

Prof. Y.S. Lee (conference co-host)



Professor Lee is a lawyer, economist, and international relations scholar with internationally-recognized authority in law and development and international trade law. He is currently Director and Professorial Fellow of the Law and Development Institute and a full-time faculty at West Virginia University College of Law. He has also taught and conducted academic research at prominent universities, including Cornell University, New York University, Emory University, Tulane University, the University of Manchester, and the University of Sydney. He graduated with a degree in economics and academic distinction from the University of California at Berkeley and received law degrees from the University of Cambridge (B.A., M.A., Ph.D). He is licensed to practice law in multiple jurisdictions, including the United States (California and North Carolina) and the United Kingdom.

Professor Lee has published one hundred thirty academic articles, books, chapters, and shorter notes with leading publishers, including Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, Routledge, and Edward Elgar, in the areas of international economic law, law and development, development / institutional economics, comparative law, and international commercial arbitration. He has developed the “General Theory of Law and Development,” which examines the causal mechanisms by which law impacts development, and the “New General Theory of Development Economics,” which analyzes the constituent elements of economic development. He is currently an associate editor of the Journal of World Trade and the founding editor-in-chief of the Law and Development Review.

Professor Lee participated in a number of bilateral and multilateral negotiations on international trade and investment at international forums such as the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law. He has appeared before WTO dispute settlement panels and the WTO Appellate Body as a government counsel, and advised national governments, international law firms, and consulting companies on international trade and development projects and major international commercial arbitration cases. He has frequently spoken on issues of international economic law, law and development, and the WTO through over seventy speech engagements at prominent forums such as Harvard University Kennedy School of Government, Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, and the World Bank.

Prof. Richard Chen (conference co-host)



Richard Chen joined the William S. Richardson School of Law in 2019 as an Assistant Professor and was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure in 2021. He previously taught at the law schools of the University of Maine and Pepperdine University. At Richardson, he teaches Civil Procedure, Contracts, International Economic Law, and Remedies and serves as the Director of International Programs.

In 2023, Professor Chen received the University of Hawai‘i’s highest teaching award, the Board of Regents’ Medal for Excellence in Teaching. He has had the honor of serving three times as the faculty commencement speaker, elected by the graduating classes of 2022, 2024, and 2025.

Professor Chen’s research focuses on international investment law, judicial and arbitral decisionmaking, and the practice of precedent. His scholarship has appeared in the *Harvard Law Review*, *Yale Journal of International Law*, *Harvard International Law Journal*, *Virginia Journal of International Law*, and *William & Mary Law Review*. He is currently an editor for ASIL Insights, a publication of the American Society of International Law. He also serves as a member of the Academic Forum on ISDS, a global network of scholars who contribute research to support the reform of investor-state dispute settlement particularly in the context of UNCITRAL’s Working Group III.

After graduating from Harvard Law School, where he served as an editor of the *Harvard Law Review*, Professor Chen clerked for the Honorable Raymond C. Fisher of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. He then worked as an associate at Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP in Los Angeles, specializing in complex business litigation, before returning to the Ninth Circuit to clerk for the Honorable Paul J. Watford during his first term on the court.

Prof. Jonathan Zasloff



Jonathan Zasloff is Professor of Law at the UCLA School of Law and Professor of Urban Planning (by courtesy) at the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs. Something of a polymath (or a dilettante if one is more cynical), he has authored books and articles on a wide variety of topics, especially in the fields of property, land use/urban planning, water resources, climate change, international relations, and legal history. He is the co-author of *Moving Toward Integration: The Past and Future of Fair Housing* (Harvard University Press, 2018) and *Land Use Regulation* (5th ed. 2025), as well as dozens of articles about these and other topics. Professor Zasloff has a keen interest in world politics; in addition to a J.D. from Yale Law School, he holds a Ph.D. in the history of American foreign policy from Harvard and an M.Phil. in International Relations from Cambridge University. His most recent work concerns the Indian Constitution and urban-rural battles over water rights. He grew up in Los Angeles and remains immensely proud of his native city but is considerably less so of his native country, and is quite grateful for his dual citizenship (with Canada). He is also an ordained rabbi and is extremely interested in the spiritual aspects of law and development.

Presentation Title: “Water, Federalism, and Sustainability: The South Africa Case and Beyond”

[link to paper](#)

This paper takes its inspiration from the near-disaster of “Day Zero,” in which the City of Cape Town was days away from running out of water in the summer of 2018. Subsequent research has indicated that a lack of coordination rising to outright conflict between national and provincial governments played a central role in bringing on the crisis. The more we consider the global crisis of freshwater resources, battles over the proper *level* of governance loom large, whether in South Africa to India to Australia to many other areas of the Global South. Appeals to “subsidiarity,” often referenced in governance discussions, do little work because they basically beg the question by introducing notions of “effectiveness” or “appropriateness” without acknowledging the trade-offs inherent in such notions. The paper will attempt to set forth a framework for analyzing which levels of authority are the most appropriate for different aspects of water governance, not through a general framework, but rather as a series of critical questions that must be addressed and whose answers will vary sharply from country to country. To use an obvious example: which level of government will have greater institutional capacity to manage projects? And how might we determine that? The answer to this will vary sharply between countries, preventing a general framework, but must be considered in setting up a regulatory system. Given how water disputes have long been judicialized (or “tribunalized”), I hope that these critical questions can serve as a template for dispute resolution mechanisms to craft solutions to preserve freshwater sustainability and thus long-term economic and social development.

Prof. Rashmi Raman



Rashmi Raman works as Research Fellow at the National University of Singapore, Centre for International Law. She was previously Professor of law and Senior Fellow at the Centre for International Legal Studies at the Jindal Global Law School, O.P. Jindal Global University, India, for over a decade. She has taught international law at universities in Asia, Europe, and Africa, offering courses that blend rigorous legal analysis with creative inquiry. In addition to academia, Rashmi consults for international organizations on international criminal law and human rights law and serves on the Board of Directors of an international refugee law organization.

Rashmi's scholarship situates at the intersection of critical legal theory, transitional justice, international criminal law, and international human rights law. She applies critical methodology to offer alternatives to dominant narratives of international law, drawing on history and critique to reimagine its mainstream accounts. Her approach to legal research and writing is interdisciplinary, integrating literature, poetry, drama, and doctrinal legal texts in her scholarship.

Before entering academia, Rashmi worked with the United Nations in public international law and international criminal law in various capacities across the globe. She contributed to the final cases at the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha, Tanzania, and worked with the United Nations Assistance to the Khmer Rouge Trials in Cambodia. Rashmi is a former International Law and Global Justice Fellow of the NYU International Law & Human Rights program at the United Nations International Law Commission in Geneva and recipient of the United Nations International Law Fellowship Programme at The Hague Academy of International Law.

Presentation Title: “Law, Development, and Environmental Justice: Decolonial Pathways in Colombia’s Post-Conflict Legal Landscape”

[link to paper \(in progress\)](#)

The paper argues that environmental degradation in post-conflict settings is often neglected in peacebuilding, reinforcing poverty, displacement, and renewed violence; patterns intensified by Eurocentric legal frameworks that marginalize local knowledge and favor extractive, technocratic models. In contrast, Colombia's post-conflict model, grounded in Third World Approaches to International Law (TWAIL), offers a transformative path. Through the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), it employs restorative measures like community-led reforestation, ensures participatory reparations inspired by the Escazú Agreement, and holds perpetrators of environmental harm accountable, including for ecocide. This decolonial, participatory framework recenters Global South epistemologies and redefines environmental justice as central to sustainable peace, offering crucial lessons for post-conflict law and development.

Prof. Giovanni Coinu



Professor Dr. Coinu is a distinguished lawyer, law professor, and expert in constitutional law, recognized internationally for his authority in the field. He graduated magna cum laude in law from the University of Cagliari in Sardinia, Italy, and holds a PhD in Constitutional Justice and Protection of Fundamental Rights from the University of Pisa, Italy. From 2013 to 2020, he served as an Adjunct Professor of EU Law at the John Marshall Law School in Chicago, IL, and he was a Fulbright Scholar from 2010 to 2011.

He teaches courses on constitutional law and information and communication law at the University of Cagliari. In addition to his teaching, Professor Coinu acts as a consultant for the Sardinian Government and has previously provided consulting services for the Italian Government.

Professor Coinu has conducted and presented research on constitutional law, EU law, and education law at top universities across Europe, the United States, and Asia. He has published over sixty scholarly articles, books, chapters, and shorter notes with prominent European publishers in the fields of public law, fundamental rights, and regional and comparative law

Presentation Title: “Balancing Renewable Energy Deployment and Environmental Safeguards: A Legal Perspective from the EU and Italian Contexts.”

[link to paper](#)

The paper focuses on how the European Green Deal and successive EU directives have redefined energy governance across Member States, emphasizing renewable energy deployment in pursuit of climate neutrality and energy autonomy. In Italy, Legislative Decree No. 199/2021 tasks regional authorities with designating suitable areas for renewable installations. Sardinia’s Regional Law No. 20/2024 introduces temporary prohibitions to safeguard environmental and landscape values, triggering a wave of constitutional and administrative litigation. Central to these disputes is the interpretation of zoning restrictions and their retroactive effects on ongoing projects. This paper explores the resulting legal uncertainty, administrative burden, and the chilling effect on investor confidence. It situates these dynamics within broader EU-State-Region competence tensions and evaluates emerging regional frameworks. The study bridges comparative law and development theory to reflect on legal tools for green transitions amid overlapping crises and competing policy goals.

