

# VANESSA VILLANUEVA COLLAO

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## ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

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<b>Bocconi University</b> , Milan, Italy <i>Academic Fellow</i> , Department of Law	2024–2025
<b>European University Institute (EUI)</b> , Fiesole, Italy <i>Visiting Fellow</i> , Max Weber Programme for Postdoctoral Studies <i>Max Weber Fellow</i>	2024–2025 2023–2024
<b>University of Roma Tre</b> , Rome, Italy <i>Research Fellow</i> , <a href="#">South EU Google Data Governance Chair</a>	2022–2024
<b>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign</b> , Champaign, IL <i>Adjunct Instructor</i> , Legal Writing (Law500)	2022
<b>Università degli Studi di Genova</b> , Italy <i>Adjunct Professor</i> , English Law, Master in Legal Translation, Department of Linguistics	2012–2021
<b>Uniforma–Interuniversity Consortium for Legal Continuing Education</b> , Italy <i>Researcher</i> , Trust Law	2011–2013

## EDUCATION

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<b>University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, College of Law</b> <i>Doctor of the Science of Law (J.S.D.)</i> - Pass without revisions Dissertation: Cryptogatekeepers in Decentralized Finance, Conflicts of Interest and Prospective Solutions Chair: <a href="#">Verity Winship</a> . Committee: <a href="#">Amitai Aviram</a> , <a href="#">Jeremy McClane</a> , <a href="#">Thomas Ulen</a> . Relevant Coursework: Empirical Methods in Law, Genomics & the Law, Machine Learning <i>Senior Editor</i> Comparative Labor Law & Policy Journal <i>Research Assistant, College of Law</i> Prof. Verity Winship Unicorn Shareholder Suits, Small Business Surveys NSF-project, Lay Perceptions of Settlement Prof. Jeremy McClane Research on Special Purpose Acquisition Companies & Business Development Companies <i>Research Assistant, Women and Gender in Global Studies</i> Prof. Colleen Murphy - <a href="#">Migration Game Design Working Group</a>	2024 2020–2023 2020–2021 Summer 2021 2019–2021
<b>University of Michigan, Ann-Arbor</b> ICPSR Summer Program in Quantitative Methods of Social Research Structural Equation Models for Latent Variables Categorical Data Analysis	2021 2020
<b>University of California at Berkeley, School of Law</b> , Berkeley, CA <i>Master of Laws (LL.M.)</i> . Relevant Coursework: Privacy law, Cybersecurity	2016
<b>Università degli Studi di Genova, School of Economics</b> , Genoa, Italy <i>Master in Maritime and Transportation Insurance (M.A.)</i>	2013
<b>Università degli Studi di Genova, School of Law</b> , Genoa, Italy <i>Laurea in Giurisprudenza [Juris Doctor (J.D.) equivalent]</i>	2011

## CERTIFICATIONS

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<b>European University Institute (EUI)</b> , Fiesole, Italy Teaching Training Certificate (3 ECTS)	2024
<b>Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models Institute</b> , Princeton Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models Certification	2020

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

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**Understanding the Role of Informal Relationships, Social Norms, and Emerging Power Structures in Decentralized Governance** (2025), *under peer review*.

**Protecting Privacy with Blockchain: When Genomics Meets DTC**, EUR. J. PRIVACY & TECHNOL. (2025) *forthcoming*

**DeFi—A Framework of the Automated Financial Open System**, 26 TULANE J. TECHNOL. & INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY 75 (2024).

**Navigating the Transatlantic AI Landscape: The EU Artificial Intelligence Act and its Ripple Effect on the US**, MEDIA LAWS (2024).

**Empirical Methods in Comparative Law: Data Talks**, 12/2 COMP. L. REV. 55 (2023); University of Illinois College of Law Legal Studies Research Paper No. 23-13

**New ICO Intermediaries**, 5 ITALIAN L.J. 731 (2019), University of Illinois College of Law Legal Studies Research Paper No. 20-12 (with Verity Winship).

featured in [the Legal Theory Blog](#), as very interesting and recommended

featured in [Tokenizzazioni di azioni e azioni tokens](#), CONSOB: Quaderni Giuridici (P. Carrière, N. de Luca, M. de Mari, G. Gasparri, T.N. Poli (2023)).

