

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR THE SEMIOTICS OF LAW - REVUE INTERNATIONALE DE SÉMIOLOGIE JURIDIQUE

#### Labelling and Categorization in Criminal Justice and Legal Theory

Volume 39 (2026)

*Special Issue Editors:*

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This special issue aims to revisit language, a central research topic in a range of disciplines concerned with law or dealing with language in a legal setting, in particular the realm of legal semiotics which has been concerned with such issues until its origin. The act of interpretation and its relation to the object of interpretation is, up to this very day, a matter of debate in legal theory and philosophy. Similarly, the issue of legal meaning and whether there is such a thing as objectivity in legal meaning, is a well-trodden path often visited by legal hermeneutics and related disciplines. How does the law control legal meaning? And is this question answered differently in relation to different legal settings? To what extent do certain technological developments influence the control that the law has over meaning?

New developments elicit renewed reflections on this topic and require revisiting these problems of language, specifically in the context of criminal justice and more particularly in the context of international criminal justice which offers a particularly interesting terrain given it is international and multi-linguistics by nature. Add to that how technological changes impact and will impact upon legal realities and what pivotal role language plays in these developments, and we are offered with a set of questions that require a multi-disciplinary perspective to make sense of.

Particularly the way in which we categorize needs to be looked at again, given that we are increasingly looking for ways to outsource legal categorization to machines. Imagine a digital or robotic judge, or more basically a judging machine working through artificial intelligence, do we not need to think of a different model of law and justice, since these systems require a “translation” of our propositions into the mathematical language (often written in binary codes) through which these systems work? And apart from the technological advancements, how do we understand certain theories of categorization, both in social sciences and sciences of languages like semiotics (e.g. Prototype Theory) or legal theory ( e.g. fair labelling or *Typizität*) to reflect upon the current state of categorization.

Several philosophical disciplines, and in particular philosophy of language, have persistently dealt with the issues of interpretation and meaning. Besides philosophy, semiotics and

linguistics devote much attention to understanding language use and translation. Thus, from different perspectives it appears that the act of naming, labelling, defining, interpreting, and categorization certain phenomena with the language of law, the way of putting certain issues in legal language, is never neutral or straightforward: using language is interpreting language, is translating it in function of certain aims or goals or interests.

We invite contributions from different disciplines dealing with the methodological problems that arise from making decisions on the basis of data in the context of legal and judicial decision-making and how problems of categorization particularly in the context of criminal justice have been dealt with.

#### *Formalities*

Papers should not exceed 15,000 words. Submissions which exceed this length will not be considered. Please take into consideration the journal's [author instructions](#)

Submission of abstracts should be addressed to [l.s.c.Quackelbeen@tilburguniversity.edu](mailto:l.s.c.Quackelbeen@tilburguniversity.edu) and [Angela.Condello@unime.it](mailto:Angela.Condello@unime.it)

#### **Key dates:**

- Abstract submission deadline: **Abstracts of 300 words by 15 May 2025.**
- Full paper submission deadline: After selection, **final papers should be submitted by 15 September 2025.**