

Socio-Legal NEWSLETTER

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SLSA

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIO-LEGAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION

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A WARM MERSEYSIDE WELCOME FOR THE SLSA IN 2025!

Twenty years after the SLSA last came to Liverpool, the School of Law and Social Justice was delighted to host the 2025 Annual Conference from 15–17 April.

This year saw a move back to a largely in-person event and attendance was unprecedented in terms of the number and diversity of participants. We received 1001 submissions, and 890 presentations were delivered across 38 streams and current topics. More than 900 delegates attended, including exhibitors, publishers and stream sponsors.

For the first time individual streams were sponsored by relevant journals, law firms and NGOs. We are indebted to all the stream convenors for their help in managing a packed programme. We also ran an expanded poster competition, with 12 posters submitted online and 30 in person.

In the current financial climate, demand for bursaries was high and we were able to award six bursaries to University of Liverpool PGRs and 87 bursaries to applicants to the SLSA conference bursary scheme (out of a total of 92 applications, of which 83 accepted). We are grateful to the generosity of our many sponsors whose support made this possible.

The highlight of the conference was a plenary session titled 'Liverpool and the Legacies of Hillsborough: Arts, Law, Communities and Accountability' kindly sponsored by the *Modern Law Review* seminar series. This year we decided on a single plenary. For the organising team, given that the conference coincided with the 36th anniversary of the Hillsborough Disaster and an anticipated new Hillsborough Law in 2025, there was only one viable topic (see page 8 for further details and to read Professor Phil Scraton's account of the long campaign for justice).

Other cross-conference activities included a session on socio-legal publishing, with editors from *Social and Legal Studies*, the *Journal of Law and Society*, *Gender and Justice*, the *International Journal of Children's Rights* and the *Northern Ireland Legal Quarterly*. This well-attended session also benefited from input from Professor Joanne Conaghan, Chair of the Law Sub-panel for REF 2021.

There were also well-received political tours of the city, led by School of Law and Social Justice academics Nicola

Barker ('Sisters of Mersey: Liverpool Women's History') and Paul Jones ('Liverpool Architecture and Capitalism').

On the social and networking side, delegates were welcomed to Liverpool at a drinks reception on Tuesday evening, while a more formal Gala Dinner took place on Wednesday in the iconic St George's Hall. There, the winners of the SLSA book, article, impact and poster prizes were announced (see page 6 for details). Professor Joanne Conaghan, winner of the 2024 Prize for Contributions to the Socio-Legal Community, delivered a speech which testified to the continuing strength and diversity of socio-legal research notwithstanding all the challenges legal academia is facing.

As the SLSA Annual Conference continues to grow in popularity, organising it brings significant challenges, and we are grateful to the many colleagues at Liverpool who participated in the organisation, especially Rachel Barrett and Michael Longworth from our wonderful events team and to our student ambassadors. In accordance with the university's commitment to sustainability we were pleased to deliver a plastic-, paper- and meat-free conference. We would also like to thank the organisers of previous conferences, notably Jed Meers, Mark Simpson and Daniel Bedford, and the wider SLSA Board for their guidance.

We look forward to seeing everyone in Sussex in 2026!

*Marie Fox & Helen Stalford
on behalf of the SLSA 2025 organising team*

SLSA 2026: CALL FOR CURRENT TOPICS OPEN

The organisers of the SLSA Annual Conference 2026 invite members to submit proposals for current topics for the forthcoming conference, which will take place at the University of Sussex, 30 March–1 April 2026.

A current topic is a one-off grouping for the purposes of a single conference which reflects a contemporary topic of debate or an issue of emerging importance and which would be expected to attract at least six papers. Proposals should address the significance and currency of the topic and its appeal for the socio-legal community. Proposals should also be distinguished from regular streams. **Please note that convenors of current topics are expected to be SLSA members, attend the conference in person and cover their own registration fee.** The deadline for the return of proposals is **18.00 on Thursday 28 August 2025**. Please submit your proposal using [this form](#). Please send any enquiries to slsa2026@sussex.ac.uk.

Download the *Socio-Legal Newsletter*

A link to an electronic copy of the newsletter will be emailed to SLSA members on publication day 23 June 2025. Don't forget to check your inbox!

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Newsletter sponsorship

The *Socio-Legal Newsletter* is sponsored by a consortium of law schools and journals. We are very grateful for this essential support for our community. If your institution would like to become involved in this initiative, contact SLSA Chair, Smita Kheria: e smita.kheria@ed.ac.uk.

SLSA BOARD NEWS

There were several changes to the SLSA Board at the AGM in Liverpool on 16 April 2025.

John Harrington retired as Chair and Trustee. John joined the then Executive Committee in 2017 before becoming Chair in 2022. The Board would like to thank him for his dedication and years of service to the socio-legal community. Smita Kheria was elected as the new Chair – see her Chair’s message below. Other Board members who stepped down after generously giving their time and commitment to the SLSA over the past years were Anna Bryson, Beverley Clough, Simon Flacks, Emma Milne, Rebecca Moosavian and Mitch Travis. The new trustees elected at the AGM are Rachel Cahill-O’Callaghan, Dave Cowan, Joy Debski, Jennifer Hough, Arwen Joyce, Caer Smyth and Clare Williams (full contact details on page 2).

In addition, Mini Saxena, PGR Rep, stepped down in May after two years. Mini made a huge contribution during her time as a Rep and we wish her all the best on the next stage of her academic journey. And, in May, Nuno Ferreira and Amir Paz-Fuchs from the University of Sussex joined the Board as SLSA 2026 conference organisers.

SLSA CHAIR’S MESSAGE

I am deeply honoured to have been elected as Chair of the SLSA at this year’s AGM. The SLSA’s Postgraduate Conference was my introduction to socio-legal studies and the association has been my academic home since the days of my doctoral research.

At the Annual Conference in 2011 in Sussex, I participated, very nervously, in the special plenary, ‘The past, present and future of socio-legal studies’, to provide a newcomer’s view (see *SLN* 64: 4–5). Drawing on my personal experience, I shared two challenges: first, my ambition to conduct empirical legal research in intellectual property law – an area with negligible socio-legal scholarship; and second, my uncertainty as an ‘outsider’ – in more ways than one – about fitting into the socio-legal community. The SLSA played a pivotal role in helping me overcome both obstacles. My research became firmly grounded in socio-legal inquiry, as I focused my empirical work on examining the nature and role of copyright in the everyday lives of creative practitioners and ensuring that artists’ perspectives on the law are represented as a distinct community, separate from more powerful stakeholders. I also gained the confidence to advocate for broader adoption of socio-legal approaches in the study of intellectual property rights, including championing the integration of empirical legal scholarship within the intellectual property law curriculum through my own teaching practices. The association’s inspiring and supportive conferences and events benefited me enormously and shaped this work. I joined the SLSA Executive Committee in 2018, encouraged by the then Chair Rosie Harding, to take up the role of the Scottish representative. Since then it has been a privilege to be able to serve the socio-legal community in various ways including hosting the SLSA Postgraduate Conference at the University of Edinburgh, my home institution, in January 2020 (a fulfilling ‘full-circle’ moment), acting as International Liaison Officer, and then as Vice Chair from 2023. I sincerely appreciate the trust the members of the association have placed in me to assume the responsibility of Chair and I’m looking forward to building on the achievements of my predecessor, John Harrington.

This year’s Annual Conference in Liverpool was one of our largest ever, welcoming 900 delegates. With 38 streams and current topics, four PGR-focused sessions, and a thought-provoking and moving plenary on the Hillsborough Justice campaign, the event was a dynamic and vibrant gathering with a broad range of ideas and perspectives. Despite the success of the conference, the SLSA remains acutely aware of the challenging financial climate facing UK higher education institutions. In response, several measures have been taken to thoughtfully redistribute the association’s current surplus through its annual funding schemes, conference bursaries scheme and other activities. The early bird registration rate for the Annual Conference was held fixed for this year (like the previous two years). Ninety-three bursaries were awarded (see page 1) – twice as many as last year – to enable ECRs, PGRs, precariously employed researchers, and those lacking institutional support, to participate in the conference. This investment of over £26,000 underscores a commitment to supporting the community at a difficult time. For our 2024–2025 round of funding schemes, £53,406 was awarded in grants to support research projects, fieldwork, seminars, impact and internationalisation, exceeding the planned total by £10,906. For the 2025–2026 round (opening soon – see details on page 7), £66,000 has been earmarked, and both maximum award sizes and overall funding pots have been increased to encourage, nurture, and showcase the work by our members. The cost of membership has been held fixed again this year (like the last four years).

The upcoming launch of our new website and CRM system is also an important investment in improving and enhancing engagement for both the membership and the wider public. I have already commenced work with the Board to identify further ways to prudently manage and distribute the surplus to advance the aims of the SLSA. If members have any ideas or suggestions to share then they are warmly invited to contact me and the Board members.

