justice Court Reform Evaluation Committee 2019-2024.

[VIEW PROFILE HERE](#)

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



Fernanda is an anthropologist specialising in Tibetan societies and uses ethnographic and historical methods to study and compare legal practices and texts. Recent research into

Tibetan legal history was funded by the AHRC and led to a series of publications and a website containing source material ([www.tibetanlaw.org](http://www.tibetanlaw.org)). She has subsequently been commissioned by Profile Books (UK) and Basic Books (US) to write a global history of law, which is due to appear in 2021 and entitled *The Rule of Laws: a 4,000-year quest to order the world*. Fernanda is currently the Deputy Director of the Centre and the Director of Graduate Studies. [VIEW PROFILE HERE](#)

**DR LENA ROSE,  
RESEARCH FELLOW**



Lena is a Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellow who specialises in migration and refugee studies, legal anthropology, religion, and globalisation. Her current three-year-interdisciplinary

research project entitled 'Christianity on Trial: Asylum, Conversion, and the Modern Nation-State' (2019-2022) examines the negotiation of 'Christianity' through the lens of asylum adjudications of claimants based on the fear of religious persecution following a conversion to Christianity. From 2017 to 2020, Lena was the co-founder and convener of the interdisciplinary Oxford Migration and Mobility Network (@MigMobNetwork), which draws together researchers of migration and mobility from across the University.

[VIEW PROFILE HERE](#)

**DR NICOLE STREMLAU,  
HEAD OF THE PROGRAMME IN  
COMPARATIVE MEDIA LAW AND POLICY**



Nicole oversees research on comparative Media Law and Policy and is also a Research Professor in the Humanities at the University of Johannesburg. She currently leads a European Research

Council project on Social Media and Conflict with a focus on Africa. Her research focuses on media and governance, particularly in areas of conflict and insecurity in Africa. Her recent projects examine the role of new media in political participation and governance; media law and regulation in the absence of government or in weak states; the role of media in conflict, peacebuilding and the consolidation of political power; and how governments attempt to engage citizens and communicate law-making processes, particularly constitution-making. [VIEW PROFILE HERE](#)

**WEND TEEDER,  
RESEARCHER**



Wend researches in the field of administrative justice and public law and specialises in quantitative research. She is currently part of a team at the Centre looking into lay experiences of

complaints procedures in the NHS and works with Sonia Macleod and Linda Mulcahy. Wend has previously worked with Linda on a number of projects including an ESRC funded pilot project concerned with socio-legal capacity building and a European Research Council funded study examining judicial conflict resolution in conjunction with researchers at Bar Ilan University in Israel.

[VIEW PROFILE HERE](#)

**ALISON TRINDER,  
ADMINISTRATION OFFICER**



Alison joined the Centre in January 2021 to cover Katie Hayward's maternity leave. Previously she worked in the MPLS (Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences) Division, managing the

Division's Career Development and Training programme for DPhil students, and has a good understanding of how the University works. She likes getting to grips with systems and processes so as to support the work of the Centre as effectively as possible; and is enjoying familiarising herself with a new area of the University.

**DR ANNA TSALAPATANIS,  
RESEARCH FELLOW**



Anna is a Postdoctoral Researcher working with Linda Mulcahy and Emma Rowden on the Supporting Online Justice Project which is funded by the ESRC. Anna received her PhD in Sociology from the

Australian National University and a Masters' degree in South Eastern European Studies from the University of Athens. Her research interests include migration studies, citizenship as status, procedural justice, bureaucracy and identity. Anna has a strong background in Cultural Studies, Diaspora, Migration and European Studies and has taught in the fields of Anthropology, Sociology, Migration and Globalisation Studies.

[VIEW PROFILE HERE](#)



# NEW ADDITIONS TO THE CENTRE STAFF

## DR FLORIAN GRISEL, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF SOCIO-LEGAL STUDIES



Florian Grisel is the new associate professor of socio-legal studies at the CSLS. Prior to joining the Centre, Florian was a research fellow at the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (Paris)

and a reader in transnational law at King's College London. He graduated in law and social sciences from Sciences Po Paris, the Sorbonne, Columbia University and Yale Law School. Florian published two books on international arbitration (the last one at Oxford University Press) and is currently finalising a book manuscript on *The Limits of Private Governance: Norms and Rules in a Mediterranean Fishery*.

*"I am very pleased to write as the new Associate Professor of socio-legal studies at the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies. The Centre is one of the few places in the world that are truly committed to socio-legal research, and I am delighted to be part of it. I view the Centre as an intellectual hub for innovative thinking, and my goal is to strengthen its position as a leading institution in the field of socio-legal studies. I hope to leave my mark on future generations of socio-legal scholars through my commitment to interdisciplinary research, mentoring and teaching at the Centre. My research on dispute resolution and globalisation fits perfectly into the activities of the Centre, and I intend to promote a welcoming and supportive environment for innovative research with strong theoretical and empirical foundations. On a side note, I am deeply touched by the warm welcome that I have received from colleagues, staff members and students".*

[VIEW PROFILE HERE](#)

## DR MARIE BURTON, SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW



Dr Marie Burton specialises in access to justice, legal aid, the legal profession and social welfare law. She has over 30 years' experience of working in and around the civil and criminal

justice system. Marie is a former practising solicitor and senior policy analyst whose work has influenced the development of national policy on legal aid, financial exclusion, high cost credit and debt. In April 2021, she will join the Oxford Centre for Socio-Legal Studies as the Postdoctoral Researcher on 'Enhancing Democratic Habits: an oral history of the Law Centres movement'.

*"As a former Law Centre solicitor and social welfare lawyer, this project is an ideal progression for me as a socio-legal researcher and academic. 'Enhancing Democratic Habits' will give me the opportunity to expand further my range of skills and abilities as an empirical researcher by allowing me to explore and understand activist lawyering through the lens of oral history and life story interviews. The project will capture the voices and experiences of the diverse protagonists of the Law Centres movement – an often overlooked and undervalued area of legal practice. It will carry out the critical role of recording the important history of the lawyers, advisers and volunteers who have worked to improve the lives of people in disadvantaged communities. It will also help us frame our response to the current crisis and the ongoing fallout from Covid-19, by providing insights into how to ensure that the claims of marginalised groups are heard by those in power".*

[IN POST FROM 1 APRIL](#)



## RESEARCH AT THE CENTRE

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:

- 1 Theoretically informed empirical research.
- 2 Bottom up perspectives to the study of law and legal phenomena.
- 3 Methodological approaches that sit at the interface of law and social sciences.
- 4 Regional specialisms most notably South Asia, East Africa, Russia and Eastern Europe.
- 5 A range of disciplines including Law, Anthropology, Sociology, Economics, Political Science, Art History, European Studies.

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 & REACH

Our research considers some of the most important global issues of the day including the impact of technology on lived experiences of law, the global environmental crisis, access to justice and migration. It is also international in its scope. The research conducted at the Centre focuses on all the countries show in blue in the image below:

