

MENGIA TSCHALAER PHD

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Summary of Qualifications

- Has 13 years of interdisciplinary qualitative research experience, including 30 months of fieldwork in India and Germany
- Directed and managed three large research projects funded by grants from the European Commission (Marie Curie IF), the Swiss National Science Foundation, and University of Zurich
- Is the author of a prize-nominated peer-reviewed monograph published by Cambridge University Press and reviewed in *Law and Society Review*, *Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law*, *Verfassung und Recht in Übersee*, *Book Review Literary Trust*, *Law and Social Inquiry*, *Contributions to Indian Sociology*
- Won 3 major and several smaller grants and fellowships amounting to a total of £335,000
- Organized a virtual symposium on COVID-19 and Queer Asylum in collaboration with LGBTQI+ NGOs and the Council of Europe, attracting over 5,600 attendees
- 15 publications; thereof 6 in peer-reviewed journals (incl. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*) and a peer-reviewed monograph, 1 publication is under review and another one is accepted for publication in a co-edited volume by CUP; 2 policy briefs, and 4 op-eds in *openDemocracy*, *Al Jazeera* and the *Tagesspiegel*
- Has a proven record of outreach activities, including appearances as an expert at the Asia Society in New York, the New Books Network in Islamic Studies, the Talking Migration podcast series, and the Perth radio show “All Things Queer”
- High impact research featured in news outlets such as *The Independent*, *Gay Star News*, *Pink News*, *Queer.de*, and *San Diego Gay and Lesbian News* etc. and with an attention score ranked in the top 5% of all research outputs by *Altmetric*

Specializations

Migration and asylum, gender and sexuality, intersectionality, critical queer and race theory, social justice movements, Islam, qualitative research methods, participatory research approach

Education

- 2013 ***Ph.D. Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology***, University of Zurich, Switzerland
Dissertation Title: Muslim Women’s Quest for Justice: Gender, Law and Activism in India
Supervisors: Shalini Randeria and Bettina Dennerlein
- 2007 ***Lic. Phil. in Social Anthropology and International Law (MA equivalent)***, University of Zurich, Switzerland
MA Dissertation Title: “We are all Sisters”: Negotiating Gender in a Tribal Women’s Court in Rajasthan

Current Positions

2018-2020 ***Marie S. Curie Research Fellow***, School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies
University of Bristol, UK

Principal Investigator researching the experiences of LGBTQI+ Muslims with the asylum system in Germany, conducting, analyzing, and writing up research, funded by the European Commission

2018- **Adjunct Associate Professor**, Department of Anthropology and Political Science
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York, USA
Developing and teaching undergraduate course on law and society, culture and the law, gender and the law, and sex and culture, advising undergraduate students on course work and careers

Previous Positions

2013-2018 **Adjunct Assistant Professor**, Department of Anthropology and Political Science
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York, USA
Developing and teaching undergraduate course on law and society, culture and the law, gender and the law, and sex and culture, advising undergraduate students on course work and careers

2016-2017 **Adjunct Assistant Professor**, Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
Barnard College, Columbia University, New York, USA
Developed and taught a course on practicing the intersectionality of race, gender, sexuality and ethnicity

2013-2014 **Adjunct Assistant Professor**, Women's and Gender Studies Program
Hunter College, City University of New York, USA
Developed and taught a course on transnational feminisms

2010-2013 **Visiting Research Fellow**, Center for Gender and Sexuality Law
Columbia University, New York, USA
Conducted, analysed and wrote up research on Muslim women's rights activism in India

2008-2012 **PhD Research Fellow**, Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology
University of Zurich, Switzerland
Designed and implemented major qualitative ethnographic research project on legal pluralism, gender, and Muslim family law in India, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation and the University of Zurich

Publications

Monograph (peer-reviewed)

2017 (sole author) *Muslim Women's Quest for Justice. Gender, Law and Activism in India*. Cambridge University Press. (Cambridge Studies in Law and Society).

This monograph examines the manner in which Muslim women's rights organizations challenge the authority of the Indian state as well as the Muslim clergy in the domain of Muslim family law.

- Nominated for 2018 Herbert Jacob Book Prize (Law and Society Association), 2018 Cohn Book Prize (Association for Asian Studies), 2019 Clifford Geertz Book Prize (Society for the Anthropology of Religion, American Anthropological Association)
- Very enthusiastic reviews in the *Law and Society Review*, *Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law*, *Verfassung und Recht in Übersee*, *Law and Social Inquiry*, *Book Review Literary Trust*
- Internal University of Bristol REF evaluation score 4-*

Articles in International Peer-Reviewed Journals

2020 (sole author) Femininities and Victimhood in Black Lesbian Asylum Cases in Germany. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. (in press)

This paper focuses on Germany's assessment of refugee claims made by lesbians racialized as Black. Drawing on gender and queer migration scholarship's critique of the asylum system as hetero- and homonormative, the goal of this paper is to illustrate how lesbian asylum seekers' uneven biographies are assessed at the intersection of gender, sexuality, and race.

