

Autumn Term 2016 at The Dickson Poon School of Law

A termly newsletter prepared for the Yeoh family

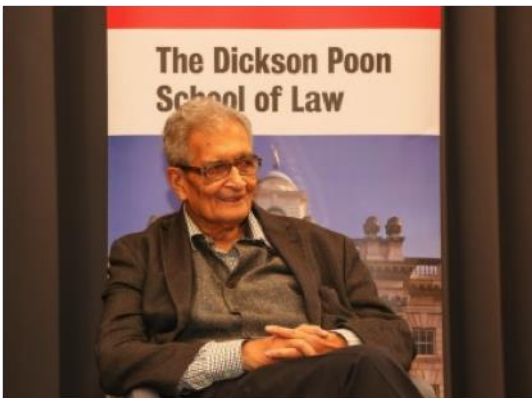
Foreword from Professor John Tasioulas



Welcome to the Autumn Term newsletter for 2016. We are delighted to update you on the wide variety of activities and intellectual engagements that the Yeoh Tiong Lay Centre for Politics, Philosophy and Law has been involved in during this term. From speaking on topical issues such as human rights and the implications of the Brexit vote, to debating the relevance of philosophy at UNESCO's Paris headquarters, scholars here have contributed to a diverse array of stimulating activities. We have also brought eminent international thinkers to King's – Amartya Sen, Sakiko Fukuda-Parr and Eric Posner, among others. Our students have proved their talent and initiative yet again, and risen to many challenges, such as gaining first-hand experience of court practice at a criminal court in Munich. We very much hope you enjoy reading about these activities, and also seeing how the Centre is evolving into an international hub for engagement with the vital issues of our times.

Recent highlights: [Events](#)

Law and Justice reform human rights and development conference



[What role do human rights play in development? Do they check the excesses of market globalization, and has their potential been fully tapped? Should we contest the belief that there is a fundamental trade-off between economic growth and human rights?](#)

On 28 October 2016 the Yeoh Tiong Lay (YTL) Centre for Politics, Philosophy and Law tackled some of these pressing questions at the first of three Law & Justice Fora for the academic year. The forum was on the topic 'Human Rights and Development', and featured some of the leading thinkers and practitioners in the world working at the interface of human rights and development. The forum aimed to address the place that human rights have in rigorous and effective thinking about development policy, with a special focus on the socio-economic rights, such as the rights to health, food and education, set out in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966).

Eminent speakers included **Professor Paul Hunt** (former UN Special Rapporteur; University of Essex), who discussed the right to health, which he argued is at an early stage in its intellectual journey, and **Dr Octavio Ferraz**, who struck a more sceptical note, highlighting the indeterminacy that threatens the very existence of that right. How can there be a right if we cannot specify its associated duties in a principled manner?

Professor Amartya Sen (Harvard University), one of the world's leading thinkers on human rights, development and their interrelation, also spoke at the event. He stressed that his 'capabilities' approach does not provide a complete theory of development, and that there are other legitimate goals of development alongside the enhancement of capabilities. He put great store on the capability to engage in meaningful work as a central capability to be fostered by government policy, because of the vital significance of work for personal self-respect.

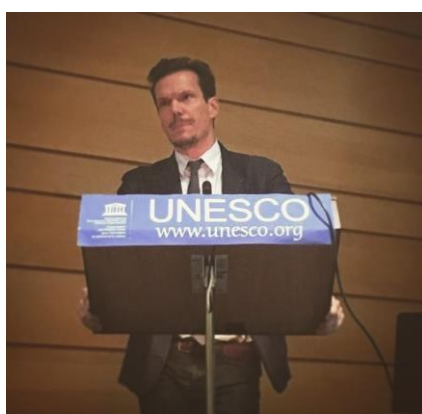
Professor Sakiko Fukuda-Parr (New School, NYC) gave a spirited defence of the role of human rights in development, stressing their role as a check on the excesses of market globalization whose potential has not been fully tapped. She characterised human rights as pre-legal, essentially ethical, norms and pointed out that

there is no evidence that they are in tension with the proper aims of development economics (as opposed to neoliberal economics). In particular, she argued that we should contest the dogma that there is a fundamental trade-off between economic growth and human rights. Equally, she claimed we also need to contest the assumption that government spending is always the key to fulfilling socio-economic rights.

