



DAMODARAM SANJIVAYYA NATIONAL LAW
UNIVERSITY, VISAKHAPATNAM



CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW AND
ALLIED DISCIPLINES
(CILAD)

GUIDE ON CAREERS IN INTERNATIONAL LAW



Media Partner





Since the narrower or wider community of the peoples of the earth has developed so far that a violation of rights in one place is felt throughout the world, the idea of a cosmopolitan right is not fantastical, high-flown or exaggerated notion. It is a complement to the unwritten code of the civil and international law, necessary for the public rights of mankind in general and thus for the realization of perpetual peace.

-IMMANUEL KANT





GUIDE
ON
CAREERS
IN
INTERNATIONAL LAW



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ABOUT DSNLU



Damodaram Sanjivayya National Law University (DSNLU) was established by the Government of Andhra Pradesh in 2008 with the mission of providing quality legal education and fostering academic excellence in legal research. Located in Visakhapatnam, the university is recognized under section 2(f) of the UGC Act, 1956 and has been granted 12(b) status by the University Grants Commission (UGC). DSNLU offers a comprehensive range of programs, including a five-year integrated B.A. LL.B. (Hons.), a three-year LL.B., a one-year LL.M. with specializations in Constitutional Law, Criminal Law, Commercial Law, Ph.D. and LL.D. The institution emphasizes practical legal training to prepare students effectively for their future careers in law.

ABOUT CILAD



The Centre for International Law and Allied Disciplines (CILAD) is an academic initiative dedicated to advancing the study and development of international law and policy through an interdisciplinary approach. Bringing together students, scholars, and experts, CILAD serves as a hub for critical thinking and meaningful discourse on global legal challenges.

Recognizing the dynamic and evolving nature of international law including international trade law, international environmental law, refugee law and international humanitarian law, CILAD emphasizes including latest international developments on both academic rigor and practical engagement. The Centre fosters an environment where students can explore legal complexities, engage in discussions, and contribute to shaping the international legal landscape. Through its initiatives, CILAD aims to bridge the gap between academic theory and real-world legal practice, equipping students with the skills necessary to navigate and influence international law and policy.



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Faculty Member

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Vinita Singh & Surbhi Gupta

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Devanshi Pandey

Katyayani Singh

Sourav Ghosh

Medha K.

Zohaa Siddiqui

Utkarsh Gupta

FOREWORD

It gives me immense pleasure to present this “Guide on Careers in International Law”, developed by the Centre of International Law and Allied Disciplines (CILAD) at Damodaram Sanjivayya National Law University, Visakhapatnam. This guide serves as a valuable resource for students and young professionals aspiring to make their mark in the dynamic field of international law.

Building a career in the dynamic field of international law demands both expertise and mentorship from seasoned professionals.

Each contributor in this guide brings a unique perspective shaped by their individual expertise and experiences. The insights shared by these accomplished professionals provide not only practical advice but also inspiration for those seeking to make a meaningful impact through their work. To the students and readers of this guide, I encourage you to use this resource to explore your interests, broaden your understanding, and pursue your aspirations with confidence.

My heartfelt appreciation to all the professionals who contributed their insights and time to this endeavor. Your engagement enriches this publication and motivates future legal minds.

I wish the guide every success and hope it serves as a catalyst for fostering meaningful careers in international law.

(Dr.) D. Surya Prakasa Rao

Vice Chancellor,
Damodaram Sanjivayya National Law University,
Visakhapatnam



FROM THE EDITORS.

“

International law is a constantly evolving field, shaped by global events, legal developments, and the voices of those who practice and study it. This edition of the CILAD International Law Guide brings together insightful interviews with legal scholars, practitioners, and experts who share their experiences, perspectives, and advice on navigating the complexities of international law.

Through these conversations, we aim to provide students and professionals with real-world insights that go beyond textbooks.

The guide serves as a platform for thought-provoking discussions on pressing legal issues, career paths, and the future of international law. We would like to thank all the experts for giving us the time and knowledge.

We hope these interviews inspire, inform, and ignite meaningful discourse.

Happy reading!

The Editor Board.

”



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&
SENIOR EDITOR
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**CILAD CONVENOR
&
SENIOR EDITOR
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**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
SOURAV GHOSH**

“

Conducting these interviews was an incredible experience—engaging with leading voices in international law, hearing their journeys, and gaining first-hand insights into pressing legal issues. These conversations brought theory to life and deepened our understanding of the field. We hope this guide sparks the same curiosity and inspiration in you as it did for us.

—Academic Team

Archana P.

Elsa Sibü

Zohaa Siddiqui

Devanshi Pandey

Katyayni Singh

Utkarsh Gupta

Sourav Ghosh

“

Bringing this guide to life has been an exciting journey. From designing layouts to curating visuals, our goal was to make these invaluable insights accessible and engaging for all. We hope the presentation enhances your reading experience and that the voices within these pages resonate with you.

—Design & Media Team

Sourav Ghosh

Medha K.

“

Connecting with the incredible individuals featured in this guide has been an unforgettable experience. Reaching out to leading minds in international law, hearing their stories, and building these connections has been truly inspiring. We hope their insights leave as much of an impact on you as they did on us.

—Outreach Team

Ratna Sumedha Chintha





Dr Vassilis P. Tzevelekos

Interviewed by Sourav Ghosh and Surbhi Gupta



How would you explain a career in academia to young graduate students from your experience?

To become a “good” human rights lawyer, one must develop a strong foundation in three key areas. Firstly, understanding how human rights technically operate whether at the domestic or international level. This includes grasping core concepts like the distinction between negative and positive obligations, limitations on human rights (on the basis of the principle of proportionality) versus absolute rights. Secondly, to understand that public international law is crucial not only to comprehend how human rights operate within the international legal order (e.g. knowing what a reservation to a human rights treaty is), but also because the international order is pluralistic. Different nations approach human rights from varying perspectives, influenced by distinct schools of thought, cultures and religion. Human rights are inherently subjective, shaped by ideologies, moral values, and worldviews. This brings me to the third, key area: a deeper exploration of the philosophy of (human rights) law is important.

These three dimensions are, I think, integral to becoming a competent human rights lawyer.

About

Dr. Vassilis P. Tzevelekos is a Reader at the University of Liverpool School of Law, specializing in public international law, human rights, and state responsibility. He serves as Vice-Chair of the UN Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, a member of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture, and Co-Editor-in-Chief of the ECHR Law Review.

Dr. Tzevelekos holds advanced degrees from prestigious institutions, including the European University Institute and the College of Europe. His career includes visiting scholar roles at Columbia Law School and the University of Michigan. He has advised governments and private entities on international law, appeared before courts, and published extensively, contributing to the development of human rights and treaty interpretation.



Q.

Do you believe that experience and academic research can independently serve as career paths, or have you observed cases where academia has supported the practice of arguing before a council, or where practical arguments have inspired further academic research in a specific field?

The Human Rights Council is composed of members from diverse professional backgrounds—academics, judges (both former and acting), and diplomats—each bringing unique experiences and perspectives. This diversity fosters meaningful contributions and mutual learning. For instance, as an academic and practicing lawyer, I had the opportunity to observe and learn from a very experienced diplomat from your country, India, who was already a member when I joined. His diplomatic experience offered valuable insights into framing arguments, applying negotiation tactics, and knowing when to apply pressure or let things go—skills that differ significantly from those of an academic.

In roles like these, you never know everything, and learning comes from doing. By observing, critically analyzing, and adapting to the approaches of others, you find ways to contribute effectively. This complementarity among members ensures a balanced and enriched dynamic within the Council.

Q.

How do you think the work you did at the Council and the advisory committee can contribute on a global scale, and how do such significant roles influence the current legal dynamics worldwide?

The Human Rights Council Advisory Committee is a vital think tank within the human rights system, composed of experts from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds. Its primary role is to study pressing human rights issues assigned by the Human Rights Council, with recent focuses on topics like artificial intelligence, climate change, neurotechnology, and disinformation—challenges central to modern human rights discourse. These studies often serve as the foundation that may lead to the development of new human rights norms, standards and regulations.

While the Advisory Committee does not set its own agenda due to the state-centric nature of the system, it has found ways to suggest and advance research initiatives. Once a proposal discussed within the Advisory Committee is deemed mature, it is submitted to the Council for further consideration. The committee operates through working groups led by rapporteurs and chairs, who collaborate to collect inputs from various stakeholders, draft reports, and refine them collectively before submission. The Advisor Committee continues to play a crucial role in shaping the future of human rights by providing knowledge and assessments to guide state's decisions.

Q. What advice would you give to students who are aspiring to take similar roles like that of yours, especially when they're at undergraduate level?

At the undergraduate level, it is a little bit difficult, because, you are at the very early stages of your career. But still, there are things that an undergraduate students can do. For instance, participating in NGOs is very important, civil society, being active citizens, lobbying, and standing for things that are dear to your heart. I believe this can be done within the university. Think, for instance, of student societies. It can also be done outside, independently of the university. It is a significant way through which we can all contribute and participate. I feel that students play a leading role because of the passion that they possess towards their believes.

Q. Would you please clarify that he is referring to students who are still in the process of completing their integrated five-year legal degree, rather than those who have already finished their legal degree?

A five-year law degree equips students in their last years with greater experience and confidence, enabling them to contribute more meaningfully. Students can also engage in enriching activities like running a law journal, which I personally found rewarding during my undergraduate years at the University of Athens. This experience not only broadened my understanding of academia but also set me on the path toward becoming an academic.



THE UNITED NATIONS BUILDING, IN USA

Beyond academics, students should actively seek opportunities within their societal and institutional frameworks. Once they transition from studying to practicing law or other career paths, the trajectory depends on their chosen roles. For example, retired diplomats or judges bring decades of valuable field experience, which they often contribute to bodies like the Advisory Committee. Similarly, academics, NGOs, and international organizations provide avenues for impactful work in foreign affairs and beyond.

The key takeaway is that meaningful contributions to law and society are not limited to just academics; diverse experiences and career paths can also lead to significant roles in shaping global and societal systems.



As the co-editor-in-chief of the EHCR Law Review, what advice would you give to students aspiring to publish in prestigious law journals, and how can they stand out in making their contributions?

When considering publishing in a journal, the primary question to ask is: who is my audience, and what do I want to achieve with this publication? Journals cater to different groups, such as academics or practitioners. Therefore, identifying the right fit is crucial. Among academic journals, there's a distinction between peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed journals. Peer-reviewed journals, like the ECHR Law Review, are typically more established because they involve a rigorous double-blind review process, ensuring quality and credibility. While these journals are often prestigious and highly selective, publishing in them is not impossible—it's a challenge that reflects the competition and standards they uphold.

Early in my career, I published in less demanding journals, and this was an important part of the learning process. Rejection is a natural part of this journey, and it should not discourage you. Feedback from the peer-review process can help refine your work, even if a paper is initially rejected.

I have experienced this firsthand—revising a paper based on feedback and ultimately publishing it successfully in another journal. The key is to view rejection as an opportunity for growth and to stay persistent in improving and submitting your work.



There is a statement I heard recently: "If you cannot produce something new, it's better not to write." How much do you agree with this statement, especially when writing a research paper? As an undergrad student, it's quite challenging to produce something novel, especially in the legal field where there is already so much literature and many perspectives. What are your thoughts on this?

The concept of novelty in legal writing is distinct because law largely relies on interpretation rather than rigid evidence, as seen in other disciplines. In areas like human rights law, personal and moral preferences can further influence interpretation. This makes novelty a nuanced concept, and its significance depends on how you frame your analysis and arguments.

Legal writing generally involves two types of analysis: positive (explaining how things –e.g. the law or case law– are, where interpretation still plays a crucial law) and normative (proposing how things should be). Being clear about the purpose of your paper is crucial. Engaging with existing literature and identifying gaps or overlooked aspects is key to making a meaningful contribution. If others have already addressed a point extensively, repeating it adds little value. However, highlighting unexplored angles and supporting your arguments with evidence allows you to stand out.

To convince editors, reviewers, and readers, clearly explain what your paper aims to achieve, the methodology, and its place in the existing literature. Transparency is essential—acknowledge others' work and situating your work within the works that are out there already published. By being honest about your arguments and their context, you can effectively contribute to the legal discourse while making your work compelling and credible.