Smita Kheria, SLSA Chair

SLSA PGR REP: CALL

The SLSA wishes to appoint a new PGR Rep to the Board. This is an exciting opportunity to represent the views of PGR members to the Board of Trustees, encourage postgraduate recruitment, and be involved in organising the SLSA’s activities for the postgraduate community. Closing date for EOIs: **7 July 2025**. Email [e slsapgrep@gmail.com](mailto:slsapgrep@gmail.com) for further details.

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SLSA EVENTS

‘Doing’ socio-legal research

Michael Ashworth, Newcastle University, £1000

On 14 April 2025, the University of Liverpool School of Law hosted a one-day workshop, generously funded by the SLSA International Collaboration Scheme and Max Planck Institute for the Study of Crime, Security and Law (Germany), and supported by Universidad de O’Higgins (Chile).

The workshop was the inaugural event for Sociolegal Methodological Interrogations (SMI): a LatAm/European ECR network. This joint initiative, led by the grantholder Dr Michael Ashworth, Dr Rachel Pougnet (Max Planck) and Dr Ignacio Riquelme Espinosa (O’Higgins), is the first international collaborative network aimed at bringing together ECRs from socio-legal communities in LatAm and Europe to engage in shared discussions of methods and methodologies.

The Liverpool workshop invited speakers and observers, including PGR students, from Chile, Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, the UK, Germany and France to reflect on conceptual and practical aspects of ‘doing’ socio-legal research from their own experience. The resultant papers emerged as three streams: on documents and institutions; on interviews and conversation; and on diverse perspectives. As participants noted, the papers had a remarkable resonance with one another and invited a rich and lively discussion focused, in different ways, on the value of and the tensions inherent in ‘doing’ socio-legal research.

The final hour was dedicated to reflecting on the workshop and thinking through the next steps for the network. What emerged from the discussion was a desire to continue methodological conversations and several potential themes for future events were highlighted. Indeed, we have begun exploring the possibility of holding online events dedicated to such issues as field negotiations, as well as a follow-up workshop in Chile, with a view to enacting genuine participatory equality by making future events fully language accessible.

If you would like to learn of any future events, please check out the SMI network [w website](#).

Law’s role in shaping and responding to disability and motherhood

Jaime Lindsey, University of Reading, £1000

Bringing together colleagues from law, social work, advocacy organisations, social policy and beyond, this seminar on 19 March 2025 at the University of Reading explored how law shapes and responds to issues around disability, motherhood and the law.

Starting with law and reproduction, Professor Beverley Clough looked at the concept of motherhood across different areas and through a lens of reproductive justice. This was followed by Professor Sheelagh McGuinness on the challenges of pregnant subjectivity in law and the epistemic injustice experienced by pregnant women. Dhanishka Seneviratne presented on her empirically grounded research on activists’ perspectives on choice in the context of disability-selective abortions.

The second session focused on parenting and disability, including special educational needs disputes and social security, with presentations from Margaret Doyle, parents and advocates Paula Farrow and Maggie Cleary, and Dr Jackie Gulland. This session highlighted the challenge

that mothers face when advocating on behalf of disabled children and the failures of the state to provide effective support.

The third panel explored disability and equality and included Maral Nosratzadeh on barriers for disabled women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Dr Abigail Pearson on why the legal framework is only part of the puzzle of disability equality and Dr Rachel Horton on workplace rights for parents and carers. The session explored some of the limitations of the law in providing solutions to the problem of disability equality.

At the start of the final session we watched two videos from **Speakup Advocacy**, based on the family court experiences of two women with learning disabilities. We then heard from Beth Tarleton outlining **recent research** on parents with learning disabilities, including the **Nuffield research** on parents with learning disabilities in care proceedings. Our final speaker was Anna Rickards of **Pause** who spoke about supporting women who have had children removed from their care.

The seminar provided a rich space for discussions across disciplines and legal boundaries to engage with some of the challenges in the law’s response to disability and motherhood. Themes included: the need for greater support for mothers and their families; the lack of data about the justice system and interventions; the role of language in law’s response to disability; law’s apparent neutrality which does not always secure justice for disabled people or mothers; and individual versus community approaches to the challenges identified. We intend to publish an edited collection of the papers presented at the seminar. Please get in touch with the organiser if you would like to know more [e j.lindsey@reading.ac.uk](mailto:e.j.lindsey@reading.ac.uk). I am grateful to the SLSA and the University of Reading for their generous support with this seminar.

Pracademia in law schools: an international community of practice

Jill Dickinson, Leeds Beckett University, £2286

Following publication of a collection on **Professional Development for Practitioners in Academia: Pracademia** (2023), citations in the *Washington Post* (2023) and *Wonkhe* (August 2023; September 2023) and the launch of a **Pracademia Seedcorn Funding Project** by the Committee of Heads of University Law Schools, this international community of practice comes at a pivotal time.

Particularly given that law school curricula in higher education have become more applied, according to **Law Works**, there is a critical need for exploring:

- the challenges that those with dual experience as practitioners and academics (‘pracademics’) may face;
- potential for supporting their professional and career development; and
- championing their potential as part of a diverse faculty.

Supported by funding from the SLSA International Collaboration Scheme, **Jill Dickinson, Judith Marychurch, Tasneem Khedarun** and **Jeevesh Augnoo** are co-developing this community of practice with delegates from the launch event on 4 April 2025 and will be presenting the project at the Annual Conference of the **Australasian Law Academics Association**.

To find out more about this international community of practice, please sign up to jiscmail and subscribe to the list [here](#). The email address is: [e pracademia-in-law-schools@jiscmail.ac.uk](mailto:e.pracademia-in-law-schools@jiscmail.ac.uk).

PGR Writing Group

Since 2023, the SLSA has been running an online, writing group to create a space for SLSA PGRs to write, connect and build a supportive community in the UK and beyond. While the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, we've been working on ways to make the experience more engaging. With that in mind, our latest session on 12 February 2025 introduced a new format.

In the past, we stuck to the classic four 25-minute 'shut-up and write' blocks, separated by five-minute breaks. However, for the latest session, we invited a special guest, **Dr Shelley Marshall**, Professor of Law at RMIT University, Melbourne. She joined us as part of the SLSA's international collaboration with the **Law and Society Association of Australia and New Zealand**. In her talk, she shared experiences and insights on the unique challenges of conducting socio-legal research in both academia and civil society organisations.

Dr Marshall's work focuses on business and human rights and labour law. She has a keen interest in the regulation of informal work in low- and middle-income countries and has led major research projects, including a multi-country study with the International Labour Organization on labour law in developing countries, funded by the UK ESRC. Her research spans informal labour markets in Bulgaria, India, Australia and Cambodia, exploring how labour law responds to different political and economic conditions.

We were thrilled to have 43 registrations, with about 33 attendees joining online. While most participants were from the UK, we also welcomed students from Australia

and New Zealand. The first hour was an engaging talk by Dr Marshall, followed by a lively Q&A session. She spoke candidly about the struggles PhD students often face when undertaking socio-legal research – especially the lack of structure and formal training in socio-legal methods. Drawing on her extensive experience in the Global South, she touched on the challenge of being perceived as an 'expert' and the complex positionality issues this can create. She also shared valuable advice on translating policy and impact work for academic audiences and how to incorporate more participatory research methods like the photovoice technique in scholarly work. During the Q&A, she fielded questions on specific methodological hurdles faced by students in their own work. She encouraged them to think about diverse research outputs and emphasised the importance of engaging with different audiences to improve communication skills. She even shared her contact details, inviting students to reach out if they needed further support with their research methods.

After Dr Marshall's session, we moved into two 25-minute writing blocks, followed by a reflection session where participants shared their thoughts on the new format which they felt sparked deeper engagement and fostered a vibrant discussion. We hope it helped generate a stronger sense of community among PGRs in both the UK and Australia and New Zealand.

We're excited to keep building on these ideas in future sessions and see where the writing group goes next! As always, we welcome any feedback and suggestions on improving the writing group and look forward to getting to know more of you in future sessions.

Diksha Sanyal and Mini Saxena, SLSA PGR Reps

VSR PhD School

For a third year, the **Netherlands Academy for Empirical Legal Studies** and **Dutch and Flemish Law and Society Association** (VSR) collaborated with the SLSA to offer five discounted places to SLSA PGRs at their PhD school at Leiden University (28–29 January 2025). The two days focused on 'Route PhD' and were attended by around 45 international researchers.

The first day's keynote by Professor Benjamin van Rooij focused on his research and professional trajectory, and how it led to his doctoral studies on the implementation of administrative law in China, where he also carried out empirical work. In keeping with the theme, he addressed the 'Route' of his career, full of vivid images and engaging anecdotes about how he fostered relationships with officials in China before he could start qualitative work.

