Mikaela Brough

PHD CANDIDATE · INFORMATION SECURITY

Royal Holloway, University of London

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Education

Royal Holloway, University of London   *Greater London, UK*

PHD INFORMATION SECURITY   *2022-present*

- Supervised by: Prof. Rikke Bjerg Jensen (RHUL), Prof. Martin R. Albrecht (KCL)

University of Oxford   *Oxford, UK*

MSc SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY   *2020-2021*

- Supervised by: Dr. Ina Zharkevich
- 1:1 Distinction

McGill University   *Montréal, Canada*

BA HISTORY AND ART HISTORY   *2015-2019*

- Minor in Political Science
- Additional credits in Anthropology, Computer Science
- GPA: 3.6 (1:1 equivalent)

Professional Experience

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

2022-	**PhD Researcher**, Royal Holloway, University of London
2024-25	**Research Assistant**, Dr. Andrew Dwyer. Securing Converged Technologies. Royal Holloway, University of London
2023-	**Teaching Assistant, Department of Information Security**, Royal Holloway, University of London.
2024-	**Teaching Assistant, Department of Computer Science**, Royal Holloway, University of London.
2021-22	**Research Assistant**, Dr. Paula Sheppard. Fertility Decision-Making. University of Oxford.

INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

2020	**Canadian Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance Officer**, First Canadian Title. Toronto, Canada.
2015-2020	**Various – Sous, Chef de Partie, Commis, KP**, Various Food Employers, Canada and UK.
2016-20	**Freelance Researcher**, Boxing Cats Productions. Toronto, Canada.

Peer-Reviewed Conference and Journal Publications

PUBLISHED

Brough, M., Jensen, R. B., & Albrecht, M. 2025. On the Virtues of Information Security in the UK Climate Movement. Proceedings of USENIX'25 Security Symposium, Seattle, USA. **Honourable Mention for Best Paper (Top 6%).**

Dwyer, A., & Brough, M. 2025. Securing Converged Technologies: Insights from Subject Matter Experts. Department of Science and Innovation (DSIT). Accepted/in-press.

Brough, M., & Sheppard, P. (2022). Fertility decision-making in the UK: Insights from a qualitative study among British men and women. Social Sciences, 11(9).

Sheppard, P., & Brough, M. (2022). Father–Toddler Bonding during the COVID-19 Lockdown: Qualitative Insights from 17 Families in Britain. Social Sciences, 11(12): 542.

Brough, M. (2021). BENNO HERZOG, The invisibilization of suffering: the moral grammar of disrespect, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, 217 pp. ISBN 9783030284480. Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford, XIII(1): 90-92.

Awards & Grants

AWARDS

2025	**Honourable Mention for Best Paper**, USENIX Security '25 – "On the Virtues of..."	
2022	**Prof. David Parkin Prize in Ethnographic Materials**, University of Oxford	*£200*
2021	**Distinction**, School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography, University of Oxford	*1:1*
2019	**Distinction (Canadian Equivalent)**, McGill University	*1:1*

GRANTS

2025	**Student Grant**, USENIX Security '25 – Seattle	*775 USD*
2024	**Student Grant**, Real World Crypto '24 – Toronto	*930 USD*
2023	**Student Grant**, Real World Crypto '23 – Tokyo	*1920 USD*
2022	**PhD Funding**, Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council of UKRI	*# 2751135*

Research Experience

Royal Holloway, University of London - Dept of Information Security — *Egham, UK.*
SUPERVISORS: PROF. RIKKE BJERG JENSEN, PROF. MARTIN R. ALBRECHT — *Aug. 2022 - Present*
- Doctoral Thesis: "Information Security in Environmental Movements"
- Project 1: "Exploring Information Security in the UK Climate Movement", 3 months ethnographic fieldwork
- Project 2: "Privacy, Security, and Activism in the Philippines", 5 months ethnographic fieldwork
- Funded by: EPSRC CDT Cybersecurity for the Everyday

