

**ALEXANDER SUNGUROV, CARLOS RAMÓN FERNÁNDEZ LIESA, MARÍA
DEL CARMEN BARRANCO AVILÉS, MARÍA CRUZ LLAMAZARES
CALZADILLA, OSCAR PÉREZ DE LA FUENTE (Editors), *Current Issues on
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The 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) inspired the International Political Science Association (IPSA) and the Carlos III University of Madrid (UC3M) to organise a joint symposium on May 23rd and 24th 2019, in the university's Getafe Campus. In its six panels, scholars from twenty-three universities, based on four different continents, presented their contributions on the trajectory of the UDHR, the current state of human rights around the world, and the main challenges they face in different areas. Most of those contributions have been compiled, in short-chapter form, in the book “Current Issues on Human Rights”, which I here review. As the book's editors highlight, both the symposium and its written counterpart arise from the commitment of both IPSA and UC3M with international human rights law. In the former's case, as the Chair of IPSA's Research Committee on Human Rights, Alexander Sungurov, points out, because the very birth of IPSA was tied to the UN's efforts to promote human rights on a global scale. In the latter's case, because the legacy of Gregorio Peces-Barba, founder of the institution, draftsman of the Spanish Constitution and renowned human rights theorist, continues to animate its academic and cultural mission. The book consists of twenty-four chapters, each for one symposium presentation. This is an overview of them all, in an order that mirrors the original symposium's panel structure.

The first group of contributions focus on the 70th anniversary of the UDHR. In his chapter, Jesús García Cívico discusses the UDHR's character as cultural milestone for humanity, based on precedents from different civilizations from Western Europe to Babylon. The author's historical analysis is linked, as well, to his perspectives on how science and human rights can work together in different perspectives and approaches. Christopher Lazarski's chapter also analyses human rights from a historical perspective. Lazarski evaluates each ancient civilization's role in promoting human rights as we

currently know them. His remarks lead him to identify some general trends, such as the West's standing as the only region where human rights have been part of a continuous process since antiquity, or the discrepancy between the theory and practice of human rights, that unites today's societies with ancient civilisations. On a different note, Jeffrey Davis provides a comparative study of the jurisprudence by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and the United States' Courts with reference to the universality of human rights. After scrutinising landmark judicial decisions, the author concludes that, based on different exceptions, U.S. Courts have effaced the universal character of human rights from the country's legal system. In the last chapter of this block, Alexander Sungurov presents some insights about the relation between research on human rights and the organisational efforts to promote them in practice, using the parallel evolution of IPSA's Research Committee for Human Rights and the UN as historical background. Relying on these trends, Sungurov's chapter emphasises the need for further support to interdisciplinary efforts on human rights studies.

The second group of contributions turns its attention to civil rights. In the first chapter of this block, Migle Laukyte discusses the relation between Artificial Intelligence (AI) and human rights after the European Commission published its Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence in 2019. The author begins by providing an overview of the document, and then elaborates on two specific issues in this area: AI's role in protecting human rights and new human rights strictly related to it. The three remaining contributions of this block take up freedom of expression. Jędrzej Skrzypczak reassesses its content in the UDHR from a contemporary perspective, especially regarding its restriction on the Internet. The global network also attracts the attention of Oscar Pérez de la Fuente. The author discusses how some of its specific traits – anonymity, global reach and issues about law enforcement – might condition regulations on hate speech. Despite its particularities as a space for the exchange of ideas and information, Pérez de la Fuente claims that our reasons to prefer education-based, rather than censorship-based, responses to hate speech also apply to the Internet. Andrés Gascón Cuenca culminates this triad on freedom of expression with a case study about the glorification of terrorist acts, as regulated by Spanish law. The author considers both Spanish legislation and jurisprudence at odds with the European case law in this area, which condones restrictions on freedom of expression only on qualified grounds.

Chapters in the third block deal with social rights. Marian Świątkowski addresses platform work in the European context. The author raises several questions about how technology might make this increasingly pervasive form of labour particularly elusive to workplace security regulations. From rights in the workplace we move to direct participation rights. In this regard, Reginaldo Da Motta Corrêa De Melo Junior and Herena Neves Maués Corrêa De Melo rely on Honneth's and Habermas's participation theories to develop a case study on budget public hearings in Northern Brazil. Tomasz Litwin presents another case study in the following chapter, now regarding marriage rights of same-sex couples under the rules of the UDHR and the Polish Constitution of 1997. After assessing constitutional provisions and jurisprudence, the author concludes that the Polish legal framework is, as of today, unable to accommodate an extension of marriage rights to same-sex couples, and so efforts in this regard should aim at constitutional reform. Pablo Sartorio's chapter examines human rights from the perspective of prisoners. With the United States' incarceration system as background, Sartorio defends the need for reforms towards a more compassionate treatment of convicts and ex-convicts. In the final chapter of this block, Herena Neves Maués Corrêa De Melo evaluates the effects of Constitutional Amendment 81/2014 for slavery in Brazil. The author recurs to critical analysis of speech to discern how the provision's wording rendered it virtually ineffective, as it allowed electoral considerations to undermine its very purpose.