Next were two parallel workshop streams. The first comprised 'Intro to qualitative methods: interviewing' (Hannah Bliersbach), 'GDPR and data protection in research' (Hanne Elsen) and 'Social network analysis' (Daria Morozova). Attendees were positive about the value of these practical workshops which offered concrete insights on empirical research. I was particularly impressed with Hannah's session on interviewing, which discussed qualitative interviewing basics, techniques, interview guides and what to pay attention to while interviewing. She encouraged critical examination of the researcher's role and stressed the importance of reflexivity, positionality and ethics with regard to interviews.

The afternoon consisted of 'Ethnographic approaches to socio-legal research' (Matthew Canfield) and 'Engaging the public with your research' (Rowie Stalk), and an opportunity for attendees to present their research in small groups. Rowie's workshop gave guidance on connecting with diverse audiences, exploring how and through what

platforms to broaden the reach of our research and make it more accessible outside academia.

The second day opened with a panel (Professors Sonja Bekker, Maartje van der Woude & Hilke Grootelaar, moderated by Danielle Chevalier, VSR Chair) on 'Routes before and after PhD'. The panellists shared their PhD journeys, their experiences during their studies, their subsequent paths, and factors influencing their decisions, reinforcing that there is no one correct path to do a PhD!

Day two looked at 'Systematic literature review' (Loran Kostense & Lisa van Roermund) and 'From surviving to thriving in PhD life' (Margarita Lourido Ferreira), plus a session for attendees to present their research. I had the opportunity to present in a panel of three. We each spoke for 10 minutes, leaving time for questions and feedback – useful for my preparation for presenting at the VSR Conference the next day! I was fortunate to receive feedback from Prof Peter van der Zwan and other PhD Day attendees, which helped me refine my presentation and stick to time, noting the most significant elements of my argument that I should get across to the audience.

The school finished with three parallel workshops: 'Case law review with NVivo' (Tine van Hof), 'How to conduct a focus group' (Leontine Bruijnen) and 'Introduction to quantitative data analysis' (Peter). Leontine's workshop introduced attendees to the focus group method, an effective way to obtain more (in-depth) information on a particular topic.

Overall, the event was fascinating and inspiring, fostering camaraderie within the sometimes-isolating PhD experience. The organisers' closing words offered further collaboration through discounted VSR membership and the opportunity to help organise future PhD Days. I would highly recommend the experience to any SLSA PGRs!

Mini Saxena, SLSA PGR Rep

SLSA PRIZEWINNERS: THIS YEAR'S LINE-UP!

This year's prizewinners were announced at the SLSA Gala Dinner on 16 April 2025 in Liverpool. The prizes are for excellence in socio-legal research and publishing. An anonymous donor supports the Annual Prize for Contributions to the Socio-Legal Community; Hart Publishing sponsors our Book Prize and Book Prize for Early Career Academics; and the Socio-Legal Theory and History Prize is sponsored by a private benefactor. The other prizes are funded by the SLSA membership.

Prize for Contributions to the Socio-Legal Community 2024

Professor Joanne Conaghan, University of Bristol.
Nominated by Professor Helen Carr, University of Southampton

Hart-SLSA Book Prize 2025 and SLSA Socio-Legal Theory and History Prize 2025

Joanne Conaghan and Yvette Russell, *Sexual History Evidence and the Rape Trial* (2023) Bristol University Press

Hart-SLSA Prize for Early Career Academics 2025

Francesca Meloni, *Ways of Belonging: Undocumented Youth in the Shadow of Illegality* (2023) Rutgers University Press

SLSA Article Prize 2025

Lynette J Chua, *“He is still your father”: tetherings, welfare laws, and troubled parental maintenance litigation in Taiwan* (2024) *Law and Social Inquiry* 49(4): 2213–2244

SLSA Impact Prize 2025: joint winners

- Nicola Barker, University of Liverpool, for the project: **‘Challenging the revocation of same-sex marriage in Bermuda’**
- Mark Walters, University of Sussex, for the project: **‘Establishing a new framework of hate crime legislation for Seychelles’**

SLSA Poster Prize 2025

Winner

- Yasmin Patching. **‘Re-imagining planning regulation for mining in Wales: an environmental rule of law approach’**

Highly commended

- Chloe Atkins, **‘Then in walked an IDVA: domestic violence and protective orders under private law – the role of the IDVA (independent domestic violence advocate) in addressing victim navigation, experience and safety’**
- Banaz Kamil, **‘Interpretation in asylum hearings: bridging the borders of understanding’**
- Matthew McCallion, **‘Autism, criminal liability, and the neurodiversity paradigm’**

SLSA CALENDAR

2025

June

- 23 Prize for Contributions to the Socio-Legal Community: call for nominations
SLSA 2026: call for current topics opens
- 25 SLSA Mentoring Scheme applications open

July

- tbc SLSA funding schemes and prizes open for applications and nominations
- 7 SLSA PGR Rep applications close
- 11 Final Friday ebulletin of summer
- 31 SLSA Mentoring Scheme applications close

August

- tbc Two summer catch-up ebulletins
- 25 Law, Drugs, and the Moving Body, Manchester
- 28 SLSA 2026: call for current topics closes

September

- 1 Closing date for SLSA Prize for Contributions
- 11 Confirmation of current topics for SLSA 2026
- 19 First ebulletin of the autumn
- 22 SLSA 2026: calls for papers, posters, bursary applications & early bird registration open
SLSA Board meeting

October

- 6 Closing date for book, article and impact prizes
- 13 AcSS call for nominations of Fellows
- 20 SLN 107 copy deadline
- 31 Closing date for SLSA funding schemes

November

- 3 AcSS call for nominations closes
- 24 SLN 107 published

December

- 14 Final weekly ebulletin of 2025
- 18 SLSA 2026: calls for papers & bursary applications close

2026

January

- tbc SLSA Postgraduate Conference, Cardiff
- tbc SLSA Board meeting
- 12 First weekly ebulletin of 2026
- 26 SLSA 108 copy deadline
- 29 SLSA 2026 early bird registration closes

February

- tbc SLSA Prize shortlists published
- tbc Successful grant schemes and seminar competition awards announced
- 16 SLSA Board call for Trustee nominations and AGM agenda items
- 26 SLSA 2026 standard registration closes

March

- 2 SLN 108 published
- 16 Notification of SLSA AGM 2026 and publication of papers
- 18 SLSA 2026 late registration closes
- 30 March–1 April SLSA Annual Conference, University of Sussex
- 31 SLSA AGM and announcement of SLSA prizewinners

SLSA FUNDING SCHEMES AND PRIZES

At its meeting in May 2025, the SLSA Board increased the total funding pot for all funding schemes to £66,000 and the maximum individual award limits. Applications and nominations for our grants, seminars and prizes will open soon. Look out for the notification in the SLSA ebulletin.

Research and Fieldwork Grants

The aim of these grants is to support work for which other funding sources are not available and to encourage socio-legal research initiatives in a practical way. Maximum awards are **£4000** for research grants (up by £1000) and **£2000** for fieldwork grants (up by £500). Closing date: **31 October 2025**.

Impact Grants

This scheme is designed to provide support for impact activity conducted by SLSA members that would not otherwise be supported through institutions. Maximum awards are now **£4000** (up by £1500). Closing date: **31 October 2025**.

Seminar Competition

Awards can be used to support the delivery of either an individual seminar or short conference, or a series of events. The maximum award for this scheme is **£4000** (up by £1000). Closing date: **31 October 2025**.

International Collaboration Scheme

This scheme aims to support SLSA members to undertake international collaborative activities specifically aimed at building connections with socio-legal scholars and socio-legal communities beyond the UK. The maximum award is **£4000** (up by £1000). Closing date: **31 October 2025**.

Impact Prize

This annual prize worth **£250** is awarded to recognise and celebrate excellence in non-academic impact arising from socio-legal research. The shortlist and winners will be announced at the SLSA Gala Dinner in Brighton on 31 March 2026. Closing date: **6 October 2025**.

Book and article prizes

There are four prizes for socio-legal publications:

- the Hart-SLSA Socio-Legal Book Prize;
- the Hart-SLSA Socio-Legal Book Prize for Early Career Academics;
- the Socio-Legal Theory and History Book Prize; and
- the Socio-Legal Article Prize.

Publications published in the 12 months up to **30 September 2025** are eligible.

The first two prizes are generously sponsored by Hart Publishing. The Socio-Legal Theory and History Prize is sponsored by a private benefactor and the article and impact prizes are funded by the SLSA membership.

The winners of all the book prizes will receive **£250** and the winner of the article prize will receive **£100**. Shortlists will be published in February 2026 and winners will be announced at the SLSA Gala Dinner in Brighton on 31 March 2026. Closing date: **6 October 2025**.

Prize for Contributions to the Socio-Legal Community: nominations open

This prestigious prize is awarded to a socio-legal scholar who has made an exceptional contribution to our community.