King's College London – Department of Informatics — *London, UK*
PIs: PROF. RIKKE BJERG JENSEN, PROF. MARTIN R. ALBRECHT — *Aug. 2024 – Present*
- Project Title: "Social Foundations of Cryptography
- Project Focus: Collaborative research with cryptographers and ethnographers to investigate the security needs of protesters.
- Contributions: PhD contributor, ethnographic fieldwork
- Funded by: EPSRC

Royal Holloway, University of London - Dept of Information Security — *Egham, UK.*
PI: DR. ANDREW DWYER — *2024-25*
- Project Title: "Securing Converged Technologies"
- Project Focus: Interview study exploring potential future cybersecurity implications of technology convergence.
- Contributions: Project management, grounded thematic analysis, report writing
- Funded by: Department of Science, Innovation and Technology

Royal Holloway, University of London - Dept of Information Security — *Egham, UK.*
ADVISOR: DR. SANTANU DASH. — *2023*
- Project Title: "Perceptions of Secure Software Development: A Qualitative Study of Software Engineers in the UK"
- Project Focus: Understanding contextual factors that shape how devs make decisions about security tools when writing code.
- Contributions: Study design, interviewing, analysis, drafting
- Funded by: EPSRC CDT Cybersecurity for the Everyday

University of Oxford - School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography — *Oxford, UK.*
PI: DR. PAULA SHEPPARD — *2021-22*
- Project Title: "Reproductive decision-making: Understanding the drivers of fertility postponement"
- Project Focus: Identifying barriers to UK families in terms of having children through focus groups with men and women.
- Contributions: Data collection (focus groups), data analysis, drafting, dissemination
- Funded by: John Fell Research Fund, Oxford University Press

University of Oxford - School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography — *Oxford, UK.*
SUPERVISOR: DR. INA ZHARKEVICH — *2020-21*
- Masters Thesis: "Away from Uncertainty: A Transnational Ethnography of the London (UK) Chef Shortage", 2 months ethnographic fieldwork
- Project focus: Grounding post-brexit 'labour shortages' in food in experiences of uncertainty and transnational precarity.

McGill University, Universita degli studi di Foggia *Trinitapoli, Italy.*
ADVISORS: DR. DARIAN TOTTEN, DR. ROBERTO GOFFREDO *2018*

- Project Title: "Salapia Exploration Project"
- Project Focus: Archaeological excavation of the ancient city of Salapia in Puglia.
- Contributions: Data collection (excavation, survey)

Invited Talks and Speaking

* presenting author

INVITED TALKS

Autumn 2025. *AI Ethics*. Guest Lecture: Ethics in Advanced Computing and AI. MSc Artificial Intelligence, Royal Holloway, University of London. Online.

Summer 2025. *Information Security in the Climate Movement*. Invited talk: Cybersecurity Seminar Series. Kings College London. London, UK.

Autumn 2024. *Research Ethics*. Guest Lecture: Research Methods. MSc Information Security, Royal Holloway, University of London. Egham, UK.

Autumn 2024. *AI Ethics*. Guest Lecture: Ethics in Advanced Computing and AI. MSc Artificial Intelligence, Royal Holloway, University of London. Online.

Summer 2024. *Talking about Information Security*. Invited Talk: Departmental Seminar. University of Cebu. Cebu City, Philippines.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Brough, M. 2025. On the Virtues of Information Security in the UK Climate Movement. USENIX Security '25. Seattle, Washington, USA.

Brough, M. 2025. Security, Privacy, and Advocacy in the Philippines. ReCAP, Re-imagining Cryptography and Privacy. The City College of New York, Massachusetts, USA.

Brough, M. 2024. On the Virtues of Information Security in the UK Climate Movement. ReCAP, Re-imagining Cryptography and Privacy. Tufts University, Massachusetts, USA.