- 2019 (sole author) Between Queer Liberalisms and Muslim Masculinities: The Assessment of Queer Muslim Asylum Quests in Germany. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2019.1640378

This paper focuses on Germany's assessment of refugee claims made by LGBTQI+ Muslims. Based on the analysis of several asylum decisions, it seeks to render insight into the ways in which credibility is assessed at the intersection of sexuality and Islam.

- Over 1,000 views within a month after publication
- Featured in 12 news outlets such as The Independent, Gay Star News, Pink News, Queer.de, and San Diego Gay and Lesbian News etc. as well as a podcast series and the Perth radio show
- Attention score ranked amongst the top 50 papers out of 10,217 papers published in all disciplines in July 2019 by Altmetric
- Internal University of Bristol REF evaluation score 3*

- 2015 (sole author) Muslim Women's Rights Activists' Visibility: Stretching the Gendered Boundaries of the Public Space in the City of Lucknow. *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal*, 11, 1-18.

This paper looks at the manner in which three ideologically different Muslim women's rights activists work toward carving out women's spaces within the men-dominated political and legal landscape in the city of Lucknow.

- Internal University of Bristol REF evaluation score 3+*

- 2012 (sole author) Competing Model–Nikahnamas: Muslim Women's Spaces within the Legal Landscape in Lucknow. *Journal of Law and Social Research*, 3, 65–80.

This paper delineates the heterogeneity and tensions at work in Islamic family law in post-colonial India. At the centre of my analysis is a document, called the nikhanama (marriage contract), which stipulates conjugal duties and rights as well as conditions of divorce and financial support.

- 2010 (sole author) Women Entering the Legal Landscape: Negotiating Legal Gender Reforms in a "Tribal" Women's Forum in South Rajasthan, India. *Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law*, 60, 41–70.

This paper analyses how women of the Meena community in rural south Rajasthan reshape the complex landscape of legal pluralism in rural India. Based on empirical material, collected during six months of field research, the paper examines whether, how and to what extent gender equality and gender justice can be realized in a new hybrid legal body presided over by women.

Book Chapters

- 2020 (sole author) *Social and cultural politics of resistance and empowerment*. In Martin Fotta, Cecilia McCallum and Silvia Posocco (eds.) *The Cambridge Handbook of the Anthropology of Gender and Sexuality*. Cambridge University Press. (in press)

Non-Peer Reviewed Articles

- 2020 (sole author). Liebe ist ein Menschenrecht! Über Schwierigkeiten bei der Flucht von LSBTTI Menschen vor Gefängnis, Folter und Ermordung Archithese. (in press)
- 2020 (sole author) Experiences of Waiting for LGBTQI+ Asylum Claimants in Germany: A Form of State Control and Resistance. In: Maria Lis Baiocchi "Gender Politics in the Age of Patriarchal Authoritarianism". *Political and Legal Anthropology Review*. (in press)
- 2020 Op-ed: Coronavirus exacerbates LGBTQI refugee isolation and trauma. In: Al Jazeera. 22 April 2020. With Nina Held and Danijel Čubelić.
- 2020 Op-ed: Ich habe mich nie einsamer gefühlt. In: Tagesspiegel. 30 March 2020. With Nina Held and Danijel Čubelić.
- 2019 Op-ed: LGBTQI+ Asylum Claimants Face Extreme Social Isolation in Germany. In: openDemocracy. 26 November 2019. With Nina Held.

- 2019 Queer Spaces: The Sexual Asylum Story. In: Authenticity and Feedback. Berlin: Diaphanes. 8/9.
- 2019 Queere Räume: Die Sexualisierte Asylgeschichte. In: Authenticity and Feedback. Berlin: Diaphanes. 8/9.
- 2019 Op-ed: Denied Victimhood of Lesbian Asylum Seekers Racialized as Black in Germany. In: openDemocracy. 14. August 2019.
- 2013 Book Review: Adjudication in Religious Family Law. Cultural Accommodation, Legal Pluralism and Gender Equality in India. *Law and Politics Book Review*, 23 (8), 415–418.

