



Socio-Legal Research Centre

Investigating Law in its societal, economic and political contexts



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Overview

The DCU Socio-Legal Research Centre (SLRC) will make a defining contribution to the understanding of law in society by employing an interdisciplinary approach to investigate the operation and effects of law in its societal, economic and political contexts. The Centre's emphasis on socio-legal research is unique in Ireland, and its work will have a demonstrable and transformative impact (academic, legal and social). The centre collaborates with local and international practitioner and policy communities by the dissemination of research, offering of advice/briefings, training courses and events.

Research Areas

The Socio-Legal Research Centre draws together legal academics at DCU with expertise in different aspects of substantive law, outlined below, who share a common thematic and methodological approach to research, which we adopt as a collective, i.e. socio-legal scholarship. Our research examines law's impact in tangible, empirical, political or economic contexts. This research provides a basis for law reform, strategic and public interest litigation, capacity building for civil society actors and public awareness-raising of the interaction between law and justice issues.

Individual members of the Centre have collaborated with the Free Legal Advice Centres on Ireland's recent examination before the United Nations on its socio-economic rights, assisted non-governmental organisations and public officials in drafting the Gender Recognition Act 2015, and provided research support and expertise to litigation.

The Socio-Legal Research Centre also collaborates with the Ballymun Community Law Centre and the Irish Innocence Project, amongst others, and engages in outreach to local schools.



Why work with us?

Socio-legal methodologies have, to date, been largely absent from legal academia education and practice in Ireland. Research centres in Ireland tend to focus on specific substantive legal topics. As a result, at a national level, the Centre remains uniquely placed to explicitly offer a combination of legal analysis and research with an inter-disciplinary perspective to external stakeholders.

The Centre offers the means for other research centres, civil society organisations, governments and international organisations, and potential postgraduate students to draw on and collaborate with research from the Centre's socio-legal scholars. The use of and collaboration with the Centre's research can provide external stakeholders with the means to address their own knowledge gaps, pursue specific legal changes in legislative changes or litigation, and provide a mutually beneficial form of collaboration seeking external funding to support civil society engagement in the non-profit sector that also reflects our socio-legal research priorities.

As a result, the Centre can have significant impacts for external stakeholders because of its distinctive inter-disciplinary approach to legal research.

Centre Members

Dr. James Gallen

Research Interests: International law, human rights, transitional justice, child sex abuse

Dr. Stephen Coutts

Research Interests: EU constitutional criminal and citizenship law, EU immigration and asylum law

Dr. Yvonne Daly

Research Interests: Criminal law, criminal procedure, evidence

Dr. Brenda Daly

Research Interests: Healthcare law, employment law, alternative dispute resolution

Dr. Aisling de Paor

Research Interests: Medical Law and Bioethics

Dr. Vicky Conway

Research Interests: Police Governance and Accountability, Abortion Law in Ireland, human rights and policing

Dr. Tom Hickey

Research Interests: Constitutional and Public Law, Political Philosophy, Social Theory

Dr. Adam McAuley

Research Interests: Family Law and Medical Law

Dr. Roderic O'Gorman

Research Interests: EU Law, Constitutional Law, Right to Environment

Dr. Tanya Ní Mhuirthile

Research Interests: Law and Body Politics, Gender Recognition