What role does academic research play in influencing international law, and how can students contribute to this discourse early in their careers? Can you share any instances from your experience, particularly in areas like climate change or the international treaty on cybercrime, which is still being discussed?

Research plays a foundational role in shaping law, and its impact on international law can be seen in two primary ways.

First, research has a direct influence through the arguments and ideas it presents. These arguments can be impactful when they are discussed, endorsed, or critiqued by other scholars and when they are adopted by various authorities. Such authorities may include judges—both national and international—policymakers, individuals working within international organizations, and NGOs. These actors transform academic research into real-world impact, whether through legal rulings, policy formulation, or advocacy efforts.

For instance, the Human Rights Committee often consults relevant academic work to inform its reports. While the UN may not always explicitly reference these sources due to strict word/length limitations, the insights provided by research do play a role in shaping its work. Therefore, research should not only aim to appeal to a niche academic audience but should also aspire to effect tangible, real-world change.

Second, research impacts international law through its incorporation into academic doctrine. Students also play a vital role in this process, with their contributions varying depending on their academic stage. Students in research programs, particularly PhD students, have a unique opportunity to make significant contributions. PhD programs offer an invaluable period for researchers to delve deeply into a specific topic without the distractions of other professional responsibilities.

Interestingly, as one progresses in an academic career, the demands of teaching, mentoring, conference organization, journal management, and practical engagements often leave less time for in-depth research. Early-career researchers, though less experienced, have the advantage of time to conduct thorough and impactful research. This is why early-career scholars hold significant potential to advance existing scholarship, and their work is highly valued for its depth and fresh perspectives.



What type of internships do you believe are both accessible and beneficial for students interested in international law and human rights law? Further, what key differences do you find between them?

In international law, like in all areas of law and beyond, the type of employer you choose to work for plays a crucial role in your career path, and your personal preferences should guide your decisions.

If you know that law firms do not interest you then you can instead focus on opportunities with organizations that align with your interests, such as international organizations, NGOs, the judiciary or research institutions.

Once you have a clearer vision of your goals, identify the key “players” in that field and begin to target them. Additionally, do not be discouraged if you do not meet all the qualifications for a job. If you are close, apply anyway—sometimes the competition might not be as fierce as you expect, or there may be flexibility in their criteria.

As you build experience, one opportunity often leads to the next. Networking with peers and mentors opens up new doors. It is important to keep seeking the next opportunity, even when you are already well-established. Progress is continuous, and the more you try, the more you learn and develop.

When it comes to the question of structural or working pattern changes in national versus international organizations, particularly in international law and human rights, there are several factors to consider. Comparing institutions can be difficult, as not all are comparable in terms of scale or resources.

A significant challenge, particularly in international environments, is the need to navigate and interact with individuals from diverse cultures. These cultural differences impact working styles, habits, and approaches, making it crucial to be adaptable and open-minded.



How can undergraduate students start building a career, building a strong foundation in public international law and human rights?

A career in academia centers around research and the creation of new knowledge. This journey typically begins with a master’s degree, followed by a PhD, which trains one to be an independent researcher. Academia also demands skills beyond research, such as applying for grants, publishing in journals, and teaching effectively. While teaching provides knowledge, what sets an academic apart is their ability to contribute meaningfully to ongoing discussions and produce original insights in their field.



How do you think international law is currently addressing emerging issues related to surveillance technologies and the use of information for criminal purposes, particularly in the context of human rights? Additionally, what legal mechanisms are organizations or states considering for the effective protection of migrants and refugees in light of the ongoing climate crisis?

2 Artificial intelligence (AI) is changing many fields, including international law. It offers many benefits, but also brings risks, and we cannot fully predict its impact.

The AI Treaty by the Council of Europe is a good start, putting AI within human rights law and pointing in the direction of a human-rights based approach. Inevitably at this early stage, the treaty is quite general and relies on principles that can be adapted to new technologies. In areas like military and security, AI creates complex questions about responsibility. For example, if an autonomous weapon system decides to act in a manner that damages human rights how can state liability be established? Should the state be responsible for its failure to program AI effectively and in a human rights compliant manner? Or should the conduct of the autonomous weapon system be directly attributable to the state as if said system is a state organ?

2 While some challenges posed by new technologies can be predicted, there are others we cannot foresee. Inevitably, this may result into gaps in the law. As to migration, there is a struggle between national sovereignty (states controlling their borders) and human rights (primarily, the life, safety and well-being of people). The refugee definition, based on post-World War II realities, can be said to be necessitating updating to reflect modern migration challenges, such as climate change. This shift can be supported through human rights instruments like the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), integrating migration protection with broader civil, but also socioeconomic rights.





Mr. Jayant Bhatt

Interviewed by Sourav Ghosh and Devanshi Pandey

Q. Can you describe your areas of legal practice and what drew you to these specializations?

My specialization lies in dispute resolution, encompassing criminal law, white-collar crimes, cybercrimes, forensics, and general criminal cases. I also handle commercial litigation, arbitration, and advisory work for corporates, HNIs, and individuals. The variety in legal practice keeps a lawyer's life dynamic and fulfilling.

Q. Reflecting on your tenure at Clyde & Co., Dubai, what differences did you observe between practicing law internationally and in India?

Work-life balance stands out as a major distinction. International firms prioritize it significantly, unlike Indian firms or chambers. Another notable aspect is the availability of multidisciplinary expertise under one roof in global firms, fostering collaborative problem-solving across verticals. In India, chambers operate differently, with limited interaction beyond the immediate team, though the landscape is evolving.

About

Mr. Bhatt is a graduate of New York School of Law, USA and National University of Singapore and has dual Masters in Law (LL.M.) from these prestigious institutions.

He is a practicing litigator at the Supreme Court of India and at various High Courts and Tribunal across the country. He has a keen interest in teaching and mentoring young minds and is an advisory board member of various organizations. He regularly features in news articles and columns and is also a writer and a thought leader.





THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA



THE RASTRAPATI BHAWAN.

Q How did participating in moot courts shape your legal career?

Mooting was transformative. It honed my research, advocacy, and critical thinking skills. Competing against talented peers and being judged by experienced professionals made me a better litigator. Moot courts also exposed me to diverse perspectives.

Q How is India contributing to the development of international law?

India aligns well with international norms, particularly in trade and policy. Recent developments, like the establishment of BharatPol—a national initiative akin to Interpol—showcase India's proactive approach.

Our judiciary also plays a significant role internationally, with retired judges taking up key positions in global institutions. Additionally, cases involving multinational corporations and privacy concerns highlight India's growing integration into global legal frameworks.

Q How does advanced legal education, like your dual LL.M. from NYU and NUS, impact professional growth?

Studying abroad broadened my intellectual horizons and provided exposure to diverse legal systems and global perspectives. Learning from experienced professionals and engaging with peers worldwide enhanced my understanding of justice systems and their societal roles. The rigorous academic environment was invaluable in shaping my approach to international law.

Q What advice would you give to students aspiring to pursue LL.M. degrees abroad?

While an LL.M. is a great academic endeavor, financial prudence is essential. Avoid debt traps; pursue scholarships or ensure financial backing. Remember, an LL.M. enhances knowledge but doesn't guarantee immediate employment. Approach it with realistic expectations and a clear career plan.



Q.

How can law students secure meaningful internships, especially in international law firms?

Build institutional bridges with foreign universities and organizations. Utilize alumni networks and develop a robust placement cell to connect with international firms. Students who secure internships should actively mentor juniors, creating a cycle of support and opportunities.

Q.

How important are publications for law students?

Quality trumps quantity. Publish 2–5 well-researched articles in credible platforms. Avoid plagiarism and focus on writing relatable and impactful pieces. Publications enhance credibility and open doors for internships and higher studies.

Q.

How is technology shaping the legal profession?

Technology has simplified legal research but introduced challenges, like hyper-connected clients who are already informed. It's reduced manpower needs in offices, emphasizing the importance of adaptability. Lawyers must embrace sustainable tech development to maintain their relevance while safeguarding livelihoods.

Q.

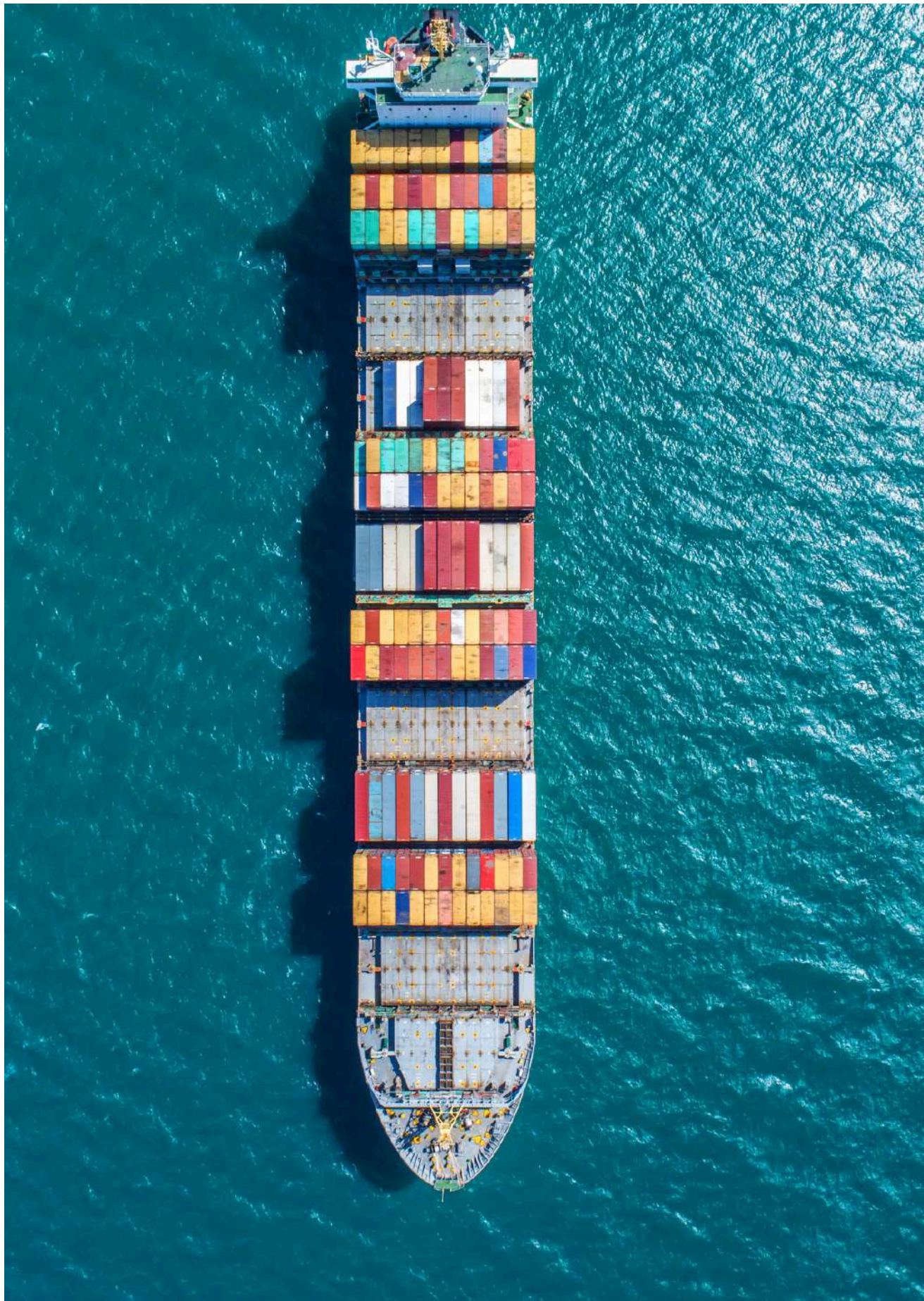
Could you share advice for building professional relationships in law?

Networking is crucial. Relationships built on mutual respect and integrity foster opportunities. For lawyers, social engagements and professional networking replace traditional advertising, helping establish credibility and expand connections.

Q.

Any closing thoughts for aspiring lawyers?