## PUBLICATIONS IN ITALIAN AND SPANISH

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**Le offerte iniziali e gli scambi di crypto-attività (Initial Offers and Exchanges of Crypto-Assets)**, CONSOB (Italian Securities & Exchange Comm'n), Comment published on Final Report (2020).

**El fideicomiso en América Latina, reflexiones para la comparación jurídica [Latin-American Trusts, reflections on Comparative Law]**, 45 ACTUALIDAD CIVIL [ACT. CIV.] 315 (2018) (Peru).

**Diritto Marittimo ed Economia [Maritime and Navigation Law]** 2015 (It.). (with P. Cremonese).

**I contratti conclusi in internet**, in IL RISARCIMENTO DEL DANNO AL CONSUMATORE [Contracts via the Internet, INDEMNIFIABLE DAMAGES ON CONSUMER CASES] TRATTATI 165 (Cendon, ed., 2014)(It.).

**Il Waqf: Charitable Trust dei modelli Islamici [Waqf: Islamic model of Charitable Trusts]**, 1 TRUSTS E ATTIVITÀ FIDUCIARIE [T&AF] 148 (2013) (It.).

## WORK IN PROGRESS

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### **Decentralized Governance: Models for Accessible Cryptomarkets**

In blockchain, large investors pervasively hold the concentration of power in decentralized organizations due to vote buying or acquisition of voting rights. Retail investors see cryptoassets as yield and are not interested in exercising their voting rights because coordination is still missing. However, instances of aggregation among younger generations have particularly affected corporate governance dynamics: their ability to coordinate. This research aims to exemplify how retail investors' voting rights in decentralized organizations can be incentivized through an online experiment on cryptoinvestors' behavior.

## **Decentralized Finance’s Premise and Promise of Decentralization and Disintermediation**

Blockchain has fostered the belief that disintermediation and decentralization are consistently present across its systems, including Decentralized Finance (DeFi). This paper debunks the myths of complete decentralization of processes and disintermediation claims, uncovering the persistence of intermediaries in DeFi. Rather than eliminating central control, DeFi decentralization primarily reflects process-based interactions mediated by technology. The article explores blockchain’s principles of decentralization and disintermediation, analyzes DeFi’s features, and critically debunks myths about its structure, efficiency, and governance. It concludes by offering a detailed analysis of DeFi’s operational realities and governance challenges.

## **The Functions of Cryptointermediaries**

This work uses an interdisciplinary approach through a case study to unravel the origins, structure, functions, and comparison between cryptoexchanges and traditional exchanges and Alternative Trading systems. This article further analyzes, through web content analysis and unstructured interviews, the emergence, functions, structure, and comparison of cryptoauditing companies and auditors in traditional finance. It argues that the functions of traditional intermediaries are performed by new intermediaries or cryptointermediaries. These new roles dictated by market forces and technological constraints are fundamental for the development of the DeFi ecosystem, particularly the increasing role of cryptoauditing companies seen as “good hackers” following several crashes involving cryptoexchanges. While these cryptointermediaries are not perfect, they allow us to observe several nuances that can illuminate future paths in regulation.

## **Cryptogatekeepers as a Response to Conflicts of Interest in Decentralized Finance**

This work contributes to the foundational understanding of Decentralized Finance by analyzing the actors, structure of the cryptoenterprise, and the vertical conflicts of interest that emerge from their structure. It explores cryptogatekeepers as a source for external corporate governance. To this end, this work elaborates on the best practices for cryptoenterprises emphasizing how cryptointermediaries can play a central role in mitigating these conflicts. Alongside the evident need for disclosures, my recommendations extend to incorporating digital identities, auditing mechanisms, and oversight of cryptointermediaries through a registry.

## **Data Governance Firms in Corporate Boardrooms**

In this paper, I argue that algorithms should be integrated into the board structure of data-driven enterprises because of the unmanageable volumes of data they generate. Thus, data governance frameworks are crucial for management but especially for board decision-making. How do we include data governance in the boardroom? I illustrate how the boardroom can implement data governance by creating a hybrid model: an “algorithm” alongside the human board composition. This proposed boardroom model includes a legal entity (a Data Governance Firm—DGF) for designing an algorithmic board member consistent with the corporation’s purpose. The DGF’s role in developing an algorithmic seat transforms the corporation and its constituencies into complex intersectional relationships based on data. Therefore, rather than being a nexus of contracts, modern corporations and their constituencies can be included in datasets showing a nexus of data.

