



Economic  
and Social  
Research Council



## ***Human Trafficking and Legal Culture in Latin America: A nested socio-legal comparative study***

### **ESRC DTP Collaborative Studentship**

### **University of Nottingham and Walk Free**

The Midlands Graduate School is an accredited Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP). One of 14 such partnerships in the UK, the Midlands Graduate School is a collaboration between the University of Warwick, Aston University, University of Birmingham, University of Leicester, Loughborough University, and the University of Nottingham.

The University of Nottingham, as part of Midlands Graduate School, is now inviting applications for an ESRC Doctoral Studentship in association with our collaborative partner Walk Free to commence in October 2023.

This research project will be the first systematic study comprehensively addressing the nuances and interpretations of anti-trafficking provisions in Latin America. It will develop an embedded understanding of international anti-trafficking norms in practice, in regional and comparative perspective, to answer: how have legal cultures in Latin American countries shaped the understanding, domestication, and application of anti-trafficking laws?

International law prohibiting trafficking and exploitation has developed in a piecemeal fashion. New concepts and language have emerged to describe and govern a set of interrelated phenomena, often in response to specific contemporary issues and with limited attention to achieving coherence in the international legal regime. This has produced fragmentation in international law, translating at the domestic level into conceptual confusion, definitional debates, and discordant legal provisions. Comparative studies on the domestic realisation of the international prohibition of trafficking remain rare, and Latin American countries have been notably overlooked in comparative academic studies of anti-trafficking law in context.

Through the lens of legal culture, the project will identify patterns and trends in anti-trafficking laws, analysed in conjunction with meaning-making factors. The project will generate new insights on how legal culture shapes the design and application of anti-trafficking provisions in Latin America through a mixed methods nested analysis operating at three levels: global, regional, and national. The project will be divided into three research streams: global secondary data analysis; regional doctrinal and empirical analysis; and national case studies in two Latin American countries. These will answer three sub-questions: 1. How has the international prohibition of trafficking been domesticated in Latin America? 2. How have legal cultures shaped the design and application of anti-trafficking provisions in Latin America? 3. What other factors have shaped the design and application of anti-trafficking provisions in Latin America?

The project will develop an early career researcher in this crucial and under-examined area of research, building networks, collaboration, and interdisciplinarity. It will translate directly into the research and advocacy work of the collaborating partner, Walk Free - an organisation committed to ending all forms of modern slavery - as well as having implications for policy and advocacy in Latin America.

### **Application Process**

To be considered for this PhD, please complete the Collaborative Studentship application form [available online here](#). Shortlisted applicants will also be required to provide transcripts and two references.

**Application deadline: February 23, 2023**

### **Midlands Graduate School ESRC DTP**

Our ESRC studentships cover fees at the home rate, a maintenance stipend, and extensive support for research training, as well as research activity support grants. Support is available to both home and international applicants. For further details, visit: [www.mgsdtp.ac.uk/studentships/eligibility/](http://www.mgsdtp.ac.uk/studentships/eligibility/).

Informal enquiries about the research prior to application can be directed to [Katarina.Schwarz@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:Katarina.Schwarz@nottingham.ac.uk).