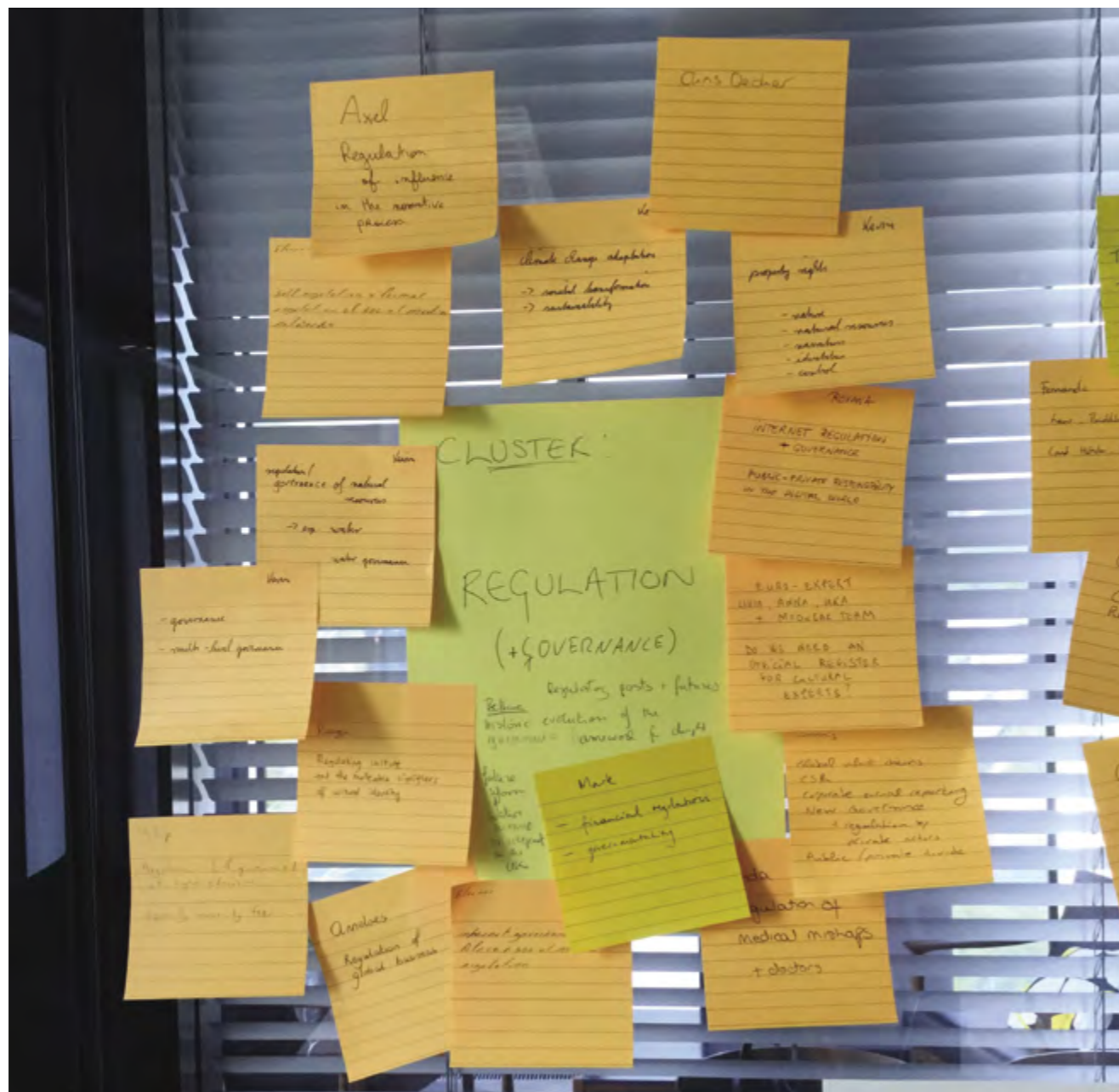


Our students commonly spend a year in the field away from the UK. The knowledge and experience they return with enriches our research culture and broadens our horizons.

# RESEARCH CLUSTERS

At a staff awayday in 2019, we reflected on how we could place collaboration at the core of our activities. More specifically, we were keen to consider the ways in which we are more than our personal or discrete research projects. In an exercise which involved the use of multiple sticky notes and the wall of the Director's office, staff and students were asked to describe their personal research interests and connections to others at the Centre.

This exercise resulted in the emergence of 15 possible research clusters which we debated and narrowed down to the five key areas of research listed opposite. It can be seen that some of these clusters reflect areas of work which the Centre has been specialising in for many years. Others such as Law in a Digital World draw on existing strengths to take our research in new directions. These clusters have proved to be a more accurate way of explaining the connections between and across projects and researchers, with most staff being involved with more than one cluster.



A series of cluster workshops are now taking place on a regular basis in which staff and students explore connections that we hope will lead to co-authored publications and jointly authored research grant applications.

1



Courthouse



Access to civil and administrative justice

2



Law beyond borders

3



Regulation and governance

4



Law in a digital world: The programme in comparative media law and policy

5

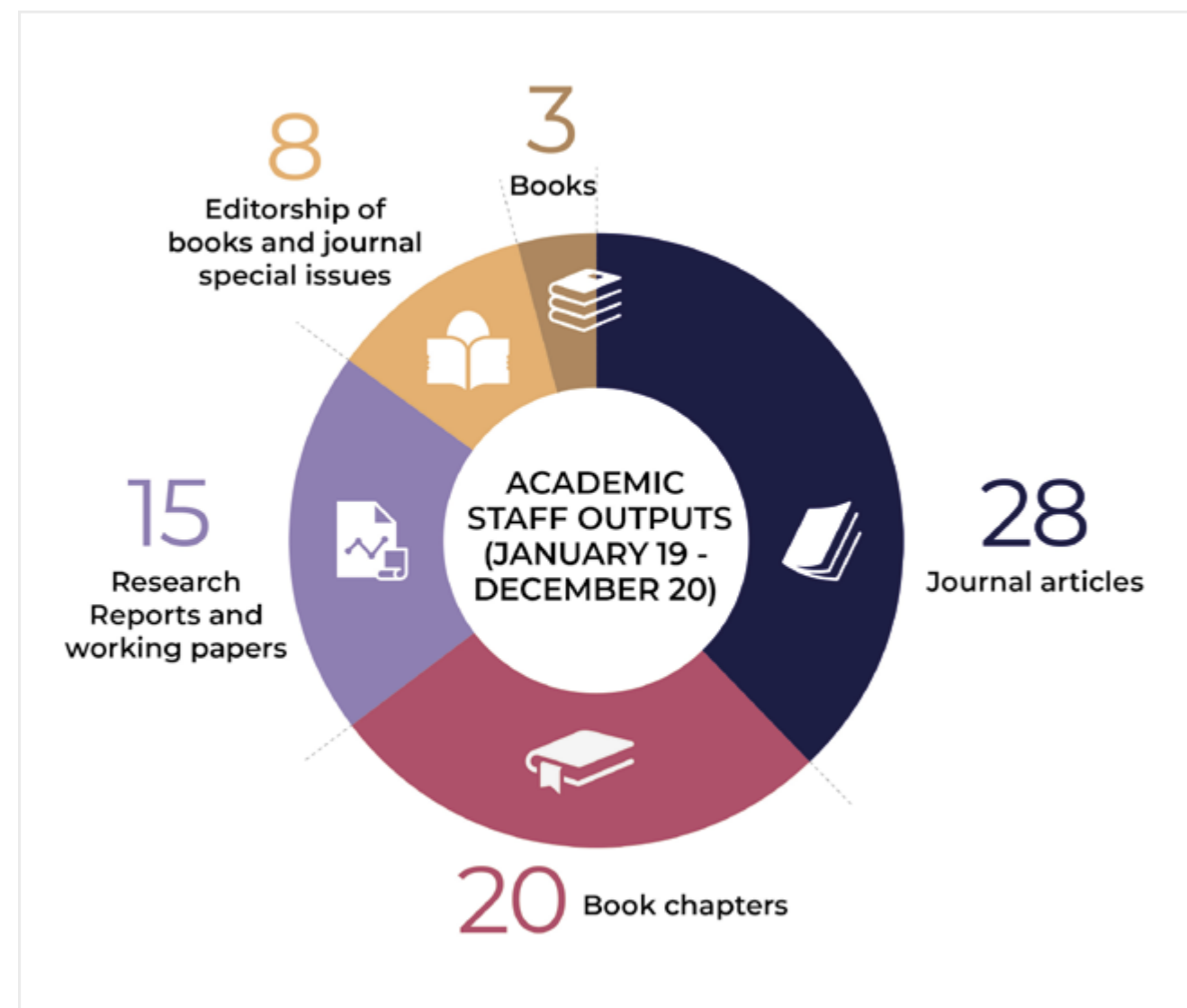


Lived experiences of human rights



## RESEARCH OUTPUTS

Staff at the Centre have published in a wide variety of outlets over the last two years including: the *Journal of Law and Society*, *International Journal of Communication*, *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, *Oral History*, *International Journal of the Legal Profession*, *International Journal of Law in Context*, *Law and History Review*, the *Modern Law Review* and the *Law and Society Review*.



## A SELECTION OF OUR FAVOURITE OUTPUTS

### FERNANDA PIRIE (2020)

'The making of Tibetan law: the Khrims gnyis Ita ba'i me long' in *On a Day of a Month of the Fire Bird Year - Festschrift for P Schwieger*, edited by Bischoff et al, Lumbini International Research Institute.

In 2015 the AHRC funded a project on law in historic Tibet. With an excellent researcher, Charles Manson, I spent two years sifting through medieval Tibetan texts, searching for references to law and gathering information about legal practices and ideas. The culmination was a translation of the earliest known Tibetan legal treatise, dating from the fourteenth century.

A festschrift for a retiring Tibetanist scholar provided the opportunity to assess the text in its historic context and describe its importance for legal history. The resulting chapter is one of my most significant contributions to the history of Tibetan law.

### BETTINA LANGE (2020)

'Regulation without Interests? An Introduction to Luhmannian Empirical Mapping of System-Environment Relationships' in *Luhmann and Socio-Legal Research: An Empirical Agenda for Social Systems Theory*, edited by Campilongo et al, London: Routledge.