Wisdom in life hinges on two principles: wait and hope. Be patient for opportunities, work diligently, and maintain hope for the future. Every experience, good or bad, contributes to growth and builds the foundation for success.





Prof. (Dr.) Holger Hestermeyer

Interviewed by Sourav Ghosh and Surbhi Gupta

Q. Professor, starting with the basics, what does a career in academia, especially in international law, look like?

The interesting thing is, you would assume that since we're talking about international law, which is an international topic, there's a homogeneous career path. But there really isn't, because academia differs from country to country, and that is one of the unusual experiences for someone who's worked in academia across different countries.

The path is always different. For example, if you're in the United States, it's rather uncommon for lawyers to get a PhD. The typical path to professorship often involves a clerkship—preferably with a Court of Appeals, and ideally with the Supreme Court. If you manage that, you'll have your pick of schools, and you can become a professor.

In the UK or continental Europe, the usual path is to pursue a PhD. Now, the UK is relatively innovative and open to alternative routes. For instance, you can come from legal practice and decide to move into academia. That's acceptable. Most universities still require a PhD as a baseline qualification, after which you can start at a lecturer level and progress over time within one institution.

About

Dr. Holger Hestermeyer is a Professor of International and EU Law at the Diplomatic Academy in Vienna, where he heads the department of international and EU law. Before joining the Diplomatic Academy, he was a professor of international and EU law at King's College London, where he co-founded the Centre for International Governance and Dispute Resolution (CIGAD) of which he remains a senior fellow. In the past, Holger was a *Référéndaire* at the CJEU. He also headed a research group at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public and International Law. He has worked as a Referendar for criminal and civil court judges in Hamburg, for the task force ICC of the German Foreign Office and an international law firm in Hamburg, Madrid and Alicante.

Dr Hestermeyer has received a Habilitation from the university of Heidelberg, a doctorate (Hamburg), LLM (Berkeley). He was awarded an Otto Hahn Medal, an Otto Hahn Award and the ISUS prize. Holger is a former Fulbright Fellow and German National Merit Foundation Fellow.

Holger has taught in the areas of international and European law in Heidelberg, Münster, Berkeley, and Santiago de Chile. He is the Co-Executive Vice President of the Society of International Economic Law and a former co-director of the Red Latinoamericana de Derecho Económico Internacional. Holger speaks German, Spanish, French and Italian.

In many continental European countries, the requirements are more stringent. You need a PhD and, before securing a full-time academic position, you often have to write a second book. The academic tradition in those countries dictates the areas in which you write.

For example, to qualify as a professor in Germany I had to write a PhD, which was in international law. Then I had to write a second book, the Habilitation, which required another exam before the entire public law faculty. It couldn't be about international law; it had to cover either administrative or constitutional law. The fact that I had an academic job in the UK was entirely irrelevant.

So, my main advice to students is this: decide which country you want to pursue an academic career in. Once you decide that, understand the academic traditions of that country and work to fulfill those requirements.



Since you're considered a legal authority in International Trade Law, how would you explain international trade law to someone encountering it for the first time?

First, it is important to understand that International Trade Law is a subset of International Law. It governs how states regulate trade among themselves. On a global level, this is primarily done within the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO), an institution established to oversee the rules of international trade.

The WTO also has a dispute settlement system, which is treaty-based. The foundational treaty here is the World Trade Agreement, which includes:

- The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), regulating trade in goods,
- The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), covering trade in services, and
- The Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement, which governs intellectual property rights.

India, for instance, has played a significant role in the negotiation and refinement of the TRIPS Agreement, given its influential generics industry.





That was insightful. Beyond academia, what career opportunities exist in international trade law?

There are several paths. Similar to general legal careers, you need to think about who you'd like to work with.

1. **Law Firms:** Some specialize in trade law. However, this can mean different things—some focus on private international commerce, like resolving disputes between companies. Others help countries negotiate trade agreements or assist businesses in navigating trade and customs law.
2. **Government Roles:** Many governments have departments dedicated to trade negotiations.
3. **International Organizations:** The WTO, for example, offers positions for officials. There are also roles in other international institutions like UNCITRAL in Vienna, which focuses on some specific trade issues, but also arbitration within the UN framework.
4. **Dispute Resolution:** Trade dispute resolution is unique because it's state-to-state litigation, unlike the numerous cases in commercial law. Most jobs here are government-based or with institutions like the WTO, which oversees trade disputes.

However, a career entirely based on litigating trade disputes is rare and usually requires a strong academic background.

Q.

Given the current challenges facing the WTO, like the appellate body being in limbo, do you still recommend students consider careers at institutions like the WTO?

Absolutely, though it's important to be realistic. The appellate body is unlikely to return. However, there's still significant activity at the WTO—countries continue to raise and address trade concerns, both politically and legally.

The experience gained at institutions like the WTO remains invaluable. Even if the current multilateral system evolves into something different, those with experience will likely lead the new systems. Trade—and the laws governing it—will persist, even if the structures change.

Q.

What can undergraduate students do during their initial years to prepare for a career in international trade law?

Focus on building a strong foundation in international law. A good understanding of international law opens doors to various systems, including environmental law or human rights law, should your interests shift. Similarly work on your methodological and writing skills.

Finally, languages are also critical in international law. Fluency in English is essential, but additional languages—like French or Spanish—are increasingly important. Treaties, for instance, are often written in multiple authoritative languages, and understanding these nuances gives you an edge.

Q.

Do you have any anecdotes or key lessons for students considering international legal careers?

Yes. International law requires openness to diverse cultures and perspectives. When I did my master's in the US, the international environment was a defining experience. I recall a party where cultural differences regarding when exactly you show up for a party invitation became almost comically evident. The invitation was for 6 PM. Students from several Asian countries arrived promptly at 6, considering it polite. Europeans came around 6:30, and Latin Americans closer to 7 and would consider showing up at 6 sharp somewhat peculiar. The American host wasn't prepared for this range of interpretations, but it was a great learning moment.

Cultural awareness and adaptability are essential. If you're pursuing international law, these experiences will shape your personal and professional life.





Q.

How important do you think publications and writing are in building a career in law and as a skill for lawyers in general?

Writing is one of the principal skills for a lawyer. Writing and speaking, essentially dealing with language, is at the core of what we do. Now, we don't write novels—it's not about the beauty of the language. It's about clarity of language, and practicing that is invaluable.

Whenever you're writing a brief or trying to convince someone of your argument, you need a totally clear structure. For instance, if you're applying a treaty provision that has three requirements, your structure must walk the reader through them one by one. If you end up discussing four requirements, something's off. Short sentences are equally important. English is one of the few languages where very short, clear sentences are an ideal. That's something my non-native-speaking students appreciate.

Q.

On that note, how important do you think research publications, blogs, and similar forms of writing are in the field of international law and academia?

For academia, writing is absolutely critical. These days, many institutions require at least one monograph, and some demand two.

In international law, the importance of journals varies across countries. For example, in the U.S., student-edited law reviews dominate. The most prestigious are general law reviews like Harvard Law Review. Almost every law school has one. Then you have specialist reviews. In Europe, double-blind peer-reviewed journals are the gold standard. Few notable publications include the British Yearbook of International Law, Leiden Journal, and International and Comparative Law Quarterly. Different countries have their own leading journals, too. Germany has the Heidelberg Journal, Italy has Diritto Internazionale, and France has the Revue Générale.

Publishing in top law reviews is highly competitive. Often, the choice of topic determines your chances.

Q.

What blogs or journals would you recommend for staying updated?

The blogs of major journals like the American Journal of International Law and the European Journal of International Law are excellent. The European Society also runs a great podcast worth listening to. Beyond that, I'd recommend staying on top of general news and following the work of the International Law Commission. Their reports drive many discussions in international legal circles.



Q. Could you share your experience advising the UK Parliament?

Certainly. Technically, I was a specialist advisor to a select committee. It was a fascinating experience because it allowed me to observe political processes up close. After Brexit, the UK needed to sign many treaties to replace those it had lost as an EU member. My role was to scrutinize these treaties, compare them to EU agreements, and evaluate their implications. This involved reading treaties line by line—a time-consuming but valuable exercise. I worked closely with the legal advisor to the EU Select Committee in the House of Lords. This collaboration gave me a deeper understanding of how the UK handles treaty scrutiny in Parliament, including its strengths and weaknesses. This subsequently led to a project aimed at improving treaty scrutiny in the UK, culminating in a report published earlier this year.

Q. That's impressive. Would you recommend such work experience to students aiming for academic careers?

Absolutely. Practical experience is invaluable. You can and should read books about how courts resolve and tackle cases. But the moment you open your first file and tackle a case for yourself will change your perception and teach you more than many books will.

Q. As we wrap up, what final advice would you give to students aspiring to build careers in international trade law?

Remember, this is your life. There will be goals and opportunities, and sometimes it's okay to turn down an opportunity to focus on your goals—or vice versa. Find the right balance, and don't hesitate to adjust your path if you find yourself unhappy in a particular area of law.

STATUE OF JUSTICE.





Ms. Lodovica R.

Interviewed by Sourav Ghosh and Shireen Kauser

Q. You've worked in legal design and innovation, which is quite unique. Can you explain what this entails?

Legal design is a new approach that focuses on making law more accessible and comprehensible for everyone. It combines law with design, behavioral science, psychology, and communication. The goal is to create tools that simplify legal systems, services, and documents, making them easier to understand. It's especially used in the corporate world, but it's also about access to justice, particularly in public international litigation. One tool used is plain English and visual elements to improve understanding.

Q. You're also pursuing a PhD in public international law. What advice would you give to those considering a PhD?

I recommend gaining experience before pursuing a PhD. Working as a practitioner or legal researcher helps identify meaningful research areas that haven't been explored yet. It's crucial to be passionate about the topic, as a PhD is a long commitment. With a PhD, you can teach, return to practice, or work with international organizations or NGOs. If you're passionate and want to make an impact, a PhD is a great choice.

About

Lodovica Raparelli is a lawyer and Consultant to Professor Can Yeginsu at 3VB. She is also a Ph.D. student at King's College London, specializing in Public International Law, International Arbitration, and Legal Design.

She holds an LL.M. in International Dispute Resolution from King's College London, with a distinction-awarded dissertation examining whether international environmental crimes can be classified as Crimes Against Humanity.

Lodovica's professional experience includes working in global law firms in London and Milan, focusing on investment-state and commercial arbitration, public international law, environmental law, human rights, and international criminal law.

As Project Manager and Junior Fellow at the Centre for International Governance and Dispute Resolution (CIGAD), she helps connect academics, policymakers, and practitioners to tackle global challenges.





You've worked on international environmental law. What do you think about its prospects?

Climate change litigation and environmental law are growing fields, especially with recent rulings by the European Court of Human Rights linking environmental responsibility to human rights. Climate change is becoming increasingly relevant, and environmental law is now more integrated with human rights issues. Career prospects include working on cases at the ICJ or with international organizations or NGOs focused on the environment. It's a field that offers opportunities at both national and international levels



What extracurricular activities should law students pursue to build a career in public international law?

Internships and vacation schemes in law firms are valuable for gaining practical experience. Participating in moot courts, especially in international law or arbitration, is also beneficial. These experiences give insight into case preparation and the dynamics of law practice. Research roles, internships in NGOs, or international organizations like the ICC can also provide useful exposure. The key is to explore various roles to understand the field better. It's a field that offers opportunities at both national and international levels



What made you pursue public international law over domestic law?


It was somewhat random. After moving to London, I did an internship in international arbitration and international law. I found that field interesting, and one thing led to another. It wasn't a clear plan from the start, but I took opportunities as they came, and seven years later, here I am.



With the rise of AI, how do you see it impacting international law?

AI is helpful for research and studying, but it cannot replace human thinking. While AI can assist, it's essential to retain critical and analytical thinking. In academia, students still need to build their own reasoning. AI tools may facilitate research, but human minds offer diverse perspectives, which AI currently cannot replicate. AI should be used ethically and to assist, not replace, human thought.





Q. Finally, how did you adapt to the shift from civil law to common law after moving to the UK?

The shift was challenging but manageable. The systems are quite different, but over time, I adapted through practical experience and further study. It's been a valuable learning process.

