

## EDITORIAL

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If we believe our leaders and politicians, or our algorithm-directed news and social media feeds, we live in societies that are rife with division. What divides us is continuously emphasised, exaggerated, manipulated and played back to us by people in positions of power and influence. As an antidote to such a damaging fixation that increases anxiety and erodes trust, we must strengthen efforts to forefront narratives and actions that reaffirm our shared humanity, common interests or joint purpose. So, as the *Statelessness and Citizenship Review* ('SCR') reaches its 7<sup>th</sup> volume, let us recall the impetus for this dedicated journal: to convene a space to come together, in what David Baluarte described in the inaugural edition to be 'our collective project' on statelessness and citizenship.<sup>1</sup>

With each new issue published since, the contributors to the *SCR* have brought this collective project to life. Academics and practitioners from diverse contexts, backgrounds, disciplines and points of departure have found common ground on which to engage, placing statelessness at the centre of exploration, learning and knowledge exchange. Over time, the slow-form dialogue that is captured within the pages of the *SCR* has expanded and evolved. Scholarship has sought to peel back more layers of discovery, to dig deeper into the drivers, tactics, mechanics and manifestations of statelessness, as well as to unpack, evaluate and critique the strategies that have mobilised around the issue.

The article by Brinham in this issue is an excellent example of this.<sup>2</sup> She observes that 'when statelessness results primarily from the misuse of state power, it has proved more challenging for international organisations to develop appropriate interventions'<sup>3</sup> and suggests that a way to 'further efforts towards responsive and accountable international programming' is through better understanding how impacted communities have organised in response to citizenship violence.<sup>4</sup> The article posits a framework to distinguish the concrete methods that states deploy to weaponize their citizenship regimes and exposes the modes of ground-level resistance that have emerged in response. Her evaluation includes lessons for statelessness scholarship. Among the strategies for collective resistance adopted is to counter erasure through community-centred knowledge production. As Brinham remarks, 'this challenges the anti-statelessness sector to centre the knowledge and analysis of people affected by statelessness at the same time as decolonising its own knowledge-production practices and approaches to international policy'.<sup>5</sup> She closes her piece with an 'invitation' that, if accepted, will do much to further enrich our collective project: 'to all of us who do

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<sup>1</sup> David Baluarte, 'The Arrival of "Statelessness Studies"' (2019) 1(1) *Statelessness & Citizenship Review* 156, 157.

<sup>2</sup> Natalie Brinham, 'All Ears to the Ground: Resisting mass citizenship stripping and citizenship violence' (2025) 7(1) *Statelessness & Citizenship Review* 5.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid* 6.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid* 7.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid* 29.

anti-statelessness work, to put all ears close to the ground and, in these turbulent times, listen harder than we have ever listened before'.<sup>6</sup>

The other principal article in this issue, jointly authored by van der Baaren, Gerdes and Vink, also centres its analysis on citizenship stripping — albeit with a very different approach.<sup>7</sup> Through the study of a longitudinal dataset of 47 European states going back to 1960, they combine comparative and historical inquiry to offer a rich contextual understanding of contemporary discourse and policy on nationality deprivation. They observe two 'waves of securitisation', the first in the 1970s and 1980s and the second from the year 2000 'after a liberalising period in the 1990s'.<sup>8</sup> By treating the dataset to linguistic analysis, the authors are able to further unpack these patterns and trends. They conclude that a 'conceptual shift took place in the language deployed by deprivation provisions, moving away from disloyalty towards state security', while noting that 'a state's notion of citizenship — and what it means to be a citizen' also plays an important role in defining denationalisation powers.<sup>9</sup> This article offers not only an original contribution to the body of literature on citizenship stripping, but also demonstrates the potency of in-depth, comparative and linguistic examination of longitudinal data to offer a highly valuable contribution to citizenship and statelessness scholarship.

This issue also includes three contributions to the Critique and Commentary section, two case notes, and one book review. Tucker's insightful commentary on 'Stateless Studies in an Age of Artificial Intelligence: Challenges, Opportunities & Setting a Future Agenda' draws urgent attention to why artificial intelligence ('AI') should be a matter of interest or concern.<sup>10</sup> He identifies some of AI's opportunities, such as its potential for identifying cases of statelessness and developing early warning systems, while also highlighting its limitations such as opacity and algorithmic bias. Tucker presents a new fruitful direction for further scholarship on statelessness and AI, building on existing work in refugee studies which is further ahead in this area of law.

In his commentary on 'UNHCR and Statelessness 30 Years On: A Call for Mandate Review and Mandate Equality', Monono takes stock of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' ('UNHCR') efforts to eradicate statelessness.<sup>11</sup> Based on recent evaluations of UNHCR work under its mandate on statelessness as well as his own observations and professional experience, Monono identifies important shortcomings in UNHCR work on statelessness, particularly regarding funding, staffing capacity, protection, and mandate. The piece offers a fresh perspective on why statelessness continues to be such an acute and persistent phenomenon despite UNHCR's efforts and offers tangible ideas as to the way forward.

Pratley's commentary on 'Food Methods in Statelessness Research: An Embodied Approach to Understanding Lived Experience' uses food-as-method (a term

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<sup>6</sup> *ibid* 30.

<sup>7</sup> Luuk van der Baaren, Maria Gerdes and Maarten Vink, 'Waves of Securitisation: The Rise, Fall and Resurgence of Citizenship Stripping Regulations in Europe, 1960–2022' (2025) 7(1) *Statelessness & Citizenship Review* 31.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid* 31.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid* 45.