Niklas Luhmann's work has been influential for understanding limits to state law's capacity to regulate but what does it contribute to understanding environmental regulation? In addressing this question this chapter focuses on two issues. First, it makes a case for a more explicit recognition of the natural environment as an object and context for legal regulation. Natural environments may be a sub-system in their own right rather than be

subsumed into general system-environment interactions that form part of a Luhmannian approach to explaining social order. Second, given Luhmann's contention that there are no pre-constituted human actors, the chapter examines how his approach nevertheless sheds light on 'interests' steering regulation, and proposes empirical techniques for researching these.



## A SELECTION OF OUR FAVOURITE OUTPUTS

**ANNA TSALAPATANIS, BRUCE, M., BISSELL, D., & KEANE, H. (EDS) (2019)**

*Social Beings; Future Belongings: Reimagining the Social*, BSA Sociological Futures Book Series, London: Routledge.

This edited collection takes a radical approach to the topic of belonging, investigating it in relation to subjects as diverse as national identity, the environment, technology, gender and space. Initially conceived of during an afternoon tea with a group of PhD students at the School of Sociology at the Australian National University, this book was finalised several months after Anna arrived at CSLS.

It is testament to how a diverse range of academics can collaborate to combine very different approaches to a core issue to fascinating and fruitful ends. Both the book and the Centre also illustrate the significant academic benefits that come from a strong socially-connected intellectual community.

**KEVIN GRECKSCH, AND CAROLA KLÖCK, (2020)**

Access and allocation in climate change adaptation. *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics*, 20, 271-286.

As climate change impacts become increasingly apparent, adaptation becomes increasingly urgent. This article reviews ten years of adaptation research conducted between 2008 and 2018 through the lens of access and allocation. It examines how adaptation affects, and is affected by, access to basic needs, rights, and decision-making

on the one hand, as well as allocation of responsibilities, resources, and risks on the other. Hence, it addresses key socio-legal questions in the field of climate change adaptation. A key finding is that questions of justice, equity, and fairness are fundamental to all dimensions of adaptation.

**CHRISTOPHER HODGES AND GRAHAM RUSSELL, (2019)**

*Regulatory Delivery*, London: Bloomsbury Press.

This ground-breaking book addresses the challenge of regulatory delivery, defined as the way that regulatory agencies operate in practice to achieve the intended outcomes of regulation. Regulatory reform is moving beyond the design of regulation to address what good regulatory delivery looks like. The challenge in practice is to operate a regulatory regime that is both appropriate and effective. Questions of how regulations are received and applied by those whose behaviour they seek to control, and the way they are enforced, are vital in securing desired regulatory

outcomes. This edited collection is written by regulatory experts from UK and around the world, and sets out the Regulatory Delivery Model; a framework for regulatory authorities that includes elements of governance, transparency, culture, outcome-focus, risk-basis, and intervention choices. The model draws on extensive operational experience, involving support to third world governments and through OECD. *Regulatory Delivery* is the first product of members of the International Network for Delivery of Regulation.

**LINDA MULCAHY AND EMMA ROWDEN, (2020)**

*The Democratic Courthouse - A Modern History of Design, Due Process and Dignity*, London: Routledge.

This book examines how changing understandings of the relationship between government and the governed came to be reflected in the court buildings designed to house the modern legal system from the 1970s to the present day in England and Wales. More particularly, it explores the extent to which egalitarian ideals and the pursuit of new social and economic rights altered existing hierarchies and expectations about how people should interact with each other in the courthouse. Drawing on an extensive analysis of public and private archives which took over five years to complete, the book details how civil servants, judges, lawyers,

architects, engineers and security experts have talked about courthouses and the people that populate them. In doing so, it uncovers a changing history of ideas about how the competing goals of transparency, majesty, participation, security, fairness and authority have been achieved, and the extent to which aspirations towards equality and participation have floundered.

Shortlisted for the Socio-Legal Studies Association History and Theory book prize 2021 (result to be announced in April 2021).



## MAJOR GRANTS

Our research takes a number of forms but is characterised by the fieldwork we undertake in order to test ideas, develop grounded theories and explore new intellectual territory. External funding is vital to our ability to conduct large scale empirical research projects and constitutes over a third of our income. This section highlights our many successes in securing the support of major research councils and other funding bodies.

The Politics and Practice of Social Media in Conflict (ConflictNET) funded by the European Research Council 2017-2023.

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: NICOLE STREMLAU WITH ELEANOR MARCHANT**

ConflictNET focuses on Africa as an entry point to understand the complex relationship between social media and conflict. Eastern Africa, in particular, is a region where Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have had an uneven diffusion. Social media has taken root among some communities and in specific areas, produced important political, social and economic effects. Other areas, especially communities in conflict, have been marginalised, or have

displayed unique and unnoticed forms of innovation connecting traditional ways of communicating with new media. This project considers 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 project team includes postdocs in Oxford as well as researchers in Africa.



Image from a law centre report showing the site of the new centre in Cardiff in the 1970s

Enhancing Democratic Habits: An oral history of the Law Centres movement funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council 2020-2025.

**CO-INVESTIGATORS: LINDA MULCAHY AND DR MARIE BURTON**

This project aims to address the dearth of in-depth accounts of radical lawyering in the UK and to consider the ways in which Law Centres – which work in and with disadvantaged communities – have been successful in addressing problems surrounding the UK’s democratic deficit. This research will explore four key issues: the new ways of lawyering that law Centres pioneered; the new types of legal specialism they were responsible for developing; the roles they have played in campaigns for legal reform; and their contribution to strategic litigation. The project team will be working closely with the UK’s leading oral history fieldwork charity, National Life Stories at the British Library.

In addition to the production of a sound archive of interviews with those who set

up and worked in law centres, the project team will create a paper archive of Law Centre annual reports which will also be deposited at the British Library. This will give generations of future researchers access to a rich repository of images, statistics and stories about how the legal needs of the poor were re-conceptualised. The research team are delighted that the Law Centres Network will also be acting as a project partner and that work in Northern Ireland will be led by Professor Kieran McEvoy and Dr Anna Bryson at Queen’s University in Belfast.

This project was launched on 6th November 2020 at the Annual General Meeting of the Law Centres Network, fifty years after the first law centre opened its doors in North Kensington in London.

*“This is an important partnership for the British Library which will add sixty-five in-depth life story interviews to the oral history collection, providing unparalleled insights into the history of the Law Centres movement. Researchers now and in the future will be able to understand the vital contribution of Law Centres in providing access to justice, and the role they have played in social political and campaigning networks over time. The Law Centre Network reports will enrich the Library’s Manuscripts collection and provide valuable data to complement the audio recordings.”*

Dr Rob Perks, the British Library’s Lead Curator of Oral History and Director of National Life Stories

## When Online Speech Meets Offline Harm: The Implications of Internet Shutdowns in Africa (2020-2021) funded by Facebook's Foundational Integrity Research Competition.

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: NICOLE STREMLAU, PCMLP PROGRAMME**

Internet shutdowns are increasingly normalising as a practice to address concerns about the offline consequences of misinformation and dangerous speech online. This research will take the form of an empirical study of the justifications and legitimacy of Internet shutdowns as a response to dangerous speech, as well as of whether they actually reduce the type of speech and offline harm as intended. The first part of the research focuses on identifying the decision-making processes and the reasons governments are shutting down the Internet. The second part focuses on the implications such arguments are having on local laws, policies, and discourses on freedom of expression.

The Oxford team is collaborating with researchers in Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Sudan on data collection. Through providing socio-legal analysis around the decision-making and implications of shutdowns, the outcome of this project will help understand and contribute to deal with dangerous speech and Internet shutdowns affecting human rights, democracy and escalating conflicts on a global scale. This project is funded by an award from Facebook's Foundational Integrity Research Competition and was one of 25 projects selected out of more than 1000 submissions from around the world.



Nicole Strelau at an event in Johannesburg with colleagues from across Africa who gathered to discuss internet shutdowns.

## Virtual Justice: Enhancing Accessibility, Participation and Procedural Justice in Courts and Tribunals during the COVID-19 Pandemic funded by the ESRC 2020-2022.

**CO-INVESTIGATORS: LINDA MULCAHY, EMMA ROWDEN (OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY) AND ANNA TSALAPATANIS**

COVID-19 and social distancing rules have forced radical changes upon the justice system with many trials now having to take place online. There is currently very little support to prepare members of the public for appearing in court from their own home or to guide them around these new virtual courthouses. This poses a number of challenges to the legitimacy of the legal system and commentators have expressed concern about the fairness of proceedings and the dangers of alienating court users. There are particular concerns about the ability of the digitally impoverished and vulnerable lay users to participate effectively in this new way of doing justice.