Q. How important do you think publishing research is for students looking to pursue an academic career?

Publishing research is crucial if you aim for an academic career. It helps you become known within the academic community and is essential for building credibility. You can start with blog posts, which are less formal but offer great exposure. For example, commenting on recent judgments or legal developments on blogs related to international law can be a good entry point. As you progress, academic journals are another avenue to explore. They may be more selective, but they provide greater recognition.

Q. A researcher once said that unless you have something novel to contribute, you shouldn't write for academia. How much do you agree with this idea?

It depends on your goals. If you're pursuing a PhD, originality is crucial, as universities value fresh perspectives. However, in international law, finding a completely novel topic can be rare. The key is finding a unique angle on a common subject. For example, with topics like climate change, you may offer a new perspective by linking it to a different area of law.

Q. Speaking of higher education, what made you choose King's College over other prestigious institutions like Oxford or Cambridge for your PhD?

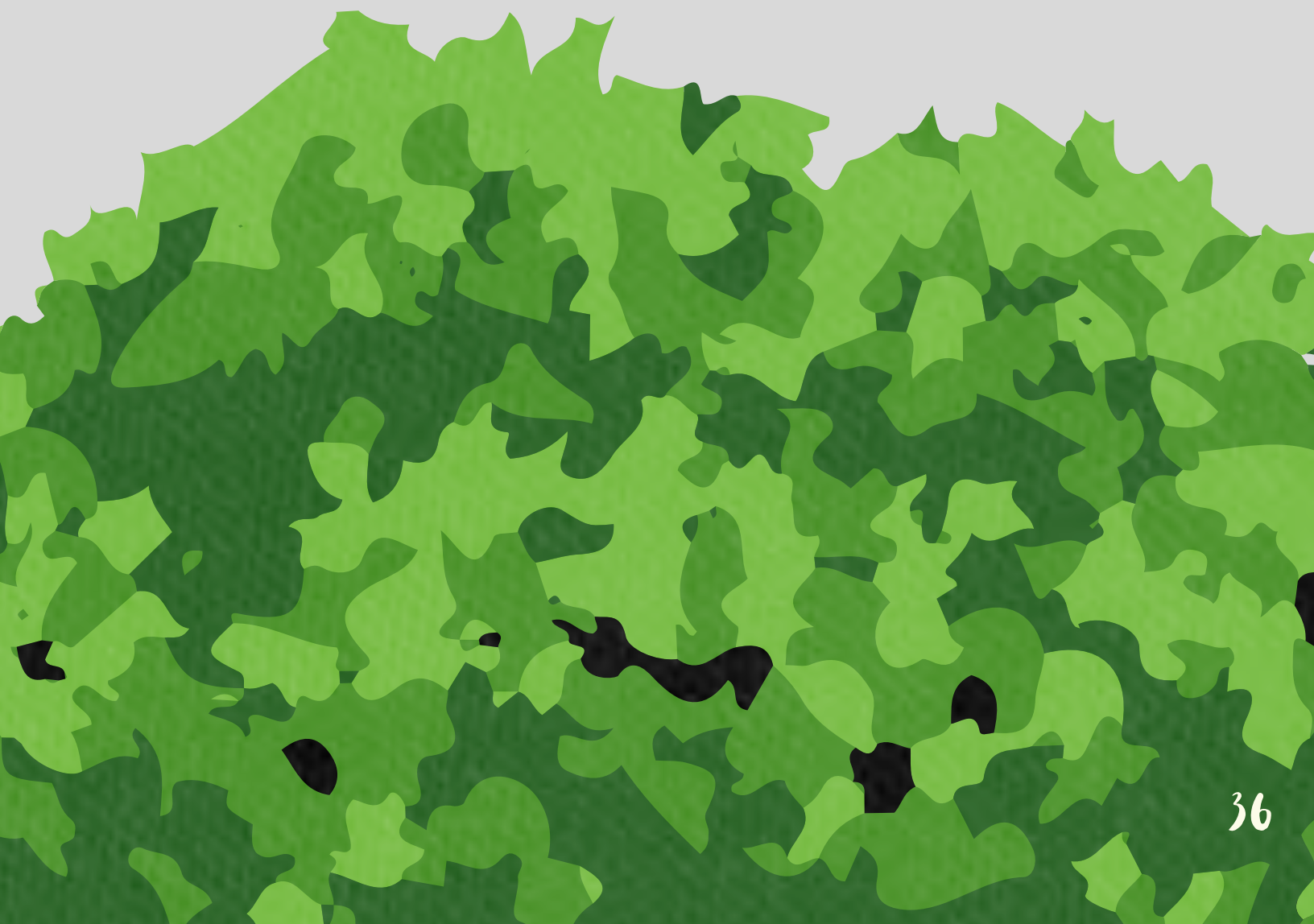
I had already done my master's at King's and was familiar with the environment. More importantly, I valued the relationship with my supervisor, Professor Philippa Webb, with whom I started working during my LLM. A strong rapport with your supervisor is essential for a successful PhD, and I knew King's was the right fit for me.

Q. What qualities do students at King's College possess that set them apart from others?

The students at King's are highly curious and possess excellent critical thinking skills. They don't just stop at reading the material—they dig deeper, asking “why” and “how.” Preparation is also key, but it's the ability to think critically and stay informed about global events that truly sets them apart.

Q. What advice would you give to students who are about to graduate?

My advice would be not to worry about having everything figured out right away. Success doesn't happen overnight, and social media can often give a false impression of instant success. The reality is that success comes from working hard day by day, seizing opportunities, and discovering what you're passionate about. Be patient and trust the process.





Sai Chaitanya Yepuri

Interviewed by Katyayni Singh

Q. Studying in the United States is often regarded as a dream come true for many students. Did you specifically target universities in the U.S., or were you open to other locations as well?

My focus was specifically on the U.S. Based on my research and knowledge at the time, I decided that pursuing a master's degree in the U.S. would be the most beneficial. There were several factors influencing this decision. Firstly, I wanted a fresh perspective and an environment that emphasized diverse cultural and intellectual experiences. During my program, there were 87 students from 40 different countries. This exposure to different viewpoints was enriching, both academically and personally.

One example that stands out is studying the Bhopal Gas Tragedy case. Understanding this case from an international perspective was eye-opening. I learned how minority stakeholders preferred addressing the matter in U.S. courts due to the absence of strong legal frameworks in India at the time. Such discussions highlighted the comparative advantages and limitations of different legal systems, which was invaluable.

About

Sai Chaitanya Yepuri is a distinguished legal professional with a strong academic background and extensive research experience. He holds an LL.M. with a Business Law Certificate from Duke University School of Law (2023–2024), where he actively contributed to legal advocacy and human rights initiatives as a Project Leader for the Human Rights Pro Bono Project and a volunteer for the Duke Afghan Asylum Project.

He earned his B.A. LL.B. (Hons.) from Damodaram Sanjivayya National Law University (DSNLU), Visakhapatnam (2018–2023). As the founding member and Student Convenor of the Student Newsletter Committee, an Assistant Editor for Lex Commerciale, and an active member of the Centre for Business and Commercial Laws (CBCL) and the Legal Aid Society, he contributed significantly to legal scholarship and institutional development. Sai Chaitanya specializes in corporate law, intellectual property, taxation, and constitutional law, with several publications in esteemed legal journals, including works on the Satyam Scandal, minority shareholder rights, and the taxation of sporting incomes.

His academic excellence has been recognized through prestigious accolades such as the Merit Scholarship from Duke University and a Certificate of Excellence in Law of Taxation from DSNLU.

Previously, he has worked at IndusLaw, Hyderabad as an Associate where he applied his research expertise to the dynamic field of business and corporate law, reinforcing his commitment to legal scholarship, policy research, and corporate practice.

Q. Could you provide a brief description of the application procedure for Duke Law School?

The application process for most U.S. law schools, except for institutions like Harvard and Yale, is managed through the Law School Admission Council (LSAC). Applicants must create an account on the LSAC platform, where they can submit applications to multiple universities. The platform allows applicants to fill out individual application forms for each university, upload documents such as transcripts, resumes, and letters of recommendation, and answer university-specific questions. However, Harvard and Yale have independent procedures that require applicants to send their documents directly to the university. For Duke, the process was straightforward and centralized through LSAC. It simplifies the logistics of applying to multiple schools since applicants only need to send their transcripts to LSAC, which then forwards them to the selected universities.

So you have to send them a courier of your transcripts which they send to all the universities you have applied to. While LSAC provides a common portal, each university requires a tailored application. For example, Duke requested additional essays based on hypothetical scenarios. These university-specific requirements ensure that applicants align with the institution's expectations and values. However, the centralized platform simplifies certain administrative tasks, such as submitting transcripts and managing multiple applications.

Q. Were you able to select your courses, or were they assigned by the university?

Students have considerable freedom in selecting their courses. Universities typically offer a broad range of options, often exceeding 200 courses annually, including specialized areas such as AI and law or cryptocurrency and law. While there are mandatory courses like U.S. Constitution and Legal Research and Writing, especially for students aiming to take the bar exam, the majority of the curriculum is flexible. In my case, we have to do 25 credits in two semesters. So there are some subjects which have three credits, some which have four, two or even one.

Therefore pick a combination of all these, and make sure to have 25 credits. I chose courses that aligned with my interest in business law, such as U.S. Corporations, International Business Law, M & A, Structuring and Regulating Financial Transactions, Entrepreneurship and Law. I even explored Fintech to gain insights into this emerging area. This flexibility allowed me to tailor my education to my professional goals.

Q.

What are the list of universities to which you applied and your thoughts on applying broadly versus focusing on a select few?

I applied to multiple institutions, including Duke, Harvard, Yale, Stanford, NYU, UC Berkeley, UCLA, Columbia, Cornell, University of Pennsylvania, University of Chicago, and the University of Southern California. Reflecting on this, I would advise future applicants to be more selective. For instance, Yale's program caters to those interested in academia, which did not align with my career goals. It's important to focus on institutions that genuinely fit your aspirations and strengths.

Q.

Can you share your advice for aspiring law students?

Enjoy your time in university, especially during your undergraduate years. These are formative years that shape both your personal and professional life. Always have a backup plan for your career. For instance, if pursuing an LLM is your primary goal, consider alternative paths to ensure you remain prepared for any eventuality. Finally, embrace opportunities for growth and learning—whether through diverse coursework, internships, or global exposure. These experiences will not only enhance your career but also help you grow as an individual.

Q.

What advice would you offer to students considering an LLM or exploring career opportunities in international law?

Firstly, always have a clear plan for your future. Whether you intend to return to your home country or pursue opportunities abroad, having a roadmap will help you stay focused and avoid uncertainty. Secondly, seek programs with a diverse cohort. Interacting with peers from various cultural and professional backgrounds enriches your perspective and fosters personal growth. Additionally, experiment with different fields during your undergraduate years. Intern in law firms, clerk under judges, and explore alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. These experiences will help you identify your passions and strengths. Remember, enjoying what you do is crucial for long-term success.

Secondly, I would advice students to opt for diverse programs with a smaller class size as such programs would ensure greater bonding amongst the students and also a better focus from the faculty and management.





Ms. Titasha Banerjee

Interviewed by Katyayni Singh

Q. Your educational background is impressive with a degree in law and also a master's degree in business administration along with other disciplines related to corporate law. How did you identify your primary interests?

My journey evolved over the past 15 years. I began with a background in economics, transitioned to law, pursued an MBA, and later completed a master's degree in law. Eventually, I earned a PhD in international investment law. The focus on investment law became a significant interest during my doctoral studies.

Q. You mentioned working with government entities and academia before moving abroad. What influenced your decisions to switch roles and locations?

My priority has always been the quality of work and the opportunities to gain new experiences. I chose to move from London to India because of the complexity and richness of the work available there at the time.

About

Titasha Banerjee is a seasoned legal professional specializing in international trade, corporate governance, and compliance. She currently serves as an International Trade Counsel at YILDIRIM GROUP, where she manages complex international contracts in the commodity sector, ensuring regulatory compliance across warehousing and logistics operations. With extensive experience in the power and energy sector, she has developed expertise in commercial law, contract management, data privacy, and technology law.

