

# Maria Skoutaridou

*PhD in Moral & Political Philosophy (Passed with Minor Corrections, March 2026)*

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## Research Profile

I am a moral and political philosopher whose research examines the relationship between liberal political thought, moral agency, and civic life. My doctoral thesis develops a systematic critique of liberal individualism and possessive self-ownership — tracing their emergence from early modern political thought through contemporary neoliberal frameworks — and argues that the reduction of moral agency to economic participation erodes civic responsibility, weakens institutional trust, and displaces communal approaches to shared challenges. Environmental ethics serves as the central diagnostic and constructive case through which these philosophical arguments are developed and tested.

The constructive core of my research develops *civic virtue environmentalism*: a normative framework centred on *phronēsis* (practical wisdom) and *oikophilia* (love of home and place) as mutually reinforcing civic virtues. Drawing on Aristotle, MacIntyre, Sandel, and Taylor, and engaging the empirical institutional literature of Elinor Ostrom, this framework re-grounds environmental responsibility in situated agency, community membership, and attachment to place — offering a post-liberal and post-utilitarian alternative to both market-based and abstract rights-based approaches to environmental ethics.

My broader research agenda extends this framework across environmental governance, education policy, institutional design, and public discourse — with a sustained interest in how moral language shapes civic life and how policy can support rather than displace the conditions of genuine civic responsibility. I write for academic, policy, and public audiences and am developing a book extending my doctoral research.

## Education

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### PhD in Moral and Political Philosophy

University of Kent, 2021–2026

*Passed with Minor Corrections, March 2026*

**Thesis:** *From Possessive Individualism to Civic Virtue Environmentalism: Virtue, Community, and the Moral Foundations of Environmental Responsibility*

**Examiners:** *Professor Adrian Pabst (National Institute for Economic and Social Research; University of Kent) and Professor Andrew Peterson (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, University of Birmingham)*

#### Thesis focus:

- Liberal individualism and possessive self-ownership: Hobbes, Locke, Mill, Rawls; Macpherson
- Political economy and the moral defence of economic freedom: von Mises, Friedman, Hayek
- Homo economicus and the moral limits of market agency
- Collective action problems and common-pool resource management: Hardin, Ostrom
- The situated self and constitutive community: MacIntyre, Sandel, Taylor
- Civic virtue environmentalism: *phronēsis* and *oikophilia* as civic environmental virtues
- Civic republicanism, green politics, and post-liberal environmental ethics

### MA Philosophy and Religion (Merit)

Heythrop College, University of London, 2014–2016

*Dissertation: From Death to Existence: The Meaning and Importance of Death for the Understanding of Being in Heidegger and Yannaras*

### BA (Hons) Theology & Religious Studies (2:1)

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2007–2011

## Research Agenda & Future Directions

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My post-doctoral research advances a broader programme in moral and political philosophy centred on the relationship between conceptions of the self, moral agency, and the conditions of civic life. While environmental ethics serves as the primary diagnostic and applied domain, the underlying project is situated within liberal and post-liberal political theory, examining how competing accounts of freedom, responsibility, and community shape institutions, public policy, and moral practice. Across five interconnected strands, this research develops a unified inquiry into how civic virtue, institutional design, and moral language can sustain forms of responsibility that extend beyond both market-based and procedural liberal frameworks.

### 1. Environmental Ethics & Civic Virtue Environmentalism (primary strand)

Extending and deepening my doctoral framework of civic virtue environmentalism across three dimensions: (i) its theoretical elaboration in dialogue with green republican, deliberative democratic, and environmental citizenship scholarship; (ii) its critical engagement with dominant approaches to environmental ethics — rights-based, utilitarian, and market-based —

showing what these frameworks cannot account for and why; and (iii) its application to the practical design of civic participation processes, environmental governance mechanisms, and policy frameworks that cultivate rather than displace the civic virtues of *phronēsis* and *oikophilia*.

