

Conference Report

Editorial Report—A Series of Seminars Based on K-Peritia WG1 Seminar Series: Advancing the Framework of Cultural Expertise in a Global Context

Dina Hadad 

Centre d'Histoire et Anthropologie du Droit (CHAD), Université Paris Nanterre, 92001 Nanterre Cedex, France; haddadd1720@gmail.com

Abstract: This report provides an editorial account of the 2023/2024 seminar series organized by Working Group 1 (WG1) of the K-Peritia COST Action Network. The series served as a platform to explore and refine the theoretical framework of cultural expertise, addressing its applicability across diverse jurisdictions and disciplines. This editorial report, presented as part of WG1's seminar series, has also been shared in video format on the K-Peritia YouTube channel. The report begins with an overview of K-Peritia as a network, highlighting its interdisciplinary and global focus. It then introduces WG1, emphasizing its central role in advancing theoretical discussions on cultural expertise. Finally, it presents the seminars, showcasing the themes, contributions, and insights they offered, while drawing connections between them to illustrate the evolving discourse. The K-Peritia COST Action Network is an interdisciplinary initiative that seeks to address the complexities of knowledge and expertise in a globalized world. With a focus on bridging diverse disciplines and jurisdictions, K-Peritia serves as a platform for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to explore the interplay of cultural, legal, and social dimensions in addressing global challenges. Within this framework, Working Group 1 (WG1): Theory plays a crucial role in articulating and refining the theoretical underpinnings of cultural expertise, a pivotal concept for navigating the cultural and contextual dimensions of legal and social processes.

Keywords: cultural expertise; theory; law; human rights



Academic Editor: Manfred Max Bergman

Published: 10 April 2025

Citation: Hadad, D. Editorial Report—A Series of Seminars Based on K-Peritia WG1 Seminar Series: Advancing the Framework of Cultural Expertise in a Global Context. *Proceedings* **2025**, *116*, 1. <https://doi.org/10.3390/proceedings2025116001>

Copyright: © 2025 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

Cultural expertise refers to the ability to provide contextually informed insights into cultural norms, practices, and systems to facilitate better understandings, decision-making, and conflict resolution in complex, often transnational settings. Two main definitions have been developed for cultural expertise; the first, by Livia Holden (2009), offers a structure for an umbrella concept that aims to encompass engagement of social scientists with law: “Cultural expertise is the special knowledge deployed by the experts of laws and cultures for assisting decision-making authorities in the assessment of evidence with information on the socio-legal backgrounds of facts and persons involved. Cultural experts must be independent and afford a position of critical affirmation” [1]. Moreover, indigenous expertise, introduced by Noelle Higgins (2023), offers a definition that relates to first nations and their indigenous cultural understanding and so is defined as “the special knowledge and experience of Indigenous peoples which locates and describes relevant facts in light of their particular history, background, and context, and facilitates the explanation of Indigenous concepts to a non-Indigenous audience” [2]. As jurisdictions around the world

increasingly grapple with cultural diversity, the need for a robust theoretical framework to guide the application of cultural expertise has never been more critical [3]. WG1 addresses this need by engaging with scholars and practitioners across a variety of contexts to refine existing theories and expand their applicability.

The WG Theory of K-Peritia COST Action seminar series is a pivotal initiative aimed at refining and expanding the theoretical framework of cultural expertise within a global and cross-jurisdictional context. This collection, presented as a series of video seminars to be shared on the K-Peritia YouTube channel, brings together emerging voices in the field to foster dialog, share insights, and drive the evolution of cultural expertise as a vital interdisciplinary tool.

Cultural expertise has proven to be indispensable in addressing the nuanced interplay of socio-legal challenges across diverse regions and jurisdictions. Recognizing the profound impact of the concept, WG1 co-leaders Dina Hadad and Ana Oliveira have actively engaged with the speakers throughout the seminar series, contributing valuable perspectives drawn from their own expertise. Their facilitation enriched the discussions, ensuring a balance of theoretical depth and practical relevance.

The seminar series underscores the WG's commitment to advancing and revising the theoretical considerations of cultural expertise as a concept, while also embracing contributions that illuminate its practical applications. The ongoing work of WG1 Theory seeks to overcome existing challenges and welcome thought-provoking perspectives that push the boundaries of current understanding. Through these discussions, WG1 Theory continues to foster an inclusive space for academic and professional collaboration, driving forward the applicability and problem-solving capabilities of cultural expertise.