Md. Imam Hossain



Md. Imam Hossain is a Barrister, Arbitrator and International Development Law scholar, as well as Chevening and IPBA scholar. He did LL.M in Law in Development from University of Warwick, U.K. He has hosted and anchored talk show ‘Law & Development’ on national television of Bangladesh. He is the Director of the Law & Development Research Institute which is a wing of IDCLA.

Md. Imam Hossain researches certain significant areas of international development law and presented in numerous international conferences as titled ‘Environmental Justice and Climate Ethics – A Debate of North-South’, ‘Global Uniform Policy for Energy Security’, ‘OBOR – A New Dimension in Cyber Security and Export Data Privacy’, ‘Issue of Overlapping in Transfer Pricing and Customs – Reconciliation of Two World’ and ‘Issue of Technological Neutrality in Paperless Arbitration’.

Mr. Imam Hossain has published over scholarly articles on “The Impact of OBOR Initiative in the Asia Pacific Region”, Hors Serie Volume XXV, 2019, Modernization of National Commercial Laws and the Role of International Legal Harmonization and "Pursuing Sustainable Economic Development through "Right to Development," Chevening Journal Volume 1 2012, Bangladesh.

Md. Imam Hossain received Lex-Falcon Global Award, Singapore, 2022 for contribution in legal domain.

Presentation Title: “Geopolitical Tensions, Environmental Conflict and the Development Law: Reconstructing Environmental Frameworks”

[link to paper](#)

This paper aims to mapping out global impact on environmental disputes and conflicts over development and offer diverse discussion and analysis of overlapping bodies of development laws. The paper analyses the causes of geopolitical tensions triggering geological disputes over natural resources and also discusses transboundary environmental harm and extent of emitters liability as well as issues of environmental taxation. The paper explores the integration of the Right to Development, trading policies and geological technologies addressing economic fairness. We submit that the reconstruction of environmental frameworks as a part of international development laws may reformulate global uniform policy to ensure a sustainable future for all.

Prof. Katherine A. Trisolini



Katherine A. Trisolini is a Professor at Loyola Law School, Los Angeles, at Loyola Marymount University. Professor Trisolini’s scholarship focuses on climate change and energy law, federal administrative law, and local environmental governance. She has spoken and written on these topics in a wide range of contexts. Her articles have appeared in the *Yale Journal of Law and Public Policy*, *Stanford Law Review*, *Colorado Law Review*, *Temple Law Review*, the *UCLA Journal of Environmental Law and Policy*, and the *San Diego Journal of Climate and Energy Law*, among other places. She teaches Environmental Law, Property, Climate Change Law and Local Governments and the Environment. Prior to joining Loyola’s faculty, Trisolini held a teaching and research fellowship at UCLA School of Law.

Before entering academia, Professor Trisolini clerked for the Honorable A. Wallace Tashima, Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, and for the Honorable Consuelo B. Marshall, Central District of California. She practiced environmental law and land use law at Chatten-Brown & Carstens in Santa Monica and at Shute, Mihaly & Weinberger in San Francisco. In these positions, she worked on a broad range of environmental cases under state and federal law.

Trisolini graduated with distinction from Stanford Law School. She also holds a M.A. in Political Science from the University of California at Berkeley and a B.A. from Oberlin College.

Presentation Title: “Towards a Permafrost Protection Treaty in the Arctic”

[link to paper](#)

This article proposes that melting permafrost poses a unique threat that cannot be adequately addressed by existing legal mechanisms. In addition to loss of structural support and habit, melting permafrost threatens to release long-frozen pathogens and dangerous levels of mercury into water, air and soil. New economic opportunities in the Arctic may bring activities that impose further impacts to permafrost. In light of these challenges and the inadequacy of existing legal mechanisms, this article proposes a new international legal framework specifically targeting permafrost preservation.

Dr. Jennifer H Mike



Dr. Jennifer Heaven Mike is a legal scholar, educator, and advocate with a career spanning over a decade in law, gender studies, and human rights. Jennifer Heaven Mike is currently a Global Studies Scholar and an Assistant Professor of Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies (WGGS) at DePauw University, Greencastle, Indiana, USA. She holds the Hampton and Esther Boswell Distinguished University Professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies position at DePauw University. Mike is also an Assistant Professor of Law at the American University of Nigeria (AUN), Yola, Adamawa. Mike further served as the Director of AUN's Centre for Governance, Human Rights and Development (CGDHR) and the Director of the Intersessional (Summer Program) at AUN. She has also worked as the HoD (Chair) of the Department of Public and International Law (PIL). Mike has served as the Gender and Diversity Officer of the Academic and Professional Committee of the International Bar Association (IBA). She obtained her PhD in Law at the University of Exeter, UK and LLM at London Metropolitan University. Mike had an extensive professional background, working in law firms in the UK and Nigeria, and serving as the Legal Advisor and Company Secretary of EcoSpectra Ltd. She is also the Founder and Director of Jennifer Heaven and Associates, a law firm dedicated to protecting the indigent, women, and children.

Presentation Title: "Environmental Constitutionalism and the Future of Sustainable Development: A Human Rights Imperative in Closing Global Governance Gaps"

[link to paper](#)

The presentation explores the intersection of constitutional environmental protection, sustainable development, and international legal accountability. It examines how environmental constitutionalism can serve as a tool to bridge legal and governance gaps in the global response to environmental degradation, issues that are deeply entwined with questions of economic justice and development. This paper explores the evolution and promise of environmental constitutionalism as both a national and global legal response to ecological collapse. It argues that recognizing a substantive right to a healthy environment within constitutional frameworks elevates environmental protection from policy preference to enforceable legal obligation. The presentation also highlights the emerging calls for new international legal instruments that recognize environmental rights as universal and justiciable. It critically examines the limitations of current international law, which lacks binding obligations or enforcement mechanisms to compel states and corporations to act in defense of the environment. By drawing from comparative constitutional models and recent jurisprudence, the paper proposes a path forward for integrating environmental constitutionalism into both domestic constitutions and international legal frameworks.

Prof. Katri L. Nousiainen



Professor Katri L. Nousiainen is a lawyer and a professional in economics and legal education. She is Professor of Economics and Legal Studies at Seton Hall University's Stillman School of Business. In addition, she is affiliated faculty with the Yale Law School, Information Society Project (ISP) as an ISP Fellow; the University of Cambridge Law (the United Kingdom) as a Research Scholar; and Hanken School of Economics (Finland) as a Teaching and Research Faculty. Besides, she is a Teaching Faculty in the Management Program at Harvard University. She is known for her academic articles and book chapters on law and economics, legal design, negotiation and contracting, and on law and emerging technologies, especially related to quantum technologies. Besides her academic work, she supports and assists companies and other operators in improving the quality and efficiency of their legal processes, products, and services. Presently she is pioneering academic research projects on law, emerging technologies, and on legal design in negotiation and commercial contracting.

Presentation Title: "Navigating Quantum Frontier: Emerging Legal and Development Challenges"

[link to paper](#)

This paper explores critical legal and developmental challenges posed by quantum technologies. It analyzes intellectual property, patenting and funding to avoid bottlenecks. A focus is on preventing quantum disparities by promoting equitable global access and technology transfer. The paper also addresses data security, post-quantum cryptography and its impact on privacy. Broader ethical/societal concerns, including dual-use issues are examined. Finally, the paper highlights the urgent need for regulatory adaptation and shared international standards. This work aims to foster collaborative efforts for ethical, equitable global quantum innovation.

Prof. Randall K. Johnson



Randall K. Johnson joined the University of Missouri-Kansas City, School of Law as a Professor of Law in 2022. A graduate of University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, London School of Economics, New York University, and University of Chicago Law School, Professor Johnson teaches Property I, Property II, Fair/Affordable Housing and Real Estate Transactions. Professor Johnson's scholarship appears in recent volumes of the Maryland Law Review Online (2026), Illinois Law Review Online (2025, 2023), Kansas Law Review (2024), Washington University In Saint Louis Law Review Online (2023), Southern California Law Review Postscript (2022), the Iowa Law Review (2021, 2017), the California Law Review Online (2020), the Minnesota Law Review Headnotes (2019) and the Indiana Law Journal Supplement (2018).

Presentation Title: “Why U.S. Cities Should Comply With Public Record Requests”

[link to paper](#)

The City of Kansas City (KCMO), at least in recent years, refuses to comply with Missouri’s sub-national version of the Freedom of Information Act. Over twenty (20) individuals filed written complaints with Missouri Attorney General Andrew Bailey in response to KCMO’s non-compliance, while others took informal steps to assert their rights, including contacting Mayor Quinton Lucas, engaging with city council members, and sharing their experiences. Yet, as shown by a new class action lawsuit involving individuals from across the political spectrum, KCMO still fails to release many records.