The fourth group of chapters' common topic is political rights. Joana Rebelo Morais opens this block with a study on transitional justice and the limitation of political rights to members of the former regime's elite. The author discusses fundamental ideas for transitional justice, such as the difference between lustration and purge, and discusses how the exclusion of the former elites from the electoral process affected the parties' lists in Portugal's elections after the dictatorship. The three remaining chapters of this group address peoples' right to secession, drawing lessons from Catalonia's recent drive to independence. Carlos R. Fernández Liesa dissects critically the main ideological features of Catalan secessionism and defends a conception of Spain as culturally and nationally plural. In his recollection of recent events in Catalonia's secession drive, the author detects worrisome developments regarding freedom of expression and democracy. Fernández Liesa also explores secession rights in international law, a topic that the next two chapters, by Helena

Torroja Mateu and Víctor C. Pascual Pachuelo, pursue even further. Both present a picture of peoples' right to secession in international law as tightly connected with colonial rule or, in exceptional cases, with "remedial secession". This link, the authors argue, would make it inapplicable to the case of Catalonia, even considering that, as Torroja points out, the vague language of international provisions on secession rights could – incorrectly – lead to think otherwise. Pascual elaborates on the difficulties for a unilateral independence referendum in Catalonia, at odds with Spain's constitution. The author highlights how important recognition from third countries might be to render the positive result of an independence referendum effective. Pascual's insights in this regard seem particularly pertinent, considering Catalonia's inability to summon any international recognition after the unilateral independence referendum held in 2017.

The fifth block displays several contributions on cultural rights. Monique Falcão dedicates her chapter to group-specific property rights in Brazil. Her analysis of the quilombolas, an ethnic group strongly connected with land ownership, relies on critical theory to depart from colonial conceptions of property to post-colonial frameworks, which she considers better suited to capture some groups' relation with land as part of their common identity and heritage. The two chapters that follow address the newest project in human rights promotion within the UN framework: The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the UN's Agenda 2030. Tatiana Barandova addresses the Ombuds figure in Russia, and their role in implementing gender-specific SDGs. On a rather pessimistic note, the author expresses concerns about the prospect of the Ombuds being actively involved in this task. Such concerns arise from the institution's gender blindness and recent events in Russian politics that could lead us to anticipate a backlash in gender policy, rather than progress towards gender equality. Veronica Reda turns her attention to the SDGs' demands on energy, cities and action against climate change. Reda reminds the reader of the strong links between environment protection and human rights, given how climate change might disproportionately affect the most vulnerable. From a human rights perspective, the author suggests, this represents a powerful incentive to keep sustainable development in mind as a fundamental analytic tool.

The UN Global Compact for Migration joins the SDGs as the two main focal points of the last group of contributions. Patrizia Rinaldi's chapter draws attention to one particularly vulnerable group of migrants: minors. The author relies on reports by

governments and international NGOs, as well as evidence obtained through participant observation in a Caritas Refugee Centre, to expose the situation of migrant children as subjects of a multi-faceted legal framework and raise awareness about children's rights as human beings with a future, but also as the future of our societies. Alfredo Dos Santos Soares also brings to the fore a generally overlooked group of migrants: internally displaced persons (IDPs). Climate change's consequences for human rights emerge in this chapter, as a prominent factor – alongside armed conflicts – for internal displacement around the world. Dos Santos regrets that IDPs have not, so far, been awarded the protection they deserve from the international community, as they have usually been considered an internal issue for which each state should be responsible. The author considers this position at odds with the “Responsibility to Protect” principle, embraced in multiple international covenants, and supports awarding IDPs the same status as refugees to involve the international community in protective action that matches their vulnerability. Giuseppe Matteo Pezzullo's chapter invites us to look at migrations from a gender perspective. The author recovers Bobbio's idea of the specification of fundamental rights, which relates them to differences in human needs, and applies it to gender inequalities as a result of the pervasive presence of patriarchal structures around the world. Within this theoretical framework, Pezzullo favours specific provisions in the UN Global Compact for Migration to protect migrant women from gender-specific sources of vulnerability. In the final contribution of this block – and the book – Karen García Curiel discusses the effects of security concerns raised by the 9/11 terror attacks in migration laws. Reinforced by a public discourse that identifies migrants with threats to national security and economic welfare, the author claims that these laws have effectively become a kind of Enemy Criminal Law, given their preventive nature and their origin in the war on terror.

The variety of topics addressed in its contributions make “Current Issues on Human Rights” an essential compendium to understand future developments in its field. Its combination of theoretical reasoning with practical analysis turns it into a useful guide to draw lessons from, a beacon to find our way forward in the route towards a more attentive world to the demands of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.