

# Dr Nika Mahnič

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## CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

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Research Associate - **Queen Mary University of London, School of Politics and International Relations** (part-time, 2026)

- Assisting Prof Rachel Humphris with the Digital Welfare Borders: The Effects of Artificial Intelligence in Migrants' Access to Welfare (DIGIWEB) Project
- Researching data sharing and interoperability in the context of migrant welfare deservingness

## ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

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**PhD Political Science**, School of Politics and International Relations (SPIR), Queen Mary University of London (QMUL) (2025) Thesis title: '**The indentured state: programmable infrastructures and structural violence**', supervised by Prof Elke Schwarz and Prof Kimberly Hutchings (Pass with no corrections)

Postgraduate students' representative with the SPIR EDI committee (2022-24)

**MA Big Data in Culture and Society**, Department of Digital Humanities, King's College London (2018)  
Thesis title: '**Left to our own devices**', supervised by Prof Btihaj Ajana (First)

**BA Cultural Studies and Anthropology**, Chair of Cultural Studies, University of Ljubljana (2016)  
Erasmus+ study exchange: European University Viadrina, University of Amsterdam  
Thesis title: '**Technoculture and its discontents**', supervised by Prof Karmen Šterk (Distinction)

## PUBLICATIONS (\*peer-reviewed)

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2025 Review of Nathan Schneider's Governable spaces, *Information & Culture* 60 (2)

2022 Review of Platform Socialism: How to Reclaim our Digital Future (James Muldoon) - LSE Review of Books

2021 Contribution to UNESCO's first global standard on the ethics of artificial intelligence

\*2019 **Encountering bloody others in mined reality**, *AI & Society* 34 (1) Special Issue: Ethics of AI and Robotics

2017 (with Professor Kathleen Richardson) Contribution to the House of Lords Select Committee on Artificial Intelligence report **AI in the UK: ready, willing and able?**

\*2014 **Gamification of politics: start a new game**, *Teorija in praksa* 51 (1) Special issue: Cultural studies of video games

2014 Review of the Nanopolitics handbook, *Teorija in praksa* 51 (1)

\*2013 (with Dr Karmen Šterk and Jasmina Ploštajner) **Včeraj je bil nov dan (danes pa smo gotovi)** - *Journal for Critique of Science, For Imagination and New Anthropology* 41 (254)

2013 (with Jasmina Ploštajner) Neue Ansätze gegen die Krise der Politik: Das Beispiel des Portals Danes je nov dan (***New approaches to the crisis of politics: the case study of Danes je nov dan platform***) article on digital activism, *Politik 2.0. Das Internet und die Zukunft der Demokratie* (Politics 2.0 Internet and the Future of Democracy) - Goethe Institut and Faculty of Arts, Ljubljana, Slovenia

## WORK ACCEPTED OR IN PREPARATION

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Accepted:

- 'The digital overlay for dodging accountability: public sector automation and the enmeshment of trade and state secrecy' (Routledge Handbook of Secrecy Studies)

In preparation:

- 'GovTech Summits and AI as a financialising intelligence' paper
- (with Prof Rachel Humphris) 'Deep deservingness: bordering from within the welfare/workfare state' paper
- developing the PhD thesis into a monograph

### **TALKS AND OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS (\*invited speaker)**

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- 2026 (with Prof Rachel Humphris) **Deep deservingness: the risks of interoperability** paper, The Datafied Citizen conference, Vulnerabilities and AI panel - Lund University, Sweden
- 2026 **The indentured state** presentation of PhD findings and (with Prof Rachel Humphris) **Deep deservingness: bordering from within the welfare/workfare state** paper, Data Justice conference - Cardiff University
- 2026 **The indentured state: programmable infrastructures and the loss of infrastructural power** presentation of PhD findings and (with Prof Rachel Humphris) **Deep deservingness: performing statecraft through bordering from within the welfare/workfare state** paper, Statecraft, Sovereignty and Digital Government symposium - Goldsmiths, University of London, UK
- 2026 (with Prof Rachel Humphris) **Datafied deservingness: bordering from within the welfare/workfare state** paper, New Technology, AI & Equality: Problems and Solutions workshop - University of Southampton, UK
- 2026 **Milking the rent cow: funding welfare from the proceeds of the right fraud** paper and (with Prof Rachel Humphris) **(Un)Learning deservingness: bordering from within the welfare/workfare state** paper, Understanding and Re-Imagining the Digital Welfare State workshop - Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway
- \*2025 Chairing the launch of a special edition of the Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies (Digital technologies and migration: behind, beyond and around the black box) - QMUL, UK
- 2025 **The past is present: the (im)possibilities of using AI for non-reformist reform** paper, The Politics of AI: Governance, Resistance, Alternatives. Transforming Law, Policy and Power panel - Goldsmiths, University of London, UK
- 2025 **The British e-state and (re)forms of rent-making** paper, European Sociological Association's Communication and capital(ism) conference, Statecraft and the Politics of Infrastructure panel - University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
- \*2025 Panel contribution for Technological (non)sovereignty panel - Grounded Festival, Slovenia
- 2025 Input for the Future of Good Decisions government and civil society consultation - Kent Law School, UK
- 2024 **Automating social security, (re)producing intersectional inequality: a historical approach to studying austerity in the British digital welfare state** paper, EASST-4S conference, Technologies of the other panel, Athena Institut, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands
- 2024 **The programmable ship of state**, Essex Law School's Digital Law cluster – University of Essex, UK
- 2024 **Speech** at the Perspectives on AI: lighting talks, Festival of AI - King's College London, UK
- 2023 Intervention at the *Naked Empire: New tools/old stories and the colonial inheritance of the rules-based order* BISA CPD workshop, Ordering the Material theme, Queen Mary University of London, UK
- 2023 **Data rentierism and the lucrative promise of state digitalisation** paper, PSA British & Comparative Political Economy specialist group Early Career Researchers workshop - King's College London, UK
- 2023 **State (in)capacity and UK government information technology under Tony Blair** paper, Special Interest Group in Computing, Information, and Society (SIGCIS) conference