Academically, Titasha holds an LL.M. in International Business Law from Amity Education Group (2010–2012). She has also completed specialized courses in Compliance Law and Privacy Law from the University of Pennsylvania and Advanced Valuation and Strategy from Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Her legal career spans roles in corporate legal advisory, compliance, and governance, with a focus on cross-border transactions and regulatory frameworks. With a strong foundation in legal research and strategic analysis, Titasha continues to contribute to the evolving landscape of international trade and corporate governance.



Indian legal practice offered a depth of contractual and regulatory challenges that were more stimulating compared to the relatively straightforward work in England. Despite the living conditions in India being less ideal for some, the intellectual and professional growth outweighed those factors. Additionally, working alongside renowned legal professionals like Mukul Rohatgi and other stalwarts of Indian litigation significantly shaped my understanding of the law.

Q. Having transitioned from litigation to international trade counsel, how have you adapted your skills to meet the demands of these roles?

While I'm no longer a litigator due to language and jurisdictional constraints in the Netherlands, my role as an international trade counsel involves advising companies on regulatory compliance and cross-border transactions. In the Netherlands, they follow a civil law framework where cases are resolved efficiently, often within minutes.

My work now focuses on drafting comprehensive legal opinions and collaborating with local counsels in jurisdictions like Sweden, Germany, and the Netherlands. This requires a nuanced understanding of both international and local laws.

Q. Could you share some highlights from your role as a legal advisor at the World Trade Organization (WTO)?

Serving as a legal advisor at the WTO was transformative. One notable case involved research on the trade of perishable goods, such as Rajnigandha flowers, which India exports to Japan. This case required addressing maritime laws, geopolitical considerations, and contract disputes.

My research contributed to a WTO judgment, parts of which are still referenced in academic and professional circles. The experience emphasized the importance of understanding global arbitration structures, force majeure clauses, and the practical applicability of international trade laws. Working with international judges and boards deepened my expertise in these areas.

Q. You've worked extensively in both traditional and renewable energy sectors. What regulatory challenges do you encounter in these industries?

In Europe, the focus is heavily on environmental regulations. Initiatives like the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) and EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) have introduced stringent compliance requirements. For example, companies must monitor their carbon emissions and obtain certificates for permissible limits. Non-compliance results in penalties, which can significantly impact cross-border trade. These regulations demand a deep understanding of environmental laws, taxation, and international trade routes. For instance, when transporting commodities like coal, we calculate carbon footprints, evaluate emissions, and determine the most environmentally sustainable routes. These complexities highlight the interplay between legal frameworks and practical business operations.

Q. How do these regulations impact cross-border transactions, and what advice do you offer to companies navigating these challenges?

Companies with complex corporate structures must address regulatory requirements proactively. For instance, when trading between EU and non-EU countries, it's essential to involve customs brokers, calculate emissions accurately, and secure the necessary certifications. Collaborating with tax experts and adhering to local and international regulations ensures smoother transactions.

Our role as legal advisors is to identify less emission-intensive trade routes and optimize compliance mechanisms. This approach minimizes disruptions and facilitates sustainable business practices.

Q. What differences have you observed in trade law practices between India and other countries? Are there areas where India could improve?

One area where India could improve is in enforcing anti-dumping laws. In Europe, dumping violations attract significant penalties, whereas in India, enforcement is less stringent. This leniency allows corporations to bypass environmental regulations by paying fines.

Additionally, India could benefit from simplifying contractual practices. For instance, shorter, standardized contracts with clear terms could enhance efficiency and compliance. Establishing general terms and conditions that are widely accepted across industries would also streamline legal processes.

Q. How do you navigate cultural and professional dynamics when working in international settings?

Sensitivity to cultural nuances is crucial. Working internationally requires adapting to diverse work cultures and legal practices. For example, in Europe, work-life balance is respected, with strict adherence to eight-hour workdays. This contrasts with India, where extended working hours and unclear communication can sometimes hinder efficiency.

When collaborating with international lawyers, clarity and directness are essential. Acknowledging gaps in knowledge and seeking assistance fosters trust and ensures effective teamwork. This openness is particularly important for young professionals entering the global legal arena.

Q. Could you share insights into your professional journey and how your interests shaped your career path?

I initially practiced as a litigation counsel for six to seven years, specializing in commercial and corporate matters. My practice extended to England and India, where I dealt with cases in the Supreme Court.

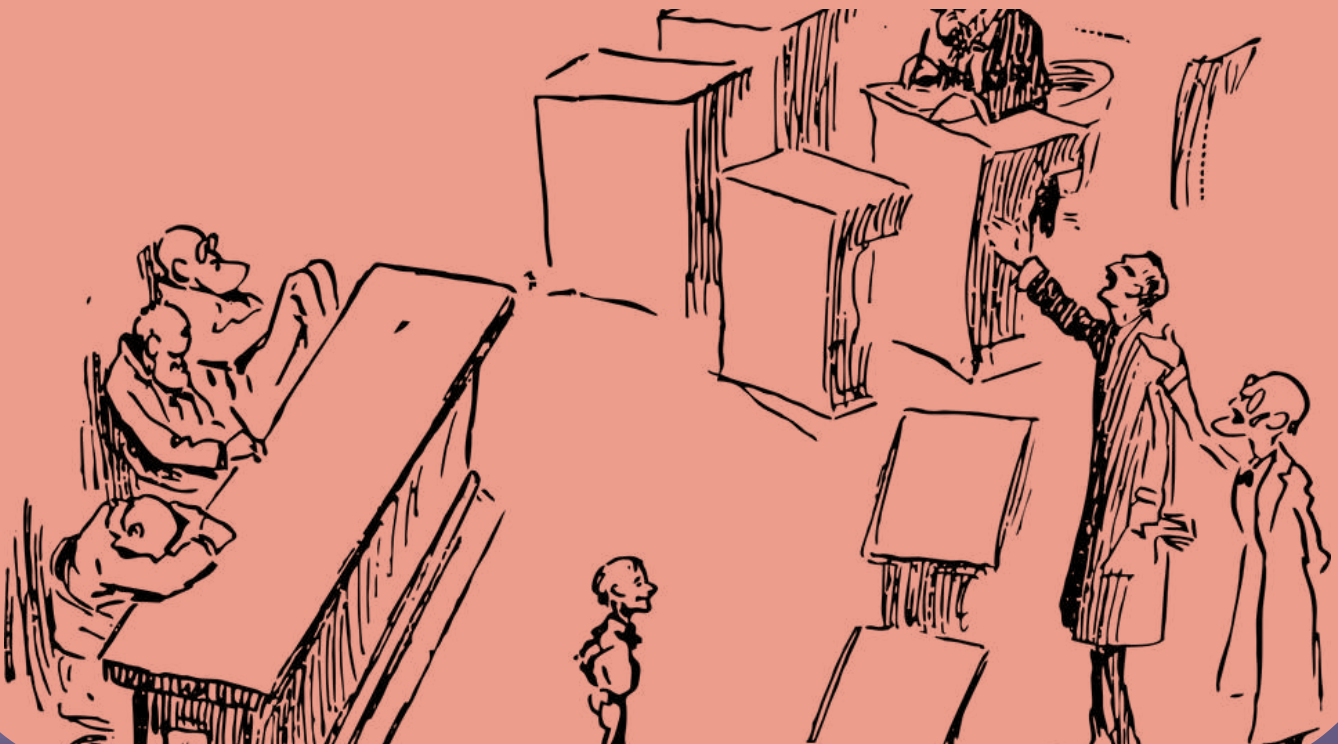
With the advent of the NCLT and banking regulations, my work shifted toward international contract disputes and cross-border transactions. This transition highlighted my preference for international trade and corporate law over domestic matters. Over time, my career trajectory adapted to evolving legal frameworks, transitioning from general corporate law to specialized international trade and contractual law.

Q.

Could you please share if you have any final thoughts or advice for aspiring professionals?

Embrace continuous learning and remain adaptable. The legal profession is dynamic, and staying updated with emerging trends is vital. Prioritize gaining diverse experiences over immediate financial rewards. This foundational knowledge will serve as a strong base for long-term success.

Lastly, focus on building meaningful professional relationships and maintaining a global perspective. The ability to navigate cross-cultural dynamics and legal systems will be invaluable in today's interconnected world.





Ms. Natasha Pérez Tümmeler

Interviewed by Devanshi Pandey and Utkarsh Gupta

Q.

What does a career with a degree in sustainability and law entail, and how would you define sustainability in this context?

A career combining sustainability and law adopts a multidisciplinary approach. It goes beyond traditional legal frameworks to incorporate scientific evidence on issues like climate change and biodiversity. While there is no universally agreed definition of sustainability, it often prompts debates around whether it constitutes a principle of international law or entails specific obligations for states and international actors.

In practice, this career focuses on sustainable development, utilizing law as a tool to address global challenges such as climate change and biodiversity loss. It involves collaboration across disciplines—with scientists, sociologists, and economists—to address the pressing environmental, social, and economic issues of our time. Sustainable development emphasizes not only environmental protection but also the integration of social and economic considerations, ensuring that no one is left behind.

About

Natasha Pérez Tümmeler is an advocate for environmental sustainability and international law, specializing in climate change, human rights, and sustainable development. With over a decade of experience in labor, migratory, and corporate law, she has worked on multi-stakeholder agreements, human rights advocacy with Defiende Venezuela, and high-profile discussions on rights violations in Venezuela.

Fluent in English, Spanish, and German, Natasha combines legal expertise with strategic communication, thriving in international and cross-cultural settings. Currently, she focuses on advancing global legal frameworks for environmental justice and is open to collaborative opportunities in sustainability and law.



Q.

How do multilingual skills enhance your legal practice, particularly in international cases?

Multilingual skills are invaluable in international law. Legal instruments are often drafted in multiple languages, and nuances in translation can alter obligations and interpretations. Proficiency in languages such as Spanish, English, and German enables a deeper understanding of the intent and responsibilities embedded in international conventions. Additionally, these skills foster stronger connections with clients and stakeholders by facilitating communication and building trust.

Q.

What key challenges do you encounter in international humanitarian law, and what role does it play in addressing human rights violations within corporate and governmental structures?

International humanitarian law (IHL) faces significant challenges, particularly in enforcement. While the rules exist, their application often falters due to political resistance and claims of self-defense by states. The enforceability of IHL is critical because it directly impacts civilians during conflicts.

Civil society plays a vital role in holding states and corporations accountable. Advocacy, public pressure, and legal action can compel adherence to IHL standards. Furthermore, collaboration between governments, corporations, and NGOs is essential to ensure compliance and address systemic human rights violations.

Q.

What emerging trends do you observe in international environmental law, and how can law students prepare for them?

International environmental law is a vast field encompassing energy law, biodiversity protection, and climate change mitigation. Students should explore these areas to identify their specific interests. Preparation involves researching current international developments, as these often influence national legal systems. Specializing in a subfield—such as energy law or arbitration—and pursuing relevant master's programs or certifications can enhance expertise. Networking and engaging in practical experiences, such as moot courts or internships, are also crucial.

Q.

How effective are the current enforcement mechanisms in international law, and what improvements do you suggest?

Enforcement in international law relies heavily on state consent, which complicates the process. Civil society, NGOs, and independent organizations play crucial roles in promoting compliance. However, these entities often face resource constraints, such as limited funding and volunteer support. To enhance enforcement, we must depoliticize international law and amplify the voices of civil society. This requires strengthening NGOs and providing platforms for advocacy. International law's political nature must be addressed to create a more equitable system of enforcement.

Q. Could you recommend any courses or certifications for students interested in international environmental or public international law?

Students should begin by exploring national-level courses to build a foundational understanding of environmental law within their country. This knowledge provides context for addressing international challenges. For example, national bar associations often offer relevant courses. On an international level, participating in moot courts, such as the Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition, can broaden perspectives and enhance skills. Additionally, organizations like the International Law Students Association (ILSA) provide valuable resources. Students should research and pursue programs that align with their interests, leveraging both local and global opportunities.

Q. Thank you for sharing your insights. Any final thoughts?

Law students should remain curious, proactive, and adaptable. International law is constantly evolving, and staying informed about global developments is key to making meaningful contributions.