2. Seminar Highlights and Thematic Connections

Each seminar in this series examined a distinct yet interconnected dimension of cultural expertise, contributing to the overarching theoretical framework:

2.1. Dina Hadad: *"Cultural Expertise Towards Praxis in the Middle East"*

Hadad offered a regionally specific analysis of cultural expertise, focusing on the Middle East. She explored how cultural expertise is conceptualized and applied within this unique context, emphasizing linguistic and cultural nuances that shape its practice [4]. This seminar highlighted the adaptability of cultural expertise to regional needs while raising questions about the challenges of transferring theoretical frameworks across jurisdictions. Her focus on the distinct linguistic and cultural dimensions of the Middle East emphasized the region's critical role in shaping broader theoretical frameworks. The discussion further underscores the importance of context-sensitive applications of cultural expertise, a theme central to the series.

2.2. Livia Holden: *"Theoretical Dimensions and Practices of Cultural Expertise"*

As Chair of K-Peritia, Holden provides a comprehensive exploration of cultural expertise as an umbrella concept that bridges multiple disciplines. She examined its ethical considerations, multidisciplinary nature, and its role as a transformative framework for addressing global socio-legal challenges. She offered a comprehensive overview that highlighted the multidisciplinary framework of such an umbrella concept that fosters the development and advancement of justice seeking tools at the global level. By framing cultural expertise as both a theoretical construct and a practical tool, Holden establishes a foundation that ties the series together, offering a lens through which subsequent presentations can be viewed and further structured.

2.3. Max Stuer: “Cultural Expertise and Litigation in Extreme Speech”

Stuer’s analysis of cultural expertise in cases of extreme speech in Slovakia demonstrates the practical utility of the concept in legal disputes involving sensitive cultural and societal issues [5]. His seminar illustrates how cultural expertise informs methodological approaches to contentious cases, adding depth to the theoretical discourse by showing its role in resolving complex legal challenges. His analysis showcased the methodological importance of cultural expertise in navigating cases involving highly charged societal issues. This contribution builds on Holden’s framework, demonstrating its applicability in specific, high-stakes scenarios and socially sensitive cases.

2.4. Helena Belchior-Rocha and Serdar Yener: “Bridging Disciplines: The Role of Cultural Expertise in Social Science Today”

This collaborative presentation emphasizes the interdisciplinary potential of cultural expertise in enhancing the impact of social research. By advocating for a greater integration of cultural expertise into collaborative projects, Belchior-Rocha and Yener connect the theoretical discussions from earlier seminars to practical applications in research and policy. Their work bridges the theoretical and methodological aspects of the series, highlighting cultural expertise as a catalyst for innovative interdisciplinary work.

2.5. Sahar Khan: “Human Rights and the Role of Cultural Expertise”

As an external speaker, Khan provides a comparative analysis of cultural expertise in human rights contexts, focusing on the UAE and international standards. Her discussion of normative and linguistic challenges underscores the transformative potential of cultural expertise in aligning diverse frameworks. The lines of discussion offered intersected with Dina Hadad’s work on cultural expertise in the Middle East and highlighted the thesis Hadad offered in her articulation of the relationship between national and international in relevance to human rights application in culturally sensitive contexts. Khan’s contribution resonates with Hadad’s emphasis on regional specificity and Holden’s exploration of ethical considerations, reinforcing the interconnectedness of the series.

3. Toward a Dynamic and Inclusive Framework

The WG1 seminar series illustrates that cultural expertise is not a static or uniform concept but a dynamic framework that evolves in response to emerging challenges and diverse applications. By linking theoretical exploration with real-world practices, this series highlights the interconnectedness of disciplines and the necessity of collaboration to refine and expand the concept.

The ongoing work of WG1 invites contributions that challenge existing paradigms and propose innovative approaches to integrating cultural expertise into legal, social, and research frameworks. By sharing this rich collection through an accessible video format, K-Peritia aims to inspire broader participation, fostering a global dialog that ensures cultural expertise remains a robust and adaptable tool for addressing the complexities of an increasingly interconnected world.

Funding: This research was funded by K-Peritia 2201 Funded by COST and European Union.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declare no conflict of interests.

References

1. Holden, L. *Cultural Expertise and Litigation: Patterns, Conflicts, Narratives*; Routledge: Abingdon, UK, 2011.
2. Higgins, N. Cultural Expertise and Indigenous Rights. In *Cultural Expertise, Law, and Rights: A Comprehensive Guide*; Holden, L., Ed.; Routledge: London, UK, 2023; pp. 201–214.

3. Holden, L. *Cultural Expertise, Law, and Rights: A Comprehensive Guide*; Routledge: London, UK, 2023.
4. Haddad, D. Cultural expertise in the Arab Middle East. In *Cultural Expertise, Law, and Rights: A Comprehensive Guide*; Holden, L., Ed.; Routledge: London, UK, 2023; pp. 319–328.
5. Steuer, M. Cultural expertise, hate speech, and the far right: The Slovak Mazurek case. *Leg. Plur. Crit. Soc. Anal.* **2024**, *56*, 215–235. [[CrossRef](#)]

Disclaimer/Publisher’s Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.