## **The New Frontier of Data Privacy and Ownership Structure: Tokenizing Genomics**

Biotech companies have resorted to blockchain and unregulated vehicles, such as initial coin offerings, as a cheap way of monetizing DNA during the funding stage. This paper will explain how biotech blockchain companies have promised investors control over genetic data but obscured other dynamics within the company ownership structure. Not only do token holders lack voting rights, but they are also in a new vulnerable position: the company has possession of their genetic data. At the same time, traditional shareholders surreptitiously gain more power and control. My analysis will shed light on the relationship between shareholders who invested capital and token holders whose interests depend on the human genetic capital shared with the company and the emerging implications.

## BLOG POSTS

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*Rodolfo Sacco: The professor, the partisan, the man*, ASCL BLOG (April, 2022).

*Auditing Crypto-Financing*, Duke Law, THE FINREG BLOG (Mar. 10, 2020) (with Verity Winship).

*Auditing Initial Coin Offerings and Smart-Contracts*, CUHK, Center for Financial Regulation and Economic Development, Machine Lawyering (Mar. 3, 2020) (with Verity Winship).

## AWARDS & GRANTS

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*Governance of Emerging Technologies and Science*, GETS & Arizona State University 2024  
GETS conference Grant

*Early-Stage Research (ESR) & Max Weber Programme Grants*, European University Institute 2023  
Project: Decentralized Governance. Models for Accessible Cryptomarkets

*Mask Network Grant*. Project: The Tech Book 2023

*CULPJ- Consortium for Undergraduate Law & Justice Research Programs Grant* 2022  
Travel grant for the Global Meeting on Law & Society at Lisbon

*Supplemental Summer Block Grant*, University of Illinois-Graduate College. Dissertation Grant 2020

*JSD Scholarship*, University of Illinois-College of Law 2018–2023

*Master Scholarship*, European Social Fund-Liguria Region 2012

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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### COURSES

*Instructor* - [Introduction to the Legal System](#), Bocconi University Spring 2025

*Adjunct Instructor* - Legal Writing, University of Illinois, College of Law July–Aug. 2022  
Small section within the course "Law500". Profs. Moritz & McDade

*Teaching Assistant* - Contracts, University of Illinois, College of Law Spring 2020  
Review sessions for LLMS and JDs. Prof. Ralph Brubaker

*Teaching Assistant* - Civil Procedure, University of Illinois, College of Law Spring & Fall 2019  
Review sessions for LLMS. Prof. Verity Winship

### LECTURES

#### ON CORPORATE LAW & TECHNOLOGY

*Corporate Technologies' Impact on Corporate Boards*  
U. of Westminster. Company & Corporate Law. Instructor: Prof. Ioannis Glinavos Spring 2024  
EUI. Seminar "Introduction to Corporate Governance". Instructor: Prof. Mathias Siems Fall 2023

*The US Approach to Sustainable Corporations*—EUI—Department of Law Fall 2023  
Seminar "Introduction to Corporate Governance". Instructor: Prof. Mathias Siems

*Introduction to Cryptomarkets*—University of Roma Tre—Department of Law Spring 2023  
Within the course "Comparative Law of Digital Markets". Instructor: Prof. Noah Vardi

*AI and its impact in businesses [IA—L'impatto nelle aziende]*—University of Roma Tre Fall 2022  
Within the course "Diritto comparato dei dati e dell'intelligenza artificiale" [Comparative Law of Data and Artificial Intelligence]. Instructor: Dr. Sirio Zolea.

*Smart Contracts: Legal Issues and Restitutionary Solutions*—Univ. of Illinois, College of Law Fall 2022  
Within the course "Fintech Law and Policy." Instructor: Paul Kayrouz.

*Blockchain and the Development of Web 3.0*—University of Roma Tre—Department of Law May 2022  
In the course “Digital Technologies and the Law.” Instructor: Prof. Giorgio Resta.

*Blockchain and IP*—University of Salerno-European Law Students’ Ass’n (ELSA) June 2021  
Webinar Academy (EWA) on AI and Intellectual Property

#### ON METHODOLOGY

*Experiments in Legal Research*—NOVA, School of Law, Lisbon Spring 2024  
Within the Course of Methodology. Instructor: Fabrizio Esposito

*Interdisciplinary Approaches to Law*—University of Roma Tre—Department of Law Spring 2023  
Within the Methodology Seminars 2023 of the PhD in “Law & Social Change”.

