

CALL FOR PAPERS

International conference of the Commission on Legal Pluralism, in collaboration with the University of Queensland's School of Law and Centre for Public, International and Comparative Law.

Knowledge, Power and the Politics of Difference - Looking at Legal Pluralism “from Down-under”

Location: Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Dates: 15-17 July 2020

The 2020 international conference of the Commission on Legal Pluralism will examine the critical role normative orders play across the globe, for example in the regulation of individual, familial and property relations, the promotion of sustainable economic development, and the countering of human rights abuses. The diverse and multiple domains in which plural legal systems operate raise crucial questions about the basis upon which law is founded. The ways in which law's authority and legitimacy are constructed in ordering society cannot be taken for granted but must be subject to scrutiny. The 'down-under' in this year's conference theme refers not only to the fact that the conference is taking place in Queensland, Australia, but it also refers to the need to move beyond a state-centered dominant legal discourse. One of the purposes of the conference is to inquire into the role and place of pluralism outside of the State. How do non-State laws operate within their own sphere, and how does this affect their impact and the space available for them? And how do States deal with laws operating outside its realm and without its specific endorsement: what have the courts, parliaments and other agencies to say about this? Moving beyond a state-centered legal perspective is especially important in a postcolonial context where plural legal systems inherited from the colonial era operate today. The conference aims to inquire into the ways in which such legal orders are dealing with this heritage. This involves not only the recognition of customary, traditional, religious or indigenous law. It also includes repositioning the plural normative system of states in relation to the legal orders of the former metropolises. And it comprises new, neo-colonial attempts by various actors to impose law on these post-colonial legal orders.

Thus the conference seeks to adopt a contextual approach to law that situates law within a broader social compass, exploring its relationship with other bodies, institutions and agencies that construct social relations, including an analysis of the lived everyday experiences and perceptions of law that inform people's lives. So, “bottom up” approaches to law may be invoked to complement, or challenge, more “top down” perspectives, particularly those derived from a state-centered orientation to law. We are interested in a heterogeneous range of actors, such as international and non-governmental organisations, corporations, foreign states, government officials, traditional authorities, religious leaders, legal experts, individuals, families and groups. Consequently the call encompasses multiple levels of law that highlight its differing normative features. These stem from



the plurality of contexts in which law comes into being and the ways in which these differing domains within which law is constituted intersect with one another in local, national, regional or transnational arenas. In exploring these dimensions and in moving beyond a western, state-centred dominant legal discourse, the conference aims to broaden academic legal debates and to engage with practitioners and activists who have experience in dealing with law in practice.

The Commission on Legal Pluralism invites scholars and practitioners to present contemporary papers on these and related themes at the 2020 Conference. The conference will also address established themes that continue to cause significant concern, such as conflicts and contestations over property, land and natural resources; governance; religion, culture, custom and ethnicity; gender; kinship; patriarchy; human rights; development aid and cooperation; as well as migration, mobility and transnationalism, while exploring how emerging and 'old' themes in the field of legal pluralism relate to each other in theory and practice.

Proposed panels linked to the conference theme can be found in the attachment to this call for papers. It is hoped that the biannual conference will offer a dynamic and vibrant space for further expansion of perspectives in debating issues and challenges relating to legal pluralism. **Hence, you are also welcome to send paper proposals that may not appear to be directly or indirectly linked to the listed panels.**

Submissions should include (a) an abstract of no more than 250 words, (b) a title, (c) name(s), institutional affiliations(s), and email address(es) of author(s), and optionally (d) the panel in which authors prefer to present their paper. Please send your abstracts to j.corrin@law.uq.edu.au (for the attention of Prof Jennifer Corrin) no later than **January 31, 2020**.

Young Scholar Best Paper Award

Scholars who have received their doctoral degrees (or any other degree where relevant) no longer than six years before the conference date are eligible to apply for the Young Scholar Best Paper Award. The prize is awarded at every biannual conference and consists of a present and publication of the winning paper in the international, peer-reviewed journal, *Journal of Legal Pluralism*. For more information on the Young Scholar Best Paper Award please visit the CLP website at <http://commission-on-legal-pluralism.com/nl/young-scholars-award>.