Other seemingly progressive governments likewise defy state-level Freedom of Information Acts. A brief review of local news reports shows several Democrat-led governments withhold public records for unlawful reasons, such as to gain an advantage in litigation or shield unprogressive policies. Such non-production is both unlawful and anti-democratic, as it prevents citizens from exercising their state-conferred rights to information.

In this context, withholding records constitutes an unjustified barrier to economic, political, and social development. Each violation restricts access to relevant information in an effort to protect the interests of government allies. Although this issue is evident, it is seldom addressed in academic literature. This essay is the first to explain why more U.S. cities should comply with public record requests. It also outlines the economic, political, and social benefits of broader access to public information. The essay concludes by drawing on recent administrative law scholarship to argue for increased legal compliance.

Ms. Yuxing He



Ms Yuxing He is an admitted legal practitioner in the Australian Capital Territory with four years of professional experience in commercial and migration law. She completed a Master of Laws (by research) at Bond University, where her thesis, titled *Disincentivising Counterfeit Trading under the Current Legislative Framework in Australia: Do Consumers Play a Role?*, explored the intersection of law and economics, focusing on consumer protection and fair competition. The research critically examined the role of consumers and consumption within Australia's regulatory framework.

Ms He commenced her PhD at Bond University in early 2022, with a research focus on data regulation. Her doctoral research investigates regulatory approaches to incentivising data sharing, drawing on comparative analysis and law-and-economics theory. In addition to her core research, she has developed a strong interest in legal reform related to smart city initiatives and their implications for citizens as consumers.

Presentation Title: “Law and Development in Smart Cities: A Case Study of Hangzhou’s Regulatory Model and Its International Impact” (co-presentation with Prof. Vai Io Lo)

[link to paper](#)

Across the globe, cities are experiencing unprecedented urban population growth, leading to increased pressure on infrastructure and public services. In response, smart cities that leverage IoT, big data analytics, and AI for effective resource management have emerged as a solution to increasing urbanization. However, strategies and measures adopted to construct smart cities may negatively impact residents' legitimate rights and interests. Thus, there is an urgent need for establishing robust legal frameworks that can safeguard residents' rights and maximize developmental benefits.

Hangzhou has implemented a sophisticated legal framework designed to guide the development of a smart city while trying to preserve residents' other legitimate rights and interest. This paper, therefore, explores the critical role of law in shaping the development of smart cities, using Hangzhou as a representative case study. By examining the economic, political and social imperatives underlying Hangzhou's regulatory model, this paper investigates why the regulatory framework is designed in a particular manner and how it addresses the inherent tensions between innovation and regulation. Furthermore, in discussing the implications of Hangzhou's regulatory model for other countries seeking to navigate the complexities of smart city development, this paper contributes to the broader discourse on urban governance and legal innovation in the digital age, highlighting the transformative impact of law on the evolution of smart cities.

Prof. Vai Io Lo



Professor Lo is a doctoral supervisor at the Faculty of Law, Bond University, Australia. She served as the Associate Dean (Research) in the Faculty of Law from 2017 to 2020 and managed the Tim Fischer Centre for Global Trade and Finance from 2006 to 2014. She has had teaching or research appointments with the University of Washington, National University of Singapore, the International University of Japan, Waseda University, and Bond University. She has also been a Visting Scholar to Harvard University, Peking University, and Renmin University of China. In terms of research interests, she has concentrated on comparative and interdisciplinary studies, especially on Australian, Chinese, Japanese and US laws, and in the areas of labour and employment, foreign direct investment, health care, law and society, legal education, judicial reform, international trade, law and development, consumer protection, and elder law. Her publications are distributed worldwide, including books, journal articles, and book chapters. She has received the Vice-Chancellor's Quality Award for Research Excellence and the Law Faculty Research Supervision Awards.

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Dr. Kwanghyuk “David” Yoo



Dr. Kwanghyuk “David” Yoo is a legal scholar with a unique cross-disciplinary background in antitrust, international trade, and regulatory law. He serves as Assistant Professor of Business Law at Kean University, where he brings both academic rigor and real-world insight to his teaching and research. His career spans roles in academia, government, and international development, including service at Emory University School of Law and the Office of the Attorney General of Iowa, with prior leadership in legal and trade-related functions at the Korea SMEs & Startups Agency.

Dr. Yoo’s scholarship has been recognized for its original contributions to competition law, digital markets, international economic regulation, and law and economics. His work has been published in leading U.S. and international law journals including *Brooklyn Journal of International Law*, *Drake Law Review*, and *South Dakota Law Review* and has informed policy discussions on antitrust and global trade governance. He holds an S.J.D. in Antitrust Law and an LL.M. in International and Comparative Law from the University of Iowa College of Law, as well as a Ph.D. and M.A. in International Law and a B.A. in Laws from Hanyang University.

Presentation Title: “Sustainable Digital Trade: Governing Code and Law in the Digital Economy”

[link to presentation material](#)

This paper proposes a new legal framework to regulate the digital economy by integrating international trade and antitrust law through the lens of new ordoliberalism. Drawing from philosophical insights and technological realities, it introduces the concept of code as a generative regulatory force and explores blockchain as a platform for self-enforcing legal norms. The paper advances the idea of “rule complementarity,” advocating a coordinated governance model for digital markets that prioritizes sustainability, competition, and institutional trust in an era of rapid global transformation.

Assistant Prof. Kehinde Folake Olaoye



Kehinde Folake Olaoye is an Assistant Professor of Commercial Law and Program Coordinator for the LL.M. in International Economic Law and Business Law at the College of Law, Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), Qatar. At HBKU, she teaches commercial law, international economic law and business associations law. Before joining HBKU, Kehinde was a postdoctoral researcher and lecturer at the School of Law, City University of Hong Kong. Kehinde obtained degrees in law from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, King's College London and the University of Ibadan. She is qualified to practice law in Nigeria and has worked as an international arbitration and dispute resolution trainee in the Hong Kong office of an international law firm and as a commercial lawyer in Lagos, Nigeria. Kehinde's research has been published in leading international law journals including the American Journal of International Law, European Journal of International Law and the World Trade Review. She has served as the Managing Editor of the Asia Pacific Law Review and currently serves as a Book Review Editor for the Journal of World Investment and Trade.

Presentation Title: “Sustainable Development, Digital Trade Agreements and the Digital Economy”
(co-presentation with Professor Georgios Dimitropoulos)

[link to paper](#)

This paper is based on a textual analysis of sustainability provisions in recently signed digital economy trade agreements. In addition, this paper analyses policy statements of states and digital economy strategies to show how national policies can and are not influencing the negotiating texts of international trade agreements. This paper shows divergences and convergences between sustainability and economic development as a domestic norm and as a transnational norm in the regulation of the digital economy. Overall, this paper argues that the securitization of trade law, economic security and geoeconomics are hindering the inclusion of specialized sustainability and environmental law protection provisions in digital economy trade agreements and digital economy laws/policies.

Prof. Katrin Kuhlmann



Professor Kuhlmann is a professor, non-profit entrepreneur, and leading authority in international law and development, international trade law, and comparative law. She is also the co-founder and Faculty Director of the Georgetown Law Center on Inclusive Trade and Development and a non-resident Senior Associate with the Global Food Security Project of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Earlier in her career, she worked as a trade negotiator and has held senior positions in think tanks and NGOs, including the New Markets Lab, a law and development innovation lab that she founded in 2010. She holds a law degree from Harvard Law School and was a Fulbright scholar in international economics. She is widely published, with illustrative recent publications including: *Micro International Law* (STANFORD JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL LAW, 2025); *A Comparative Study of the Legal and Regulatory Dimension of Seed Sector Development in Sub-Saharan Africa Using Regulatory Systems Maps* (co-authored, AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS, 2025); *Digital Regulation and Development: A Global Micro and Macro Comparison* (GEORGETOWN JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL LAW, forthcoming 2025); *Inclusive and Sustainable Development in Regulation of the Digital Economy: A Comparative and Contextual Analysis* (forthcoming in CAMBRIDGE HANDBOOK OF DIGITAL TRADE LAW, Burri & Chander, eds., Cambridge University Press), *Globalizing International Economic Law: The Evolution of TradeLab Clinics* (co-authored, forthcoming in LEGAL CLINICS AND INTERNATIONAL LAW, European Society of International Law Book Series, Bartolini, ed.); *The Impact of Trade Disciplines on Women in Developing Economies* (co-authored, forthcoming in RESEARCH HANDBOOK ON TRADE LAW AND DEVELOPMENT, Edward Elgar Publishing, Rolland, ed.); *Rethinking Legal Models for Aligning U.S.-African Trade and the AfCFTA* (forthcoming in HANDBOOK ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA, Birhanu, Hailu, Klimke, & Tietje, eds., Routledge); and *Comparative “Micro” Approaches in International Law* (forthcoming in EDWARD ELGAR RESEARCH HANDBOOK OF COMPARATIVE INTERNATIONAL LAW, Myslinska, Nicola, & Gouêva eds., work in progress).