*Comparative Legal Systems*-University of Genoa, Department of Law 2016–2018  
Within the Course of Comparative Law

#### ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

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*DAOs, Decentralized Governance, and Vote Buying. An Experimental Study*  
[La Sapienza University - SIDE/ISLE, Italian Association of Law & Economics](#) Dec. 2024

*Decentralized Governance: Models for Accessible Cryptomarkets*  
[University of Pittsburgh - WINIR Institutional Resilience & Recovery](#) Sept. 2024  
[BlockchainGov Research Workshop](#) July 2024  
[Bocconi University - Corporate Governance and Reputation](#) July 2024  
[EUI - Navigating Trends in Financial Markets & Corporate Governance](#) July 2024  
[MWF Conference “Continuity or Rapture”.](#)  
Panel: The Return of Authority in Digital Governance-EUI June 2024  
[Arizona State University - GETS Conference](#) May 2024  
[University of Westminster-CETI](#) Mar. 2024

*Cryptogatekeepers in Decentralized Finance. Conflicts of Interest and Prospective Solutions*  
[Governance of Emerging Technologies, Arizona State University](#) (from call for papers) May 2024  
[SPEED, Nova School of Law](#) April 2024

*Cryptointermediaries in Decentralized Finance*  
[WINIR—Institutional Innovation & Evolution](#) (from call for papers) Sept. 2023  
[University of Genoa & University of Roma Tre - New Trends in Corporate Governance](#) July 2023

*Data Governance Firms in Corporate Boardrooms*  
[WINIR—Polycentric Governance and the Challenges of the 21st Century](#)(call for papers) Sept. 2022  
[Law & Society—Global Meeting, Iscte—University Institute of Lisbon](#) (from call for papers) July 2022

*The New Frontier in Data Privacy and Ownership Structure: Tokenizing Genomics*  
[Legal Design for Transparency in Consumer Contracts operating online and offline,](#) Oct.2021  
[Jean Monnet Chair PROTECH: European Protection Law of Individuals in Relation to New Technologies Roundtable](#) (from call for papers)  
[National Business Law Scholars Conference—University of Tennessee at Knoxville](#) June 2021  
[Law & Soc’y—Chicago Annual Meeting](#)(from call for papers) May 2021  
[Machine Lawyering Conference: Human Sovereignty and Machine Efficiency in the Law](#)  
[The Chinese University of Hong Kong](#) (from call for papers) Jan. 2021

*Conflicts of Interest in DeFi: The Duties of Cryptointermediaries*  
[Rijeka Doctoral Conference 2021—University of Rijeka](#) Dec. 2021  
[10th National SJD Roundtable—Georgetown University Law Center](#) April 2021

### *Empirical Methods in Law: Data Talks*

- [17th Annual Conference of the Italian Soc’y of Law and Economics \(SIDE\)](#) Dec. 2021  
Panel: Comparative Law & Econ. (from call for papers).
- [American Soc’y of Comparative Law “Annual Conference”](#) Oct. 2020  
Panel Law & Methodology (from call for papers)
- [AIDC/YCC Conference “New Topics and Methods in Comparative Law Research”](#) June 2020  
Panel on Systemology (from call for papers)

### *New ICO Intermediaries*

- [Exploring cryptocurrencies & other related markets-roundtable](#). L.& Soc’y Conference May 2020  
University of Luxembourg Nov. 2019

## **CONFERENCES AND SPEAKER SERIES ORGANIZED**

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- University of Pittsburg-WINIR - Young Scholars Workshop, [“Bridging Divides”](#) Sept. 2024
- EUI, MWP Conference [“Continuity or Rupture: Towards an Interdisciplinary Inquiry”](#) Feb.–June 2024
- EUI & Law & Science, [“Capitalist Law”](#) presentation of Katharina Pistor’s Book, Mar. 2024  
co-sponsored by the EUI Finance & Soc’y Cluster
- WINIR - Young Scholars, [Call for Papers: “Technology and Institutional Change”](#) Sept. 2023
- Symposium [New Trends in Corporate Governance](#)-Univ. of Genoa & Roma Tre Univ., July 2023
- WINIR - Inaugural Young Scholars Workshop - [Call for Abstracts: “Technology and Society”](#) May 2023
- South EU Google Data Governance Chair
- [“Data Protection and Consumer Protection Conference”](#) - Roma Tre University Mar. 2023
- [“The Future of Data Protection Conference”](#) - Roma Tre University Mar. 2022
- Law as Science Project - [Organized Events on Methodology](#) Fall 2022–Spring 2023

