



INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH SEMINAR



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Law and Norms in Multicultural Societies

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Abstract

(Luise Goerges, Tom Lane, Daniele Nosenzo, Silvia Sonderegger): Laws affect behaviour not only through deterrence but also their *expressive power*, i.e., by shaping social norms. We examine how this expressive power operates in multicultural societies, where groups differ in their underlying value systems. According to our theory, in which individuals care about the social reputation they derive from behaviour, the expressive power of law will be weaker among cultural groups whose values are less strongly aligned with laws. Incentivized vignette experiments in Denmark, with respondents of Danish or Turkish origin, mostly find support for this prediction. We find laws move norms in the same direction for both groups, but the effects tend to be stronger for the group whose values are more aligned with the law. These findings highlight both the reach and the limits of the expressive function of law in multicultural societies.