Presentation Title: “Rethinking Legal Models for Trade and Development in a Shifting International Landscape”

[link to paper](#)

This paper examines sometimes conflicting approaches to issues of distribution and marginalization in international trade. It assesses and compares legal models for trade and development, integrating both “macro” (multilateral trade law and regional trade agreements) and “micro” (domestic law and stakeholder-focused process) dimensions. Ultimately, the paper attempts to assess the strengths and weaknesses of comparative legal models, empirical methods, and interdisciplinary approaches for integrating trade and development at a time of significant global change.

Prof. Salil K. Mehra



Professor Mehra is an internationally-recognized scholar of competition (antitrust) law, with a particular focus on the effects of technology. He is the James E. Beasley Professor of Law at Temple University's Beasley School of Law in Philadelphia, USA. He has also taught and researched in Japan at Keio University and at Temple University Japan. He holds a B.A. in economics from Harvard, an M.A. in Japanese Studies from the UC-Berkeley, and a J.D. from the University of Chicago Law School. He is the author of several dozen articles and book chapters, including several over the past decade introducing the concept of algorithmic collusion, and was also a co-editor of *Algorithms, Collusion and Competition Law: A Comparative Approach* (Elgar, 2023 - with Stephen van Uytsel and Yoshiteru Uemura). Since 2024, he has been the editor-in-chief of the Antitrust Bulletin, a peer-reviewed academic journal founded in 1955.

Presentation Title: “Tariffs, Trade and *In Terrorem* Development”

[link to paper](#)

The recently inaugurated U.S. presidential administration has ushered in a new era of protectionism, chiefly sparked by the U.S.'s imposition of import tariffs. This move threatens to ignite worldwide protectionism, since nations that export to the U.S. have retaliated with tariffs on putative imports to their countries from the U.S. However, given the tangled web of global supply chains, in which a product at various stages may transit through a number of countries before becoming a “U.S.” or “China” export, U.S. tariffs and counterparty retaliatory tariffs risk turning a global web of trade into a global web of tariffs.

Much of the focus on these tariffs has been on major industrial powerhouses such as the U.S., China, the EU, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Canada and India. In fact, the new era of tariffs may have its worst impact on the least developed countries — that are in the process of seeking foreign direct investment (FDI) just to start on the ladder of industrialization – because of the uncertainty tariffs create for investment return. As a result, a critical legal intervention would be to authorize and promote insurance for the risk of short-term tariff shocks; this presentation discusses the details involved in pursuing such an intervention.

Prof. Ronnie R. Gipson Jr.



Professor Gipson is an international law scholar whose research focuses on aviation law and economic policy trade law issues. He is a published scholar worldwide in both areas of specialty within international law. He started his teaching career at Soongsil University in the Global Law Department located in Seoul, Korea. He is an Associate Professor at Penn State Dickinson Law where he teaches Public International Law, International Economic Policy and Trade Law, and Aviation Law. He graduated from Texas A & M University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Modern Languages (French). He then earned his law degree from the University of San Francisco School of Law. Notable publications exemplifying his contributions to international law in aviation law and economic policy trade law issues include the following: *ASEAN—A Regional Trade Pact Model for States in the Global South*, 20 Wash. Univ. Global Studies L. Rev. 391 (2021); *Crafting an Exception to the Principle of Non-Intervention to End Military Coups*, 30 Buff. Hum. Rts. L. Rev. (2025); *The Time Has Come to Stop the Bloodshed in Myanmar and Restore the People’s Democratically Elected Government*, 15 Creighton Int’l & Comp. L. Journal (2024); *Can Lufthansa Successfully Limit its Liability to the Families of the Victims of Germanwings Flight 9525 Under the Montreal Convention?*, 30 Journal of Korean Air & Space Law Policy, 279 (December 2015).

Presentation Title: “Opportunity Lost”

[link to paper](#)

This article provides the appropriate framework from which to view the turmoil the US economy is experiencing after the start of the second Trump administration. The first six months of the second Trump administration can best be described as chaotic and detrimentally harmful to the country’s interests without a long-term plan for economic stability, revitalization, and prosperity—plagued by the utilization of tariffs with no comprehension of their long-term trade law impacts. For the uninitiated, the article will demonstrate how free trade between global states leads to increased competition, more efficient production, and economic opportunities. The article explains that the negative consequences of abandoning free trade policies in favor of mercantilist and nationalist policies creates openings for other states to capitalize on the missteps of the US in its economic and trade law policy. The final section of the article sets forth a blueprint for a long-term economic and trade law policy designed to accomplish sustained economic growth when the second Trump administration ends.

Prof. Alberto Costi



Alberto Costi is Professor of Law at Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington, Co-Director of the New Zealand Centre of International Economic Law and President of the New Zealand Association for Comparative Law. A specialist in public international law, his scholarship spans international environmental law, climate change, use of force and the law of armed conflict. He has published widely in English and French on these subjects and advised governments and regional bodies across the Pacific, Europe and Asia.

He is the General Editor of the first ever New Zealand international law textbook, *Public International Law: A New Zealand Perspective* (LexisNexis, 2020; 2nd edition forthcoming), and serves on numerous editorial and scientific boards, including the *Revue Québécoise de Droit International*, the *Comparative Law Journal of the Pacific* and the *World Commission on Environmental Law (IUCN)*. A graduate of the *Université de Montréal*, the *College of Europe*, and *Harvard Law School*, he has held teaching positions and held fellowships across four continents.

Presentation Title: “Climate-Compatible Trade Law as a Catalyst for Sustainable Economic Development in Pacific Small Island States”

[link to paper](#)

Pacific small island developing states depend heavily on trade, yet current trade flows contribute disproportionately to global emissions and carbon-intensive growth. This presentation explores how international and domestic trade law frameworks can be recalibrated to both foster economic diversification and support the transition to climate-resilient development in the region.

Drawing on WTO rules, emerging instruments like the ACCTS, and case studies from the Pacific, the paper proposes three legal strategies:

1. Conditional liberalisation of climate-friendly goods and services to support green industries;
2. A Just Transition Subsidy Toolkit to enable targeted support for decarbonisation;
3. Integration of loss-and-damage finance into trade facilitation through climate-adjusted import fees.

These proposals offer a legal roadmap aligning economic growth with climate imperatives—demonstrating that trade liberalisation and environmental stewardship can be mutually reinforcing for climate-vulnerable economies.

Prof. Alexandr Svetlicinii



Alexandr Svetlicinii is Associate Professor of Global Legal Studies at the University of Macau, where he also serves as Programme Coordinator of the Master of International Business Law in English Language. He holds PhD in Law from the European University Institute and LL.M in International Business Law from the Central European University. Svetlicinii has published extensively in the fields of competition law and international economic law. His recent works include the monograph *Chinese State Owned Enterprises and EU Merger Control* (Routledge, 2021) and co-edited volumes *The EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment: Towards a Binding Investment Liberalisation* (Springer, 2024); *Competition Law and Policy in the Western Balkans* (Springer, 2025). In addition to his academic work, he serves as co-director of the Academic Society for Competition Law in South East Europe, co-chair of the Working Group on Data Regulation and Digital Economy of the International League of Competition Law, International Advisor to the Institute for Consumer Antitrust Studies at the Loyola University Chicago, Ambassador of the Value of Competition initiative at the University of Oxford, Centre for Competition Law and Policy, and the Non-Governmental Advisor to the International Competition Network.

Presentation Title: “Export Controls of Dual Use Goods and Technologies: Balancing Security and Sustainable Development”

[link to paper](#)

The paper explores the complex interplay between international trade law, non-proliferation regimes, and unilateral export control regimes to ascertain whether and how they consider sustainable development goals, which emphasize the importance of technology and innovation in achieving sustainable development. It focuses on the existing regulatory frameworks of international trade law (WTO system), non-proliferation regimes (Wassenaar Arrangement and other plurilateral export control groups), and emerging unilateral solutions guided by general principles of international law. In addition to assessment of the *status quo*, the paper considers the perspectives for adoption of a more inclusive and cooperative approach towards dual use export controls in order strike a balance between security and development, ensuring that export controls do not become barriers to sustainable development.

Prof. Andrew Morriss



Professor Morriss is a lawyer and economist at Texas A&M University, where he is on the faculty of the School of Law and the Bush School of Government and Public Service. He previously taught at the University of Alabama, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and Case Western Reserve University. He received his A.B. from Princeton, his J.D. and M. Pub.Aff. from The University of Texas at Austin, his Ph.D. (economics) from M.I.T., and his M.Ed.Pysch. from Texas A&M.

Presentation Title: “Networks of Legal Integration and Development Outcomes in Post-Colonial Africa: An Analysis of Tax and Investment Treaties” (co-presentation with Prof. Charlotte Ku)

[link to paper](#)

Our paper examines how African economies' integration into global legal frameworks through tax treaties and bilateral investment treaties (BITs) has influenced both economic and human development outcomes. We explore a distinctive U-shaped pattern of legal-economic integration that characterizes the post-colonial states: During colonial rule, African territories were deeply integrated into imperial economic systems (British, French, etc.) with clear rules for taxation and investment, albeit on terms dictated by colonial powers. Following independence, these nations typically experienced a period of reduced global integration before gradually reconstructing their international legal relationships—often expanding beyond former colonial powers to develop more diverse treaty networks. Using a comprehensive database of tax and investment treaties from the colonial period to the present, we construct an index of legal integration that captures the evolving position of African nations within global treaty networks, quantifying this U-shaped integration trajectory and its developmental implications. Our methodology employs network centrality measures to quantify each country's position within these legal frameworks over time, revealing a notable feature of African treaty networks: the relative absence of intra-African connections compared to ties with non-African nations. This allows us to track how changes in legal integration—both global and regional—correlate with various development indicators. We analyze trade flows, conventional economic metrics (GDP per capita, foreign direct investment), and broader development outcomes (infant mortality rates) to provide a holistic assessment of how these legal instruments impact development.