SLSA members are warmly invited to submit nominations for this year's prize. Nominators should simply state in 100 words why the person they are nominating would be a worthy recipient of the prize. The winner receives **£500** and lifetime membership of the SLSA.

Since its launch in 2011 the prize has been awarded to Joanne Conaghan, Rosemary Hunter, Richard Collier, Caroline Hunter, David Cowan, Robert Dingwall, Fiona Cownie & Tony Bradney, Mike Adler, Linda Mulcahy, Martin Partington, Sally Wheeler, Roger Cotterrell, Phil Thomas and Mavis Maclean. Send nominations to **e admin@slsa.ac.uk** by **1 September 2025**. The winner will be announced on **24 November** in *SLN* No 107.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Many people renew their annual membership on 1 July, so now is a good time to check your details and make sure you are paying the correct fees.

Full membership is **£50** per annum and student membership is **£25**. These amounts have been held fixed again this year. Members are encouraged to pay via the new members' area on our soon to be launched new website. Details will be emailed in due course. You can also still pay by bank transfer, standing order or Paypal. We are very grateful to members for this support which enables the SLSA to fund activities that benefit the whole socio-legal community. Prompt payment also saves administration time and is much appreciated.

Social and Legal Studies

34(3) June 2025

Special Issue: Housing and Social Control:

A Legal Evaluation edited by C H (Lieneke)

Slingenberg and Michel Vols

Introduction: Social control, housing and the law – C H (Lieneke) Slingenberg & Michel Vols

Social control and homeless encampments: shifting the role of shelters through judicial review – Alexandra Flynn

Indigenous housing rights and colonial sovereignty: self-determination and housing rights beyond a white possessive frame – Thalia Anthony & Jessie Hohmann

Housing and social control: reassessing the protection asymmetries of article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights – Serde Atalay

Coerced into subsistence: deprivation of liberty in the EU reception and identification centres in Greece – C H (Lieneke) Slingenberg

Migrant reception centres and coercive social control: rule by legal uncertainty? – Isabella Leroy

Let me move: a legal analysis of residence restrictions on asylum-seekers in Ceuta, Melilla and the Canary Islands – Juan Ruiz Ramos

Regulating public property: the account of the homeless – Sue-Mari Viljoen

HILLSBOROUGH: RECOVERING TRUTH, REDRESSING INJUSTICE

Our 2025 plenary event brought together some of the most significant figures in the Hillsborough Justice campaign to showcase and reflect on the complementary roles that community activism, research, the arts and the law have played in the long search for justice for the Hillsborough families.



The speakers were (from left to right) Elkan Abrahamson, who acted as legal representative to many of the Hillsborough families, Margaret Aspinall and Sue Roberts, both pivotal figures in the Hillsborough Family Support Group, acclaimed Liverpool-based writer and producer Jimmy McGovern, whose 1996 docudrama **Hillsborough** is credited with helping to overturn the original inquest finding, and leading socio-legal scholar, Professor Phil Scraton, who was research lead for the Hillsborough Independent Panel (HIP). Phil's outstanding research resulted in a groundbreaking 2012 report that fully exonerated the fans and served as a precursor to the findings of the final inquest, which found unequivocally that those who died at Hillsborough were unlawfully killed. The very moving testimony from the speakers about their quest for justice, the failures of law and their hopes for reform, sparked a standing ovation at the end of the plenary. Many of those present will take away Jimmy's injunction to 'write what matters'.*

In this article, Phil Scraton recounts the key facts of the tragedy and describes his involvement in the campaign for justice for those who died and their families.

Marie Fox and Helen Stalford

The facts

15 April 1989 – a fatal crush at a Hillsborough FA Cup semi-final between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest killed 97 soccer fans, injured 766 and traumatised thousands. At an unfamiliar stadium, 24,000 Liverpool fans were compressed through 16 turnstiles, 10,100 with standing tickets for the Leppings Lane terrace were allocated seven turnstiles. Relieving the crush, police opened an egress gate. It led to a 1 in 6 gradient tunnel, signed STANDING. Without guidance, over two thousand fans descended into two already full pens, overhanging fences to the front, fences to the side. The near fatal crush outside the stadium became a fatal crush inside. There was no way back. A decrepit terrace barrier collapsed taking down a tangled mass of compressed bodies. Unconscious and semi-conscious fans were pulled from the pens and laid out in the goalmouth. Within days 95 men, women and children died. Two young men were left in a persistent vegetative state. Hundreds were physically injured, thousands

* The session was recorded for a podcast, which will be shared in the coming weeks.

traumatised. Many others have died prematurely, some taking their own lives.

Within hours police representatives and politicians briefed the international media that drunken, violent fans, many without tickets, had forced entry and caused fatalities. As fans were being rescued, the South Yorkshire Police (SYP) match commander, David Duckenfield, misinformed senior officials that Liverpool fans had rushed the pens. Immediately, his allegations were broadcast internationally. UEFA President, Jacques Georges, condemned Liverpool fans as 'beasts waiting to charge into the arena'.

That evening the SYP Chief Constable reiterated the allegations. Next morning, on the terrace where fans died, he briefed Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Her Press Secretary, Bernard Ingham, wrote: 'I know what I learned on the spot. There would have been no Hillsborough if a mob, who were clearly tanked up, had not tried to force their way into the ground.'

In a hardening political climate, the tabloids presented the allegations as uncontested, promoting the myth that Liverpool fans were entirely responsible. They included false claims by local Conservative MP Irvine Patnick and Paul Middup, chair of the SYP Federation, that Liverpool fans had attacked the police and urinated on rescuers and sexually assaulted a dying woman.

The aftermath

The Government appointed Lord Justice Taylor to chair a public inquiry. Within four months it concluded the 'main cause' of the disaster was overcrowding, the 'main reason' was police mismanagement of the crowd. Taylor criticised Sheffield Wednesday Football Club (stadium owners), its safety engineers and Sheffield City Council (the stadium licensor). Yet his final report made passing reference to Hillsborough, redirecting attention to football-related violence.

An Independent Police Complaints Commission investigation and civil actions failed to establish liability. The longest inquests in legal history (May 1990–March 1991) returned a majority verdict of 'accidental death', ostensibly reversing Taylor's findings. Two years later, bereaved families appealed to the High Court claiming the inquests had been improperly conducted, inappropriate evidential restrictions imposed and evidence suppressed. It was rejected. A judicial scrutiny of 'new' evidence by High Court Judge Stuart-Smith (June 1997–February 1998) concluded that no new evidence of substance had been revealed. I accompanied families and a former SYP officer to present evidence. Rejecting my several submissions for a further in-depth inquiry, his report criticised my involvement. In 2000 families brought a private prosecution for manslaughter against senior officers responsible for policing on the day. The jury failed to reach a verdict on the match commander, and the trial judge ruled there would be no retrial.

A decade passed throughout which bereaved families and survivors continued determined campaigns to have the inquest verdicts quashed, a criminal investigation reopened and allegations against fans withdrawn. In 2009 Andy Burnham, then Minister for Health and Culture, demanded full disclosure of all documents generated by previous investigations and inquiries. Supporting his proposal, with the Hillsborough Family Support Group, I submitted a comprehensive 'truth recovery' proposal. Documents would be provided to, and interrogated by, an independent panel whose members would possess the necessary scope of knowledge and experience. It would have three objectives: truth recovery through independent

inquiry; acknowledgment of failings in previous inquiries; and resolution via thorough documentary analysis.

In 2010 the HIP was appointed to access and research the mass of official documents and testimonies generated by previous investigations and inquiries and to establish how the disclosed information informed public understanding of the disaster and its aftermath. Over two years I headed the research encompassing: the history of multiple deaths at football stadiums; the safety and regulation of Hillsborough; the 'moment' of the disaster; emergency response, medical intervention and accommodating the bereaved and survivors; the pathology, blood alcohol levels and, without consultation with bereaved families, removal of tissue samples from the dead; the complexity and inter-relationships between the civil, criminal and inquisitorial investigations each serviced by the West Midlands Police; context and consequences of restrictions placed on evidence given at the inquest; review and alteration of police statements; Stuart-Smith scrutiny; private prosecutions; and the media's role.

In September 2012 the Panel's 153 findings reversed the preceding official and media narratives on the causes, circumstances and aftermath of the disaster. The Panel fully examined the processes, previously revealed in my book *Hillsborough: The Truth*, through which police officers' statements had been reviewed and altered by the SYP. Further, questioning the initial medical analysis, it found that there was evidence in 41 deaths of prolonged survival, demonstrating that some deaths could have been prevented. The panel concluded that, following severe criticisms levelled against senior police officers by Lord Justice Taylor, South Yorkshire's Chief Constable had affirmed his determination to use the inquests as a platform to revive the spectre of drunk, abusive, ticketless fans determined to force entry into the stadium. Documents revealed that within days of the disaster he attended a Police Federation meeting, stating that a 'rock-solid story' should be presented through which the police 'would be exonerated', redirecting 'blame' to 'drunken, ticketless individuals'. Analysing minutes of SYP internal meetings, involving the Federation's parliamentary representative, the panel identified how public opinion, and the inquests, had been influenced to reverse Taylor's conclusion that the deaths had been caused by police mismanagement.