Policy Briefs

- 2019 Held, Nina and Mengia Tschalaer. Queer Asylum in Germany. Better Visibility and Access to Legal and Social Support Needed for LGBTQI+ People Seeking Asylum. Policy Brief, October 1. University of Bristol.
- 2019 Held, Nina and Mengia Tschalaer. Queeres Asyl in Deutschland: Bessere Sichtbarkeit und besserer Zugang zu rechtlicher und sozialer Unterstützung für LSBTQI* Geflüchtete. Politisches Positionspapier vom 1. Oktober. Universität Bristol.

Manuscripts and Special Journals in Preparation

Special Journal Issue: Bridget Anderson and Mengia Tschalaer. Queerness, Human Rights and Mobility. (to be submitted to *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* in May 2020)

Monograph: Queer Asylum Spaces in Europe: Islam, Race, and Queer Temporalities. (Book proposal to be submitted to Cambridge University Press for its Asylum and Migration Studies Series).

Article: (sole authored). Experiences of Waiting for LGBTQI+ Asylum Claimants in Germany: A Form of State Control and Resistance (to be submitted to *Law and Social Inquiry*)

Research Experience

Queer Muslim Asylum Spaces in Germany (2018-2020)

- 2018-2019 seven months of research on the experiences of LGBTQI+ Muslim asylum seekers with the bureaucratic asylum procedures in Germany.
Multi-sited research, 25 interviews with LGBTQI+ asylum seeker, refugees and activists; NGO representatives judges and lawyers, discourse analysis of legal documents and media reporting, non-participant observation in courts

Muslim Women's Quest for Gender Justice in Lucknow, India (2008-2013)

- 2011 three months of doctoral fieldwork in Lucknow, India on Muslim women's rights organizations
- 2009-2010 twelve months of doctoral research on the adjudication of Muslim women's rights within state and non-state legal fora
Multi-sited research, 70 qualitative interviews with members and leaders of 3 Muslim women's organizations as well as judges and litigants at 2 Sharia courts and the family court about ideas of justice, gender, feminism(s), marriage, sexuality, religion, and politics, case and legal discourse analysis, non-participant observation in the family and Sharia courts.

A Tribal Women's Court in Udaipur, India, (2005-2006)

- 2005-2006 eight months of qualitative research on a unique tribal women's court in Rajasthan

Grants and Fellowships

- 2020 Drei Linden Stiftung, award for the conference "Under the European Asylum Rainbow: Intersectional Queer Challenges 2020" (£3,400)

- 2019 Gunda-Werner Institute (Heinrich Böll Foundation), award for the conference “Under the European Asylum Rainbow: Intersectional Queer Challenges 2020” (£8,500)
- 2019 ESRC Impact Acceleration Award for the Workshop “Under the European Asylum Rainbow: Intersectional Queer Challenges 2020” (£3,000)
- 2018 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Individual Fellowship. Grant Agreement Nr. 793497. 1. September 2018 – 31. August 2020. (2 years, £163,057)
- 2018 CUNY Travel Grant (£743)
- 2017 PSC-CUNY Professional development grant (£1,857)
- 2015 PSC-CUNY Professional development grant (£2,229)
- Publication grant, University of Zurich (£371)
- 2014 PSC-CUNY Professional development grant (£1,710)
- 2013 Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences conference travel grant (£1,041)
- 2012 Swiss National Science Foundation Fellowship for Prospective Researchers (6 months, £26,021)
- 2008-2012 University of Zurich Candoc Dissertation Fellowship. Grant Nr. 56650301. 1. August 2008 – 31. July 2012. (3 years, £121,928)

Invited Talks and Conference Presentations (selection)