## **2. Institutional Ethics & Civic Participation**

Examining how different institutional designs — educational, economic, political — either cultivate or erode civic responsibility, with particular attention to the role of intermediary institutions in sustaining cooperation and moral formation. This strand engages Ostrom's literature on institutional design alongside the communitarian and republican tradition's account of the conditions of civic flourishing.

## **3. Virtue Ethics and Public Policy**

Applying virtue-ethical frameworks to contemporary policy challenges, including welfare reform, education policy, and environmental governance. The central concern is how policy can be designed to support rather than displace individual and communal responsibility — rehabilitating the concept of civic obligation as a policy resource rather than a constraint on individual freedom.

## **4. Moral Language and Public Discourse**

Investigating how abstract rights-based and procedural frameworks in public discourse obscure substantive moral questions and communal goods, and developing alternative vocabularies grounded in virtue, membership, and stewardship. This includes particular attention to civic education and the question of what moral language must be made available to citizens and educators if shared frameworks of obligation are to be recovered.

## **5. Liberal and Post-Liberal Political Theory**

A sustained research interest in the foundations, internal tensions, and limits of liberal political thought, developed through my doctoral engagement with the canonical liberal tradition (Hobbes, Locke, Mill, Rawls) and its critics (Macpherson, Sandel, MacIntyre, Taylor). This strand examines the relationship between liberalism's conception of the self, its account of freedom, and its capacity to sustain civic and moral life — with particular attention to the contested relationship between economic and political freedom in neoliberal thought (von Mises, Hayek, Friedman). A secondary focus concerns post-liberal political theory: the intellectual and normative alternatives to liberal proceduralism that have emerged from communitarian, republican, and virtue-ethical traditions. This provides the broader theoretical context within which my account of civic virtue and situated agency is situated, and opens questions about institutional design, sovereignty, and the common good that extend well beyond environmental ethics.

## **Book Project (In Development)**

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### ***Environmental Ethics in a Post-liberal Era: Towards a Civic Virtue Environmentalism***

Extending the doctoral research into a public-facing book with two complementary aims. The first is critical: a sustained engagement with the post-liberal thesis as it applies to environmental ethics, showing how the dominant frameworks — market-based carbon trading, abstract rights claims, top-down regulatory mandates — presuppose a model of the self that cannot generate the civic dispositions environmental stewardship requires. The second is constructive: developing the civic virtue environmentalism framework not only as a normative theory but as a practical resource for environmental policy and civic design, addressing the mechanisms, institutions, and participatory processes through which *phronēsis* and *oikophilia* can be cultivated at the local and municipal level. The book aims to speak to academic philosophers, policy practitioners, and educated general readers concerned with the failure of existing environmental frameworks.

## **Publications & Scholarly Output**

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### **Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles (Under Review)**

- *It Is Not My Fault, It Is My Responsibility: A Response to Walter Sinnott-Armstrong and Ewan Kingston on the Moral Obligations of Individuals in Joyguzzling* — under review, *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* (submitted February 2026)

### **Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles (in Preparation)**

- *Grounding Green Political Judgement: Oikophilia, Local Knowledge, and the Spatial Preconditions of Civic Environmental Responsibility* — *Beyond Carolin Bohn's (2021) account of 'green political judgement formation'* — manuscript in advanced preparation. [Target: *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy / Environmental Politics / Environmental Values*]

- *Ethics of Distraction: Moral Reassurance and Environmental Responsibility in Consumer Societies* — manuscript in advanced preparation. [Target: *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice / Environmental Values*]

### Policy Essays & Public Philosophy

- *Trial by Jury as Common Sense: Moral Judgement and Free Speech in a Democracy* — Free Speech Union (2026)
- *Political Correctness Is Not a Moral Compass* — Centre for Heterodox Social Science, University of Buckingham (2025)
- *Human Flourishing vs. Abstract Social Justice Narratives of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: A New Path for Educational Reform* — Centre for Heterodox Social Science, University of Buckingham (2025)

### Essays Under Editorial Consideration

- *Monarchy and the Moral Imagination of the Common Good* — submitted to *The Critic*; under editorial consideration