Receiving the Panel's report, on behalf of the Government, 'and indeed our country', Prime Minister David Cameron offered an unqualified 'apology' to the Hillsborough families stating they had 'suffered a double injustice – the failure of the state to protect their loved ones and the indefensible wait to get to the truth'. While establishing the significance of non-state inquiries and state-sanctioned independent panels in reviewing complex, contested, public-interest cases, the Panel's work raised profound concerns regarding the legitimacy of statutory public inquiries.

The report's national and international impact and the Government's response were unprecedented. It opened an alternative route to investigating complex, contested cases with immediate consequences. The DPP committed to pursuing criminal prosecutions, an Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC, now IOPC) investigation began into police misconduct, and new inquests were announced. Formal apologies focused on the flawed institutional, personal and political responses to the disaster and its aftermath.

However, the investigative failures by the South Yorkshire and West Midlands forces remained unacknowledged. Clearly intentional, they had infected the judicial inquiry, criminal investigation, IPCC investigation,

inquests, divisional court reviews, compensation hearings, judicial scrutiny, private prosecution and submissions to the Attorney General. They received credibility in media coverage and were used to dismiss our independent research findings. Further, I revealed that Taylor and senior Home Office officials had been aware that all police evidence had been subjected to review and alteration.

Two related but separate criminal investigations followed the Panel's report employing several hundred investigating officers and support staff. They are yet to be completed. Following extensive preliminary hearings, new inquests were held between April 2014 and April 2016, the longest and most contested inquests in legal history. The jury returned a unanimous verdict of unlawful killing, supported by a narrative of 25 detailed criticisms revealing institutional failures by the agencies involved, most significantly the SYP. It exonerated the fans, stating their behaviour played no part in the circumstances of the deaths and reversing allegations that crowd violence had contributed to the disaster.

The Panel initiated a unique methodology for truth recovery research. Regarding investigation and inquiry, re-investigation and review, Hillsborough has been defining. It reaches across criminal and civil law, public inquiries and coronial inquests, heralding a new departure in accessing, disclosing and interrogating data held by state agencies and informing due process. The research pioneered public-interest disclosure in contested cases, establishing adaptable methodologies for accessing and analysing official documents. While state-funded, the Panel's independence guaranteed support from bereaved families, survivors and the wider public. It pioneered a powerful process through which the truth could be accessed, official apologies delivered and justice progressed.

In June 2017 the CPS announced charges against CS Duckenfield (gross negligence manslaughter), Sheffield Wednesday's Secretary (health and safety), the SYP solicitor Peter Metcalfe, CS Donald Denton and CI Alan Foster (perverting the course of justice in altering police statements), and former CI Norman Bettison (misconduct in public office). Subsequently, the latter was dropped. Sheffield Wednesday Football Club, the Ambulance Service, Football Association, police officers investigated for their role in altering statements, alleged criminal acts or perjury escaped prosecution. Following a hung jury and retrial Duckenfield was acquitted. Mackrell was convicted by a majority verdict and fined £6500. In May 2021 the judge ordered abandonment of the case against Metcalfe, Denton and Foster, thereby ending criminal prosecutions.

Subsequently, Ian Byrne MP launched the **Hillsborough Law Now Campaign** in Parliament bringing together rights organisations and activists to: ensure bereaved families receive legal aid at inquests; impose a 'duty of candour' on public officials, including police officers; introduce a charter for those bereaved by public tragedy, binding on all public bodies; and appoint a public advocate to act for bereaved families. The **Real Truth Legacy Project** has established a political education 'toolkit' through which organisations will be informed about Hillsborough. Further, an education programme has been developed with the intention of adding the lessons of 'Hillsborough' to the national curriculum in primary and secondary schools.

Phil Scraton is Emeritus Professor, School of Law, QUB: he established the funded Hillsborough Project in 1989, publishing two substantial critical reports, Hillsborough and After (1990) and No Last Rights (1995) and is author of Hillsborough: The Truth and primary author of Hillsborough, the HIP Report.

SLSA MENTORING SCHEME: YEAR 2

We have had another successful year for our SLSA Mentoring Scheme! The scheme ran from October 2024 and will finish towards the end of the summer 2025. This initiative came out of the 2022 EDI Survey which highlighted the need to improve community inclusion and diversity by creating channels for the transfer of knowledge from more established socio-legal scholars to those in earlier stages of their careers or those wishing to return following career breaks. The purpose of the scheme is to provide support for those who may face structural disadvantage in their academic careers in line with our EDI and anti-precarity commitments. We also value the opportunity for 'reverse mentoring', whereby more senior members learn from colleagues who are building socio-legal careers in the current environment.

Ten mentees were selected as against the eligibility criteria by a small working group of the EDI Committee. These 10 were then matched with mentors during September 2024. We started with a plenary session in October 2024 with all the mentees and mentors and we discussed how the scheme would operate and answered any questions that the group had. It then continued with one-to-one meetings through the year, arranged independently between the pairings. There was also an opportunity to meet up at the SLSA Conference in Liverpool in April 2025.

In a change to the pilot scheme following feedback, we decided to hold two online workshops for the mentees during the year. The first one was held in March 2025 and covered publishing. We are very grateful to Professor Dave Cowan, Professor Vanessa Munro and Professor Mark Flear who gave their time to support this session. The second workshop in June 2025 is on funding and impact. All the mentees to date have found it to be a positive experience. Further feedback will be gathered from both mentors and mentees towards the end of the scheme, although there have been informal opportunities to feedback on the scheme throughout the year.

The second year of the scheme will be launched shortly and applications to the scheme will be open until the end of July 2025. We will again run the scheme for 12 months from October 2025 to September 2026 with a similar format to this year. Once again PhD students will only be eligible to apply if they are nearing submission and looking for their next move in academia. Once again there will be an opportunity to meet up at the Annual Conference, which will be held at the University of Sussex in 2026. Mentees will again be eligible to submit an application to the conference bursary scheme to apply for a fee waiver.

The call for mentees for 2025/2026 academic year will be announced on **25 June 2025** via email and will close on **31 July 2025**.

If you are an established socio-legal scholar and would like to be a mentor on the scheme, please send a short expression of interest, outlining your relevant experience and areas of expertise (such as research, teaching, editorial roles, publications, impact, funding, network building) to [e mentoring@slsa.ac.uk](mailto:mentoring@slsa.ac.uk).

GRANT SUMMARIES 2025

Here we bring together project summaries from this year's cohort of Research and Fieldwork Grants. Final reports from three completed projects will appear in the next issue.

Research Grants

Exploring how the statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children features in the work of the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration

Jonathan Collinson, University of Sheffield, £2900

The Home Secretary (SSHD) has a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in her immigration and asylum functions, but how does this duty, and children more broadly, feature in the oversight and accountability of the SSHD undertaken by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI)? ICIBI inspection reports are referenced frequently as a source of information and critique on Home Office actions, policies, and on the state of the UK's immigration and asylum system, but the ICIBI has never been the subject of academic enquiry itself.

ICIBI inspection reports give valuable insights into the work of the ICIBI as they provide information as to the rationales and methodologies of inspection, as well as their outcomes and findings. This research intends to deploy a mixed-methods thematic analysis for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within these reports. This research focuses on whether children are presented as only being objects of welfare protection or else subjects of human rights protection, rights which ought to be respected, protected and fulfilled.

Framing the Sámi experiences: legal and social narrative construction of a truth and reconciliation commission in Finland

Anna Katila, City University of London, £2980

In 2018, the Government of Finland set up a truth and reconciliation commission (TRC) to uncover and understand the Indigenous Sámi people's past and present experiences of marginalisation and discrimination by the state and authorities. This research project aims to evaluate the work and effectiveness of the TRC. The project is guided by the question: how does the TRC frame the Sámi experiences and balance between the legal mandate and socio-cultural expectations of its work? Archival research, observation and interviews will lead to new knowledge about the implementation and perceptions of the TRC, which expands on few existing outputs on the TRC mandate. This research will locate the Finnish TRC within a broader transitional justice (TJ) framework by setting the findings in dialogue with a TRC in Norway and the Canadian TRC on the Indigenous experiences of residential schools. The project will reconsider the meaning of truth-telling in peaceful societies and of transition in TJ scholarship. The findings will be disseminated through a journal article and public-facing writings that contribute to Finnish public discourse about the TRC.