This project will undertake an extensive consultation with the public, court staff, interest groups, practitioners and policy

makers about their experiences of online justice. It will have two key deliverables (a) a central repository of good practice materials drawing on examples from around the world and (b) a series of audio-visual guides which will assist lay users of the justice system in navigating their way around virtual proceedings and facilitate effective participation. The project is underpinned by the five key goals of enhancing technical competence; improving understanding of court processes; supporting court users in navigating the alternative geographies and sense of time in virtual space; engendering a sense of journeys to and from civic space; and promoting dignity and gravitas in virtual court proceedings. The research will focus on family courts and tribunals.

## Inspiring Women: Challenging the Diversity Deficit in the Legal Professions funded by the John Fell Fund 2019-2020.

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: LINDA MULCAHY WITH DVORA LIBERMAN**

This project investigated the lack of diversity in the upper echelons of the legal professions in England and Wales and the relative invisibility of women lawyers in positions of power. It aimed to understand the reasons why women continue to face discrimination in the legal arena in the twenty-first century and to raise the profile of inspiring women lawyers whose work is little known beyond their professional field. Its particular focus was on women lawyers, from working-class backgrounds;

those who came to England and Wales as migrants or refugees; women of Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) heritage; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer groups (LGBTQ+); and women with disabilities. This project was carried out in partnership with National Life Stories and life story interviews conducted with inspiring women lawyers will form part of the Sound Archive at the British Library.



## Research Programme on Civil Justice Systems funded by Swiss Re.

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: CHRIS HODGES WITH SONIA MACLEOD AND CHARMAINE COLE**

The programme aims to evaluate options for dispute resolution, regulation and enforcement in European states, and to propose new frameworks and solutions. The outputs of the programme have been widely relied on by governments, regulators, ombudsmen, and consumer and business organisations across the world. A number of strands of work have been completed to date. These include:

- an analysis of consumer ADR and Ombuds mechanisms;
- advice to Ombuds, governments and ADR bodies in many sectors and countries;
- a book on administrative redress schemes for personal injuries, led by Dr Sonia Macleod;
- a project with Prof Stefaan Voet of Leuven University that assembled empirical evidence to compare different forms of delivering collective redress in Europe;

- research on enforcement and redress by regulatory authorities;
- a holistic review by Prof Hodges of all major dispute types in England; and
- a report by Charmaine Cole which analysed variations in the many types of claims made to the General Regulatory Chamber of the First Tier Tribunal and it provided a template for reform supported by the relevant judges.

These various outputs have led to a series of policy discussions over reform of disputes involving consumers, SMEs, property, employment and other sectors.

## MaRIUS (Managing the Risks, Impacts and Uncertainties of Drought and Water Scarcity) Natural Environment Research Council 2014 - 2020.

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: BETTINA LANGE AND KEVIN GRECKSCH**

MaRIUS engaged legal scholars, economists, human geographers, hydrologists, and climate scientists in the development of a more risk-based approach to governance of drought. It focused on the development of management measures whose costs and impacts are in proportion to the probability and consequences of water scarcity and was informed by an understanding of droughts from the perspectives of a range of communities and stakeholders. Bettina Lange led the socio-legal aspect of the research, which included the development of a conceptual framework set out in Lange, B. and Cook, C. (2015) 'Mapping a Developing

Governance Space: Managing Drought in the UK', *Current Legal Problems*, 1-38. She contributed to a number of workshops with stakeholders from water companies as well as environmental and economic regulators, and co-produced a resource with the Rivers Trust on drought management in catchments. Kevin Grecksch's responsibilities included the identification, assessment and development of innovative drought and water scarcity governance options and a scenario workshop with high-level stakeholders from water companies and regulatory authorities.

## POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS

**In addition to project research grants the Centre has a proven track record in working with early career academics in securing postdoctoral fellowships.**

### 'Christianity on Trial: Asylum, Conversion, and the Modern Nation-State', Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship Award 2019-2022.

**DR LENA ROSE**

*Christianity on Trial* is examining the negotiation of 'Christianity' through the lens of asylum adjudications of claimants based on religious conversion. Among recent migrations to Europe, asylum claims on the basis of fear of religious persecution following a religious conversion are frequent. Secular judges have to assess the genuineness of the conversion, and risks of practising Christianity

in the country of origin of the applicants. This study of case law and ethnographic fieldwork at courts in Germany, France, and the UK is exploring the tensions between culture, religion, and power in the negotiation of what 'Christianity' is.

### Out of sight – out of regulation? Ensuring sustainable underground governance in the UK, British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship Award, 2018-2021.

**DR KEVIN GRECKSCH**

This project advances theoretical and practical perspectives on underground governance in the UK. It bridges scholarly perspectives and practitioners' experiences to develop new governance modes for underground space use including increased recognition in land use planning. In the light of increasing claims on the underground space for fracking, transport, geothermal energy or carbon capture and storage, Kevin has been assessing the question of how an improved and sustainable governance of underground spaces can be ensured to protect, for example, drinking water.

Geological underground models only deliver frameworks for possible uses and we do not know much about geological characteristics and the human uses, demands and changes of underground space. Moreover, governing underground space can be complicated as it involves conflicting objectives and regulatory frameworks. One key objective of this research is to conceptualise a new approach to underground governance and regulation that takes into account its diverse uses and various stakeholders' claims on underground resources.

## START-UP GRANTS FOR NEW INITIATIVES

Staff at the Centre have been highly successful in generating start-up grants to help facilitate the development and launch of new initiatives.

### Ox-Ber grant (2020-2021) Governing the Governors: Hate Speech and Disinformation in Comparative Perspective

Nicole Stremlau and Martin Emmer (Freie Universität Berlin), in collaboration with CSLS associates, Roxana Radu and Giovanni de Gregorio, were awarded the Oxford-Berlin Research Partnership seed funding for their project 'Hate Speech and Disinformation in Comparative Perspective'. The project aims to unpack the ways in which disinformation is threatening our societies.

### Ox-Ber grant (2019-2021) LISY (Law in Society) - An Oxford – Berlin socio-legal research partnership

The Centre for Socio-Legal Studies has been developing links with the Law and Society Institute at the Humboldt University as part of the University of Oxford's strategic 'Ox-Ber' partnership and three co-organised events have now taken place supported by central University funds. Bettina Lange has been running this initiative with Professor Dr. Anna-Bettina Kaiser from Humboldt-Universität.

### Queer rural lives and technology

The Queer Rural Connections project is funded by The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities (Humanities Cultural Programme) and Arts Council England, which Kira Allmann co-leads with writer, director, and actor Timothy Allsop (Turn of Phrase, Ltd). Through this project, Kira and Tim are collecting life stories of LGBTQIA+ people in and from rural parts of England in order to decenter a metropolitan aesthetic of queerness.

### Reflecting about 'Swimming camels' on the North-East Coast of England: Knowledge, translation and global challenges

Together with Shilpi Srivastava (Institute of Development Studies), Patrick Cadwell (Dublin City University), Andrea Ciribuco (National University of Ireland Galway) Kevin Grecksch is using British Academy/Royal Irish Academy Seed Funding to explore whether it is possible to build a conversation about global phenomena such as development, migration, climate change, that involves the way in which local communities understand, interpret and experience these phenomena?

### Migration Bureaucracies

Anna Tsalapatani was awarded funding by the John Fell Fund for her start-up project which aims to explore migration bureaucracies from the perspective of the individuals who navigate them in the three case countries, the UK, Australia and Greece.

### Community-run internet networks (B4RN)

Kira Allmann has conducted ethnographic field work with Broadband for the Rural North (B4RN), a community-owned internet network in northwest England largely built by local volunteers. This project examines the role of alternative networks (or "alt-nets") in the telecommunications ecosystem as a solution for extending connectivity to "hard-to-reach" locations along the internet's last mile.

### Public access points and e-government services

The Oxfordshire Digital Inclusion Project is a Knowledge Exchange Seed Fund project led by Kira Allmann, in collaboration with Dr Grant Blank (Oxford Internet Institute), to study how public libraries in Oxfordshire provide digital access and assistance to people accessing e-government platforms and other online services.



A B4RN volunteer showing another volunteer how to fuse fiber-optic cables in a rural field.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD AROUND US

Scholars at the Centre focus on undertaking theoretically informed empirical work and generating theory from data gathered during fieldwork. We commonly find ourselves mingling with practitioners, policy makers and legal subjects as we consider how law or legal phenomena might be reimagined. This means that although our research is not policy led, it is often policy relevant and can make a difference in the world around us. In this section we provide some examples of successful knowledge exchange and impact activities over the last two years.

Kevin Grecksch has researched drought and water scarcity in the UK in four projects funded by the Natural Environment Research Council, Oxford University's John Fell Fund, and the ESRC through an Impact Acceleration award.

