
ALLARD LAW GRADUATE RESEARCH ENGAGEMENT SYMPOSIUM (GRES)

Analyzing the Colonial Influence on Customary Law in modern West Africa

Tuesday, March 25th, 2025, from 12:30-1:30 pm

Allard Hall – Room 122

Light lunch will be served. For Zoom link or paper, please contact sopuru10@student.ubc.ca

Abstract

This article examines the enduring impact of colonialism on customary law in West Africa and highlights how the brutal legacy of colonialism reshaped Indigenous customs and legal systems in West Africa, leading to their radical transformation. It further analyzes the colonial influence on what is considered contemporary customary law in West Africa today. This article aims to unravel complex layers of colonial influence on customary law and examines how colonial administrations reshaped indigenous legal systems. By understanding the historical context and mechanisms of this transformation, this study also aims to contribute to ongoing discussions on the necessity for legal reform and the decolonization of legal systems in West Africa. It emphasizes the need to critically assess the colonial legacy embedded within contemporary customary law and to explore pathways for its revitalization and integration in a manner that reflects the authentic traditions and values of West African societies.

Sopuruchi Christian (PhD Student)

Ph.D. Student Allard Law School UBC



Sopuruchi Christian is a doctoral student at the Peter Allard School of Law and a former Assistant Professor at the Jindal Global Law School Haryana India. His current doctoral research focuses on the intricate and layered subject of environmental dispute management in the West African states. His research aims to understand the environmental conflicts present in the sub-region with the objective of proposing a bespoke dispute management model to address these challenges effectively. As a corollary to his research project, Sopuruchi is passionate about building a resilient thriving community for African residents in British Columbia through effective leadership.



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