The scope for alternative body disposal techniques in Ireland: a socio-legal review

Kate Falconer, University College Cork, £2846

Ireland's traditional death culture is known and admired around the world. However, this ancient way of death presents modern challenges. A cemetery space crisis,

rapid population growth, increasing immigration, rising environmental awareness, and a cost-of-living crisis all have implications for body disposal in Ireland. One potential implication is the uptake of alternative disposal techniques – such as water cremation, which became available in Ireland in 2023.

Against this background, this project's overarching aim is to conduct a review of social and cultural attitudes towards alternative forms of body disposal in Ireland in the context of existing legal and regulatory frameworks. Using Cork – Ireland's second largest city – as a case study, it employs a dual methodology. Semi-structured interviews with local Death Café attendees and funeral directors from across the city will be carried out. A comprehensive documentary review of the legal and regulatory frameworks relating to body disposal in Cork will also be conducted.

The project's results will be published in a peer-reviewed journal. Any recommendations for legal or regulatory reform will be made available to Cork City Councillors.

Perspectives on the gender pensions gap: the Old Age and Widow's Pensions Act 1940 and the National Spinsters' Pensions Association (1935–1958)

Teresa Sutton, University of Sussex, £1190

This project uses a feminist legal history approach to consider the development of the law of pensions. Its specific objective is to use archival sources to determine the impact of pressure groups behind the reforms of the Old Age and Widow's Pensions Act 1940 and to situate that legislation within legal history explaining the current gender pensions gap of 37.9% between men and women in the UK. The key pressure group was the National Spinsters' Pensions Association (NSPA) founded in Bradford in 1935. By 1938 the NSPA had grown to over 100 branches with a membership of about 150,000 calling for fair pensions for single women. The NSPA is of significance for its campaigning, achievements, membership and leadership and its relationships with other groups working to bring about legal change to benefit women. The socio-legal historical methodology will include archival work at the Women's Library at the LSE (papers of Annie Marsland (Treasurer), West Yorkshire Archives (papers of Florence White, National Organiser), British Library (NSPA newsletters) and Mass Observation Archive (Worktown Archive). The project hopes to inform current understandings of the modern gender pensions gap and evidence connections between inequalities in employment and pension outcomes for women. The results will be published as a research article.

'Coordinating' workers' rights in contemporary content creation: exploring the use of 'intimacy coordinators' in pornography

Charlotte English, University of Westminster, £2135.40

This project explores the benefits and challenges of using intimacy coordinators in pornography production/adult content creation, with a particular focus on adult performers' work conditions and rights. The precarious and stigmatised nature of pornography production exacerbates the work-related risks performers face and the limited recourse when they are mistreated. The research has two main aims: 1) to investigate the impact of intimacy coordinators on performers' employment/labour rights and occupational health and safety rights; and 2) to determine the relationship between the use of intimacy coordinators and what has been referred to as 'ethical pornography'. This qualitative socio-legal study, set against a broad theoretical backdrop of sex-positive

feminism, employs focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders, including performers. As this project centralises the voices of those with lived experience, confidentiality and anonymity are central ethical concerns. Anonymised data from the project will be shared at a roundtable that will bring those with lived experience and expertise in the field together with those responsible for policy and oversight. Finally, a peer-reviewed publication will be written at the end of the project to further disseminate findings.

Fieldwork Grants

Are behavioural regulatory tools legitimate?

A post-structuralist analysis of tools to promote MMR vaccination in France

Vendula Kolarik Mezeiova, University of Oxford, £1500

This PhD project explores how parents and medical professionals construct the legitimacy of different regulatory approaches to MMR vaccination in France. It focuses on the 2018 shift from behavioural tools (eg reminders, social pressuring, default health card listings) to a legal requirement for childhood MMR vaccination, following a citizens' consultation and judicial decision.

Grounded in a post-structuralist approach and Foucauldian discourse analysis, the research asks what matters for the legitimacy of vaccination regulatory tools besides legal and institutional reasonings. How do those directly involved in lived vaccination practices and interactions, like parents and medical professionals, understand, justify, or contest different regulatory techniques? How do justifications vary across socio-economic, cultural or gender lines? The project examines micro-level discourses and regulatory dynamics unfolding in decision-making about MMR vaccine uptake.

Fieldwork in four French departments with varying MMR-vaccination rates combines in-depth interviews and observations of MMR-related medical appointments, alongside archival research about citizens' consultation. Vaccination regulation, especially involving children, touches intimate imaginaries beyond polarising notions of coercion or autonomous decision-making. Listening to narratives and observing vaccination practices requires sensitive ethical navigation.

The research contributes to socio-legal understandings of the legitimacy of behavioural regulation compared to mandatory law. Outputs will include academic publications, public-facing engagement, and insights for public health regulation.

The laws of motion: towards a sensational jurisprudence of movement within the court

James Campbell, University of Oxford, £1500

In my research I explore the significance of physical movement within legal spaces. My focus is movement within the social world and the social meanings of movement: why we move as we do, how we are moved, the functions of our movement, the things that movement allows us to do, and how our movement is both facilitated and constrained by our built environment. To examine concretely how movement is governed and how movement governs the law in action in the doorway of the court, my fieldwork is being undertaken in the great antechamber to the Supreme Courts of Scotland: Edinburgh's Parliament Hall. Drawing on human geography methodologies, and utilising mobile methods, I am conducting observation and walking interviews with the Hall's users, primarily,

advocates, solicitor advocates and solicitors. Through this, I aim to develop a deeper understanding for the relationship of people and place in the Hall and, in particular, the ways in which movement mediates this. With this project, I hope to contribute towards an emerging body of socio-legal work addressing law and movement. I am also interested in feeding back to the legal professions that my research engages with, and I intend on sharing my findings in practitioner publications.

Encountering Blue Transformation: a legal ethnography of salmon farming and resistance in Norway and Chile

Sophie Quist, The Arctic University in Norway, £1475

The SLSA-funded study in Chilean Patagonia is part of a PhD project which addresses the role of law in new forms of ‘ocean grabbing’. In Norway and Chile, industrial salmon farming is growing in the name of ‘Blue Transformation’; a new global policy agenda that aims to sustainably intensify fish farming to feed growing populations. As the industry grows, so do conflicts with the Indigenous peoples and coastal communities and ecologies that inhabit the territories where farms are located.

The project investigates two central research questions: 1) what are the legal technicalities of the Blue Transformation and their effects; and 2) how do coastal communities mobilise law to resist ocean grabbing through salmon farming and what can we learn from them? The project aims to contribute an empirically grounded problematisation of popular ocean-food policy agendas and identify how law can advance ocean justice.

The planned ethnographic fieldwork in the south of Chile involves building relationships with members of coastal communities in the regions and undertaking around 20 semi-structured interviews with key actors (community members/leaders, activists and professionals) involved in marine and coastal spaces of Indigenous peoples. The project’s decolonial ethical framework involves free and informed consent, transparency, collaboration and reciprocity.

Sexual violence adjudication in Odisha courts

Preeti Pratishruti Dash, University of Cambridge, £1500

This ethnographic study examines sexual violence adjudication in Odisha’s trial courts, focusing on adult rape cases (Indian Penal Code, section 376) and child sexual abuse (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012). Based in Bhubaneswar’s Sessions Court, the research explores the gap between legal theory and practice through comprehensive fieldwork across the entire legal ecosystem, including District Legal Aid Services, Sakhi centres, Forensic Science Laboratory, Crime Records Bureau and Regional Jail.

The methodology employs court observations and interviews with diverse stakeholders: judges, lawyers, victims, defendants and court officials. Ethical considerations are paramount given the sensitive nature of cases involving vulnerable populations.

The research will analyse how informal legal processes, evidentiary standards and institutional practices interact to shape case outcomes in sexual violence adjudication. Findings will contribute to academic discourse on legal pluralism and gender justice whilst providing practical insights for legal professionals, policymakers and women’s rights organisations. Results will be disseminated through a PhD thesis submitted to the University of Cambridge and findings will also be shared through policy briefs, and workshops aimed at judicial officers and legal aid providers.

RDG ‘Law and Interdisciplinarity’

A Research Discussion Group (RDG), ‘**Law and Interdisciplinarity**’, was established on 1 July 2024 by Dr Sofiya Kartalova (Convenor) at the School of Law, University of Nottingham. Since then, it has attracted close to 40 members from the School of Law and other disciplines at the University of Nottingham. Its monthly hybrid meetings have generated stimulating discussions on the academic and practical aspects of interdisciplinary legal research. For more information, visit its **webpage** here and the **announcement** for its launch event. Other meetings included a two-part event on publishing, featuring editors-in-chief of leading journals, another on editing a volume on interdisciplinary research methods in EU law, and a third on ‘Tort law and unawareness’. Full details of speakers and topics can be found **here**. RDG ‘Law and Interdisciplinarity’ also welcomes expressions of interest from external researchers, experienced in the field of law and interdisciplinarity, to remotely participate in its meetings or other activities, or from research institutions, to build strategic partnerships on a domestic or international level. For more information, contact: **e sofiya.kartalova@nottingham.ac.uk**.