## **OTHER PRESENTATIONS**

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- [Fireside Chat: A Fair Conversation about Blockchain Regulation](#) May 2024  
EUI The Law, Rationalism, and Complexity Working Group (Moderator)
- [Artificial Intelligence & Institutional Change - WINIR Conference](#) (Invited Moderator) Sep. 2023
- [Fintech & Financial Innovation - WINIR Pre-Conference Workshop](#) (Invited Moderator) Sep. 2023
- [Inaugural WINIR Young Scholars Workshop](#) (Invited Moderator) May. 2023
- [Introduction to the Law & Economics Institute-IAED-](#) (Invited Speaker) Mar. 2023  
Universidad de Palermo (Argentina) “El análisis económico del derecho como catalizador de la igualdad de género” [The Economic Analysis of Law as a Catalyst for Gender Equality]
- [Decentralized Finance](#), Berkeley Global Society (Paris) (Invited Speaker) Sep. 2022
- [Ninth Annual Corporate & Securities Litigation Workshop - \(Chicago\)](#) (Invited Moderator) Sep. 2022  
University of Illinois, College of Law
- [Revista Facultad de Jurisprudencia \(RFJ\) 75th Anniversary](#) (Invited Moderator) Nov. 2021  
Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador–PUCE
- [25th Annual Conf.: Econ. Analysis of the Law & Institutional Change](#) (Invited Moderator) Oct. 2021  
Latin American, Caribbean and Iberic Law and Economics Association-ALACDE



## APPOINTMENTS TO RESEARCH ASSOCIATIONS

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[Instituto de Análisis Económico del Derecho](#) [Law & Economics Institute] since 2023  
University of Palermo - Buenos Aires, Argentina

## OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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**Law Office of Paolo Ghiara.** Associate. Genoa 2017–2018  
**SUNIA – Syndicate of Tenants and Assignees. Genoa** 2015–2016  
Regional Project Coordinator, EU Project EnerSHIFT, quality of social housing buildings initiative  
**ClaimsConsult s.a.s.** Average Adjuster, marine and cargo claims specialist. Genoa 2015  
**Kuehne and Nagel S.R.L.** Intern. Genoa 2012  
**Private practice** Mediator, Labor Law, Immigration Law, tertiary sector. Genoa 2001–2011

## SERVICE & MEMBERSHIPS

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### ACADEMIC SERVICE

#### *European University Institute*

[Guest Reviewer for the EJLS Special Issue on International Law and Technology](#) 2024  
[Finance and Society cluster](#) (organized event) 2024  
Department of Law, December and February Papers (discussant) 2023–2024

#### *European Law Institute*

[Consultative Committee: Succession of Digital Assets Data and Other Digital Remains](#) 2024

#### *University of California at Berkeley, LL.M. Alumni Ambassador*

LL.M. Program Application Reviewer 2023–2024

#### *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

JSD Representative 2019–2023

### BOARD AND ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

#### *Law as Science Project*

Advisor & Project Lead ([Interdisciplinary Methodological Approaches to Legal Studies](#)) 2024-current  
Coordinator & Editor ([Legal Method Lab](#)) 2022-2024

#### *WINIR—World Interdisciplinary Network of Institutional Research*

WINIR Young Scholars Committee 2022-current

#### *Berkeley Global Society*

Board Member 2020–2023  
Editor of [blog posts](#) and social media posts ([Twitter](#)). 2020–2022

### OTHER MEMBERSHIPS

[AALS](#)—Association of American Law Schools; [AIDC](#)—Associazione Italiana di Diritto Comparato  
[American Society of Comparative Law](#); [ALACDE](#)—Latin American & Caribbean L.& Econ. Ass'n  
[European Law Institute](#); [Law & Society Association](#); [SIDE](#)-Italian Society of Law and Economics;  
[SIRD](#)—Società Italiana per la Ricerca nel Diritto comparato

## LANGUAGES

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Spanish (native); English (fluent); Italian (fluent); French (basic knowledge)