- 2023 Data Ownership workshop, University of Cambridge, UK
- 2023 **Government information technology and its state(d) boundaries** contribution at *Data: materialities, infrastructures, critiques* workshop, Cambridge Digital Humanities - University of Cambridge, UK
- 2023 Digital Good Network summer school - University of Sheffield, UK
- 2023 *Logic, limits, contingency* spring school - Freie Universität Berlin, Germany
- 2022 **Histories of proprietary government information technology in the UK** paper - Datafied welfare states ECREA pre-conference, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
- 2022 **Information technology and state (de)formation** paper - MANCEPT workshop in analytical political theory, Digital democracy: governance and resistance in a digital era panel - University of Manchester, UK
- 2022 Taming the iMonster: Regulating digital platforms workshop - University of Vienna, Austria
- \*2021 Lecture **Sediments in the machinery for a future**, The End of the World seminar - Kulturpunkt's journalistic school, SCCA-Ljubljana Centre for Contemporary Arts's School of Art and MaMa's Human rights film festival
- \*2021 Speaker at the *Ethics of data reuse in the digital society* roundtable - Ministry of Administration, Slovenia
- 2020 In conversation with Professor Mark Coeckelbergh on Deepfakes and the danger of totalitarianism, the Truth edition - Festival Grounded – Ljubljana, Slovenia
- \*2020 In conversation with Dr Julia Schneider, author of We Need To Talk, AI comic book – Aksioma, Slovenia
- \*2020 Keynote speech **Privacy and depersonalisation**, Cryptoparty Slovenia by Drzavljan D - Computer History Museum - Ljubljana, Slovenia
- \*2019 Contribution **Artificial governance: emerging technologies in public sector**, Conference on Information Technologies and Information Society - Faculty of Information Studies - Novo Mesto, Slovenia
- \*2019 Discussing smart cities, EDO film festival – Technology Park - Ljubljana, Slovenia
- \*2019 Lecture **The art of surveillant intelligence**, Feminism Today - Trubar Literature House - Ljubljana, Slovenia
- \*2019 Discussion on banning facial recognition, East of Queer - Pritličje - Ljubljana, Slovenia
- 2019 **Left to our own devices** paper - Technology and society conference - KU Leuven, Belgium
- 2019 Human and Artificial Intelligence: how will we live and work in the future seminar – United Europe - University of Cambridge, UK
- 2019 Surveillance Override workshop led by Sarah Grant and Joana Moll - Critical Engineering: Radical Tools for Interventions in Infrastructures – Aksioma – Ljubljana, Slovenia
- 2018 Fellow at SEEDIG (South Eastern European Dialogue on Internet Governance) - Ljubljana, Slovenia
- \*2018 Lecture **Measures of intimacy** - Grounded Festival - Ljubljana, Slovenia
- \*2018 Panelist at the The future of sex: love in times of the robot panel - 4Gamechangers festival
- 2016 Robophilosophy conference - TRANSOR Research Network for Transdisciplinary Studies in Social Robotics - University of Aarhus, Denmark

## **AWARDS**

2026 Travel and accommodation grant for the Understanding and Re-Imagining the Digital Welfare State workshop, Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway  
 2020-23 UKRI AHRC London Arts and Humanities Partnership (LAHP) PhD studentship  
 2017-18 Ad Futura full Masters scholarship

## **EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

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Research Associate - **Queen Mary University of London, School of Law** (part-time, 2025 - 2026)

