

Volume 1, Issue 1, March 2017

**Peace Human Rights Governance: A New Academic
Journal of the University of Padova**

Editorial

DOI:

10.14658/pupj-phrg-2017- 1-1

How to cite:

(2017), Peace Human Rights Governance: A New Academic Journal of the University of Padova, *Peace Human Rights Governance*, 1(1), 9-12.

Article first published online

March 2017

Peace Human Rights Governance: A New Academic Journal of the University of Padova

A new academic journal in the field of human rights studies: the first issue of *Peace Human Rights Governance* (PHRG) is online and in print from March 2017. PHRG is published three times a year by the University of Padova Human Rights Centre with Padova University Press, and succeeds a previous series, *Pace Diritti Umani - Peace Human Rights* (Marsilio Publishing, Venice), which was launched in 2004.

There is no doubt that human rights and the human rights discourse are increasingly perceived as a crucial dimension in any attempt to think and to grasp the legal and socio-political landscape of today's and tomorrow's world. Indeed, human rights provide not only a prescriptive/normative matrix to tackle the dynamics of local and global societies, but also an analytical frame for current trends that can be used to create meaningful correlations among a wide variety of datasets.

The tension resulting from the perceived rigidity of the legal recognition of rights and the tumultuous emergence of challenges to the given setting urged by micro and macro phenomena and trends should be positively assumed and engaged as a test to measure the lasting capacity of human rights principles and standards to meet realities and demands of today's communities, and undertake the necessary reconfigurations. The human rights values and principles, dynamically captured in the 'International Bill of Human Rights', are the pulsing engine of a research agenda that extends into many fields. Thorough and rigorous research in these domains is almost inevitably multi- and inter-disciplinary. Human rights, in their many "generations" and clusters, are indeed interdependent and interconnected and should be considered simultaneously and comprehensively, through a consideration of the specific analytical advantages brought by the different data collection and processing methods and their interaction. Moreover, human rights normative predicament cannot be separated from their actual embedment in the vital needs, lives, and struggles of individuals, communities and peoples. A world-wide vision is thus assumed as analytically necessary, since the cross-cutting global nature of most problems affecting individuals and societies can hardly be overestimated.

PHRG considers and proposes human rights as a heuristic lens to address theoretical and empirical issues concerning both macro and micro socio-political dimensions. Human rights are expected to provide a significant and original angle from which to effectively investigate and discuss crucial issues of the present day and the future. These themes range from, *inter alia*, world order and governance issues, international law, politics and

organisation, international and cosmopolitan democracy, and national and European foreign policy, to civil society transnational networking, city diplomacy, global citizenship, public policy, intercultural dialogue, women's human rights, the human right to peace, conflict transformation and conflict resolution, education processes, and trafficking of human beings. Accordingly, PHRG conceives human rights research as an effort both to move beyond what often results as an ultimately confrontational approach, whereby fundamental rights are generally represented as limits or boundaries to individual and institutional agency, and to develop a more proactive methodology, with a view to anticipate the debate on prospective human rights challenges and build the capabilities to tackle them.

To address such order of issues, a scientific, evidence-based approach needs be premised on an overarching vision. Competing narratives have tried to interpret the trans- and supra-national dimensions of contemporary politics, underpinning a proliferation of global studies literature. From liberal cosmopolitanism to anti-liberal approaches based on subordinate antagonism, all sorts of theories have been developed. A concept and a vision that still nurtures universal and world-wide values - beyond any cynical scepticisms and disillusion about the grand World Order designs - is peace. Peace, as a normative and empirical predicament, has been chosen to complement the fundamental reference to human rights in framing the title of this journal; along with the term - even though contested and highly controversial - of governance. The use of the concept of governance suggests that a certain degree of 'social responsibility' is accepted as a natural component of the scientific research. A quantum of entanglement with the tough work of handling the power is a price worth paying if social research is to keep with the ethical commitment to realising human rights. The assumption from which this journal originates is that in the globalised world, multi-level governance is the natural architectural framework for the construction of a world order based on the principle according to which, 'the recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world' as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Peace, in itself, is a fundamental human right, recognised implicitly in art. 28 of the Universal Declaration, and explicitly in the United Nations Declaration adopted by the General Assembly on 11th December 2016. The University of Padova Human Rights Centre believes that it is part of its 'social responsibility' to encourage, also through this Journal, the continued attention for the follow-ups to an instrument that intrinsically reiterates universal values and principles.

The order of peace founded on human rights, also by reason of the connatural principle of subsidiarity, evokes the theme of the democratisation of the processes and of the institutions of governance at various levels, from the city to the United Nations in the borderless space that belongs to the paradigm of human rights, as it is set forth in art. 1 of the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of December 1998: 'Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels'.

The need for more legitimation of the organs and more participation in decision-making processes in the afore-specified space, also offering more role opportunities to non-governmental organisations, is a thematic area that contributes to qualifying the action- and policy-oriented approach of PHRG.

The law of human rights is a Law that has an intrinsic resistance force to violations. Such force is primarily owed to the fact that, with legal recognition, principles of genuinely humane ethics have been inoculated in the hearth of the general international order, beginning its transformation: from an order aimed at disciplining exclusively the relations among and for States to an order that, although formally established by States and entailing primarily obligations for them, sanctifies the original subjectivity of the human being, is for everyone's life, and is for peace among the communities where persons and peoples organise and live their everyday lives.

This authentically universal *ius* is positive law, *ius positum*, both because such is the viewpoint of its formal aetiology, and because it is endowed with significant, though still imperfect, mechanisms of implementation and guarantee and, above all, it finds direct resonance in the deep feeling of common people everywhere.

In conclusion, PHRG aims to offer a holistic interpretation key with regards to a process of world-wide legal positivisation, which operates with modalities that can be equated to those of the baker's yeast. We are in the presence of a dynamic reality that is characterised by the fact that, following precepts of universal ethics, when one goal is achieved, another goal immediately takes its place: once a horizon is disclosed, another one opens up, in the constant tension to passing and enhancing laws, policies and relations. PHRG is committed to capture this whole dynamic frame of analysis in all its various ramifications and also contradictions. In so doing, it aims to contribute by exploring the complexities and open dilemmas left by the need to produce an increasingly solid multi- and inter-disciplinary

scholarship on human rights and to make the outcomes of such heuristic effort permeate the multiple levels of peace and human rights governance.

The Executive Editors