### Conference Presentations (Selected)

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- *Moral Fragmentation and the Disengaged Self: MacIntyre, Taylor, and the Accountability Deficit in Global AI Interaction* — From Virtual to Virtue: Ethics, Epistemology, and Education, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia (forthcoming June 2026, competitive selection)
- *Beyond Market Participation: Re-evaluating Economic Freedom and Morality in Misesian Economics* — University of Kent (2024)
- *System Consequentialism and Virtue Ethics: Character Traits in Improving Systemic Outcomes* — MANCEPT Workshop in Political Theory, University of Manchester (2023, competitive selection)
- *It Is Not My Fault, It Is My Responsibility: Climate Change and the Atomised Self* — University of Potsdam (invited, 2023)
- *J. S. Mill's Idea of Individuality in On Liberty: Utility or Virtue?* — University of Kent (2023)

### Professional Memberships & Academic Service

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- British Philosophical Association
- The Aristotelian Society & Mind Association
- British Society for Ethical Theory
- European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR)

Available for peer review, conference organisation, and editorial service.

### Teaching Experience

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#### Head of Philosophy & Social Sciences

Bales College, London, 2015–2018

Designed and delivered A-level curricula in:

- Philosophy (epistemology, philosophy of religion, metaphysics). Taught ancient philosophical influences, dualism, arguments for the existence of God.
- Ethics (normative and applied ethics, meta-ethics, ethical language). Taught Virtue Ethics, Utilitarianism, Kantian deontology, business ethics, sexual ethics, intuitionism, emotivism, the nature of conscience)
- Sociology (Sociological theories, research methods, methods in context).

Supervised independent research projects on secularisation, crime, and the impact of feminism.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (Level 3).

#### Teaching Interests & Competencies

- Core: Political Philosophy (ancient to contemporary); Moral Philosophy (normative and applied ethics); Virtue Ethics; Environmental Ethics
- Research Specialisations: Civic responsibility and moral agency; virtue ethics and character theory (Aristotle, MacIntyre, Taylor); environmental ethics and collective action; liberalism, communitarianism, and critiques of individualism; moral language and public discourse.
- Developing Areas: Post-liberal political thought; civic republicanism and green republicanism; AI ethics and moral accountability; political economy and the moral limits of market societies.
- Additional Areas: Social Theory; Philosophy of Education; Philosophy of Religion; Ethics of Technology and Consumer Culture
- Teaching Approach: Close reading of primary and secondary texts; Socratic dialogue; essay-based assessment; connecting philosophical theory to contemporary ethical and policy debates

### Relevant Professional Experience

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Over ten years of senior practice in local authority statutory services and education leadership, providing an empirical grounding for research on institutional design, civic responsibility, and the conditions of civic cooperation.

### **Advisory Teacher — Data, QA & Institutional Oversight**

Merton Virtual School, 2021–2026

Senior practitioner in a statutory service for looked-after children; quality assurance of statutory frameworks; analytical reporting for senior leadership and multi-agency stakeholders; professional challenge in complex contested institutional environments.

### **PEP Coordinator → Acting Head (Interim)**

Barnet Virtual School, 2018–2021

Interim leadership of a local authority-wide statutory service; evidence-based professional challenge at Corporate Parenting boards; oversight of Pupil Premium Plus evaluation; translation of national policy into local implementation.

### **Head Teacher**

Greek School of the Holy Cross & St Michael, London, 2015–2020

Overall institutional leadership: safeguarding, curriculum, staffing, budget management, and community engagement.

### **Research Skills & Competencies**

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- Philosophical methods: conceptual analysis, normative argumentation, comparative political theory, close textual interpretation
- Interdisciplinary synthesis: philosophy, political economy, institutional economics, social theory, environmental governance
- Independent research design and project management; systematic literature review across disciplines
- Critical engagement with empirical social science (Ostrom, collective action theory, institutional governance)
- High-level academic writing for specialist audiences; public philosophy and policy-facing communication

### **Professional Qualifications & Languages**

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- Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) — Department for Education, UK · Designated Safeguarding Lead (Level 3) · Enhanced DBS (current) · Greek (native) · English (fluent) · French (beginner)

*References available upon request*