Prof. Charlotte Ku



Dr. Charlotte Ku is Professor of Law and Director, Global Programs at the Texas A&M University School of Law. Previously, she was Professor of Law and Assistant Dean for Graduate and International Legal Studies at the University of Illinois College of Law. She served as Acting Director of the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law, University of Cambridge and was Executive Director and Executive Vice President of the American Society of International Law from 1994 to 2006. Dr. Ku serves as Past President of the Academic Council on the United Nations System and on the Board of Directors of the American Branch of the International Law Association. She is a member of the American Law Institute, the Council on Foreign Relations, and the Institute for International and Strategic Studies.

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Prof. Andrew Larkin



Professor Larkin’s research focuses on how law structures and maintains global inequality. He pursues this agenda most directly by researching international economic law institutions, including international investment and trade law, international arbitration, and international monetary policy. These fields have substantial lacunae, and to critically understand them his research also draws on private law and legal history, including the law and history of business associations, property, and contract.

Prior to joining the Lawyering faculty, Professor Larkin defended sovereign states in investment treaty arbitrations and related enforcement proceedings at Curtis, Mallet-Prevost, Colt & Mosle LLP in New York. He also maintained an active pro bono practice involving immigration, equal protection, and Guantanamo matters. He clerked for Judge Allyson K. Duncan (ret.) on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

Professor Larkin earned his JD *magna cum laude*, Order of the Coif from NYU School of Law. He also earned an MA with distinction in Intellectual History from the University of Sussex, which he attended on a Fulbright Scholarship, and a BA with distinction in history from the University of Minnesota.

Presentation Title: “The Takings Counterrevolution”

[link to paper \(in progress\)](#)

The Takings Counterrevolution examines the influence of libertarian theories of permissible state conduct on the evolution of international investment law. It argues that a proper framing of the investment regime in a comparative constitutional context demonstrates that the regime adopts an approach to takings that most advanced democracies have rejected. That approach requires compensating investors for any material regulatory interference with the value of their investments. The project goes beyond previous scholarship on this subject by demonstrating how treaty standards ostensibly focused on issues other than expropriation have been converted into de facto prohibitions on partial regulatory takings. This assessment raises new normative challenges to the legitimacy of the investment regime. More importantly, it highlights how the regime poses broader challenges to theories of governance that seek economic redistribution as a normative goal. The investment regime rehabilitates and diffuses a radical approach to takings which other international legal frameworks and developing countries face pressure to internalize.

Prof. Barnali Choudhury



Professor Choudhury is a professor at Osgoode Hall Law School and Director of the Nathanson Centre on Transnational Human Rights, Crime and Security. She is the author of *Global Corporations and Sustainability* (Edward Elgar, 2025); *The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights – A Commentary* (Edward Elgar, 2023); *Corporate Duties to the Public* (Cambridge University Press 2019), *Understanding the Company: Corporate Governance and Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 2017); and *Public Services and International Trade Liberalization: Human Rights and Gender Implications* (Cambridge University Press, 2012). In addition to having authored numerous articles, book chapters, blog posts, and public policy submissions, her work has been featured in the media and cited by the United Nations, the UK’s House of Commons, the House of Lords EU Select Committee, international arbitral tribunals and relied on by governments and international non-governmental organizations. Additionally, she is an Advisory Member for the Academic Circle Supporting the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development, a principal co-investigator for the Canada Climate Law Initiative, an Editorial Board Member of the *Business and Human Rights Journal* and is appointed to the pool of candidates for the EU's Trade and Sustainable Development Panel.

Presentation Title: “International Investment Law and Sustainable Development – Friend or Foe?”

[link to paper](#)

Foreign direct investment (FDI) is seen as crucial for achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs), yet International Investment Agreements (IIAs)—used to attract FDI—have largely prioritized investor protection over sustainability. Despite over 2,500 IIAs in force, sustainable development provisions remain limited, especially in arbitration outcomes. Some states are reforming IIAs to better integrate sustainability by revising treaty language, promoting SDG-aligned investment, and improving domestic investment environments. This paper first analyzes these approaches to assess their effectiveness and identify gaps. It then considers whether deeper legal and political reforms are necessary to ensure IIAs and FDI genuinely support sustainable development.

Prof. Ali Kairouani



Ali Kairouani is Professor of International Law at Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco. He has also taught at the EGE of Mohammed VI Polytechnic University and at the Moroccan Academy of Diplomacy in the Moroccan Minister of Foreign Affairs. Between 2021 and 2024, he taught in the New Trends in International Law Master programme at Hassan II University in Casablanca. He was a guest lecturer at the Palermo University Italy (2025), at ESAMI Trapca in Arusha (2024), at the African Development University in Niger (2023), at Ho Chi Minh University in Vietnam (2023) and at the Canadian Congress of International Law (2021). He continues to specialise in international Economic Law.

Presentation Title: “The Right to Sustainable Development within the African Continental Free Trade Agreement”

[link to paper](#)

This paper explores the implementation of the right to development from the perspective of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) Investment Protocol, African and the African System of human rights. The AfCFTA was established since 2019 and will contribute to African economic development by supporting sustainable investments. The draft of AfCFTA Investment Protocol, adopted in February 2023, confirms in its preamble the right of African states to regulate the development of their populations and local communities (Case studies: Ogiek people within Kenya and Sahrawis population within Morocco). However, this pursuit comes up against the conventional protection of foreign investors’ right to invest and the thorny issue of interpreting investment treaties in terms of investor and investment protection. This constitutes both an obstacle in the light of existing arbitration case law and an African opportunity to reorient investment law towards greater development and inclusion. It should also be pointed out that the right to sustainable development is crystallised in the AfCFTA Investment Protocol, particularly in its preamble, article 24 and article 28 on sustainable development objectives. The article 24 of the Investment Protocol relevant to the chapter 4 about sustainable development related issues provides the right to regulate and should be read in accordance with the article 28 concerning the pursuit of Sustainable development goals. It means that African states are driving the New African Economic Order. Even though, the implementation of the right to development have been thinking from the perspective of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) Investment Protocol, African international human rights law and international foreign investment law. The draft Investment Protocol, adopted in February 2023, confirms in its preamble the right of African states to regulate the development of their populations and local communities. This paper will encompass the different aspects of the right to development in the light of the New African Economic Order.

Ms. Irene Kariuki



Ms. Irene Kariuki is an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya, practising in the areas of international economic and business law, commercial litigation and international commercial arbitration. She routinely advises both public and private entities including foreign investors, governmental and non-governmental organisations in Kenya and beyond. Ms. Kariuki is a member of various professional bodies including the Law Society of Kenya, the Institute of Certified Secretaries of Kenya, the East Africa Law Society, the Commonwealth Lawyers Association and the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators.

Ms. Kariuki is also a Master of Laws candidate at the University of Nairobi Law Faculty. She has published several legal research works and presented papers at national and international conferences including the AIRESS International Conference on “First Years of Functioning of the AfCFTA: Challenges and Prospects” in Morocco; the 4th South Asian International Economic Law Network Conference in Sri Lanka; the 6th Biennial African International Economic Law Network Conference 2023 in Ghana; among others.

Presentation Title: “Development at Whose Cost? Indigenous Peoples, International Investment Law, and the Struggle for Land Rights in Africa and Asia”

[link to paper](#)

The paper examines the extent to which the decisions of the Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) tribunals impact Indigenous peoples’ land rights in Asian and African countries, countries which are often in the pursuit of development. It critically questions whether and how the voices and perspectives of Indigenous peoples are incorporated into the resolution of international investment disputes. The paper argues that the involvement of Indigenous peoples in ISDS proceedings should span the entire lifecycle of the dispute resolution process, ensuring their rights and interests are adequately represented throughout the process. This approach will help to strike a balance between fostering sustainable development and preserving Indigenous land rights.

Ms. Daniela Oliveira Rodrigues



Daniela Oliveira is a Public Attorney at the Attorney’s General Office of Brazil (AGU). She is an International Law expert, currently pursuing her PhD at the University of Brasília. She holds an International Law master's degree from the Faculty of Law of the University of São Paulo (2014), where she also graduated in Law (2009).

Her recent professional experience includes serving at the Ministry of Planning and Budget as the General Coordinator for Economic and International Affairs at the Legal Consultancy Office. Prior to this, she was the General Coordinator of Strategic Partner Investments and Substitute Undersecretary of Foreign Investments at the Executive Secretariat of the Foreign Trade Chamber (SE-CAMEX). In these roles, she provided legal support in International and Finance Law preparing studies, opinions, and technical notes for high-level Brazilian representatives.