Ms. Siddeeqa Iram

Interviewed by Katyayni Singh

Q. What motivated you to pursue an LLM in international law and humanitarian law, and what was your strategy in selecting a program?

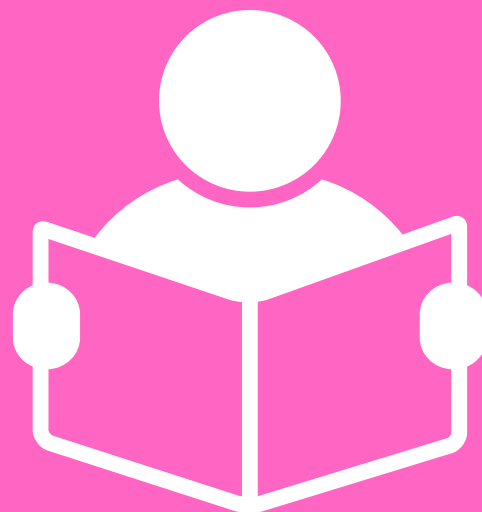
Initially, I did not plan to pursue an LLM. However, my growing interest in international law and human rights, coupled with the limited opportunities in India, led me to explore programs abroad. I applied to universities such as Edinburgh, Birmingham, and King's College, but ultimately chose Geneva for its unparalleled resources and proximity to international organizations like the UNHCR and ILO.

Q. What career paths do you see after completing this program?

Career options include academia, international organizations like UNHCR or Amnesty International, and local administrative roles. Geneva's market is competitive, with a preference for candidates fluent in multiple languages and skilled in project management tools. The key is to remain adaptable and open to diverse opportunities.

About

Siddeeqa Iram is a former student of DSNLU (2019-24) and is currently pursuing LLM in International Law at the prestigious Graduate Institute, Geneva. With Human rights as her concentration stream, she is passionate about the rule of law, humanitarian issues, and international justice. Her research spans a wide range of critical legal areas, including migration law, women's rights, and public international law, reflecting her broad intellectual interests and her desire to advocate for marginalized groups and promote justice on an international scale



Q. Can you share insights about your academic experience at your institute?

The academic environment in Geneva's Graduate Institute is rigorous and highly interactive. Attendance and participation are strictly monitored, and professors expect students to critically engage with readings. Exams are typically application-based, requiring analysis and synthesis rather than rote memorization. For instance, open-book exams span 24–48 hours, challenging students to demonstrate a deep understanding of the material.

Classes emphasize critical thinking and discussion, creating a supportive space for intellectual exploration. Response papers, which analyze and critique class readings, are a regular feature and contribute significantly to grades. Talking of the program, it combines foundational courses in international law with specialized streams in economics, environmental law, and individual protection, which align with my interests in human rights and humanitarian law.

Q. How did you approach the application process, and what advice would you give prospective students?

The application process varies by country. In the UK, IELTS scores and a strong academic record are essential. Research skills, demonstrated through papers and internships, play a critical role. Tailor your Statement of Purpose (SOP) to each university, highlighting your alignment with their faculty and programs. Strong recommendation letters from professors or employers who know your abilities are also crucial.

A lot of institutes have interview rounds included before final selections. For SOPs and interviews, it is better to be ready with an articulation of your motivations and future goals and if needed, a well-thought-out thesis proposal as well.



What are your experiences with internships and networking in Geneva?

Geneva offers excellent networking opportunities through career services assistance and collaborations with organizations like the ICRC. During my volunteering with the ICRC's statutory meetings, I engaged with global delegates and learned about the dynamics of humanitarian law in practice. Such experiences provide invaluable exposure and connections.

However, visa restrictions limit part-time work and volunteering hours, requiring careful planning. The competitive job market in Geneva emphasizes skills like multilingualism, data analysis, and project management. Students should actively network at events and leverage alumni connections to navigate these challenges.



What advice would you offer to young lawyers exploring their career paths?

Don't feel pressured to have all the answers immediately. Explore various fields through internships and experiences to discover your interests. Your career path might evolve—for instance, I've seen colleagues transition from commercial arbitration to human rights. Embrace change, take calculated risks, and stay open to new opportunities. Confidence and perseverance are crucial in navigating the complexities of the legal profession.



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Mr. Timothy Smyth

Interviewed by Sourav Ghosh and Surbhi Gupta

Q. How would you define international arbitration law and a career in it from your perspective?

I would define international arbitration law as the set of legal principles that relate to international arbitration, wherein parties decide that a dispute will be resolved by arbitration rather than in any other forum, such as a national court. Typically, such disputes will be heard by either a sole arbitrator or a panel of three arbitrators. Parties essentially situate that dispute outside the jurisdictional framework of national courts and instead have it decided by a neutral decision maker who will ultimately issue an award which is then enforceable in various jurisdictions around the world. There are several international treaties in relation to the enforcement of arbitral awards, including the New York Convention. In an investor state context, you have the ICSID Convention as well.

Arbitration as a career is so enriching, and that perhaps segues into the second question, which is how you define a career in international arbitration. There are various different directions that such a career can take. First of all, I'm coming at the issue largely from a council perspective.

Within the council world, there's various different aspects. I do a mix of commercial arbitration and investor state arbitration.

About him

Timothy Smyth is a Counsel at Boies Schiller Flexner LLP. He has been specializing in international arbitration and public international law. With a focus on representing sovereign states, multinational corporations, and high-net-worth individuals, he has handled arbitrations under various rules, including ICSID, UNCITRAL, and ICC. Mr. Smyth has appeared in cases before the International Court of Justice and the High Court of Justice in London. Recognized for his expertise, he has a strong reputation for delivering precise legal analysis and developing compelling legal arguments.



Since I'm an English lawyer by training, most of my experience of commercial arbitration is English Law arbitrations. I get to work under various governing laws like Swiss law, New York law, and others. There is huge career framework even from the counsel segment; for instance, people who have been counsel for a good length of time often end up sitting as arbitrators and deciding international arbitration disputes.

Then you also have academics and researchers. A lot of work is done on research on different approaches taken by arbitrators, different principles that should apply, attempts to harmonize different sets of rules. A lot of people span all three areas that I've talked about. They act as counsel, arbitrators, and are also involved in academia. For instance, I do some lecturing myself at various universities, including Durham University, and I recently taught at Brunel University as well over the summer.

Then there are work in the institutions around the world. The most prominent ones in my part of the world are the LCIA in London and the ICC in Paris. I would say that in both international arbitration law and international arbitration, there are different career aspects to it and so many different pathways that you can take.

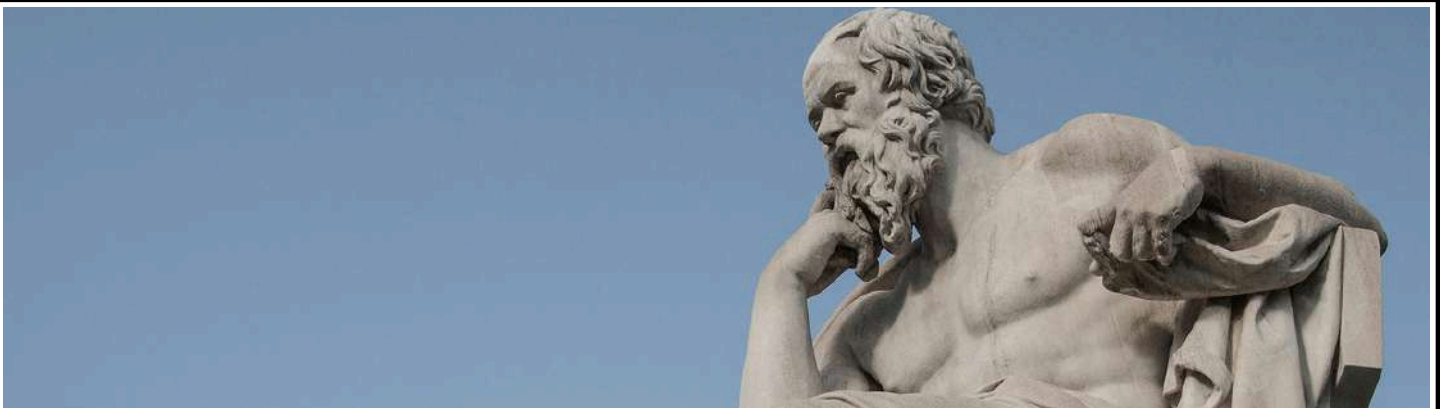


How can an undergraduate decide if international arbitration is the right career path for them assessing the skills they have and what steps should they take to get started?

There are certain core skills that are very important for an international arbitration lawyer, and they include effective legal writing. This probably is the most important skill of an arbitration lawyer, because so much of what we do is “writing”, whether it's legal advice to a client, whether it's submissions before a tribunal, various other tasks that you might carry out as an international arbitration lawyer involve writing.

Therefore, there should be a big focus amongst aspiring arbitration practitioners to hone their legal writing skills. And the most important aspect, in my opinion, is clarity. If the drafting isn't clear, it's not going to go anywhere. If it's a piece of legal advice, the client won't necessarily understand it easily. If it's a tribunal member, you can't even begin to start persuading them. The initial step of being able to write clearly is incredibly important.





People coming to arbitration from an academic background will require a different style of writing. It might be slightly more academic in style, slightly more verbose potentially, and so there's an exercise that needs to be done in trimming back some of the “decorative elements of your writing” to make sure that you're getting your message across clearly.

For Instance, I did an English literature degree and that was fundamental in terms of my writing skills because it taught me to write effectively and persuasively and if I think back to the first few years of my legal career, there was a process of trying to make my writing more concise, make it clearer, make it punchier, make it crisper, that took some time.

And then for your second question, the obvious thing if you're doing an undergraduate degree is to take modules that relate to international arbitration. I think that doing say a private international law module or a public international module will be hugely valuable.

I also think that aspiring arbitration practitioners should be on the lookout for opportunities to get work experience, be that with chambers or a law firm internship. The third tip would be networking. Arbitration is an area where networking is very important. One can, for instance, join the Young International Arbitration Group (YIAG) under the auspices of the LCIA in London. Similarly, the ICC has a comparable organization.

I recently attended a conference for instance as part of Young ITA (Investment Treaty Arbitration). Many students participated, they got to network with professionals, listen to panels, and gained insight into working in practice.



What are the most common mistakes practitioners make in legal drafting, particularly in investment disputes, and what key tips should law students follow to excel in drafting for arbitrations?

The biggest mistake that legal drafters make is a lack of clarity. I think probably a related aspect is “structure”. I think it is really important for any arguments, any legal submission to follow a cogent and logical structure. And that too often, I think, is neglected. And the key issue I feel is that when someone's drafting a legal submission, they're not thinking enough about the reader and the convenience with which the reader can follow the argument. So, if you structure is not really having a logical flow and easy to catch, it can become very hard on the part of the reader



STATUE OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

Q.

How important are moots and publications for students pursuing international arbitration, and where should they focus their efforts in these areas?

I think they are important for sure. When I'm looking at CVs of people applying for our internship program or for associate positions as well, it is a good sign that someone has taken an interest in arbitration early stage and started to work on their oral advocacy skills. It is never too early to start developing those skills.

The most prominent moots in this field are quite well-known. The Vis Moot, for instance, is highly regarded in commercial arbitration. It features outstanding problems and is judged by prominent arbitration practitioners. It's so well drafted and so well constructed. On the public international law side, the Jessup Moot is undoubtedly the most prestigious. I've had the pleasure of judging the Jessup Moot several times and always enjoyed the process. I am hugely impressed by the students, the caliber of the students taking part in the quality of the arguments. Also, then I suppose the other one prominent moot is the FDI moot as well.

As for publications, the Kluwer Arbitration Blog, for example, allows you to submit proposals for articles. If you're at university, there might also be opportunities to publish your thesis. Additionally, if you're doing work experience at a law firm, you may have the chance to contribute to publications on their website.

Q.

How important is an LLM or a PhD for building a career in international arbitration, and how significant is its role in networking, given that arbitration heavily relies on building professional connections?