- 07/2020 Invited to chair a panel on Gender and Sexualised Governance on Migration and Mobility.** IMISCOE. University of Luxembourg. (POSTPONED)
- 04/2020 Invited to give a public lecture:** Queer Muslim Asylum in Germany. Digital Center for Humanities and Barnard Center for Research on Women, Barnard College. (POSTPONED)
- 02/2020 Invited as a panelist for the public discussion: Between Colonialism, Gender and Power.** Theater Basel. Switzerland.
- 01/2020 Invited as a speaker for a 3-day conference:** Access to asylum of queer refugees in Germany. Hohenheimer Tage on Migration Law, Stuttgart. Germany.
- 12/2019 Invited to give a talk on queer asylum policy in Germany.** Sussex Center for Migration Research. University of Sussex. UK.
- 11/2019 The Sexualization of Black Lesbian Asylum Seekers in Germany. *Multiculturalism, Nationalism, Religions and Secularism Conference*. University of Bristol. UK.
- 09/2019 Victimhood and Femininities in Black Lesbian Asylum Cases in Germany. *ncr – on the move Conference*, University of Neuchatel, Switzerland.
- 09/2019 The Erasure of Femininities in Black Lesbian Asylum Cases in Germany. *German Futures Conference*, University of Bristol, UK.
- 07/2019 Invited as a panelist for a 1-day conference:** Panel: Intersectional perspectives on queer asylum. Under the European Asylum Rainbow: Intersectional Queer Challenges, Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany.
- 06/2019 The Assessment of LGBTQI+ Muslim Asylum Claims Against the Background of Raising Islamophobia in Germany. *IMISCOE Conference*, University of Malmö, Sweden.
- 05/2019 Invited for a 2-day workshop:** LSA Junior Scholar Workshop, Annual Law and Society Meeting, Washington DC.
- 05/2019 Between Queer Liberalisms and Muslim Masculinities: The Assessment of Queer Muslim Asylum Quests in Germany. *Law and Society Association Annual Meeting*, Washington.
- 11/2018 Invited for a 3-day workshop:** Political Theory of LGBTQI Refugees and Migrants, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa.
- 11/2018 Invited for a brown bag presentation:** Theoretical Reflections on Queer Asylum in Germany, School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies, University of Bristol.
- 08/2018 Gender, Religion and Non-State Law. International Conference on Legal Pluralism. *University of Ottawa*.
- 06/2018 Book Roundtable: Muslim Women’s Quest for Justice: Gender, Law and Activism in India. *Law and Society Association Annual Meeting*, Toronto.
- 06/2018 Vernacularizing women’s subjectivity within human rights discourse. *Law and Society Association Annual Meeting*, Toronto.

- 10/2017 Destabilising Gendered Proprieties: Muslim Women's Visibility within the Public Space in the City of Lucknow, *South Asia Conference, University of Wisconsin – Madison*.
- 09/2017 **Invited for a book talk:** 'Muslim Women's Quest for Justice.' South Asia Center, Moynihan Institute of Global Affairs Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. *Syracuse University*.
- 04/2017 **Invited for a panel discussion:** Islam: Debating democracy, tolerance, and terrorism. Asia Society, New York. USA.

Media Appearances

- 2019 Radio Interview. *All Things Queer*. RTRFM 92.1. 31. July 2019.
- 2019 Podcast Interview. Talking Migration. *What Injustices do LGBTQI+ Asylum Seekers Face?*
- 2017 Podcast Interview. New Books Network. *New Books in Islamic Studies Podcast Series*.
- 2017 Panelist: Islam: Debating Democracy, Tolerance, and Terrorism. *Asia Society, New York*.

Teaching Activities

- 2013- *Adjunct Professor* – John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York
Sex and Culture (200-level undergraduate online course), *Systems of Law* (200-level undergraduate online course), *Culture and Personality* (200-level undergraduate online course), *Gender and the Law* (300-level undergraduate lecture in-class and online) *Introduction to Law and Society* (200-level undergraduate lecture course)
- 2016 *Adjunct Professor* – Barnard College, Columbia University
Practicing Intersectionality: The Interdisciplinary Study of Race, Gender, and Ethnicity (300-level undergraduate lecture course)
- 2013 *Adjunct Professor* – Hunter College, City University of New York
Transnational Feminisms (200-level undergraduate lecture course)

Organization of Scientific Meetings and Conferences

- 09/2020 Conference organizer: Under the European Asylum Rainbow: Intersectional Queer Challenges 2020, Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany.
- 04/2020 Online symposium organizer: COVID-19 and Queer Asylum. (co-organized with the Council of Europe and various LGBTQI+ NGOs in Germany). Over 5,600 people attended the symposium and viewed the live stream and recordings on Facebook.
- 06/2018 Conference Roundtable: "New Books in South Asian Legal Studies", *Law and Society Association Annual Meeting, Toronto*.
- 08/2018 Conference Panel: Non-State Laws, Religion, and Gender, Panel, *International Conference on Legal Pluralism, Syracuse University. University of Ottawa*.
- 06/2011 Conference Panel: Interlegality in South Asia, Panel, *Law and Society Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco*.

