



Forum
Transregionale
Studien

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS:

In Search of the “Political”: Law’s (Il)legibility between Violence and Care

Working Group for Advanced Ph.D. Students and Early-Career Researchers

Aims

We invite applications to form a working group to discuss and work together on conceptual questions related to narratives, processes, structures, and institutions through which law is produced, appropriated, and contested throughout its different life stages of drafting, interpretation, and implementation. We are interested in ethnographic, historical, philosophical, literary, legal, sociological, and political science approaches, and a transregional inquiry into how law operates to create categories of legibility and illegibility that in turn produce the law as (il)legible under varying conditions of inequality, injustice, and crisis.

Within this framework, we seek to draw attention to the entanglement of violence and care in modern law and explore the extent to which the global judicialization of politics - whereby the resort to law is seen as the ideal substitute for political solutions in the pursuit of justice (Comaroff & Comaroff 2006; Ticktin 2011) - reproduces the very inequalities and injustices the law is imagined and promises to address. In addition, within the current context of a global pandemic, we are interested in the role of law as a “caregiver” whose performance intensifies under health crises, but can be found, as well, in other constellations, such as the transition to democracy, settler-colonialism, authoritarianism, and neoliberal capitalism. In this sense, a crucial question is the extent to which war/colonialism/international interventions or

illiberal/authoritarian forms, pretexts and ideologies are construed as actions that originate in a sense of care. Inversely, we will examine how interventions that are seemingly aimed at alleviating suffering and guaranteeing human rights, like humanitarianism, can reproduce the very violence they seek to address.

We seek to recruit 20 participants for the working group who will commit to participate in the meetings, the collective discussion, and the writing process. Meetings will be held online once a month, starting October 2021 over a 9-months period. Following the meetings, we will organize an in-person workshop during which working group members will present work in progress. The idea is that the work presented in the workshop will originate from discussions held throughout the year. The workshop will be supported by the [ZEIT-Stiftung](#) Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius in the framework of its program [Trajectories of Change](#), and will take place during 2023. We will do our best to ensure that the chosen location will be accessible to all participants regardless of their nationality.

We will adopt the format of the writing workshops of the Berlin-based [Forum Transregionale Studien](#), which is structured by a sequence of discussions that will be based on close readings of key texts addressing the aforementioned questions and on invited speakers' lectures. By the end of the seminar, each group member will be required to write and present a paper based on the discussions. These texts will be shared on the internal working-platform of the Forum and peer reviewed. In the next stage, these papers will be published as a series on the Forum's [TRAFO-blog](#). These publications represent a first stage which will later be compiled either as a special edition or as an anthology that will be dedicated to the theme of the convoluted relation between law and care.

Theme & Questions

This is an interdisciplinary workshop that seeks to address the problematic of law and care. We thus invite early-career researchers (including advanced Ph.D. students and independent researchers) from disciplines across the social sciences and the humanities to apply.

We are interested in the following questions, but are by no means limited to them:

- How has care become a key modality of governance? In what ways have vulnerability and protection emerged as key grounds for rights claims-making?
- How can modern configurations of law and (in)equality help us rethink facile distinctions between reason and passion; the religious and the secular; and the local and the transnational that underlie modern governance?
- Can we draw a line between law and care?
- What defines law's carness and carelessness?
- Do inclusive legal actions that seek to improve the lives of minority groups enhance the law's caring performance? Can we, and should we, dismantle the law as a caring mechanism?
- To what extent are the law's expressions of care related to its legibility and illegibility?
- How does the law, through the entanglement of care and violence, make itself (il)legible to its differently positioned subjects, and in turn, how does it produce social categories as (il)legible?
- How is the political constituted, reshaped, and contested in relation to the law's care/carelessness?
- What are the violent aspects of care to which law (also in the form of norms) abides?

Application

We accept applications from early-career researchers (including advanced Ph.D. students and independent researchers) in any discipline across the social sciences and the humanities.

Applications should include:

- A short bio, (name, institutional affiliation, status, titles of relevant works/PhD thesis, and research interests). To ensure the diversity of the group, please also indicate your gender and nationality.
- The applicant's interest in the working group, indicating as well how the working group may contribute to his/her ongoing work (200 words).
- One recommendation of a book or an article, including a short explanation of the choice (150 words).

Applications should be sent to law_care@trajectories-of-change.de

The deadline for applications is **August 30th, 2021** at midnight Central Europe time.
Notifications of acceptance will be sent in September 2021 .

Organizers: Ola Galal (The Graduate Center at CUNY), Revital Madar (The Program in Cultural Studies, HUJI).

Tentative Schedule

Meetings will be held online once a month beginning on October 28th 2021, at **19:00 CET**.

Meetings' dates are: 28th October 2021; 18th November 2021; 16th December 2021; 27th January 2022; 24th February 2022; 31st March 2022; 14th April 2022; 19th May 2022; 30th June 2022.

August 30th - CFA deadline.

September 27th - Decisions are sent to applicants.

28th October 2021 - First meeting of the working group.

June 2022 - Last meeting of the working group.

December 2022 - Submission of work in progress to be presented in the workshop.

February 2023 - 2-3 days in-person workshop.¹

May 2023 - Submission of short versions of articles presented in the workshop for publication in the TRAF0-blog.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with questions and comments at
law_care@trajectories-of-change.de.

Ola and Revital

¹ Participation in the workshop is conditioned on attending at least 7 out of the 9 meetings of the working group, as well as on the submission of a work in progress by December 2022.