Author of the book *Limits to Copyright* (2019) and the *Legal Certainty Guide for Foreign Investors in Brazil* (2018). She also contributed to the chapter on International Regulation of the “AGU Manual on Regulatory Coherence” (2018). Her international experience includes being a former member of the group of Brazilian negotiators for Cooperation and Facilitation Investment Agreements (CFIAs) and an international intern at the Centre d'Etudes Internationales de la Propriété Intellectuelle, CEIPI (Strasbourg, France).

Presentation Title: “Attracting Investments in Times of Uncertainty: a Comparative Analysis of National State’s Practices”

[link to paper](#)

This paper examines new legal-economic methods adopted by states, particularly Brazil, to attract foreign direct investment in the post-pandemic era. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a significant decline in global foreign direct investment flows, with a subsequent recovery concentrating investments in developed countries, which might have hindered developing countries’ economic growth. The paper explores international economic policy, the role of government coordination in treating foreign investment as public policy, and the improvement of regulatory frameworks for investment attraction, highlighting the intensified crisis in state public policies due to global uncertainty and fierce competition for foreign direct investment.

Mr. Muad Al Juhany



Muad Al Juhany is a J.S.D. candidate at Washington University in St. Louis School of Law and a faculty lecturer at Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University in Saudi Arabia. His research centers on legal modernization, economic development, and institutional reform explored through theoretical and empirical perspective. Drawing on comparative law, he examines how codification efforts in Saudi Arabia interact with judicial discretion and bureaucratic structures, and how these legal transformations shape governance and connect with broader economic reform agendas.

Presentation Title: “Law, Bureaucracy, and Development: A Neoweberian Reading of Codification Efforts in Saudi Arabia”

[link to paper](#)

This paper examines current legal reforms in Saudi Arabia from a Neoweberian perspective, focusing on the role of bureaucracy and codification in driving economic and regulatory transformation to enhance the trade and investment environment. Contrary to conventional narratives that portray Saudi legal development as a struggle between traditionalists and modernists, this study argues that the key challenge is bureaucratic fragmentation. The reform is less about jurisprudential change and more about bureaucratic centralization.

Drawing on the 2023 Civil Transactions Law and the reform of the Companies Law (2015–2022), the paper explores how codification aims to increase legal predictability and support economic diversification under Vision 2030. Despite these formal efforts, judicial discretion remains integral to legal reasoning. The paper highlights a hybrid model of legal modernization, in which rationalization coexists with flexibility.

By situating the Saudi case within a Neoweberian framework, this study emphasizes how codification selectively reorganizes legal authority rather than imposing rigid uniformity. It contributes to law and development debates by illustrating how transitional legal systems negotiate between tradition and modernization.

Dr. Fabrizia Cesarano



Dr. Fabrizia Cesarano is a legal scholar with expertise in private law, diversity and inclusion, and the governance of commons. She is currently Research Fellow in Law and Organizational Studies for the Promotion of Diversity and Inclusion (LOSPD) at the Scuola Superiore Meridionale and Honorary Fellow at the School of Law and Social Justice (SLSJ), University of Liverpool, UK. She holds a Doctor Europaeus Ph.D. in Private Law, awarded for a Spanish-language dissertation on social parenthood completed during a visiting research period at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

Since 2023, Dr. Cesarano has taught the course *Urban Regeneration: Between the Management of Commons, Public Art, and Inclusiveness* at the Scuola Superiore Meridionale, aimed at both Ph.D. candidates and undergraduate students. She also leads the LOSPD Laboratory (Laboratory of Sound and Painting Differently) within the competitive MUR – PRO-BEN I project, which focuses on the psychophysical well-being of students. Additionally, she is an active member of the working group for the institution's Gender Equality Plan (GEP).

Dr. Cesarano serves as scientific consultant for the PRIN 2022 PNRR project *The Right to Beauty: Between Protection and Inclusiveness*, where she explores urban regeneration as a tool for inclusion through aesthetic and spatial transformation. Her research focuses on social parenthood, commons-based resource management, and participatory practices for inclusion. She analyzes governance models such as civic use, co-management, and public-private partnerships, alongside artistic and housing practices that foster sustainable and inclusive communities. Inclusion remains the central theme of her work, addressed through legal, social, and cultural perspectives.

Presentation Title: “Rethinking Property Rights with regard to their Social Function. Commons, Culture and Sustainable Governance in the Italian Legal Framework”

[link to paper](#)

This paper investigates the evolving legal understanding of property through the lens of its social function and the collective management of urban commons. It analyzes how grassroots practices—such as civic uses and participatory governance—redefine ownership beyond individual entitlement, aligning with the constitutional mandate that property serve collective interests. Central to this transformation is culture, which fosters community awareness, supports the shared function of assets, and enables inclusive access to urban resources. In this context, the commons become both legal and cultural tools for realizing the “right to the city” and building more democratic, sustainable urban environments.

Ms. Yujin (Ashley) Seo



Ms. Yujin Seo works as an associate member of the Law and Development Institute. She holds a B.A. (*summa cum laude*) in Korean History and Political Science from Seoul National University. Her academic interests include international trade law, international investment law, international transactions law, and international human rights law.

Presentation Title: “The Dilemma of Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) in Times of Political Crises: The Application of Ukraine-Russia BIT and Its Implications on Interstate War”

[link to paper](#)

Under the current international investment treaty regime, countries commit to protecting the property rights of foreign investors in their territories through bilateral and multilateral investment treaties. To prevent businesses from being damaged by the host state’s actions, the Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) allows investors to sue host states for monetary compensation through the Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) system.

However, sudden political changes in the host state, such as an outbreak of war and armed conflict, can trigger confusion and anxiety for investors who seek stability for their investment, leading them to require measures to protect their property rights and investments already made. This demonstrates the importance of understanding the mechanism for implementing BIT in wartime and its contested consequences.

The ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia displays a situation where the above issue is a problem at hand. This paper navigates the legal challenges of BIT implementation during wartime by examining key dispute cases between the two countries and aims to analyze the legal applicability of BIT in times of political crises, the necessity of such application, and the feasibility of its implementation, providing a useful legal basis for protecting foreign investments during political instability.

Prof. Sean A. Pager



Professor Pager teaches and writes about intellectual property law and international trade & development. He is the Director of the Michigan State University College of Law’s Intellectual Property, Information, & Communications Law Program. Professor Pager’s scholarship explores the interplay between intellectual property law and creative development. His work examines the extent to which digital technologies have “democratized” creative industries by lowering the cost of production and whether experience matters as a basis for creative achievement. Another strand of Professor Pager’s research explores the protection of traditional knowledge and cultural heritage rights.

Professor Pager earned his J.D. at U.C. Berkeley, where he served as associate editor of the *California Law Review*. He earned an LL.M. in International Law from the European University Institute in Florence, Italy, while studying on a Fulbright Fellowship.

Presentation Title: “Cultural Sustainability & Propertization: A Cautionary View”

[link to paper](#)

Proponents of cultural sustainability seek to instantiate new forms of intellectual property rights that would empower local and indigenous communities to control use of their traditions. This paper provides a cautionary perspective that counsels against such “cultural propertization” at least in its stronger forms. Instead of locking up intangible heritage in property rights, this Article advocates alternative protection regimes such as geographic indications that can accommodate dynamic meanings and which operate in conjunction with commodification rather than in opposition to it.

Prof. David L. Finnegan



David L. Finnegan is Professor of Law at Cooley Law School in Lansing, MI. His scholarship focuses on law and legal institutions in developing countries and on the relationship between law and economic development. He teaches courses in property law, land use law, international law, and human rights law. Prof. Finnegan graduated from the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service and the University of Michigan Law School, where he served as Editor-in-Chief of the *Michigan Journal of International Law*. He earned his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Michigan. He also studied at the University of Dar es Salaam and the University of Nairobi. Prior to entering academia, Prof. Finnegan practiced law in Washington, D.C. in the areas of domestic and international competition law and commercial litigation.

Presentation Title: “The *Numerus Clausus* Principle and Land Law in East Africa”

[link to paper](#)

This paper employs a traditional comparative law concept, the *numerus clausus* principle, to assess the state of land law in East Africa and to suggest avenues for reform. The *numerus clausus* principle is observed in both civil law and common law systems, either expressly in national legislation or implicitly in patterns of land rights enforcement. Under the principle, the legal system fixes and limits the number of interests in land that may be created, conveyed, and enforced, and market participants lack the autonomy to modify the characteristics of these interests when engaging in land transactions. The *numerus clausus* principle provides a gauge with which land law regimes may be measured and evaluated: To what extent do East African land law systems reflect the *numerus clausus* principle? Why or why not? How does the law balance the standardization benefits of the principle with the need to accommodate diverse customary land tenure systems? Do land law reforms in these jurisdictions, aimed at enhancing land tenure security and market participation, strengthen or weaken adherence to the principle?

Dr. Myra Williamson



Dr Myra Williamson is a Senior Lecturer of Law at the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) in Auckland, New Zealand. She has previously taught law at Waikato University in New Zealand and at private universities in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Myra holds an LLB Hons (First Class) and a Bachelor of Arts (major in Political Studies) from the University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand. She also holds an LLM Hons (First Class) and a PhD in public international law from the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand. She holds a Post-Graduate Certificate in Tertiary Teaching and Learning from the University of Waikato and has completed a Women’s Leadership Development programme with the Said Business School at the University of Oxford. Myra was admitted to the Bar as a Barrister and Solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand in 1998 and practiced law before having children.