Reviewing Activities

- 01/2020– present Reviewer for *Signs* (Journal)
- 06/2019– present Reviewer for the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (Journal)
- 02/2019– present Reviewer for the *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal* (Journal)
- 09/2018– present Reviewer for *Modern Asian Studies* (Journal)
- 11/2016– present Reviewer for *Cambridge University Press* (Books)
- 08/2016– present Reviewer for the *Law and Society Review* (Journal)
- 03/2014– present Reviewer for the *Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law* (Journal)

Memberships

- 2019- Socio-Legal Studies Association
- 2019- IMISCOE International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion Network
- 2019- Association for German Studies in Great Britain and Ireland
- 2018- Migration and Mobilities Bristol (MMB)

2015- Accommodation in Pluri-Legal Europe
 2011- Law and Society Association
 2010- Law and Social Sciences Research Network

Professional Training and Development

2019 *Pathway to Impact*. Kings College. 3 weeks.
 2019 *Grant proposal writing*. University of Bristol. 2 days.
 2019 *How to create a successful podcast*. The Independent. 1 day.
 2019 *Project Management*. University of Bristol. 1 day.
 2019 *Policy Engagement*. University of Bristol. 1 day.
 2019 *Research Impact*. University of Bristol. 1 day.
 2019 *Introduction to Entrepreneurialism*. University of Bristol and University of Essex. 1 day.
 2018 *Research and Public Engagement*. University of Bristol, 1 day.
 2018 *Interview Confidence Training*. University of Bristol. 1 day.
 2018 *Improving Online Teaching for Students Success Seminar*. City University of New York. 3 months.

Public Engagement and Impact

2020 Main organizer of the stakeholder conference “Under the European Asylum Rainbow: Intersectional Queer Challenges”, which will take place at the Goethe University in Frankfurt on the 25th September 2020. The conference is committed to putting the lived experience of queer asylum at the centre of the conversation and will bring together LGBTQI+ refugees and people seeking asylum, key academic scholars, practitioners, politicians, policy and civil society stakeholders. The conference is supported by several LGBTQI+ refugee organizations in Germany, the European Coalition of Cities Against Racism, the Heinrich Böll Foundation, ESRC, and Columbia University.

2020 Main organizer of the online symposium COVID-19 and Queer Asylum. The virtual symposium featured NGO representatives and lawyers working on queer asylum, LGBTQI+ activists and LGBTQI+ persons seeking asylum/refugees from Germany as well as the Council of Europe. Over 5,600 people have attended the symposium either via the webinar or Facebook live.

2020 Invited by the Digital Center for Humanities and the Barnard Center for Research on Women at Barnard College, Columbia University, to deliver a public lecture on “queer liberalisms and colonial sexualities within Germany’s asylum system’ in April 2020. (POSTPONED)

2020 Invited by the Theater Basel, to serve as a speaker on a panel on colonialism, sexuality, and power as a part of the Theater Basel’s speaking series on Colonialism and Power.

2020 Invited by Dr. Kolja Nauman, judge at the Administrative Court of Appeal of Northrhine-Westfalia in Münster, Germany, to give a presentation queer asylum in Germany at the Hohenheimer Tage on Migration Law in January 2020 – the biggest conference on migration law in Germany and features politicians, ministers, legal practitioners, policy makers, and academics.

2019 Invited to serve as an interviewee to share my findings on queer Muslim asylum in Germany for the All Things Queer radio station in Perth and the Talking Migration podcast series based in the UK. Published an Op-ed on Black lesbian’s experiences with Germany’s asylum system and one on the extreme isolation LGBTQI+ persons face when seeking asylum in openDemocracy, an independent global media platform with human rights focus and over 7 million visitors a year.

2019 Invited to attend a roundtable discussion at the stakeholder conference Under the European Asylum Rainbow which took place at the Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany in July 2019.

2019 Publication of a policy brief regarding the legal and social support of LGBTQI+ persons within Germany's asylum system. These policy recommendations were discussed and finalized in collaboration with the German Association of Gays and Lesbians (LSVD), the European Coalition of Cities against Racism, and the Cologne Refugee Council.

2019 The article *Between Queer Liberalisms and Muslim Masculinities*, published on July 24, 2019 in the high impact journal *Ethnic and Racial Studies* was **downloaded over a 1,000 times in the first month after publication**, the article was ranked amongst the top 50 papers out of 10,217 papers published in all disciplines in July 2019 by Altmetric.

2019 Policy relevant findings from my ongoing research project into the experiences of LGBTQI+ asylum seekers from Muslim background with Germany's asylum system were featured internationally in 12 online news forums including news outlets such as The Independent, Gay Star News, Pink News, Queer.de, and San Diego Gay and Lesbian News etc. as well as a podcast series and the Perth radio show.

2018 Invited to attend a workshop on LGBTQI+ Refugees and Migrants at University of Ottawa that was organized by the Arctic University and University of Ottawa and funded by the Norwegian Research Council.

Languages

German (native), English (fluent), French (proficient), Hindi and Italian (conversational)