These projects brought together a number of stakeholders including regulators, water companies, related industries and the public and had three practical impacts. Firstly, they had involved the creation of a lesson plan 'Changing our thinking about drought' for secondary school pupils studying for GCSEs in England, developed in collaboration with the University of the West of England and the UK Geographical Association. Secondly, contributions were made to the UK primary school story book 'DRY: Diary of a water superhero' in collaboration with the University of the West of England, Bristol. This book was awarded the UK Geographical Association Publishers' Silver Award 2020.

Finally, the research was quoted in a recent report by the UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights' report on 'Climate change, culture and cultural rights' (2020). Based on his drought and water scarcity research, Kevin was commissioned to undertake a rapid evidence review by the British Academy and the UK Government Office for Science on 'COVID-19 and Sustainability: Communities, Culture and Belonging'. This will be integrated in a report on the long-term societal effects and impacts of COVID-19 due to be published in 2021.

Kira Allmann is the lead on the Oxfordshire Digital Inclusion Project funded by the Knowledge Exchange Seed Fund.

This is a collaboration between the University of Oxford and Oxfordshire County Council Libraries which aims to produce data driven insights on the digital needs of people who are under/ unconnected to the internet and other digital technologies. Public libraries are increasingly on the front lines of the digital divide, providing essential digital skills training and digital services to people who need connectivity. By documenting and evaluating the digital needs of library patrons, this project works to improve digital assistance programmes for people in Oxfordshire with the aim of making policy recommendations on the digitisation of public services.



Chris Hodges' research on regulation across a variety of sectors including food, water, energy, financial services, medicines, medical devices, data protection, rail, aviation, digital platforms, AI, and online harms brings him in regular contact with policy makers and senior practitioners.

He has been asked to advise on application of the Regulatory Delivery Model and the Ethical Business Regulation (EBR) Model in modernising regulatory, compliance and enforcement systems, engaging with governments and regulators including of Australia, Brazil, Canada, the EU, Finland, Malaysia, Singapore and the UK. A recent example of where EBR has been applied successfully is in the process for agreeing water prices in Scotland to 2027, where the approach has been lauded by the Water Industry Commission for Scotland and Scottish Water. Similar discussions about adopting a cooperative model of regulation based on trust and evidence that both businesses and regulators aim to 'do the right thing' are ongoing in many sectors across the globe.

Changes of this kind take some time in preparing governance and transparency systems and cultures, but the foundations for extensive and transformative progress are being laid. Chris has also discussed reform ideas with HMCTS and virtually all of the sectoral Ombudsmen in UK. He has spoken at ADR conferences organised by the Danish ECC-NET and the University of Granada, Spain, given evidence to the Commission on Justice in Wales, and was appointed to the Rail Ombudsman Consumer Panel. He has also advised the EU and UK manufacturers on redress scheme design for vaccine compensation schemes. Assistance has been given on regulatory design to several Ministries in the UK including the Cabinet Office, BEIS, and the Department of Health and abroad to the Australian Treasury and the Monetary Authority of Singapore.

Linda Mulcahy and Anna Tsalapatanis are currently working on an Economic and Social Research Council funded project which forms part of a COVID rapid response call issued by UK Research and Innovation.

The focus of their project is the provisions of audio-visual guides for users of the large number of video-hearings which have replaced hearings in court or tribunal buildings during the pandemic. The project places a particular focus on the needs of those who occupy the wrong side of the digital divide. The resources that the team produce will be rolled out by Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) in 2021 before being evaluated by user groups and stakeholders. A revised suite of guidance will then be produced for use by HMCTS. Linda and Anna are working with Dr Emma Rowden, architect and designer, from Oxford Brookes University on this project, which builds on the substantial body of work that Linda and Emma have undertaken on court design and justice spaces including an action research project undertaken with JUSTICE in the summer of 2020.

## CAPACITY BUILDING

The Centre has a longstanding reputation for capacity building in the field of socio-legal studies. This encompasses a range of activities that includes postdoctoral fellows, research students and the broader socio-legal community in the UK.

### Postdoctoral Fellows

We actively welcome postdoctoral researchers and have hosted a range of early career academics supported by project grants and postdoctoral fellowships funded by the British Academy and Leverhulme Trust. When possible, the Centre has also raised the funds for postdoctoral posts from its surplus income. Continuing to support early career academics in this way is a top priority in our strategic plan. Postdoctoral Fellows are all mentored by a senior member of staff. Many go on to pursue academic careers elsewhere but in other instances we also work with them in crafting research grant applications in the hope that they will remain at the Centre.



*“My three years at the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies provided me with a rare opportunity to take the time to develop as an independent researcher in a supportive, yet academically rigorous environment. It also instilled in me the importance of coffee and cake, wine and nibbles, and collegiality beyond formal research environments.”*

Jessie Blackburn, Lecturer, Durham Law School

### Law in Context Workshops for early career academics

Marina Kurkchiyan has taken the lead in running a series of Law in Context Workshops for early career academics. These events are jointly sponsored by the Centre and the *International Journal of Law in Context*. Advertised internationally, they support would-be academics in taking a first step into academia, equipping them to join the profession and building up their confidence. The informal format of the workshop enables a small group of young scholars selected through an open and highly competitive process to discuss their work-in-progress, ideas for projects, and plans for publication with senior scholars and expert publishers over two days in the friendly setting of an Oxford college. Each participant is given a platform to present and discuss their research, and benefit from a one-to-one consultation with a Centre senior staff member or a guest academic. CUP journal editors gave advice on how to prepare material for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. In its most recent workshop in 2019 the Centre was pleased to welcome participants from across the UK, as well as from Germany, Belgium, Italy and South Africa.

### ESRC Masterclass

Using a three-year grant provided by the ESRC and matched funding provided by the *Journal of Law and Society* and the Socio-Legal Studies Association, Linda Mulcahy runs an annual methodology masterclass for research students from across the UK. This two-day event allows 20 students to work with established socio-legal empiricists in discussing methodological experiences, problems and dilemmas.



CAPACITY  
BUILDING



# RESEARCH STUDENTS DPHIL PROGRAMME

The Centre has the largest cohort of research students specialising in socio-legal studies in the UK. Our programme has grown steadily over the years and the Centre currently has over 40 research students, the majority of whom are studying for DPhils. Competition for places remains high and in the academic year 2020-2021 the Centre received over 130 applications for just 9 places.

Our students are central to the work we do at the Centre and bring new research ideas and fresh perspectives with them. In common with our staff, they come from a rich variety of disciplinary backgrounds. In addition to working on their own research, they make a significant contribution to maintaining and revitalising our intellectual community through the reading groups and work-in-progress seminar series they organise. Current students on the DPhil programme and their research topic:

## SELINA ABÄCHERLI, LINCOLN COLLEGE

Making Better Law: An Analysis of the Discourse on 'Good Law' and Legislative Standards in the UK  
(Supervisor: Professor Pirie)

## STERGIOS AIDINLIS, ST CROSS COLLEGE

Regulating Administrative Data Sharing for Research in the British Public Sector  
(Supervisor: Professor Kaye, Centre advisor Dr Lange)

## KARA APLAND, BALLIOL COLLEGE (PART-TIME)

The limits of legal protection: A study of the influence of law on adolescent sexuality in Nepal (Supervisor: Dr Kurkchian)

## TERESA BÜCHSEL, WOLFSON COLLEGE

Procedures of Protection Status Attribution: The construction of bureaucratic identities in judicial asylum procedures - a Socio-Legal investigation (Supervisor: Dr Kurkchian)

## JAMES CAMPBELL, WOLFSON COLLEGE (PART-TIME)

The Laws of Motion: Towards a Sensational Jurisprudence of Movement within the Court  
(Supervisor: Professor Mulcahy)

## RANGGA DACHLAN, EXETER COLLEGE

Legally-Defined Culture: Deconstructing Indonesian Heritage (Supervisor: Dr Kurkchian)

## ANA CAROLINA DALL'AGNOL, WOLFSON COLLEGE

Foreign Direct Investment and the Role of the Law: the Cases of Angola and Mozambique (Supervisor: Professor Pirie and Dr Decker)

## DIANA DAJER, GREEN TEMPLETON COLLEGE

Routes to Conflict Prevention: An Analysis of the Influence of Medellin's Participatory Budgeting Process on Political Inclusion (2004-2017) (Supervisor: Dr Lange)

## FERNANDA FARINA, LINCOLN COLLEGE

From democracy to 'juristocracy': expansion of judicial power from the Brazilian perspective (Supervisor: Dr Lange)

## MIKOLAJ FIRLEJ, ST CROSS COLLEGE

Regulating autonomous weapons  
(Supervisors: Dr Lange and Dr Blackburn)