Brough, M. 2024. Information Security in Environmental Movements. Inter-CDT Conference. University of Bristol, Bristol, UK.

Brough M. 2024. On the Virtues of Information Security in the UK Climate Movement. CDT Showcase. Royal Holloway, University of London, Windsor, UK

Brough M. 2024. Information Security in Environmental Movements. MISC-CS Conference. Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, UK

Brough, M. 2023. Exploring Secure Messaging and Perceptions of Risk: A Literature Review. STS Italia. Università di Bologna, Bologna, Italy.

Brough M.* Jones C.* Smith S.* 2023. Exploring Software Developers Perceptions of Security. CDT Showcase. Royal Holloway, University of London, Windsor, UK

Brough M. 2023. Exploring Secure Messaging and Perceptions of Risk. CDT Showcase. Royal Holloway, University of London, Windsor, UK

Sheppard P.* Brough M. 2022. Fertility Decision Making in the UK: Insights from a qualitative study across British social classes. European Human Behaviour and Evolution Association Conference. Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig, Germany.

WORKSHOP TALKS

Brough, M. 2024. Usability of Cryptographic APIs. Cryptography Research Seminar. Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, UK.

Brough, M. 2024. Positionality in Social Science Research. Social Science Methods CDT Workshop. Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, UK.

Brough, M. 2024. Navigating the high / low risk binary in information security research. Looking for Everyday Security Workshop. University College London, London, UK.

Brough, M. 2022. Labour Ethnographies. Ethnography Reading Group. Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, UK.

Teaching Experience

M=marking, F=facilitation, L=lecturing, LP=Lesson plans

2024-25	**Introduction to Cryptography**, Teaching Assistant, Infosec, RHUL.	*LP, F*
2024-25	**Security Management**, Teaching Assistant, CS, RHUL.	*M, L*
2024-25	**Programming Fundamentals (Python and Java)**, Teaching Assistant, CS, RHUL.	*M*
2024-25	**User-Centred Design**, Teaching Assistant, CS, RHUL.	*M, F*
2024	**Databases**, Teaching Assistant, CS, RHUL.	*M*
2024	**IT Project Management**, Teaching Assistant, CS, RHUL.	*M*
2024	**Internet Services**, Teaching Assistant, CS, RHUL.	*M*
2023	**Security Management**, Teaching Assistant, Infosec, RHUL.	*M*

Outreach & Professional Development

OUTREACH

2024	**Public lecture/workshop for CSOs**, Facilitator/presenter	*Manila, PH*
2024	**Public lecture/workshop for community groups**, Facilitator/presenter	*Cebu, PH*
2024	**Small group public information security training**, Facilitator	*Cebu, PH*

SERVICE

2024-	**Departmental Student Committee**, Cohort Representative	*Egham, UK.*
2023	**MISC-CS Conference**, Member of Organising Team	*Egham, UK.*

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

2025	**Privacy Camp**, 1 day	*Brussels, BE*
2024	**Real World Crypto**, 3 days	*Toronto, CA*
2023	**CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems**, 5 days	*Hamburg, DE*
2023	**Real World Crypto**, 3 days	*Tokyo, JP*

PEER REVIEWING

2025	**USENIX Security**, Program Committee	*Conference*
2025	**ACM CHI 2026**, External Reviewer	*Conference*
2024	**IEEE EuroS&P**, Sub-reviewer	*Conference*

CERTIFICATIONS

2024-	**InSTIL Teaching Development Programme**, Accredited by Advance HE	*Pending*
2025-	**Associate Fellow**, Higher Education Academy (AFHEA)	*Pending*

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

2024	**23 Things International**, Global Research Collaboration	*Online*
2024	**Fieldwork Training**, Departmental Training	*Egham, UK.*
2023	**Media Training**, BBC/Royal Holloway Researcher Development	*Egham, UK.*
2023	**Ethics and Data Management**, Royal Holloway Researcher Development	*Online*
2023	**Ethical Research**, Epigeum Researcher Development	*Online*
2023	**Responsible Research and Innovation**, UCL	*Online*
2023	**Academic Writing**, Royal Holloway Researcher Development	*Egham, UK.*
2023	**Presentation Training**, Royal Holloway/Mindful Presenter	*Egham, UK.*
2023	**Network Security Training**, Royal Holloway CDT Training	*Egham, UK.*

Volunteering

*Volunteering with research partner groups cannot be included for confidentiality reasons.

