

Mikaela Brough

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Citizenship: Canadian

Profile

I am a PhD researcher in the Information Security Group at Royal Holloway, University of London. My research explores how environmental activists navigate their information security in politically risky contexts. Rather than prioritising technological solutions, I study the social first - building our understanding of security from the ground up. The ultimate aim is to understand secure systems through the lived experiences of those who explicitly rely on them. I have previously published in other areas of qualitative social research in academia and the private sector.

Current Research Interests

Social Movements, Environmentalism, Cryptography and Security Technologies, Ethnographic Methods.

Education

2022 – Present **Royal Holloway, University of London** – Egham, UK
PhD in Information Security
Centre for Doctoral Training in Cybersecurity
Supervisors: Dr. Rikke Jensen, Dr. Martin Albrecht

2020 – 2021 **University of Oxford** – Oxford, UK
MSc in Social Anthropology
Supervisor: Dr. Ina Zharkevich *1:1 Distinction*.

2015 – 2019 **McGill University** – Montreal, Canada
BA in History and Art History, Minor in Political Science
GPA: 3.6.

Awards

2022 International PhD Funding with Living Stipend (Department of Information Security, Royal Holloway, University of London)
Awarded through the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council of UK Research and Innovation

- 2022 Prof David Parkin Prize in Ethnographic Materials (School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography)
Awarded to the best use of ethnography in an MSc Dissertation
- 2021 Distinction (School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography, University of Oxford)
- 2019 Distinction (Canadian Equivalent) (McGill University)

Publications

- 2022 **Father-toddler bonding during the Covid-19 lockdown: Qualitative insights from 17 families in Britain**
Paula Sheppard, Mikaela Brough
Social Sciences
- 2022 **Fertility Decision-Making in the UK: Insights from a qualitative study among British men and women**
Mikaela Brough, Paula Sheppard
Social Sciences
- 2021 **Review of “Benno Herzog, Invisibilization of Suffering: A Moral Grammar of Disrespect”**
Mikaela Brough
Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford

Research experience

- June 2023 – present **PhD Fieldwork**
Supervisors: Dr. Rikke Bjerg Jensen, Professor Martin Albrecht
Ethnographic fieldwork in the UK and the Southern Philippines for PhD thesis. Recruitment, Data Collection (interviewing, participant observation, focus groups, workshops, etc.).
- August 2021 – January 2022 **Research Assistant**
Principal Investigator: Dr. Paula Sheppard (University of Oxford)
Qualitative research project on UK fertility gap/decline. Summary of findings available [here](#) and [here](#). Recruitment, Data Collection, Data Analysis, Writing, Editing, Publishing.

June 2018 – **Salapia Exploration Project**
August 2018 Mentors: Dr. Darian Totten (McGill University), Dr. Roberto Goffredo (Università degli studi di Foggia)

Relevant industry experience

2016 - 2020 **Researcher (Boxing Cats Productions)** – Toronto, Canada
Summer 2020 **Canadian Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance Officer (First Canadian Title)** – Oakville, Canada

Talks / Conferences

March 2023 - present **Attendee (Various Events)** – *Real World Crypto (x2), ACM CHI*
August 2024 **Presenter** – Talking about Information Security
Various (x4 venues), Cebu, Philippines.
June 2024 **Presenter** – Information Security in Environmental Movements
Inter-CDT Conference, Bristol, UK.
May 2024 **Presenter** – On the Virtues of Information Security in the UK Climate Movement
ReCAP, Re-imagining Cryptography and Privacy, Massachusetts, USA.
April 2024 **Presenter** – On the Virtues of Information Security in the UK Climate Movement
CDT Showcase, Windsor, UK.
June 2023 **Presenter** – Exploring Secure Messaging and Perceptions of Risk: A Literature Review
STS Italia, Bologna, Italy.
April 2023 **Presenter** – Exploring Software Developers Perceptions of Security
CDT Showcase, Windsor, UK.
April 2022 **Presenter** – Fertility Decision Making in the UK: Insights from a qualitative study across British social classes
European Human Behaviour and Evolution Association conference at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig, Germany.

Reviewing

September 2022	Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health Peer review
September 2023	USENIX Security Symposium Peer review

Skills

Programming Languages

Proficient in: Python, R, Bash

Familiar with: C, SQL

Technical Skills

Network security: Good knowledge of network protocols, architecture

Cryptography: Proficiency in conventional cryptographic algorithms, key management, key exchange. Basic knowledge of PQC

Operating systems: Proficiency in how to configure and manage security settings on Mac, Windows, and Linux

Scripting: Good knowledge of scripting languages (Bash, Python, Powershell)

Legal: Good knowledge of major legal and regulatory frameworks for security (e.g., GDPR)

Languages

English (fluent), Italian (advanced), French (intermediate), Tagalog (basic)

Other

Ethnography, participant observation, qual/quant data collection/analysis, interviewing