Professor John Tasioulas gave a talk on his recently finalised report as a consultant to the World Bank on the topic of minimum core obligations of human rights. He outlined an account of the nature of such obligations and their value, associated with economic, social and cultural rights that are to be immediately fulfilled by all states.

The concluding session involved a provocative talk from one of the leading sceptics about human rights law, **Professor Eric Posner** (University of Chicago), who emphasized the greater importance of development economics and economic globalization in fostering development.

The forum was structured to facilitate engagement between the speakers and those in attendance, and was enormously stimulating. A full report on the event, including photographs and videos, are available online.



'A Night of Philosophy' in Paris

Three members from the Yeoh Tiong Lay Centre for Politics, Philosophy & Law in 'A Night of Philosophy' at UNESCO headquarters: celebrating the wealth of philosophy

'A Night of Philosophy' is a series of all-night events showcasing the wealth of global philosophy organised by the French philosopher and stage director Mériam Korichi. In 2016 it was hosted by the UNESCO in Paris.

The YTL Centre is proud to have been able to send a delegation of three of its members to present their ideas: Ashwini Vasanthakumar, Massimo Renzo and its Deputy Director Christoph Kletzer. At 2am, Dr Vasanthakumar spoke on "Inclusion, democracy and self-determination"; at 2.30am Dr Kletzer gave his talk on "Primitive Law"; and at 4am Dr Renzo spoke on "Revolution and Intervention" to a still alert audience! The night gave ample opportunity to interact with the general public and philosophers from around the world, including eminent thinkers such as Vincent Descombes, Paul Boghossian and Nigel Warburton. The event has been a great success and a thorough celebration of the wealth of philosophy.

Taking Brexit Seriously: A Dialogue



'Taking Brexit Seriously: A Dialogue', hosted by Yeoh Tiong Lay Centre for Politics, Philosophy & Law in September 2016, was chaired by the Centre's Director, **Professor John Tasioulas**. The event generated a constructive dialogue on two broad and inter connected questions that arose in the wake of the vote for Brexit: firstly, what are the requirements – legal and other – that must be satisfied to give proper effect to the vote to leave the European Union?; and secondly, to the extent that there is room for manoeuvre in negotiations, which version of Brexit would secure the best political and economic outcomes for the United Kingdom, and for Europe? Distinguished members of the academia, the legislature as well as the corporate world were called upon to provide their expert views.

Professor Takis Tridimas (The Dickson Poon School of Law, King's) argued that the Brexit notification is not irrevocable under the EU Treaties, and that it is hard to imagine how Brexit will be realised without the British Parliament's involvement.

Professor Richard Ekins (Faculty of Law, University of Oxford) discussed whether the UK should aim to become a member of the European Economic Area (EEA). He concluded that for the



British individuals who voted in favour of Brexit, it makes little sense to pursue this option.

Lord Norton of Louth (Professor Philip Norton, Department of Politics, University of Hull), on the other hand, noted that one should separate the question whether Parliament is required to be involved in the Brexit process from the question whether Parliament should in fact approve it.

Dr Helen Thompson (University of Cambridge) argued that the UK's membership in the EU but not in the Eurozone was not a sustainable scheme in the long term, especially after the euro crisis. Moreover, she contended that the UK's flexibility in achievement macroeconomic adjustments is an important comparative advantage which would likely put pressure on the EU to make the post-Brexit life of the UK difficult.

Other speakers included **Professor Vernon Bogdanor** (King's College London) and **Ms Helena Morrissey** (Newton Investment Management). Following their presentations, the panellists took questions from a lively capacity audience of two hundred. A full report on the event, including photographs and video, is available online.

Above left picture: from left, top: Professor Vernon Bogdanor, Professor Takis Tridimas, Professor John Tasioulas, Professor Richard Ekins.

Bottom: Helena Morrissey, Dr Helen Thompson, Lord Norton of Louth (Professor Philip Norton)

Student focus: Yeoh Tiong Lay LLM Scholars reception

We are delighted that the 2016/2017 Yeoh Scholars have commenced their studies and are already thriving at King's. At the start of term, we invited them to a reception held to celebrate their achievements which provided an opportunity to meet Centre Director, Professor John Tasioulas and Deputy Director Dr Christoph Kletzer. It was also a chance for the students to get to know each other. We followed up with some of them at the end of the term to see how they have got on so far:



'I had an amazing first term at King's. I particularly enjoyed the Restitution of Unjust Enrichment module led by Professor Robert Chambers and Mr James Lee. I am very happy to score relatively well for my first formative assessment in this module as well. I also volunteered as the Social Secretary of the International Business Law pathway and organised a Christmas Skating event at Somerset House last week before this term came to an end. Once again, I am entirely grateful for the Yeoh scholarship.'

