

EDITORIAL

Introducing the European Journal of Empirical Legal Studies: A Beacon of Empirical Inquiry in Law

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Empirical Legal Studies (ELS) is not merely a burgeoning field; it is an evolutionary force reshaping the landscape of legal scholarship. While its roots trace back to the legal realist movement of the twentieth century, ELS has matured into a distinct domain of inquiry, fostering a community of scholars passionate about unraveling the empirical fabric of law. In Europe, this momentum culminated in the establishment of the European Society for Empirical Legal Studies (ESELS) in 2022, heralding a new era of institutional support and collaboration.

Against this backdrop emerges the European Journal of Empirical Legal Studies (EJELS), a scholarly conduit for empirical legal inquiry under the auspices of ESELS. Our mission is twofold: to elevate the quality and visibility of empirical legal scholarship as well as to advance our understanding of law and its societal impact. The journal will advance these goals by providing a robust platform for the dissemination of high-quality empirical legal scholarship. From refining legal theory to informing policy decisions, empirical legal scholarship has an impact far beyond academia, shaping society. By helping to spread such scholarship, the EJELS will empower policymakers, jurists, and stakeholders with evidence-based insights.

The EJELS is committed to scientific excellence and ethical rigour. This includes adherence to gold standards of scientific publication, such as double-blind peer review and requirements of ethical review and reproducibility, including sharing necessary data and code. In addition, the Journal adheres to the principles of Open Science democratizing access, fostering inclusivity, and promoting transparency.

For us, inclusivity is not just a buzzword; it's our creed. EJELS embraces diversity and inviting all who seek to better understand how the law operates, the world on which law is based, and the context in which law operates to call it home, regardless of disciplinary background, area of focus, or methodological expertise. Whether through quantitative analysis, qualitative research, or interdisciplinary collaboration, EJELS serves as a nexus for scholarly exchange and intellectual innovation, transcending traditional boundaries in pursuit of knowledge.

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EJELS proudly wears the mantle of independence. It is a community-owned and community-run journal that is completely independent from the scientific publishing houses. This means that when you publish with the EJELS, no commercial actor benefits from the immense publically-funded work that scholars put into collecting data, conducting research, writing articles, and the mostly uncompensated effort scholars invest in reviewing submissions, and editing manuscripts. It also allows us to publish all submissions Open Access, immediately and completely without any fees whatsoever to anyone who wants to submit to, publish with, or read the European Journal of Empirical Legal Studies. This means that the scientific advances can reach more readers, greatly benefiting all of humanity. We do this – and donate our time and energy to make it possible – because we firmly believe that this is the right way to do academic publishing.¹

We invite you to share our collective journey of discovery, navigating the complexities of the legal landscape through empirical inquiry. Together, we have the potential to unlock new frontiers in our understanding of law and its role in society, paving the way for a more enlightened and equitable future. Welcome to the European Journal of Empirical Legal Studies!

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