She is the author of a monograph, *Terrorism, War and International Law: The Legality of the Use of Force Against Afghanistan in 2001* (Ashgate, 2009) as well as a chapter on comparative law in *The Diffusion of Law – The Movement of Laws and Norms Around the World* (Ashgate, 2015). She has also authored two chapters on the use of force by Israel against Lebanon in Ruys, Corten and Hofer *The Use of Force in International Law - A Case-Based Approach* (Oxford, 2018). Myra’s main research and teaching interests are in international law (especially the *jus ad bellum*), constitutional law and comparative law but she has published on a variety of topics including statelessness, citizenship and nationality rights, gender justice, housing/tenancy rights, academic integrity in universities, overseas investment law and property rights.

Presentation Title: “Property, Power, and the Pacific: Fast-tracking seabed mining in Aotearoa-New Zealand”

[link to paper](#)

This paper explores the New Zealand Government’s current approach to seabed mining in domestic waters as well as in international waters (‘the Area’). It explores the conflict between property rights and development that is rapidly evolving in relation to seabed mining especially due to the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024 and the Regulatory Standards Bill (RSB) (moving through New Zealand’s Parliament at the moment). The RSB would elevate property rights above other rights if passed in its current form: domestic law could significantly impact development in New Zealand (and regionally). The paper will examine how the competing rights are balanced; that is property rights and ‘development’ versus the need for environmental protection, security and indigenous rights in New Zealand and the wider Pacific. The paper will apply Professor Lee’s theoretical framework, especially the ‘Regulatory Impact Mechanisms’ aspect of it to this particular issue to see if any new insights can be gleaned for New Zealand and other jurisdictions.

Ms. Elizabeth Bakibinga



Elizabeth Bakibinga is an Advocate/Attorney at Law with 25 years' standing who has served as Legal Adviser - Rule of Law, at the Commonwealth Secretariat, United Kingdom, Vice President of the Commonwealth Association of Legislative Counsel; Legal Officer in the United Nations' Department of Peacekeeping Operations, among others. With 29 years' experience in governance, legal, legislative and policy analysis work, she has extensively managed and provided legislative drafting and legal advisory services, rule of law programme management, managed delivery of legal services in peacekeeping operations, global governance, built partnerships, mobilised resources, promoted the development of legal, policy and institutional frameworks, elections observations, negotiated with governments, organisations and rule of law institutions, peer reviewed articles, as well as capacity building. She attended Makerere University, Boston University and the University of Oslo, among others.

Presentation title: “Legal and Policy Frameworks to protect the property rights of women migrant workers in line with Agenda 2030: A case study of Uganda”

[link to paper](#)

Property law is significant to the development agenda of countries and sustainability. With the externalization of labour, guaranteeing the rights of the more than 150 million women migrant workers is critical to ensure sustainability. Agenda 2030 recognizes that protecting migrant women's rights will enhance their potential to become agents of development which makes Sustainable Development Goals 5 (gender), 8 (labour) and 16 (rule of law) critical. Women migrant workers actively contribute to their community, financially or in kind and bring about social change due to their exposure to different cultures, access to the Internet has exposed them to political discourse and boosted the income for content creators on social media platforms. However, women migrant workers are vulnerable to exploitation and deprivation of property. Remittances are substitutes for poor social protection, but there is no guarantee of security for the remittances and the property acquired by women migrant workers. In Uganda, their rights to property, especially land are affected by patriarchal systems, limited access to financial services especially mobile money facilities due to deactivation of SIM cards during their absence and illegal or extrajudicial deprivation of property, fraudulent transactions. This paper examines the existing framework and makes recommendations for better protection of the property rights of women migrant workers.

Ms. Shulun (Charlene) Tian



Shulun (Charlene) Tian is a Ph.D. candidate at the Faculty of Law, the University of Hong Kong. Her PhD research focuses on comparative private law, especially the legal transplantation of the common-law fiduciary duty in China. Shulun has published a journal article relating to this theme in *Trusts & Trustees*. She also studies Chinese philosophy and Chinese ethics as a part-time research assistant at HKU. Before joining HKU Law Faculty, Shulun studied at the University of Edinburgh and the China University of Political Science and Law, and once spent one semester at the University of California, Berkeley as an exchange student.

Presentation Title: “Suiting Property Law for Sustainability: Bridging the Anthropocentric and Eco-centric Paradigms” (co-presentation with Ms. Hai Du)

[link to paper](#)

Are trees and rivers only resources for humans to exploit and consume? Do they have rights on their own, and how can we better protect them within the property law sphere? This paper offers a theoretical analysis of the interaction between Dagan’s liberal theory of property and the rights of nature (‘RoN’) theory raised by Stone, discussing the potential role those objects of nature may play in a more ‘sustainable’ property law system. It examines whether natural objects such as trees and rivers own full autonomy like the one enjoyed by ordinary natural persons; or alternatively, whether they can be analogous to other types of right holders such as companies and minors or infants. As our exploration yields all negative answers, we adopt a mitigated approach to soundly reform property law for sustainability.

Ms. Hai Du



DU Hai is a Ph.D. candidate in the field of environmental law at the Faculty of Law, the University of Hong Kong. She was an associate in research at Duke University School of Law on environmental justice. Her current research focuses on environmental litigations, the rights of nature theory, and judicial politics.

Hai holds an LL.M. from Duke Law School and an LL.B. from China University of Political Science and Law. She has obtained the P.R.C. Legal Professional Qualification Certificate and is admitted to the New York Bar.

Hai is a student fellow at the HKU Centre for Interdisciplinary Legal Studies and co-editor-in-chief of the 19th volume of the Hong Kong Journal of Legal Studies (2024–25).

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Ms. Anika Maan



Anika Maan is an attorney and emerging scholar with an academic interest in the Asia-Pacific region. She is admitted to practice law in the District of Columbia Bar and received her Juris Doctor from Washington and Lee University School of Law. Anika has previously worked for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Suva, Fiji, where she conducted an internal assessment on white-collar crime prosecutorial statistics in Fiji, Palau, and Kiribati. She has also worked for the US Securities and Exchange Commission, the US Department of Justice, and the US Department of Commerce. In each of these roles, she contributed to international legal assistance programs, gaining insight into economic and regulatory systems around the world. She is currently a Court Counsel for the Supreme Court of the Republic of Palau. Anika is an advocate for indigenous art, history, and custom, with a goal of upholding indigenous practices within modern legal systems.

Presentation Title: “The Way of Water: How the United States Can Learn from the Palauan System of Custom Deference”

[link to paper](#)

This paper explores the Palauan legal system, heavily influenced by the United States’ justice system, and the ways in which Palau incorporates traditional custom as recognized, settled law. In this piece, I submit two case studies in which the United States failed in its oversight, therein failing its indigenous populations: the disaster of the Red Hill fuel tank leaks in Hawai’i, and the Sioux Tribe’s attempted resistance to the Dakota Access Pipeline. I retroactively apply a framework of custom deference, adapted from Palau’s, to these two cases, and posit that such a system of custom deference, if implemented, would have brought proper recourse to those affected by these environmental disasters. Moving past mere administrative aspects, I shift to unpack a narrative of restricted fundamental constitutional rights, such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This type of administrative redressability within the United States’ legal system would be paramount in reducing increased pressure on government resources, as well as reducing governmental overreaches and environmental disasters. Most importantly, this proposed solution aids in providing a collective voice to those who came before the colonies.

Prof. Sung Eun (Summer) Kim



Professor Sung Eun (Summer) Kim is Professor of Law at the University of California, Irvine, School of Law. Professor Kim’s primary research and teaching interests are in corporate law, corporate social responsibility, corporate governance, financial regulation and contracts. Her scholarship examines how legal and market structures create and deepen inequities in our society, and her work aims to close these gaps.

Professor Kim is a co-author (with Professor Cynthia Williams of Indiana University Maurer School of Law and Professor D. Gordon Smith of BYU Law School) of the popular teaching casebook, *Business Organizations: Cases, Problems & Case Studies* (5th edition, Wolters Kluwer, 2022).

Professor Kim is also the inaugural Faculty Director of the Korea Law Center and has served in this role since 2016. The mission of the Korea Law Center is to promote practical solutions to problems arising at the intersection of U.S. and Korean laws. In recognition of her service to the Korean community, Professor Kim received the Trailblazer Award from the Orange County Korean American Bar Association (OC KABA) in 2016.

Prior to law teaching, Professor Kim practiced law at Kirkland & Ellis and Shearman & Sterling, where she specialized in the areas of debt finance and capital markets. She received her J.D. from Harvard Law School and her B.A. in Economics, *summa cum laude*, from Seoul National University. She is a member of the New York and California bars.