## IVO GRUEV, MERTON COLLEGE

The limitations of the Bulgarian Constitutional Court with regard to the fundamental rights protection of citizens (Supervisors: Professors Mulcahy and O'Regan)

## ETIENNE HANELT, WOLFSON COLLEGE

The Costs of Judicial Authority and the Politics of Interference (Supervisors: Professor Pirie and Dr Ezequiel González Ocantos)

## MARK HASKEW, WOLFSON COLLEGE

Following Libor: Financial benchmarks, law, and the government of economic life  
(Supervisor: Dr Lange)

## ANNELOES HOFF, ST ANTONY'S COLLEGE

Power, Fragility and Corporate Social Responsibility: An ethnography of a mining corporation in Colombia  
(Supervisor: Professor Pirie)



## LISA KO-EN HSIN, LINACRE COLLEGE

In Pursuit of Transparency: An Investigation into the Effectiveness and International Relevance of the Modern Slavery Act 2015  
(Supervisor: Professor Pirie)

## HOI-CHUN 'ALVIN' HUNG, LADY MARGARET HALL

Exploring Intercultural Disputes through the Lens of Legal Culture: A Case Study of Chinese Private Enterprises in Myanmar (Supervisor: Dr Kurkchian)



## SHRUTI IYER, ST ANTONY'S COLLEGE

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

## BUSINGYE KABUMBA, EXETER COLLEGE (PART-TIME)

Beyond legal pluralism: Analysing the phenomenon of legal syncretism in contemporary Africa  
(Supervisor: Professor Pirie)

## LAMA KARAME, EXETER COLLEGE

Age and the law: A critical approach to ageing under Legal Pluralism  
(Supervisor: Professors Mulcahy and Herring)

**CHARLOTTE KELLY,  
BALLIOL 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 from 1955 to 2018? (Supervisors: Dr Kurkchiyan & Dr Ferguson)

**SARAH LEVY,  
GREEN TEMPLETON COLLEGE**

The Conflation of Canadian Sealing Activities: Distinguishing the Inuit seal hunt from the Atlantic sealing industry in law and policy (Supervisor: Dr Lange)

**ANNA LOEBBERT,  
LINCOLN COLLEGE**

Denying the State through Law (Supervisor: Professor Pirie)

**AMANDA LINDSTROM,  
ST ANTONY'S COLLEGE (PART-TIME)**

Business, Politics and Law: Socio-Legal Aspects of Global Health Supply Chain Governance and Pharmaceutical Manufacturer Due Diligence (Supervisors: Professors Mulcahy and Davis)

**CAIO MACHADO,  
WOLFSON COLLEGE**

Scientific Disinformation and the Public Sphere in Brazil: How pseudo-science impairs democracy (Supervisor: Dr Lange)

**CHIKONDI MANDALA,  
HERTFORD COLLEGE**

Is Customary Law Considered in Law and Development: The Impact of the Customary Land Act (2016) on Matrilocal-Matrilocal Land Systems in Malawi (Supervisor: Professor Pirie)

**VICTORIA MCCLOUD,  
GREEN TEMPLETON COLLEGE (PART-TIME)**

Socio and socio-legal responses to Big Data and to Artificially Intelligent technologies which make decisions affecting people and communities (Supervisor: Dr Lange)

**ANGELA MOORE,  
BRASENOSE COLLEGE (PART-TIME)**

The Impact of EU Accession on Refugee Rights in the Context of the Refugee and Migration Crisis in Europe: Raising Standards or Policing Borders? (Supervisor: Dr Kurkchiyan)

**JOAO LORETO ILHAO MOREIRA,  
ST CROSS COLLEGE**

Cognitive and role biases in arbitral decision-making (Supervisor: Dr Lange)

**AASTHA PRASAD,  
GREEN TEMPLETON COLLEGE**

From Colonialism to Late Capitalism – Trajectories of 'Customary Law' Among Tribes in Western India (Supervisor: Professor Pirie)

**SAMUEL RUIZ-TAGLE,  
ST CROSS COLLEGE**

The Urban Constitution: Courts, Judgement, and Public Administration (Supervisors: Dr Lange and Professor Fisher)

**TOBY SHEVLANE,  
EXETER COLLEGE**

Regulating for the responsible development of artificial intelligence (Supervisors: Dr Lange and Professor Fisher)

**HANNAH SMITH,  
ST CROSS COLLEGE**

Exploring divergences between legal approaches and citizens' attitudes towards the reuse of administrative data in social science research (Supervisor: Professor Kaye, Centre advisor: Dr Lange)

**JESSICA STEINBERG,  
ST HILDA'S COLLEGE**

A global paradigm shift: the influence of commercial cannabis in the process of law reform (Supervisor: Professor Pirie)

**STANISLAVA TOPOUZOVA,  
ST CROSS COLLEGE**

Decision-making during Status Determination Proceedings in Bulgaria: The Discretion of Granting Asylum (Supervisors: Professor Mulcahy and Dr Kubal)

**SILA ULUCAY,  
ST ANTONY'S COLLEGE**

A Comparative Study of Copyright Laws in Action in Everyday Turkey and Egypt (Supervisor: Dr Kurkchiyan)

**DENNIS WEST,  
GREEN TEMPLETON COLLEGE**

The Institutionalisation of Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance in Organisations Field: sociology of law and finance, governance, risk (Supervisor: Dr Lange)

**ELEANOR WHITTINGDALE,  
LADY MARGARET HALL**

When law comes to life: narratives of sexual violence beyond the courtroom (Supervisor: Professor Mulcahy)

**PHILIP WILLIAMS,  
BALLIOL COLLEGE**

Radical Spectacles and Insurgent Citizenship: Destabilising the Regulatory Space of South African University Fees (Supervisor: Dr Lange)

## RESEARCH STUDENTS MPHIL PROGRAMME

**BENEDIKT BARTHELMESS,  
ST ANTONY'S COLLEGE**

Compliance with Financial Crime Regulation: The Social and Economic Effects of Banks' Risk-Based Approaches Vis-A-Vis Vulnerable Populations (Supervisor: Dr Lange)

**KELSEA JEON, WOLFSON COLLEGE**

Battling over Justice for the Poor: Lay Lawyers and the Legal Profession, 1890-1940 (Supervisor: Dr Grisel)

**DEBORAH RABINOVICH, REGENT'S PARK  
COLLEGE**

Mobilizing Transitional Justice in Consolidated Democracy: The Realization of Federal Restorative Systems in the United States (Supervisor: Dr Kurkchiyan)

**ZHANNA TER-ZAKARYAN,  
ST ANTONY'S COLLEGE**

Decolonisation, Provenance, and Restitution: The Case of the Benin Bronzes at the British and Pitt Rivers Museums (Supervisor: Professor Mulcahy)

**NÍNA THORKELSDÓTTIR,  
KEBLE COLLEGE**

The Impact of Social Media and Open-source Information on Decision-making in Asylum Cases in Iceland (Supervisor: Dr Kurkchiyan)