- Amanda Cham Jie Yi



It has been a great first semester! I was able to talk to Mr. Martin Hunter, a prestigious international arbitration professional, whose books I have been reading since sophomore! His enthusiasm for teaching and knowledge of international dispute resolution has been an inspiration for young scholars like us. I find King's an ideal place to study for students like me whose primary interests are international dispute resolution and transnational human rights issues. I very much look forward to next semester, when I will be taking advanced lessons on investment arbitrations and human rights litigation. Again, I want to thank the Yeoh family for the generous gift, without which my study at King's would be impossible.

- Nan Lan

Graduate focus: An update from Sonja Heitzer



Sonja Heitzer (middle)

Sonja Heitzer was one of the first Yeoh Tiong Lay Scholars (2014 – 2015). Here she details some highlights from her activities this year.

"After completing my course at King's College London in summer 2015, I returned to Munich to finish my legal education in Germany. I spent three months at Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP, before starting the Referendariat at the Higher Regional Court of Munich in October 2015. During my time at the Criminal Court, I was in charge of representing the state as a prosecutor and gained first-hand experience in court practice. Next, I hope to work at a German embassy for three months – preferably in South-Eastern Asia.

My favourite moment from the past year was definitely the LLM graduation ceremony in January 2016 at Barbican Centre. It was an amazing day and a great opportunity to catch up with classmates and teachers – and to celebrate the amazing past year. Thank you for supporting me!"

Staff focus



Professor John Tasioulas

Professor John Tasioulas, gave a talk on 30 September 2016 at a symposium on Peter Simpson's "Political Illiberalism" at Notre Dame Law School in the US, and delivered the 2nd Van Hasselt lecture in Delft – a major event involving the mayor of Delft and the President of the Technical University of Delft – on “The dynamics of big data and human rights” based on a recently published article (*see right*). In October 2016, he also spoke at Meiji University, Tokyo and at Seoul National University.



Dr Christoph Kletzer

In October, Dr Christoph Kletzer gave a keynote talk at the "Gesprächskreis Rechtsphilosophie und Rechtstheorie" at the University of Vienna with the title "The Germ of Law". In December he was the invited speaker of the Research Seminars for Legal Philosophy at Tilburg University where he spoke on "Primitive Law".



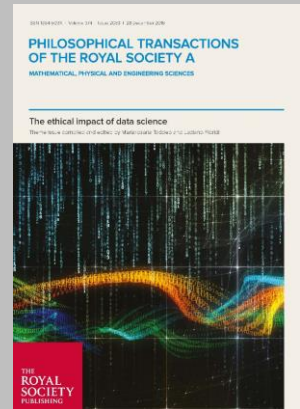
Dr Ashwini Vasanthakumar

Dr Ashwini Vasanthakumar delivered a guest lecture at the Blavatnik School of Government, Oxford in November and gave a talk at the University of Bristol. She also published an article, "Epistemic Privilege and Victims' Duties to Resist Their Oppression," which is forthcoming in the Journal of Applied Philosophy.



Dr Massimo Renzo

Dr Renzo gave a keynote talk at the XII Italian Society for Analytic Philosophy Conference in Pistoia from 5-7 September 2016. He also spoke at a talk on complicity for a workshop called "Conversations on War," organised by the Stockholm Centre for the Ethics of War & Peace and the YTL Centre in Palermo between 21 and 23 October, and presented "Revolution and Intervention" at the University of Catania on 25 October 2016.



Notable Publications:

“The dynamics of big data and human rights: the case of scientific research” by Effy Vayena and John Tasioulas, published in *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A* - 14 November 2016

Thank you

On behalf of all those directly benefiting from such generous support, we would like to thank the Yeoh family for their commitment to The Dickson Poon School of Law.

As this newsletter highlights, the School is a hub for attracting talent, hosting events and forging international collaborations. We look forward to providing the Yeoh family with further updates on activity within the School in the coming terms.