It can be very helpful to do an LLM if you want to practice in Europe, I think it can be helpful to get an LLM from a recognized European university that people are familiar with. I wouldn't describe it as crucial to have an LLM or a PhD. And I come at that partly because I don't have an LLM or a PhD. And I was still able to forge a career in arbitration. And I suppose what allowed me to do that was by getting an opportunity at an early stage to practice with a really good arbitration team. I did six months of training during my contract to the Paris office of Eversheds, which had and still has a very good arbitration team. And that gave me a really good platform for the rest of my career.

There are some very, very good programs out there with fantastic teachers. The Durham University LLM program, which I teach on has a very, very good investment arbitration module on that LLM program.

It is useful, for sure, in terms of getting a really good grounding in the legal principles, and also the chance to study with leading professors and practitioners. However, I wouldn't describe doing it as an essential. And similarly PhD would give you a level of knowledge of the legal principles that would be kind of probably unrivaled amongst junior practitioners, once you're starting out, be very valuable, but not necessarily an essential part of the process or a prerequisite.

Q.

How do you think technology will shape the practice of arbitration over the next 10 years, and how can students prepare themselves to align with the evolving market and enhance their employability in this sector?

One area where young aspiring practitioners will be able to make an impact is by mastering technology in a way that more established arbitration practitioners have not been able to do either, because they're too busy, or because they're not used to it. Whereas younger practitioners may have more inclination to get to grips with new technologies. If you think about it, if you are starting out at a law firm, and you may have a partner who is fantastic at the legal principles, but doesn't necessarily know how a piece of technology works, you could come in as a junior practitioner, and help them with that process and get to know them really well. As a result you can become a really key part of the team in managing, say, a document management platform. It is a good way to establish yourself as a key member of the team. I am sure that AI will have a big impact on arbitration in the future.

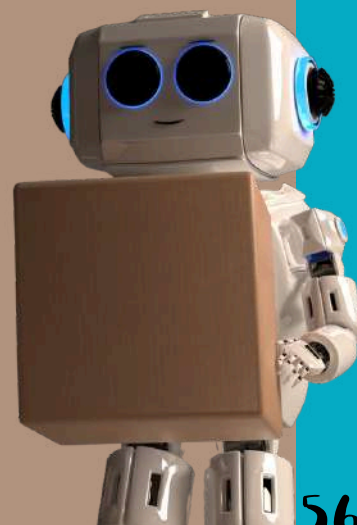
There is some caution on the part of practitioners, rightly so, in terms of AI tools, particularly when it comes to anything resembling drafting legal submissions. That's an area where practitioners will always, I think, be very cautious before using AI in any way to produce work products that would go to the tribunal in a submission format.

I'm sure that AI will have a really key role in organizing and structuring documents, identifying what the key parts of those documents are, summarizing themes that course through the documents. Legal research as well is an area where many technology firms are investing a lot in harnessing the power of AI to improve the process of legal research.

Q.

Do biases against practitioners from third-world countries exist in international arbitration, similar to concerns in academia about discrimination in first-world countries?

A great effort is being made in arbitration to root out any form of discrimination, to improve diversity amongst council, amongst arbitrator appointments. I mean, undoubtedly, there's still progress to be made. But I certainly think that arbitration is an inclusive community. And it does embrace people from all walks of life. And it's a global community that involves people from many different backgrounds and cultures. It's sort of inherent in the arbitration system is this inclusivity of different legal backgrounds, different cultures, different ethnicities. And that has led to a big effort to increase diversity and ensure that there's no discrimination.



Q. How can students effectively network with practitioners in a globalized environment, and what strategies help them stand out and leave a lasting impression?

LinkedIn is a good start. I try to be very receptive to students or aspiring practitioners, mainly because I had some fantastic mentors, when I was coming through the system. And it's a way of trying to sort of give back. I like to encourage aspiring practitioners who are trying to make their way into this world.

The other main thing I would highlight is conferences. Attending conferences, and networking is one of the most important things you can do. And there are, as I said, various organizations that run conferences. So I think that as young practitioners, you should be trying to attend as many of those conferences as you can, ideally in person. But the networking aspect is much harder to achieve from an online conference. So I'd say certainly, in person conferences. I think mooting is a really good way to network as well. Because you will be judged by senior practitioners, and it gives you a way to make a connection with them.

Then there are the kind of events like Paris Arbitration Week, and London International Disputes Week. I went to Paris Arbitration Week last year. So, there are a lot of opportunities to listen to them, and network with them.

Q. What challenges and opportunities arise in commercial or investor-state disputes? How do counselors ensure enforceability of arbitral awards, especially regarding public policy exceptions?

When starting a dispute, it's crucial to consider enforcement from the very beginning. Before even filing a request for arbitration, think about where you might enforce the award, the other party's assets in that jurisdiction, and even which party you're initiating arbitration against, as this can significantly impact enforcement ease. And part of that process will be assessing whether there are any particular public policy hurdles that might arise with the enforcements of an award. As part of the due diligence process that you carry out before you even issue proceedings, you should be, first, looking at potential avenues for enforcements, and as subsets of that, you should be looking at what public policy exceptions might apply in a given jurisdiction. And that might then also require taking advice from local counsel in that jurisdiction, conducting legal research and things of similar sort.

Q.

How are ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) considerations influencing recent trends in international arbitration and investment disputes?

In recent years with cases such as the Bear Creek against Peru mining case.[1] you can see certain states adopting ESG obligations or provisions in investment treaties. An example is the Morocco Model Bilateral Investment Treaty which includes within the definition of an investment that the investment contributes to the sustainable development of the country. And that's a very interesting development because it suggests that ESG issues could come to the fore as a jurisdictional issue in investor states arbitration before you even get to the substantive standards.

[1] Bear Creek Mining Corporation v Republic of Peru, ICSID Case No ARB/14/21, Award (30 November 2017)

Q.

What are some of the landmark cases or notable achievements in your international arbitration career that have made a significant impact globally? Additionally, how have these experiences shaped you and your professional journey over the years?

Probably the most significant case I worked on in my first few years of practice was the Infinito against Costa Rica case [2], which is an investment treaty arbitration brought against Costa Rica.

It's a very significant case in relation to various legal principles, including jurisdiction, including the scope of the fair and equitable treatment standard, also the ability of investment treaty tribunals to review judicial measures taken by a state.

For me personally, it was very important in my career because it was the first chance that I got to do oral advocacy at the final hearing, and I'm indebted to the partners on that case for letting me present part of the closing arguments for Costa Rica. It was an amazing experience to engage in oral advocacy before a distinguished tribunal comprising Gabrielle Kaufmann-Kohler, Brigitte Stern, and Bernard Hanotiau, three leading figures in international investment arbitration over the past 20 years. It was also a hugely interesting background to do with a gold mining project and various court proceedings that were launched in order to annul the mining concession that was at issue in that case, in part for environmental conservation reasons. I should add, we were successful in representing Costa Rica in that case, and there was a small liability finding, but no damages awarded. I am very proud to represent Costa Rica in that case.

[2] Infinito Gold Ltd v Costa Rica, ICSID Case No ARB/14/5, Award (3 June 2021)



Q.

On a more informal note, have you ever seen yourself doing something except international disputes or law?

When I was starting, when I was a student, I thought about being a journalist. So that was the main alternative career path that I thought about because I enjoyed writing. I've always enjoyed the sort of investigative side of things that lends itself to international arbitration, but also to journalism. So that was the main alternative career path that I considered, but ultimately ended up in arbitration. Within the legal world, I also initially saw myself becoming an IP and media lawyer. But ultimately, like I alluded to earlier, I did my seat during my training contract in Paris in public international law and international arbitration. So, journalism and IP will probably be the two areas that I thought about.

I would wish everyone luck and good fortune in taking that first step in their career.

Q.

What parting thoughts or final statements would you like to share with students who might be reading this?

I would say, be confident, be open-minded, be perseverant. And to say that international arbitration is a hugely enriching and rewarding career, should you choose to embark on it, it comes with great challenges. But ultimately, it's very rewarding and is hugely varied and is just a mirror on global commerce and society in a way that some areas of law are not.





Dr. Michail Risvas

Interviewed by Sourav Ghosh and Utkarsh Gupta

Q. Teaching is not typically the most popular career choice for law students. Most law graduates tend to pursue legal practice in large or small law firms, work as independent practitioners, or take in-house roles. Some capitalize on their legal education to enter business, while only a small percentage venture into academia. Why do you think academia is such an uncommon path?

The relative unpopularity of academia stems from a few key factors. First, an academic career demands extensive preparation, often requiring a PhD, teaching experience, and publications. Second, teaching and research are vocations that appeal primarily to those with a strong interest—or even a passion—for law and legal research. For many, this is not a mainstream option but a specialized calling.

Q. How important is a PhD for someone pursuing a career in academia? Does it hold significance outside academia, for instance, in legal practice?

A PhD is essential for an academic career in most jurisdictions, either due to legal requirements, university policies, or both. In the majority of countries, a PhD is a prerequisite to apply for academic positions.

About him

Dr. Michail Risvas is an assistant professor (Lecturer) in law at the University of Southampton. Dr. Risvas has completed his masters and PhD from the University of Oxford.

He specializes in international arbitration, public international law and international economic law.

Previously, he has also worked as an associate at a Law firm.



I strongly encourage students interested in academia to pursue a PhD from a reputable university. In legal practice, a PhD is not a requirement. Experience and practical skills are more critical. That said, some areas of law, such as international law and arbitration, are inherently more academic. In these fields, practitioners with PhDs are not uncommon.

Q.

What role do research papers play in building a strong academic profile? How should students navigate potential biases in academic publishing?

Research and publishing are crucial regardless of one's professional aspirations. Excellent research skills are indispensable for academics and practitioners alike. Moreover, publishing enhances visibility and marketing, particularly for practicing lawyers. While biases and limitations exist in academic publishing, the best antidote is excellence. High-quality, rigorous research can often overcome obstacles. To stand out, a publication must emphasize quality, originality, and strategic alignment with the targeted journal. Submitting a paper to an unsuitable journal is a common mistake that leads to rejections.

Q.

Can you share your approach to selecting topics and conducting research for your publications?

I have written on various topics, including international investment law, commercial arbitration, WTO law, EU law, and the law of the sea. Writing on diverse subjects is intellectually stimulating but requires significant time and effort. When choosing a topic, I focus on quality, originality, and relevance. A well-researched, original perspective tailored to the right journal ensures that the work contributes meaningfully to the field.

Q.

How did your experience in legal practice shape your role as an academician?

My time in legal practice profoundly influenced my approach to academia. It enhanced my teaching and research and provided practical insights that I now incorporate into my academic work. For fields like international law and arbitration, where the boundary between practice and academia is porous, experience in both realms is invaluable.

Q.

What advice would you give to students unsure about pursuing academia versus legal practice?

Choosing between academia and legal practice is a personal decision that requires careful consideration of both objective and subjective factors. My philosophy is that there are no inherently good or bad choices—only conscious ones. I encourage students to explore both paths. Engage in legal practice while pursuing teaching or research on the side. Both academia and legal practice are rewarding yet demanding careers, so understanding what aligns best with one's interests and goals is crucial.

Q.

As someone who studied at Oxford, what advice would you offer to students aspiring to pursue higher education at prestigious institutions?

Admission to top universities like Oxford primarily hinges on academic excellence. This requires not only dedicated study but also a critical and creative approach to learning. Students must go beyond memorizing cases and strive to understand the law deeply.

Q.

How does academia differ from arbitration in terms of degree requirements? Does a PhD hold equal importance in both fields?

While a PhD is a formal requirement for many academic positions, it is not essential in arbitration. Many successful arbitration practitioners hold only undergraduate degrees, while others have advanced qualifications. Ultimately, success in either field depends on the individual's skills and dedication.

Q.

For students considering a PhD, what factors should they weigh before committing to such a significant investment?

A PhD should not be pursued for its own sake but as a means to fulfill a genuine interest in academia. Students should evaluate their passion for research and teaching and consider the pros and cons of an academic career before committing.

Q.

What core skills should students develop for a career in international law?

The core skills required for international law are similar to those for other legal fields: analytical ability, understanding and applying the law, and critically evaluating perspectives. Additionally, international law demands a deep understanding of international relations, history, and a cosmopolitan outlook.

Q.

What courses and activities would you recommend to students interested in international law?