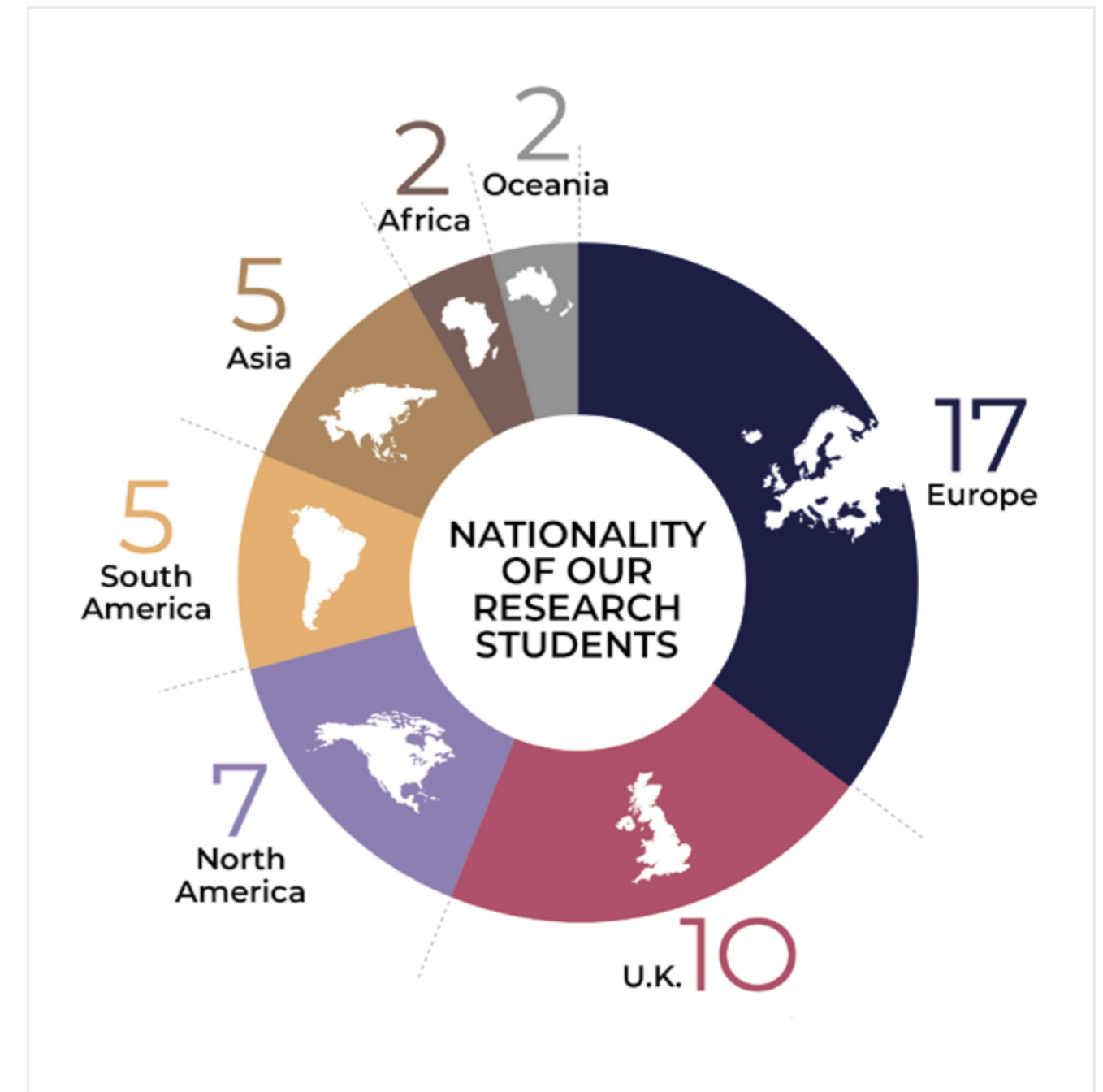
## DEVELOPING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY DURING A DIFFICULT YEAR

There is no doubt that the pandemic has been challenging for our students, not least because we have been unable to gather in person. We are proud of the way that they have dealt with difficult circumstances by establishing online writing sessions, pairing up to go on socially distanced walks and having social events online.



A highlight of the year was the fundraising campaign that Ellie Whittingdale and Ellie Norton organised. Between 1st-8th August 2020 staff and students at the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies walked, rowed, cycled, ran, hiked and swam all over the world to raise money for the Oxford Food Bank. Together we covered almost 800km and have exceeded our target by raising £3,393. We would like to thank everyone who supported us.

## WHERE DO OUR STUDENTS COME FROM?



## GRADUATED RESEARCH STUDENTS 2019-2020

### DPHIL

#### ALICE SCHNEIDER, CHRIST CHURCH

Recognising Information Privacy:  
A Comparative Case Study of Legal change  
in Late Modern Societies  
(Supervisor: Dr Lange) 2020

#### ELENA BUTTI, ST CROSS COLLEGE

'We are the Nobodies': Youth Violence,  
Marginality and Social Cleansing in  
Colombia (Supervisor: Professor Pirie) 2019

#### FELIX-ANSELM VAN LIER, BLACKFRIARS

Legal Politics in the Libyan Constitution-  
Making Process (Supervisor: Professor  
Pirie) 2019

### MPHIL

#### SHRUTI IYER ST ANTONY'S COLLEGE

A Socio-Legal Understanding of State  
Compensation for Silicosis in India.  
(Supervisor: Professor Mulcahy) 2020

#### ELEANOR NORTON, ST CROSS COLLEGE

Childhood Divided: Child Soldiers and  
Gang Members in the Western Imagination  
(Supervisor: Professor Pirie) 2020

#### CARSON SMITH, ST CROSS COLLEGE

Community Mediation Across Ethnicities:  
Building for Conflict Resolution in Diverse  
Societies (Supervisor: Professor Mulcahy) 2020

#### COLTON WADE, BRASENOSE COLLEGE

Accountability in Action: Democratic  
Protections against Political  
Corruption in Brazil and the United  
States (Supervisor: Dr Kurkchian) 2020

#### NOAH WESCOMBE, ST CATHERINE'S COLLEGE

A hydro-socio-legal conception of rights  
for water: addressing jurisprudential  
tensions to foster responsive legal  
regimes (Supervisor: Dr Kurkchian) 2020

#### GABRIEL DARIN, ST CROSS COLLEGE

Legal Operations from Below: The compulsory  
purchase of subsoil rights for railway tunnels  
(Supervisor: Dr Grecksch) 2019

#### NICHOLAS DILLON, ST CROSS COLLEGE

Rights in Parliament: Assessing Australia's  
Legislature-Oriented Rights System  
(Supervisor: Dr Kurkchian) 2019

#### DENNIS WEST, GREEN TEMPLETON COLLEGE

Organising Relevance: The Process of  
Reporting and Managing non-Financial Issues  
in Companies Listed on the London Stock  
Exchange (Supervisor: Dr Lange) 2019

## CAREER DESTINATIONS OF CENTRE STUDENTS 2000-2020

Since 2010, almost 70 research students who came to study on the DPhil or MPhil programme, have graduated from the Centre.

The MPhil is an increasingly attractive standalone qualification with overseas students and many leaving the Centre to go into law firms, management consultancy and other private practice. Having started a research degree, around half our alumni decide to stay in academia and progress to study for a doctorate. Those students who study on our DPhil programme are most likely to progress to academic jobs with a smaller proportion embarking on careers in government, the private sector and NGOs. Graduates can now be found pursuing careers in Europe, Australia, South America, North America, Asia and Africa.



## PROFILE OF AN ALUMNA SINDISO MNISI WEEKS

Sindiso studied for a DPhil on 'The Interface between Living Customary Law(s) of Succession and South African State Law' at the Centre from 2005-2009. In this section Sindiso explains in her own words what she went on to do after leaving the Centre.



"When I graduated, I took up a position as a senior researcher in the Rural Women's Action Research Programme at the University of Cape Town's law school (UCT Law), combining research, advocacy, and policy work on women, property, governance, and participation under African customary law and the South African Constitution. While there, I taught African Customary Law in the Department of Private Law. When I moved to the US in 2013, I taught Law and Society in the Department of Political Science at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. At the same time, I also held a fellowship position as a resident scholar at the University of New Hampshire School of Law, where I completed a book in 2018 on *Access to Justice and Human Security: Cultural Contradictions in Rural South Africa*, London: Routledge. I took up my current position as

Assistant Professor, Public Policy of Excluded Populations, in the School for Global Inclusion and Social Development at the University of Massachusetts Boston in the fall of 2014. Since then, I also have been appointed Adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of Public Law at UCT. In the interim, I have taught for the Consortium for Graduate Studies in Gender, Culture, Women, and Sexuality (GCWS) in the School of Humanities, Arts and Social Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; co-authored a textbook in 2015, *African Customary Law in South Africa: Post-Apartheid and Living Law Perspectives*, South Africa: OUPSA; and continued my work as a social justice thinker and scholar-activist, often writing for the popular press."

## CALLING ALL ALUMNI

One of our recent activities has been the updating of the alumni mailing list. If you have received this annual report then you are probably already on it, but if you studied with someone else who would like to stay in touch with us, please ask them to get in touch with us at [admin@csls.ox.ac.uk](mailto:admin@csls.ox.ac.uk)



*"Having read history (interviewing WWI soldiers, reading their letters and diaries) before I read law, I always look with envy at the important, exciting and impactful research being undertaken by the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies. It is wonderful to see the Centre going from strength to strength under transformative leadership."*

Professor Mindy Chen-Wishart, Dean of the Faculty of Law



# EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

In the period from January 2019-December 2020, staff and students at the Centre hosted over 90 separate events. These included an annual lecture; a regular term-time seminar series for external speakers; a student-led socio-legal discussion group; an indigenous interdisciplinary discussion group; professional development events for early career researchers and knowledge exchange symposia.

Many of these events involved scholars from across the world including colleagues from Yale, the University of California, the Australian National University, the Max Planck Institute and the University of Ankara. In this section of the report, we highlight just a few of the many gatherings that we have hosted.

## ANNUAL LECTURE

Each year CSLS hosts an annual lecture which brings together colleagues in Oxford and the UK with a notable overseas speaker. COVID-19 led to the 2020 lecture being cancelled but the CSLS annual lecture for 2019 was given by Lauren Edelman, Agnes Roddy Robb Professor of Law and Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Berkeley.