<sup>10</sup> Jason Tucker, 'Stateless Studies in an Age of Artificial Intelligence: Challenges, Opportunities & Setting a Future Agenda' (2025) 7(1) *Statelessness & Citizenship Review* 50.

<sup>11</sup> Darren Ekema Ewumbue Monono, 'UNHCR and Statelessness 30 Years On: A Call for Mandate Review and Mandate Equality' (2025) 7(1) *Statelessness & Citizenship Review* 59.

coined by Pratley and distinct from food-as-just-substance) to ‘provide a gentle and accessible entry into’ some of the common challenges faced by stateless persons in accessing food, food insecurity, and lack of nutrition.<sup>12</sup> It speaks, therefore, to the ideas of a life of precarity, identity, belonging, connection and acceptance. This innovative piece, which goes beyond legal and political concepts, is based on Pratley’s research with young migrants and former refugees in Australia. It offers food as a methodology to complement existing methods such as surveys, interviews and focus groups.

The two case notes critically examine rulings from Constitutional Courts. The case note by Birla analyses a landmark ruling delivered by the Indian Supreme Court in October 2024 concerning the constitutionality of a provision of its citizenship laws in Assam.<sup>13</sup> Although the court upheld the constitutional validity of the law, it acknowledged serious enforcement problems since 1971, noting that inadequate implementation has led to widespread injustice. The note emphasises the court’s important contribution to the conceptual ‘framing of citizenship’ and its interpretation of the constitutional principle of ‘fraternity’.<sup>14</sup> However, it also identifies important limitations in the decision, particularly the failure of the court to address the issues surrounding stateless persons and refugees and their rights under international human rights law instruments to which India is a signatory.

The case note by Marambio examines a decision by the Peruvian Constitutional Court of September 2023 on the issue of sex-based discrimination, namely the unequal treatment of single and unmarried fathers in birth registration, in a case of international surrogacy.<sup>15</sup> The judgement is a landmark ruling in multiple respects, particularly in its affirmation of a child’s fundamental rights to a name, birth registration, identity, and nationality. This decision has significant potential to influence other Constitutional Courts, especially those in civil law jurisdictions, as they navigate evolving social norms and the imperative for legal frameworks to adapt accordingly.

The theme of acquisition of citizenship at birth is also the subject of Rodziana Mohamed Razali’s book *Safeguarding Against Statelessness at Birth: International Law and Domestic Frameworks of ASEAN Member States*, reviewed by Liew in this issue.<sup>16</sup> Liew describes the book as ‘a must read’.<sup>17</sup> The book notes that ‘[s]tatelessness from birth is a common phenomenon anchored to the location of one’s birth and the jurisdiction, laws and practices of that place’ hence it focuses on the important ‘temporal location of birth as the site when most children become stateless’.<sup>18</sup> The book adopts international standards as the benchmark for mapping, measuring, and encouraging states to implement these standards in domestic nationality laws and practice. This approach is maintained despite the

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<sup>12</sup> Elaine Mei Lien Pratley, ‘Food Methods in Statelessness Research: An Embodied Approach to Understanding Lived Experience’ (2025) 7(1) *Statelessness & Citizenship Review* 67.

<sup>13</sup> Aishwarya Birla, ‘Statelessness as an Academic Concern: The Indian Supreme Court’s Engagement with Citizenship Policy in *In Re: Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955*’ (2025) 7(1) *Statelessness & Citizenship Review* 85.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid* 94.

<sup>15</sup> Helena Ulrike Marambio, ‘Establishing Parental Equality in Peru – Fathers’ Rights in Child Registration without Maternal Details’ (2025) 7(1) *Statelessness and Citizenship Review* 75.

<sup>16</sup> Jamie Chai Yun Liew, ‘Rodziana Mohamed Razali, Safeguarding against Statelessness at Birth: International Law and Domestic Legal Frameworks of ASEAN States (Springer 2023). 262 Pages. Price \$159.99. ISBN 9789811953705’ (2025) 7(1) *Statelessness & Citizenship Review* 95.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid* 95.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid* 96.

fact that most Association of Southeast Asian Nations (‘ASEAN’) member states are not parties to the relevant human rights treaties. The book offers a hopeful and positive perspective, making a significant contribution to finding solutions to child statelessness. In doing so, it provides a useful and aspirational pathway for a region characterized by immense linguistic, cultural, and religious diversity, guiding it toward increased cooperation and harmonization.

In closing, we note that this edition of the *SCR* marks the beginning of a new chapter for the journal itself, as we say goodbye to our founding co-Editor-in-Chief, Professor Michelle Foster and welcome Professor H el ene Lambert in her new role. We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to Michelle for the vision, dedication and intellectual leadership that she brought to this endeavour ever since the journal was just the seed of an idea. Her commitment to scholarly rigor and her generous engagement with contributors have left an enduring legacy, helping to shape the *SCR* into a vital forum for the study and understanding of statelessness and citizenship. We remain inspired by her example and deeply committed to ‘our collective project’: a shared pursuit of knowledge, critical reflection, and meaningful exchange that spans disciplines, geographies, and perspectives. We look forward to continuing this ‘collective project’ with all of you — authors, reviewers, readers, practitioners and editorial team members — who make this journal a vibrant space for thought and action.