Students should not exclusively focus on international law. A solid foundation in general legal education—civil law, contract law, and other core subjects—is essential. Moreover, studying related fields such as international relations, economics, and political economy provides valuable context. Extracurricular activities like moot court competitions and debates are also highly beneficial. These experiences enhance practical skills, build confidence, and expose students to real-world legal challenges.

Q.

How can students secure research internships with international professors or institutions?

Securing research internships requires proactivity. Students should apply widely and not be discouraged by competition. Any internship, whether with a professor, institution, or law firm, is valuable and contributes to professional growth.

Q.

International law is often seen as a competitive field. How can students stand out?

Success in international law depends on strong skills, credentials, and perseverance. Students should focus on excelling academically, gaining practical experience, and building a well-rounded profile. Networking and seeking mentorship are also key.

Q.

What challenges do students face in pursuing international law, and how can they overcome them?

Two major challenges are the structural differences between international and domestic law and the cultural diversity inherent in international law. Understanding these nuances requires a combination of legal knowledge and cultural sensitivity. Building a strong foundation in both domestic and international law is essential.





Mr. Matej Pustay

Interviewed by Sourav Ghosh and Vinita Singh

About him

Mr. Pustay, is a partner in the International Dispute Resolution practice at Squire Patton Boggs, specializing in investor-state disputes, as well as international and domestic commercial arbitration and litigation.

He has extensive experience providing legal counsel in arbitration proceedings conducted under UNCITRAL, ICSID, and ICC rules, as well as those of the Arbitration Court of the Czech Commerce Chamber and the Czech Agriculture Chamber. In addition, Mr. Pustay advises clients in court and administrative proceedings before Czech authorities.

Q. What do you think the future holds for arbitration, both commercial and investment arbitration, on a global scale?

The relative unpopularity of academia stems from a few key factors. First, an academic career demands extensive preparation, often requiring a PhD, teaching experience, and publications. Second, teaching and research are vocations that appeal primarily to those with a strong interest—or even a passion—for law and legal research. For many, this is not a mainstream option but a specialized calling.

Q. What are initial steps that you recommend students should take during the law school to build a strong foundation to go towards this direction?

The best way how to enter the practice is to actually join a law firm during those studies, which deals with arbitration. Of course, another way can be participation in various moot court projects. For example, our firm, when looking for students or junior associates to hire, the first people that we often go to are people who are active in mooting and showed interest in the field already.



Q.

How important do you think networking is, and how can students build their network during university?

Networking is important, especially in the arbitration community, because the global arbitration community is still not that big. Hence, it is really helpful if someone can recommend you, as the community is quite close. The way to build contacts definitely includes moot activities because you basically travel around the world and can meet people from different jurisdictions. Obviously, if there are student exchange programs, that might be another way to go.

Q.

Would you recommend pursuing postgraduate studies, like LL.M.s or Ph.D.s, in international law or arbitration as crucial?

“LL.M.s” can be very helpful, but mainly because of the networking aspect. These LL.M. programs usually involve students from all around the world, especially from the big and the best institutions. It makes more sense for junior practitioners, at the very beginning of their career, to go for an LL.M. after practicing for around five or six years. LL.M. is good in that respect, but again, it’s definitely not a must.

Q.

As a partner in international dispute resolution, what key qualities have supported your success?

I think that what was always known about me was that I had a good command over the case files. I was always the go to person when there were any questions about evidence, facts, arguments etc. So, I suggest that especially as a junior associate, you should be able to help the partners. It is also good to have a niche or specialty added to that. For example, for me, that was financial or economic part of things. I was always able to read financial statements and reports, etc. Which is something that most lawyers struggle with, “the numbers”. Hence, I suggest to develop a kind of niche that distinguishes you from the rest.

Q.

How has working in international arbitration influenced you personally or professionally?

The main thing is if you are doing international arbitration, you get kind of internationalized. Because you are dealing with people from different places, different cultures, that’s the biggest effect that it had on me.

Q.

In the last few years, there have been instances where researchers from third world countries or second world countries have said that there's an inherent bias of cultural insensitivity that is present. Do you think this is true in the area of arbitration as well, given how closed of a network it is. And how are these considerations essentialized in the globalized environment?

I've never personally experienced such bias. On the contrary, historically, if you look at arbitrators, for a long time, many were middle-aged or older white men deciding cases. However, there has been a conscious effort to change that. Various institutions now apply diversity rules when appointing arbitrators. For law firms, this shift often comes naturally to some extent. Given the international nature of arbitration, having practitioners from different regions is both necessary and beneficial. It not only makes handling cases for clients from those regions easier but can also open doors to new opportunities.

Q.

How can young lawyers overcome biases in the tightly-knit international arbitration network and establish themselves in the field?

I think it can be difficult for young lawyers in the arbitration field. The reason, again, is largely historical. The average age of practitioners and arbitrators in international arbitration tends to be higher than in other fields. However, I do think that is slowly changing. Many arbitral institutions are now focusing on incorporating younger elements into their work. That said, it can still be challenging, and I don't think there is a quick fix. The key is to be patient and gain the necessary experience over time. One way to ease this process is through networking—connecting with other young practitioners. This way, you can receive referrals, be appointed as an arbitrator, and get known within the community. It's much easier to integrate into the young community around you than to navigate the field alone.

Q.

Since you're now a part of the ICC YAFF, how do you think such organizations help individuals in growth and networking has employed, even though that has been dealt with this institution in particular?

I recently became an ICC representative. Last weekend, I attended the ICC Global Conference in New York, which takes place every two years and features a handover between former and new representatives. Over 100 representatives from around the world attended, and we spent two days together. The main purpose of the event was to build connections for future collaboration. I also spoke with more senior professionals, both from the ICC and those who have moved into practice. They shared that young ICC representatives, if not already partners when they join, often go on to become partners and receive significantly more arbitrator appointments. It's a valuable experience, and such initiatives for young professionals, not just within the ICC, can be extremely beneficial.



Q.

How do you see the role of technology and artificial intelligence evolving in the arbitration industry, and what impact do you think it will have?

I believe one of the main topics currently under development is technology and artificial intelligence. I think it will remain a top priority for quite some time, as AI has the potential to significantly change the industry—if we can reach a point where it actually works. Personally, I don't think we're there yet, and I believe it will still take quite a bit of time to get there. However, I do think the change will be positive, as it will allow us to work much more efficiently and with higher added value, without displacing younger associates or others in the process.

Q.

What are your thoughts on the future of investment arbitration, especially in light of ongoing discussions about reform and the potential rise of multilateral courts?

On the treaty-based side, technology plays a role in both commercial and investment disputes. In investment disputes, there has been an ongoing discussion for many years about whether the system works and if it is transparent enough. Should there be a major reform of the system? There has also been talk about multilateral courts, which have already been introduced in some international treaties. This conversation was significantly accelerated by the ACMEA decisions of the European Court. I believe this discussion will continue. However, there is still no real replacement for arbitration in its current form, whether it's investment arbitration or ad hoc arbitration handled by other institutions. This discussion will persist, but I don't expect many changes beyond intra-EU disputes, which are gradually coming to an end as many states have withdrawn from their bilateral treaties. Once the sunset clauses expire, it will essentially mark the end of it. There will be a decrease, but this will likely be replaced by developments happening globally. We may move toward more protectionist measures, depending on the outcome of elections in the U.S. and how that impacts global relations, particularly with China. If states become less willing to cooperate internationally, it could fuel investment disputes, as the key issue is whether a country wants international investors and how it manages that relationship.

One key topic I often discuss relates to arbitrators helping with drafting awards. There is a significant debate about whether this should be allowed, as it is traditionally the responsibility of the arbitrator to draft the award. However, many believe that AI could be a useful tool for summarizing the pleadings of the parties. Similarly, for counsel, AI can assist greatly in working with large data sets. If we can leverage technology and AI in this way, it could enable lawyers at all levels to focus on more important, strategic issues in a case.



Q What unique challenges do you encounter when working within various arbitration frameworks, such as the ICSID, or ICC?

I'm not sure whether the challenges can be generalized in that way that would apply to industry as such. There are specific challenges related to specific types of work. In state investor arbitration, it can be the fact that states do have certain power authority. You can have witnesses or experts that are not willing to go against the states in which they are based. You can have various issues with parties agreeing to pay or not pay. You can have issues related to transparency and disagreement between parties to what extent proceedings should be confidential or not. You can have challenges with respect to constitution of tribunals and how to approach constitution of tribunals. I don't see any general issues applying to the industry as such. It's more of specific issues relating to specific areas.

Q Whose name comes to your mind as role models in arbitration field who have done pioneering work which students of today should follow up?

I wouldn't say that you have many practitioners that are known worldwide, from arbitrators like Gabrielle Kaufmann-Kohler or Richard Stern in investment arbitration or Gary Born with his books, many people know. I think those can be often very distant in a sense that you do not really see and you cannot really see what's behind them becoming who they are. It's much better to look for role models that are closer to you. Whether it's someone from the region who made it and try to see what it was that he or she did that helped them in their careers. Don't necessarily go and look at fancy names that everyone knows. It's obviously helpful to see what they did, but I think it's also important to focus on people closer to you and how they succeeded.

Q If you could answer this question, is there me memorable cases that you have worked upon and that made a lot of significance in the arbitration for it?

Yes. I was involved in the original ACMEA investment case, but it was actually the court proceeding that followed that made a lot of impact on investment arbitrations.

I'm working on war crime now. That's definitely a case that will have an impact, but it's not necessarily arbitration. We did a case of investment arbitration against Serbia, where for the first time the investment tribunal upheld the claim of an investor who was a beneficial owner with the nominal owner being a national of Serbia.

Q.

What message do you have for students considering a career in international arbitration?

It's a great career. I definitely wouldn't exchange it for anything else, mainly because every dispute is different and it's never boring. It also may not be for everyone. If you are a bit more introvert, let's say, and you prefer to sit in the office and draft something, it may not be necessarily a career for you. The first thing everyone should really decide for themselves is what is it that they want, what is it that suits them, and what is it that they won't achieve in life. If that's international arbitration, go for it. Find your way to it. Be humble. Be prepared that it may take time, but I think the reward at the end is definitely worth it.





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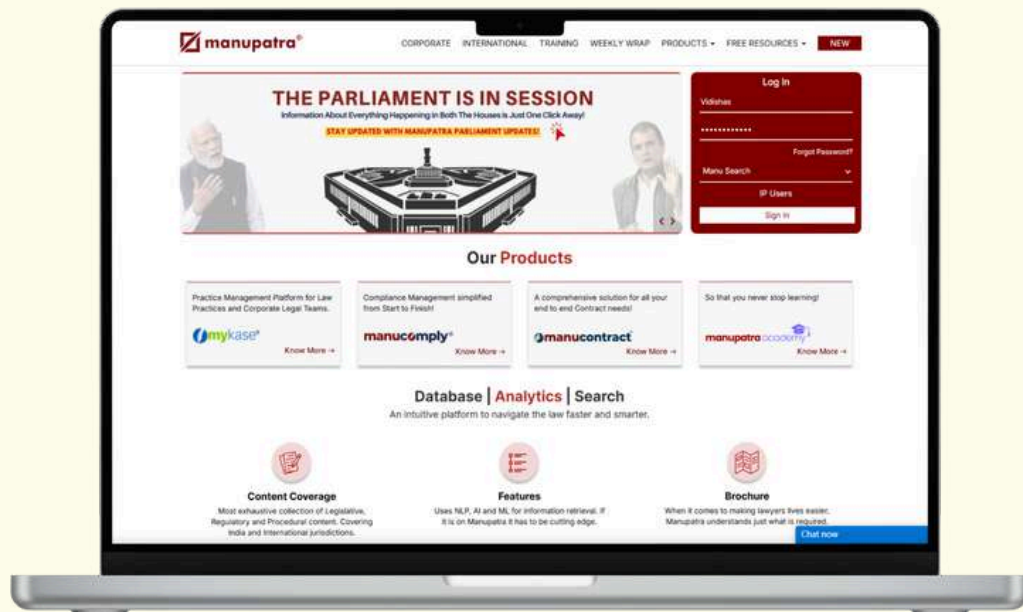
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United States

US Supreme Court Federal Courts Statutes

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