In her lecture Lauren asked why, more than half a century after the 1964 Civil Rights Act, do race and gender inequality persist in the workplace? In *Working Law*, Lauren Edelman argues that managers and professionals within organisations interpret ambiguous legal rules in ways that incorporate business interests and values and comply with law in ways that symbolise change without improving the workforce status of minorities and women. Even more troubling, forms of symbolic compliance that become widespread within companies eventually make their way into the legal domain, inconspicuously influencing lawyers for both plaintiffs and defendants and even judges, regulators, and legislators. Litigation is ineffective at combatting discrimination because judges fail to scrutinise organisational structures, instead inferring non-

discrimination from the mere presence of symbols of compliance. Ultimately, Edelman concluded that we have become a symbolic civil rights society in which symbols of equal opportunity and diversity have become accepted measures of compliance even where they fail to mitigate race and gender inequality.

In addition to her lecture, Lauren conducted a workshop with CSLS students in which they were able to talk to her about her work in a more informal setting.

## OX-BERLIN LINK AND EVENTS

The Centre for Socio-Legal Studies has been developing links with the Law and Society Institute at the Humboldt University as part of the University of Oxford's strategic 'Ox-Ber' partnership and three co-organised events have now taken place supported by central University funds. Most recently, Associate Professor Bettina Lange organised a workshop on the theme of 'But what does the law say? Reading legal texts socio-legally'. The online workshop was dedicated to developing a dialogue between social science and legal approaches to interpreting legal texts across the common and civil law traditions. The workshop attracted an audience of 53 participants across academia, legal practice and NGOs. It involved presentations and interactive discussion of the Dutch Supreme Court decision in *Urgenda Foundation v. State of the Netherlands* [2015] HAZA C/09/00456689, as well as discussion of a socio-legal reading of the European Union Emissions Trading Directive and the UK Modern Slavery Act 2015.

## GLOBAL MEDIA POLICY SEMINAR SERIES

The Global Media and Policy Seminar Series is an online seminar series jointly organised between the University of Oxford's Programme in Comparative Media Law and Policy and the University of Johannesburg's School of Communication. The series fosters an international dialogue about pressing issues affecting new media and human rights, particularly at the margins. The speakers in this series tackle issues related to technology and policy across different contexts, including (among others) algorithmic bias and inequalities; misinformation and elections; social media and migration; extreme speech online; community-driven internet access solutions; autonomous and feminist infrastructure; and privacy. This innovative global seminar series uses the power of technology to bridge the geographic and epistemic distance between the global north and the global south – to bring together critical perspectives on new media in context and facilitate a diverse dialogue on the most important questions of human rights, internet governance and our technologically mediated lives.

## OXFORD MEDIA POLICY SUMMER INSTITUTE

For the past twenty years, the Oxford Media Policy Summer Institute has brought together top early career communications scholars, media lawyers and regulators, human rights activists, technologists and policymakers from countries around the world to discuss the effects of technology, media, and policy from a global and multidisciplinary perspective. As an integral part of Oxford's Programme in Comparative Media Law and Policy (PCMLP), the Institute has built a strong global network of alumni and faculty who are leaders within the global freedom of expression community. The Institute is co-organised with the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication and the University of Johannesburg.

The central aims of the Institute are to broaden and expand the pool of talented young scholars & practitioners working in these fields; to connect them to elite scholars and practitioners from around the world; to facilitate interdisciplinary dialogue; and to build space for future collaborations. With just thirty places on offer each year, who commonly hail from more than 20 countries around the world, the Institute has long offered participants unrivalled exposure to the diverse experiences and media environments of its global participants and speakers. Many of those that take part go on to become leaders at top government agencies, corporations, non-profits, and academic institutions around the world. The 2019 theme was Technology & Policy at the Margins and focused on emerging issues including extreme speech online; innovative efforts to connect the unconnected; algorithmic bias and inequality; and the increasing influence of AI.



Professor Ambreena Manji, speaker at one of our regular Monday seminars, with guests.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO PROFESSOR CHRIS HODGES



**Professor Chris Hodges was awarded an OBE in the New Year Honours for services to Business and Law.** The award recognises many years researching regulatory and dispute resolution systems, and working with officials, judges, ombuds, businesses, consumers and others on reforms aimed at producing outcomes and systems that are ethical, fair, safe, effective and cooperative. Professor Hodges has chaired committees in the pharmacy, medical devices, medicines, consumer law, product safety and liability, housing and opera sectors. He has advised governments, regulators and ombuds across the world. He has sat on committees redesigning regulation of property agents, and served on various boards including of the UK Research Integrity Office.

Professor Hodges is regarded as the leading European expert on consumer dispute resolution, ombuds and ADR, with deep knowledge founded on extensive research, and has advised almost all the UK consumer Ombudsmen. He co-founded the International Network for Delivery of Regulation in 2017 at the invitation of UK government, which has links with experts in regulatory delivery worldwide. His research into public and private enforcement cast doubt on the efficacy of deterrence in most circumstances, and led to the 'no blame' open culture idea of Ethical Business Practice and Regulation. These concepts are now being piloted widely, from financial services to care homes to water pricing. Chris held chairs at Oxford and Erasmus Universities, and visiting chairs in China, Australia and Belgium.

IN CLOSING





## VISITORS AND ASSOCIATES

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.



*"I frequently reflect on how privileged I was to spend my sabbatical as a visitor*

*to the CSLS. It was a wonderful experience for me to meet you all and find out about your interesting and diverse research projects. I feel so lucky to have been a part of the intellectually stimulating and personally supportive environment at the CSLS, even if only for a short while. It was an opportunity for me to develop new skills in qualitative research methods and discuss my emerging research ideas with others."*

Anne MacDuff from ANU, Visitor 2020

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 2020 we were delighted to welcome Sir Ernest Ryder and Professor David Sugarman to our existing list of Senior Associates.



*"The intellectual stimulus and sense of community generated*

*by the seminars, panels and presentations offered by the Centre, all underpinned by inspirational leadership, have been invaluable, especially in this time of lockdowns and allied restrictions."*

Professor David Sugarman

The Centre is also grateful for the input of the **Centre Management Committee** who oversee our activity and act as critical friends: Professor Sue Bright (Chair); Professor Nick Barber; Professor Kate O'Regan; Dr Abi Adams-Prassl; Professor Peter Kemp and Professor Ian Loader.

## IN CELEBRATION OF LONGSTANDING FRIENDS

It is with great sadness that we mark the death of three friends who had a longstanding connection to the Centre and played a significant role in its development.

### DON HARRIS 1928-2020

Don played a central role in establishing the Centre in 1972 and was its Director for 21 years. This placed him at the forefront of the move in legal scholarship from traditional black-letter approaches to one supplemented by a socio-legal perspective, making use of the insights of the social sciences in the study of law and legal phenomena. It is no exaggeration to say that in his time at the Centre Don made the most important contribution of the era to securing the institutional foundations of socio-legal studies in the UK through the research conducted at the Centre, and the staff and research students brought there to be schooled in multidisciplinary analysis of law, its institutions, its processes and impact.

### REZA BANAKER 1959-2020

Reza was a Research Fellow at the Centre from 1997 to 2002, holding the Paul Dodyk Research Fellowship. He was an active member of the Socio-Legal Studies Association and the Research Committee on the Sociology of Law. He will be remembered as an excellent scholar, as a devoted educator and as a warm-hearted friend who always had time for his colleagues. His manner was one of modesty and kindness.

### PHILIP LEWIS 1933-2019

Philip had a long association with the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies in the Law Faculty and remained a Senior Associate there until his death. Philip is best remembered for the substantial body of work he left behind on the legal profession, more particularly the three-volume set of essays on *Lawyers in Society* he produced with his friend Richard Abel. Following a seminar to celebrate his work hosted by the Centre the *International Journal of the Legal Profession* will be producing a special issue in 2021 dedicated to marking his many achievements.



## BLACK LIVES MATTER

**Staff and students at the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies have been saddened and upset by the tragic circumstances in which George Floyd died and the persistent structural inequality and embedded racist attitudes that it once again revealed.**

Regrettably, such racism is not confined to the United States and we are aware of the importance of us all taking responsibility for confronting the part that we, and the institution we work for, have played in facilitating discrimination and benefiting from a legacy of imperialism. We would like to take this opportunity to reassert our commitment to confronting racism 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 and law are currently being explored in a number of projects at the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies. 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 Black academics we have:

Launched a campaign, in partnership with Wolfson College, to raise enough funds to support two Black and minority ethnic students to undertake a research degree at the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies.

Engaged in a review of our curriculum to ensure that students are asked to read the work of a diverse range of authors.

Begun discussions about how best to support African scholars who would like to take part in our Visitors Programme.

Committed to inviting a broad range of speakers to present in our seminar series.

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.