Sofiya Kartalova, RDG Founder and Convenor

Centre for People’s Justice, led by the University of Liverpool

The new centre, which has received £4.1 million from the AHRC, is aimed at responding to the public’s need for the law to be fairer, safer and more inclusive. It is a coalition of 45 organisations, including six other UK universities. The convenors of the Centre are Professors Helen Stalford and Lydia Hayes from the School of Law and Social Justice at the University of Liverpool. One of the centre’s initial projects, the Brown Envelope Project, will focus on the way the public understand and respond to official correspondence from the authorities. See **w [website](#)** for details.

people . . .

The SLSA Board nominated two scholars to the AcSS for election as fellows in the latest round of appointments. We are delighted to announce that Helen Carr, Professor of Social Justice and Property Law, Southampton University, and Professor Emilie Cloatre, Professor of Medical Law, King’s College London, have both been elected as AcSS Fellows. See **w [website](#)** for full details.

Dr NATALIE KYNESWOOD, Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, Oxford, has been awarded a Wellcome Early Career Award of £582,390 for her project ‘**Care in the courtroom: trauma-informed specialist courts and the medicalisation of justice**’.

Professor MAYA UNNITHAN, University of Sussex, has received a Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship of £115,023 for her project ‘**Reproductive freedom and ethics: a comparative project on the making of self**’.

Professor Chloë Kennedy, University of Edinburgh, has received a Leverhulme Research Project grant of £372,138 for her project ‘**A history of hurt feelings and the law**’.

Developing a mixed funding model for free legal advice

This Nuffield project will explore potential creative and supplementary funding models to secure a sustainable future for the legal advice sector, which plays a crucial role in supporting vulnerable communities. The team will answer eight key questions, including what funding schemes exist internationally, what are their characteristics, and how do they facilitate access to justice for the disadvantaged. The project is being led by Professor Linda Mulcahy, University of Oxford. See [w website](#) for details.

Consultation on criminal legal aid

The Government has launched a consultation on criminal legal aid aiming to deliver more efficient justice for victims and stabilise the criminal legal aid system by investing millions more in criminal legal aid. See [announcement](#) for details and see [w website](#) for consultation. Closing date: 4 July 2025.

UKCLA blog ‘The politics of judicial decision-making in the UK’s Top Court’

Does the judge who hears a case affect the outcome, particularly, in the UK’s top court? This is a question that has received increasing attention of late. In this UK Constitutional Law Association blog post, Professor David Sugarman utilises his research on the behind-the-scenes proceedings in the *Pinochet* case (1998–1999) to address this question. See [w website](#) to read the full post.

Talking Rights! New human rights blog

The Talking Rights blog is a scholarly blog focused on publishing high-quality and topical pieces in the field of human rights and public international law. Based at the Institute for Human Rights at Åbo Akademi University, Turku, Finland, it is edited and curated by a dynamic team of scholars and students. The editors invite submissions on diverse perspectives on human rights and public international law. See [w talkingrights.org](#) for details.

SLSA JOURNALS INITIATIVE

*The Northern Ireland Legal Quarterly (NILQ) is a leading independent journal that provides an international forum for peer-reviewed scholarship, with a strong contribution from the socio-legal community. Since moving to exclusive online publication in 2017, the journal has rapidly grown its readership and reach, focusing on increasing the substantive range of its publications, widening the availability of open access content, and specialising in fast turnaround from submission to publication through the introduction of its **Advance** section. Chief Editor Professor Mark Flear and Production Editor Marie Selwood work closely together, coordinating with other members of the Editorial Board, authors and readers, and here present an overview of the journal’s latest innovations.*

The journal makes its most important decisions on a collective basis involving all the Editorial Board (drawn from the Law School at Queen’s University Belfast) and an International Editorial Board, comprising leading legal scholars from countries including the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. New members are to be added to the latter periodically. The International Editorial Board, an innovation to our governance introduced in 2021 as part of a comprehensive relaunch aimed at ensuring the journal’s sustainability, has proven essential to maintaining the highest possible editorial processes and shaping the development of the journal so that it meets the needs of authors and readers. The journal uses a double-blind peer-review process for all article submissions and has a strong team of regular reviewers that provide a firm foundation for editorial excellence.

We aim to offer authors a smooth and efficient editorial journey once their articles have been accepted. We communicate directly with our contributors throughout the process, keeping them fully informed and updated right up to the day of publication.

Though not yet fully open access, all our content is available free of charge on our [website](#) one year after publication.* However, we have been expanding the open access availability of our content, with most issues

containing at least one open access article and some issues being completely without restrictions: for example, most recently, spring 2025 – a **special issue in honour of Chris Newdick**, edited by Thérèse Callus; and autumn 2024 – a **special issue on the Windsor Framework**, edited by Tobias Lock, Mary Dobbs and Karen Lynch Shally.

The journal welcomes proposals for special issues on themes across legal scholarship. **Our archive** demonstrates the wide variety of subject matter covered by our guest editors over the years. In addition, we regularly publish supplements and, due to our dynamic editorial processes, we are able to react quickly to events. For instance, during and after the pandemic, we published two special issues focused on key themes relating to Covid-19: ‘**Covid-19 Law: breadth, depth and future implications**’ and ‘**Covid-19 and legal responses on the island of Ireland**’.

Since 2018 the journal’s contents has been promoted via social media, and we have recently moved our focus to **Bluesky** and **LinkedIn**. Meanwhile, with the aim of helping readers to obtain a snapshot of recent articles, our **Contributors’ Blog** allows authors to summarise their articles after publication, while underlining the core contribution to scholarly debates.

Our most recent innovation is our ‘**Reflections on Writing**’ series, which we launched in February 2025 with an **inaugural article** by Professor Mariana Valverde, University of Toronto. The articles in this series are by selected authors, who have kindly given of their time to think about and share often highly personal reflections on their writing practices, in particular, how, where and why do they write and with whom. The series has proven exceptionally popular, and to date we have published eight highly readable and thought-provoking contributions from a range of scholars from across the UK and overseas.

Also, this year the *NILQ* has been proud to provide sponsorship towards SLSA 2025 in Liverpool, and Professor Flear was delighted to join a panel on journal publishing, in a special session on the final morning of the conference.

On behalf of the Editorial Board and International Editorial Board, the Chief Editor warmly invites **submissions of articles, commentaries and notes** from SLSA members. If you have any queries please contact [e m.flear@qub.ac.uk](mailto:m.flear@qub.ac.uk).

* And available on Heinonline & LexisNexis after three months.

Legal Temporalities of Sexual Consent (2025) Caroline Derry, Edinburgh University Press, £90hb/eb 272pp

This book offers new perspectives on two key themes: the criminal law of sexual consent and the temporalities of law. It uses detailed feminist analysis to investigate how the kinds of time produced by statutes and court decisions are vital to constructing the gendered, liberal, legal subject. By shedding light upon a contested and multi-faceted legal issue, it demonstrates that more expansive temporalities are the precondition for a richer, relational understanding of consent. Use code for 30% discount at checkout: NEW30.

Law and War in Popular Culture (2024) Stefan Machura (ed), Nomos €59hb/eb 237pp

Leading international scholars provide fresh perspectives on law and war in popular culture and analyse works of popular culture, place them into their context at the time of origin and discuss their meaning for today's audiences. Law and war in film, television series, opera and pop music are investigated in the 10 chapters of the book by authors coming from the subjects of media studies, political science, sociology, law and criminology as well as music.

Judicial Individuality on the UK Supreme Court (2025) Lewis Graham, Hart £85hb/£75.50eb 304pp

This book presents an empirical analysis of the UK Supreme Court's output over its first 10 years, with a specific focus on each individual judge's contribution to each case. It shows that judges, like all of us, are human; it would be difficult to imagine that any of us, even in our most professional capacity, could act completely independently of our predilections, motivations and biases. The same is true for the judges sitting on the UK's highest court.

Pseudolaw and Sovereign Citizens (2025) Harry Hobbs, Stephen Young & Joe McIntyre (eds), Hart £95hb/85.50eb 376pp

This is the first-ever edited volume solely dedicated to examining pseudolaw and its most prominent adherents, sovereign citizens. Drawing on the expertise of judges, criminologists, legal theorists and political sociologists, this collection offers insights into the global growth and alarming adaptability of pseudolaw. While it might be tempting to laugh at the ridiculousness of pseudolaw, it is a serious matter. People who make these claims rob themselves of meaningful legal opportunities and impose great costs to themselves, the administration of justice, and the community. Pseudolaw is also linked to violent extremism and indicative of growing social insecurity.

