



Oñati Socio-Legal Series, v. 1, n. 1 (2011) – Master works
ISSN: 2079-5971

Foreword: 2010-11 International Master's in Sociology of Law: Master's theses

SOL PICCIOTTO *

It is very appropriate that this first issue of the first volume of the *Oñati Socio-Legal Series* should be devoted to the best of the Master's theses produced in 2010 (those graded *eximia* or *magna cum laude*). These research papers demonstrate much of what is best about the Oñati Institute's wide range of activities.

The Institute is now well known worldwide, as well as being firmly rooted in the Basque Country. It welcomes researchers and scholars for short and long stays: as visiting researchers, from doctoral students to emeritus professors; as participants in the workshops held weekly from April to July on many topics organised by leading researchers from all over the world; and as teachers in the Master's programmes. They come to use the excellent facilities: the Library, the Old University, the Residence; to debate and interact, think and write, while enjoying the pleasures of Basque cuisine and culture and the beautiful location.

For over 20 years his has stimulated a steady stream of outstanding scholarly work. Much of it has been published in the two book series published under the auspices of the Institute: the *Oñati International Series in Law and Society* (Hart Publishers, Oxford), and the *Colección Derecho y Sociedad* (Editorial Dykinson, Madrid). We are now adding this new venture, the *Oñati Socio-Legal Series*. Our aim is to complement the book series by taking advantage of the possibilities of electronic publishing via the internet. These will enable us to reach a wide audience worldwide, since anyone with access to an internet connection will be able freely to access the works we will publish here. We also aim to publish more quickly than is usually possible for print publications. Nevertheless, each paper will be peer-reviewed, to ensure a continuation of our high standards.

The papers we publish in this Issue exemplify many of the qualities of the work stimulated by the Institute. They range over the wide field of topics covered by law in society studies, as well as many countries: from attitudes to same-sex marriage in Russia to state violence in Colombia, and from lay participation in criminal tribunals in Argentina to transgender women's experience of the law in Turkey. This reflects the range of participants in the Master's programme: in 2009-10 there were 18 students from 14 different countries. Although the papers we publish here are only those judged to be the very best of the theses, there was also work of excellent quality produced by other students. Their quality is not only a tribute to the hard work and intelligence of their individual authors, but also results from the many interactions and collaborations within the programme: with other students, with visiting researchers, with the course teachers, and with the specialists who kindly agreed to supervise the thesis research.

* International Institute for the Sociology of Law, Oñati; Lancaster University.
s.picciotto@lancaster.ac.uk

The spirit of Oñati lies in the fertile intellectual soil created by the unique combination of place and people which was made possible by the creation of the International Institute for the Sociology of Law here. I am proud to have been associated with it, and to be able to present here some more of the fine fruits produced from that fertile soil.