- Assisted Dr Daragh Murray with the project 'What does artificial intelligence mean for the future of democratic society?'
- Data collection of input data, training data, and computational models used in public administration in countries around the world

Research Assistant - **Queen Mary University of London, School of Politics and International Relations** (part-time, 2024 - 2025)

- Assisted Dr Tamara Popic with the 'Public Responses to Austerity in Healthcare' project
- Responsible for nine European countries
- Identified and coded Lower House and Upper House speeches by relevant Ministers justifying austerity measures

Research Fellow - **Queen Mary University of London, School of Politics and International Relations** (part-time, 2023 - 2024)

- Interviewed academics, complementing recordings of events organised by the Global Politics Unbound research group
- Curated, edited and finalised a podcast series on global politics

Researcher - **HM Government Department for Work and Pensions** London (2022)

- Secured a competitive 3-month UKRI policy placement in Business Strategy Analysis unit
- Contributed evidence for service delivery reform

Community Relations Director - **Aksioma Institute** Ljubljana (2019 - 2020)

- Grew a network of researchers involved in MoneyLab#8 conference

Production Trainee - **Pekinpah Association** Ljubljana (2020)

- Responsible for copyrighting and branding of Spider Festival of Radical Bodies
- Organised and moderated an international conference for cultural producers (Sarajevo, Bosnia)

Conference Programme Curator - **Institute for Culture of Diversity Open** Ljubljana (2018 - 2021)

- Led meetings and organised four editions of a conference forming Grounded Festival
- Steered the programme curation of four editions of the conference: Intimacy in the Age of Artificial Intelligence (2018), Automation and Power (2019), Truth (2020), The State (2021)

Strategy Trainee - **Pekinpah Association** Ljubljana (2017)

- Conceptualised a digital platform/network for cultural producers
- Contributed to a successful Horizon/Creative Europe 2018 funding call (sub-areas of digitalisation, audience development and new business models)

Grant Proposal Assistant - **Aksioma Institute** Ljubljana (2015)

Co-founder, Researcher, Data Analyst, Writer - **Danes je nov dan Institute** Ljubljana (2011-)

- Established a civic technology NGO with five other founders
- Served as writer and editor of Agrumenti, short articles that were published 5x weekly, for more than a decade; contributed to long form article series Občasnik
- Monitored data accuracy and liaised with stakeholders of Parlameter, Google Digital News Innovation-funded open-source parliamentary data analysis and visualisation tool

## **UNDERGRADUATE SEMINAR TEACHING**

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Queen Mary University of London, School of Society and Environment (2024-)

- Modules: **Global Sociology** (year 1), **War in World Politics** (year 2), **Power in Global Governance** (year 2), **Modern Political Thought 2** (year 2)

King's College London, Faculty of Social Science and Public Policy (2021-)

- Modules: **Social Justice and Policy Analysis** (year 1), **Civil and Political Rights** (year 3), **Rethinking Work** (year 3)
- Guest Lecturer for the Civil and Political Rights module (on **digital human rights, surveillance and the right to privacy**) and Rethinking Work module (on **disciplining citizens into workers and the rise of the workfare state**)
- Contributed to assessment development for the Rethinking Work module
- Obtained the AdvanceHE Associate Fellowship

Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana (2013-2015)

- Module: **Social and Political Anthropology** (year 1)

### **OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE**

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- Board Member, Danes je nov dan institute
- Reviewer for SOAS Journal of Postgraduate Research (Issue 17, Resistance: Meanings and Methods) and Editorial Board member of the Journal of Future Robot Life (2020-22)
- Submitted policy evidence on AI ethics (UNESCO, House of Lords)
- Various journalistic experience: radio (Radio Študent, Arts and Humanities), print (Tribuna)

### **ARTISTIC ENGAGEMENT**

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- 2024 T-WERK article – *Selling out issue*, ETC. magazine
- 2022 *Migration poems* – The Calvert Journal, New East Digital Archive
- 2020 Core player in *Unrealism* and part of *Journey into a Living Being – From Social Sculpture to Platform Capitalism* exhibition; one of the authors of *Heart of an Avatar*, published by Folia – Omsk Social Club, Germany
- 2019 *Performer* with the *Right Left* project by Jan Rozman - Festival of Performance, Slovenia
- 2019 Research and production assistant for *Marija Bozinovska Jones* and *Omsk Social Club - Technologically fabricated intimacy: blockchain and dating apps* - Somerset House and King's College London, UK
- 2018 Scriptwriter and performer with *Ergonomics* – *X Shared Spaces festival* - Kammerspiele Munich, Germany
- 2018 Video interpretation for *Sex in the Digital Age* exhibition, representing King's College London (Department of Digital Humanities) - Ars Electronica Festival Linz, Austria

### **LANGUAGES**

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Professional working proficiency: Slovenian, English, Italian