

Call for Papers
Early-Career-Researchers
International Conference

The Legal and Social Consequences of Artificial Decision Making

Organised by: DFG Research Unit 5906 (<https://www.uni-muenster.de/For5906/>)

Venue: Münster, Germany

Date: 11.03.-12.03.2027

Artificial decision-making marks a turning point for both law and society. Decisions are increasingly being driven by Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems, which have seen a surge in capabilities in recent years. While machine decision-making offers immense opportunities, ranging from economic prosperity to potentially higher-quality outcomes, it also restricts individual freedoms, poses significant risks to individual and the public, and raises profound questions about legitimacy.

This development raises questions about the fundamental functions of law and the role of legal scholarship. Although there is a wealth of literature on the specific legal consequences of AI, there is a critical research gap regarding its **broader implications for the fundamental principles of law** in modern societies.

Our DFG-funded research unit investigates these challenges systematically. We aim to identify the challenges and potentials of artificial decision-making, develop options for new legal design and reform, and re-evaluate the mission of legal scholarship in this new era. We work beyond established disciplinary boundaries, fostering an **intra-disciplinary** dialogue (between legal philosophy, private law, corporate law, labour and social law, civil and criminal procedure law and criminology) and an **inter-disciplinary** exchange with a range of disciplines – including computer science, philosophy, political theory, sociology, psychology and economics.

The conference marks the end of the group's first year of research, and represents the achievement of the first milestone. It will cover the overarching themes of autonomy, control and responsibility. To this end, it will feature contributions from leading international experts.

- ***Mareike Schmidt, University of Hamburg***
- ***Ignacio Cofone, University of Oxford***
- ***Sille Obelitz Sjøe, University of Copenhagen***
- ***Mareile Kaufmann, University of Oslo***
- ***Miriam Buiten, University of St. Gallen***

Call for Papers: Scope and Tracks

To complement the invited contributions, we are inviting **early career researchers** (PhD-candidates/post-docs/assistant professors) from all disciplines related to the interests of the research units to submit proposals. We are looking for innovative research ideas dealing with the transformation and normative shifts caused by AI.

We welcome submissions to a broad range of topics. Submissions might address, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- AI and Legal Anthropocentrism: Are human-centred concepts and metaphors adequate for AI-related legal problems? How is the legal AI-discourse also a political discourse (e.g. about power, governance, distribution and/or exclusion)?
- How must anti-discrimination law be reconstructed to limit decisions made by autonomous systems? And how can algorithmic fairness work in practice?
- Can legal design shift the focus from ex-post compensation to ex-ante prevention of algorithmic bias?
- How do we benchmark an AI system to be considered fair in the context of judicial decision-making?
- How do we regulate the interaction between judges and AI to prevent both *automation bias* (over-reliance) and *algorithm aversion* (under-reliance)?
- To what extent is corporate law anthropocentric?
- How must *Corporate Digital Responsibility* be defined? Does relying on AI shield board members from liability, or does it create heightened duties of oversight?
- How does AI-driven prognosis or evidence evaluation impact truth-finding, the presumption of innocence, and efficiency?
- How does the use of AI affect the psychological acceptance and perceived legitimacy of criminal verdicts among judges, lawyers and the public?
- Does a shift from selective to total social control with the help of data science and AI erode the socio-integrative function of law and current control systems?
- Is there a dissonance between a political as well as administrative desire for data driven total social surveillance and control systems and their acceptance within the general population?
- Do we have to rethink legal scholarship to be able to address the challenges for law posed by AI?

Submission Guidelines

We invite interested early-career-researchers to submit an abstract (max. 500 words) of their proposed paper to forschungsgruppe5906@uni-muenster.de until

30th September 2026.

Selected participants will be notified until 31st October 2026. Following the event, authors will have the opportunity to publish their research in the research unit's **working paper series** (not mandatory), ensuring high visibility within the academic community. We are able to cover travel expenses if needed.

If you have any questions, please contact the research unit's spokesperson, Prof. Dr. Stefan Arnold, LL.M. (Cambridge): stefan.arnold@uni-muenster.de