Presentation Title: “The (Un)intended Consequences of South Korean Legal Education Reform”
(co-presentation with Mr. Yonghyung (Thomas) Chung)

[link to paper](#)

This paper contributes to the discourse on legal education and legal profession reforms by examining the unintended consequences of the South Korean Graduate Law School Act. Counter to its legislative purpose, the South Korean Graduate Law School Act has increased the barrier to entry into the legal profession in South Korea by imposing more educational and professional prerequisites and has deepened the legal education system’s dependence on examination outcomes. Furthermore, there are concerns about whether the reformed legal education system adequately prepares aspiring lawyers for an increasingly competitive and globalized legal services market. Our analysis emphasizes the need for careful calibration and coordination among legal reforms to achieve desired legislative outcomes.

Mr. Yonghyung (Thomas) Chung



Mr. Yonghyung "Thomas" Chung is a law clerk at Palmieri, Tyler, Wiener, Wilhelm & Waldron, LLP, where he is a member of the firm's litigation team. His practice involves a broad range of civil litigation matters. He is also a Legal Research Associate at the Korea Law Center at UC Irvine School of Law.

Mr. Chung earned his LLB from Dongguk University in South Korea, followed by an LLM in International Business and Commercial Law from the University of West London. He also received his LLM and J.D. degrees (*cum laude*) from the University of California, Irvine, School of Law, where he developed a deep interest in cross-border legal issues and comparative law.

While at UC Irvine, Mr. Chung served as a research associate at the Korea Law Center, where he supported the Center's research, served as a resource to visiting scholars, and helped organize events focused on global and transnational law. During law school, Mr. Chung was recognized with several honors, including the OCKABA Student Volunteer Award, the Los Angeles Copyright Society Paul Miller Memorial Fund for Academic Excellence, and the Independent Spirit Pro Bono Award.

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Dr. Francesca Farrington



Dr Farrington is a Lecturer in Commercial Law at the University of Aberdeen. Francesca has a broad interest in law and development, business and human rights, and freedom of expression. In the development context, her research focuses on rule of law promotion and institutional theories of law. As for business and human rights, she is primarily interested in the private international law dimension of transnational corporate accountability. She is Convenor of the Anti-SLAPP Research Hub where she and her colleagues investigate the strategic use of litigation to suppress freedom of expression on matters of public interest. She has acted as a consultant on SLAPPs for the European Parliament and the United Nations' Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights. She was appointed as a TrialWatch Expert for the Clooney Foundation for Justice in 2024. Outside of the University of Aberdeen, Francesca is a Research Associate at the Centre for Business Research, University of Cambridge and a member of the Rule of Law and Economic Development Working Group at McGill University.

Presentation Title: “Aid and Influence: China’s Development Agenda in a Post-USAID World”

[link to paper](#)

Amidst shifting global power dynamics and the withdrawal from overseas development assistance (ODA) among many OECD countries, this paper critically analyses how China’s position as the world’s largest creditor is reshaping the architecture of ODA and challenging long-standing lending norms centred on transparency and accountability. The paper aims to improve our understanding of what China’s rise as an international lender may mean for a human-rights based approach to ODA; one which requires ODA to be delivered in a rights-compatible manner (i.e., guided by the principles of equality, non-discrimination, accountability, and participation). The paper tracks the evolution of China’s lending model and identifies a cross-section of case studies of lower- and middle-income countries using information from AIDDATA – a database that has collected data on 20,985 projects across 165 low- and middle-income countries financed by China with grants and loans worth \$1.3 trillion from 2000-2021. The lending practices in these case studies are interrogated through the lens of a human-rights based approach to development with a view to identifying areas of convergence and divergence from the norms of equality, non-discrimination, accountability and participation.

Prof. Gabriel Lochagin



Gabriel holds a PhD in Economic and Finance Law from the Faculty of Law of the University of São Paulo in Brazil. He also graduated in law from this institution, where he currently teaches Economic Law, Regulation and Public Finance. He was also a visiting researcher at the National University of Singapore (2024) and at the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin (2014). He is also the Adjunct General Controller of the University of São Paulo since 2022.

Presentation Title: “Institutional experimentation in Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs): the case of the Brazilian “Drex””

[link to paper](#)

My presentation starts by showing how Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) are being currently plotted by most central banks in the world as a promising development mechanism: they may foster innovation in a somehow stagnant financial sector, stimulate diversification in products and services offered to consumers and grant citizens broader access to sophisticated market products that are up to this moment available only to professional investors.

All these potential benefits, however, come along with raising concerns. CBDCs are looked down by those who see relevant risks for data privacy. Critics also highlight the underpinning risks for financial stability, considering that radical changes in money issuance may affect the most prominent actors of the financial system - the banks, which may no longer play such a relevant role in the economic process. Though sometimes far-fetched, these issues are still relevant in the current debate.

When supporters and critics brandish their perspectives in general terms, however, the high level of experimentalism involved in designing CBDCs is overlooked, in spite of its importance to understanding monetary innovation. This paper proposes a more empirical and less abstract approach to institutional aspects of CBDCs. The main goal of this work is to emphasize how official digital currencies should consider the regulatory framework under which they will effectively operate. This regulatory perspective reveals not only the varied legal landscape of official digital money, but also how the potential contribution of CBDCs to development is conditioned by their institutional design, reflecting policy ambitions and also deep political and economic constraints.

Within this empirical agenda, the paper analyzes one particular case of CBDC implementation, the Brazilian “Drex”, exploring its main strategic decisions as well as the policy choices for regulatory design.

Dr. Yi (Claudia) Lu



Yi (Claudia) Lu is currently a Senior Lecturer at Peking University School of Transnational Law (PKUSTL). Claudia received her J.S.D. and LL.M. degrees from Yale Law School and her J.D. and J.M. degrees from PKUSTL. Claudia's academic interests include food and drug law, risk regulation, environmental law, administrative law, and international trade.

Presentation Title: “Chinese Law and Development (CLD): The Strategic Role of Non-legal Norms in the Cross-Border Economic Order”

[link to paper](#)

This paper examines how China uses non-legal norms, such as diplomatic mediation, overseas Chinese diaspora networks, and technical standardisation, to create a transnational economic order within the framework of “Chinese Law and Development” (CLD). This study builds on Matthew Erie’s foundational theoretical framework, which defines CLD as a hybrid system that blends transnational law, extralegal norms, and non-legal mechanisms to mitigate risks and advance geopolitical interests. This paper seeks to shift the focus of CLD study to the empirical applications of non-legal norms, offering a detailed analysis of their operational logic and impact in real-world contexts.

This paper argues that non-legal norms do not simply replace formal law, but function in synergy with it. First, the paper examines how diplomatic engagement, such as the embassy-led negotiations to resolve disputes over building codes without resorting to litigation, can serve as a strategic substitute for formal legal mechanisms in states where the judiciary is underdeveloped. In addition, this study explores the role of overseas Chinese communities as cultural brokers in Belt and Road Initiative regions. Leveraging established local relationships and cultural knowledge within these communities facilitates more effective navigation of bureaucratic processes, thereby reducing perceived risks for investors. Furthermore, this study highlights China’s promotion of technical standards, such as those used in the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway project, to establish de facto regulatory frameworks without direct legal transplantation. This is in line with CLD’s emphasis on transnational order, while demonstrating how technical dominance fosters economic dependency. Finally, while Chinese firms include arbitration clauses in contracts, a legal measure, they also use diplomatic pressure and diaspora networks, non-legal instruments, to ensure enforcement in contexts characterised by weak legal institutions. This analysis contributes to the ongoing discourse on “normative pluralism” in CLD by illustrating the pragmatic interplay between legal and non-legal instruments in CLD's hybrid governance model.

Ms. Laura Panades-Estruch



Laura Panadès-Estruch (BSc, LLB, LLM) is a Lecturer in Law at the Cayman Islands Law School, Honorary Lecturer at the University of Liverpool, and PhD candidate in Law at the University of Cambridge.

She brings 15 years of research experience in public procurement and public finance. She has published 30 articles and book chapters, and has been appointed peer reviewer of five leading international journals in public procurement and public administration.

Appointed by Her Excellency The Governor of the Cayman Islands, she is a Cayman Islands Public Procurement Committee member: she takes collegiate responsibility in reviewing public contract awards over KYD 250k (USD 300k).

She is an experienced academic leader: she designed and led the Master of Laws in International Finance at the Cayman Islands Law School, in partnership with the University of Liverpool. She has 13 years of lecturing experience in Law and Economics, currently focusing on Contract Law, Tort Law and European Union Law. She has worked for the European Parliament, the Horizon 2020 DIGIWHIST European Commission project for early detection of corruption and a number of European Universities.

Outside of work, she volunteers training young Caymanian women on public speaking and interviewing skills.

Presentation Title: “The Impact of Economic Preferences in Development – a Critical Assessment”

[link to paper](#)

This paper analyses the regulatory framework and practice of the use of local economic preferences in selected case studies: Belize, the Cayman Islands, Haiti, Jamaica and Turks and Caicos. Local economic preferences are methods of establishing preference for domestic bidders in the award of public contracts. As such, they embody a clash between two conflicting visions of development: fierce global competition versus local prosperity. Developed economies tend to dismiss them to pursue more efficient contracting and better value for money. Instead, developing economies embrace them to keep the less dynamic local economy afloat, meaning that the public sector is willing to pay higher prices for local providers to keep the money circulating within their borders.