2025	**Greenwich Docklands International Festival**, Accessibility Support	*London, UK.*
2025	**Red Cross Philippines**, General Support	*Philippines*
2022-	**Migrateful**, Class Facilitator	*London, UK.*
2022-	**Mozilla**, Support Team	*Remote*
2019-	**FoodCycle**, Cook	*London, UK.*
2015-19	**World University Service of Canada (WUSC - EUMC)**, Executive Committee Member	*Montreal, PQ*
2018-19	**High School of Montreal Adult Centre**, English Third-Language Teaching Assistant	*Montreal, PQ*
2018-19	**Elimu Development Project**, English Second-Language Teaching Assistant	*Remote*
2009-19	**Special Olympics Ontario/Quebec**, Coach	*Canada.*

Skills

Programming Languages

Python, Proficient – scripting, data analysis
R, Proficient – data analysis
SQL, Intermediate – data queries, normalisation, joins
C, Familiar with – systems programming, memory management concepts
Java, Familiar with – object-oriented design, academic projects

Research and Soft Skills

Methodology, Proficiency in qual data collection and analysis (interviewing, participant observation, focus groups, thematic analysis), proficiency in discourse analysis (both qual and quant), good knowledge of quant data collection and analysis (surveys, questionnaires, statistical analysis, data visualisation using R), good knowledge of Participatory Action Research (PAR) methods.
Communication and Outreach, Proficiency in communicating across disciplines, public speaking to a variety of audiences, fostering participant relationships, recruitment across cultural lines, and ethically engaged research principles and practices.
Intercultural Collaboration, Good knowledge of how to position and communicate a qual project within a mixed methods or interdisciplinary project, proficiency in working collaboratively with research participants on shared goals outside research (real-world impact). Canada, UK, Philippines.
Theory, Proficiency in all major anthropological / sociological theories from past 100 years, contemporary ethnographic theory, cultural history of CS, contemporary debates in CS.

Technical Skills

Networking, Good knowledge of network protocols and architecture.

Cryptography, Strong knowledge of standard cryptographic protocols and key management.

Operating Systems, Strong knowledge of OS fundamentals (memory management, file systems, configuration) across Mac, Windows, and Linux. Experience in installing and configuring various Linux distributions, advanced disk management including partitioning and formatting, managing bootloaders (GRUB), kernel parameter tuning, automating maintenance tasks. Working knowledge of manual software installation via source builds and dependency management outside of package managers.

Scripting, Good knowledge of Bash, Python, and PowerShell scripting.

Typesetting, Strong knowledge of using LaTeX for academic writing, experienced with collaborative projects using Overleaf and also working with local compilers.

Reference Management, Strong knowledge of using BibTeX and BibLaTeX for managing academic bibliographies.

Docker, Working knowledge of containerisation, experience building images, using Docker Compose, and managing containers.

Environments, Good knowledge of interactive data analysis using Jupyter Notebooks and VS Code, visualisation, and research workflows integrating Markdown and code.

Version Control, Strong knowledge of using Git for version control, branching, merging, and collaborative workflows (e.g., GitHub).

Front End, Working knowledge of JavaScript, CSS, and HTML.

Other, Good knowledge of frequentist statistics and SQL databases.

Languages

English, Native speaker
Italian, B2 Level - Upper Intermediate
French (Canadian), B1 Level - Lower Intermediate
Filipino (Tagalog), B1 Level - Lower Intermediate

References Available upon request.