

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL SECTION: LAW, PUBLIC POLICY AND THE COVID CRISIS— PART TWO**

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In this issue of *Amicus Curiae*, we present the second of our two part-special issue on ‘Law, Public Policy and the Covid Crisis’.<sup>1</sup> The articles published here were originally presented in a series of remote seminars which I hosted at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies during the 2020–2021 academic year, entitled ‘Law and Humanities in a Pandemic’.<sup>2</sup> In addition to this two-part special issue, the remaining papers arising from the series will appear in an edited book entitled, *Law, Humanities and the Covid Crisis*, which will be published in the OBServing Law series of open access publications by the University of London Press (Stychnin 2022). Taken together, these interventions provide valuable insights into our understanding of the ongoing changes wrought by the pandemic, as well as the continuities which have been revealed.

The four contributions to this section highlight, in diverse ways, how the claim that Covid-19 is a universal experience belies its unequal and discriminatory impact. We begin with an essay from Nergis Canefe, who elaborates upon the selective application of pandemic legal responses to ‘populations on the move’, particularly refugees, migrant workers and displaced communities. In response to the phenomenon of ‘disposable lives’, she proposes a conception of pandemic justice that recognizes the existing injustices wrought upon these groups.

This is followed by a co-authored article by Lynsey Mitchell and Michelle Weldon-Johns. Their focus is on the impact of the pandemic lockdown on women’s rights, in relation to work, health and wellbeing. They demonstrate how legislation too often has been drafted from the partial perspective of the autonomous, male legal subject. They call instead for the mainstreaming of gender issues within the law-making process. Gender is also central to the concerns of Fatema Hubail. In her

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<sup>1</sup> The first part of the special issue is published in *Amicus Curiae* 2.3.1 (Autumn 2021).

<sup>2</sup> The seminars remain accessible on the [Institute’s website](#).

powerful contribution, she emphasizes the importance of an intersectional understanding of the relationship between gender and sect, in her examination of how the pandemic has exacerbated women's legal, political and social inequalities in Bahrain. She draws upon women's engagement with social media to recount their stories of everyday life. This contrasts against the positive images portrayed by the Bahraini state throughout the pandemic, including its preparedness to host major international sporting events.

Finally, we turn to what would seem to be the universal experience of death and the restrictive legal measures that were imposed during the pandemic on cultural practices related to funerals, burials and mourning. In this article, Hui Yun Chan demonstrates the challenge of accommodating diverse religious and cultural traditions and the potential for the differential impact of public health measures. She analyses this in terms of the need for balance and she emphasizes the universal importance of rituals for bereaved families and friends.

These four diverse and important articles complement the three papers which were published in Part One of this special issue. All together, they provide an important historical record of our times and will be of lasting significance.

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## Reference Cited

Stychin, Carl (ed) (2022) *Law, Humanities and the Covid Crisis* London: University of London Press, forthcoming.