The Market Citizenship Illusion: Free Movement Rights for Atypical Workers (2025) Alice Welsh, Hart £85hb/OA 272pp

This open access book challenges the existing focus in EU citizenship scholarship which overlooks the limitations of free movement for atypical workers. Arguing that the vague EU concept of 'work' allows for its restricted application in member states, it shows how many workers and economic contributors are left out of the free movement regime. It argues that, if EU free movement rights are awarded on the basis of market credentials, more must be done to ensure an inclusive market citizenship. Use code GLR BD8 for discount on hardback version.

Domestic Violence in Pakistan: The Legal Construction of 'Bad' and 'Mad' Women (2025)

Daanika Kamal, Oxford University Press £100hb 256pp

Pakistani women are increasingly pursuing legal avenues against acts of domestic violence. Their claims, however, are often dismissed through character allegations that label them as 'bad' women in need of control, or 'mad' women

not to be trusted. This book explores why the subjectivities of women victims are constructed in particular ways, and how these subjectivities are captured and negotiated in the Pakistani legal system. Use code AUFLY for 30% discount at checkout.

Inside Asylum Appeals: Access, Participation and Procedure in Europe (2024) Nick Gill, Nicole Hoellerer, Jessica Hambly & Daniel Fisher, Routledge £145hb/OA 332pp

Appeals are a crucial part of Europe's asylum system but they remain poorly understood. Building on insights and perspectives from legal geography and socio-legal studies, this book shines a light on what takes place during asylum appeals and puts forward suggestions for improving their fairness and accessibility. Drawing on hundreds of ethnographic observations of appeal hearings, as well as research interviews, the authors paint a detailed picture of the limitations of refugee protection available through asylum appeals.

Detention and the Right to Liberty: Addressing Gaps in Protection at the European Court of Human Rights (2025) Sabina Garahan, Routledge £145/OA 240pp

This book is a ground-breaking study of how the European Court of Human Rights interprets article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights – the right to liberty and security. The right to liberty is a fundamental provision that is enshrined not only in the Convention but in all major human rights treaties. Despite this, article 5 remains both a largely underdeveloped and unexplored area of European human rights law. The work aims to fill this gap by presenting an original framework for the progressive interpretation of the right to liberty.

The Palimpsest Constitution: The Social Life of Constitutions in Myanmar (2025) Melissa Crouch, Oxford University Press £100 320pp

This volume explores the social life of constitutional legacies, or how past constitutions matter. Using the case of Myanmar, the author demonstrates that constitutions are a palimpsest of past texts, ideas and practices, an accumulation of contested legacies. Through constitutional ethnography, it traces Myanmar's modern constitutional history from the late colonial era through its postcolonial, socialist and military regimes.

Social and Legal Studies

Volume 34(4) August 2025

- Reproducing timely subjects: how abortion law calendars social reproduction – Ruth Fletcher
- Spatial governance of the unhoused: on social death in the contemporary city – Kajsa Lundberg & Alison Young
- On oil flow and coral enclosure: climate changes in the Red Sea – Irus Braverman
- Kinder justice: communicating legitimacy to children in sentencing courts – Kathryn Hollingsworth
- The courtroom as four landscapes: reflections on terrorism trials through ethnographic research – Tasniem Anwar & Machteld Aardse
- The legal profession in battle: cause lawyers versus state-embedded lawyers in Hong Kong's democratization – Ying-ho Kwong
- How to build a culture of human rights in the era of populism: reflections from the human rights city of York (UK) – Paul Gready

- **NEXT 100 YEARS' SIXTH HEILBRON LECTURE**
1 July 2025: Central Criminal Court, Old Bailey, London
Speaker: Dr Rumiana Yotova, University of Cambridge. See [w website](#) for details.
- **SIDNEY SEMINAR: REAL REGIME CHANGE?**
2 July 2025: UCL Faculty of Laws
See [w website](#) for details.
- **WORKSHOP: IN THE NAME OF NATIONAL SECURITY: THE FRAGILITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS**
3 July 2025: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, Madrid
See [w website](#) for details.
- **THE IMPEACHMENT OF WARREN HASTINGS: THE FIRST GOVERNOR GENERAL OF INDIA**
3–4 July 2025: University of Worcester
Speaker: Dame Linda Colley. See [w website](#) for details.
- **RACIAL JUSTICE, EQUITY AND POWER CONFERENCE**
9 July 2025: University of Suffolk, Ipswich
See [w website](#) for details.
- **FACING THE FUTURE: JUSTICE**
10 July 2025: National Library of Scotland
See [w website](#) for details.
- **1885 AND ITS LONG SHADOW: SEXUAL OFFENCES IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT**
11 July 2025: online from the Open University
See [w website](#) for details.
- **BEHIND CLOSED BOOKS: MONEY LAUNDERING IN UK INSOLVENCY PROCEEDINGS**
17 July 2025: School of Law, University of Leeds
See [w website](#) for details.
- **LEGAL HUMANITIES ASSOCIATION: LAUNCH**
22 July 2025: Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen
See [w website](#) for details.
- **TAKING SECRETS TO THE GRAVE**
25 July 2025: Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen
See [w website](#) for details.
- **LAW, DRUGS, AND THE MOVING BODY**
25 August 2025: University of Manchester
See [w website](#) for details of this SLSA seminar.
- **NORDIC LAW AND GENDER CONFERENCE 2025: AGAINST ALL ODDS**
28–29 August 2025: University of Copenhagen
See [w website](#) for details.
- **TO DETAIN OR PUNISH**
3 September 2025: The London Archives
See [w website](#) for details.
- **CRITICAL LEGAL CONFERENCE 2025: 'LAW AND PROCESS' STREAM CFP**
4–6 September 2025: University of Exeter
Closing date: 1 August 2025. See [w website](#) for details.
- **RESEARCH METHODS RENDEZVOUS**
18 September 2025 & 29 October 2025: online from NCRM
See [w website](#) for details of the National Centre for Research Methods capacity-building days.
- **THE VULNERABLE ACCUSED IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**
10–11 September 2025: Cardiff University
See [w website](#) for details.
- **RESPONSIBLE AI IN HEALTH CARE**
10–12 September 2025: Rotterdam, The Netherlands
See [w website](#) for details.
- **INCLUSIVE LEGAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE**
11 September 2025: Leeds Beckett University
See [w website](#) for details.
- **25 YEARS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**
18 September 2025: Liberty Building, University of Leeds
See [w website](#) for details.
- **CONTEMPORARY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN COMMERCIAL LAW**
24–25 September 2025: Swansea University
See [w website](#) for details.
- **SAFI ANNUAL CONFERENCE**
9–10 October 2025: University of Amsterdam
Theme: Reimagining Justice. See [w website](#) for details.
- **FROM BINARY TO BENCH: EMPOWERING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND AI LITERACY IN GLOBAL LEGAL EDUCATION**
5 November 2025: University of Reading
See [w website](#) for detail.
- **PURE IMAGINATION: STORIES, INSTITUTIONS AND LAW REFORM**
17 November 2025: Strand Campus, KCL
See [w website](#) for details.
- **RESISTANCE AND AGENCY IN THE DIGITAL SOCIETY: BEYOND LITERACY, TRANSPARENCY, AND RISK ASSESSMENT**
15 December 2025: University of Lausanne, Switzerland
See [w website](#) for details.
- **MODERN STUDIES IN PROPERTY LAW: CFP**
30 March–1 April 2026: University of Southampton
See [w website](#) for details. Call closes on 15 September 2025.
- **SLSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026**
30 March–1 April 2026: University of Sussex
The call for current topics closes on 28 August 2025. The call for papers will open on 22 September 2025.

Journal of Law and Society
Volume 52(2) Summer 2025

Articles

The new voyeurism: criminalising the creation of deepfake porn – Clare McGlynn & Rüya Tuna Toparlak

What is (the) matter with climate litigation? – Stewart Motha

The real inefficiency of plea bargaining: rehabilitation and reintegration – Jay Gormley

Algorithm-facilitated discrimination: a socio-legal study of the use of AI hiring systems by Australian employers – Natalie Sheard

'Separation of powers'? The *sui generis* case of China's sentencing pyramid – Enshen Li

Victim guilt as the collateral damage of court hearings – court professionals on victim-blaming in rape, fraud and assault – Maritha Jacobsson

Book reviews

Property in Contemporary Capitalism by Paddy Ireland – Helen Carr & Rowan Alcock

How Autocrats Attack Expertise: Resistance to Trump and Trumpism; How Autocrats Abuse Power: Resistance to Trump and Trumpism; and How Autocrats Seek Power by Richard L. Abel – Bojan Bugarić

Surveillance Law, Data Retention and Human Rights: A Risk to Democracy by Matthew White – Marcin Rojszćak

Law at the Movies: Turning Legal Doctrine into Art by Stanley Fish – Peter Goodrich

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