

Panel One: Dignity and Climate Change Biographies and Abstracts

Wednesday 9 June 2021

Erin Daly is Professor of Law at Widener University Delaware Law School, where she served as Interim Dean, Vice Dean and Dean of Faculty, as well as the H. Albert Young Fellow in Constitutional Law. She is the Director of the Global Network for Human Rights and the Environment and the Executive Director of Dignity Rights International, an NGO dedicated to advancing the dignity of vulnerable people throughout the world. She also serves as the US National Correspondent for the Centre international de droit comparé de l'environnement (CIDCE), as a member of the Normandy Chair for Peace and of the Scientific Committee of the Global Pandemic Network. She is the author of *Dignity Rights: Courts, Constitutions and the Worth of the Human Person* (Penn 2020), and the co-author and co-editor with Jimmy May of numerous books including *Global Environmental Constitutionalism* (Cambridge 2015), *Implementing Environmental Constitutionalism* (Cambridge 2018), and *Dignity Law: Global Recognition, Cases, and Perspectives* (Hein 2020).

Catherine Dupre is an Associate Professor of comparative constitutional law at the University of Exeter. She has documented and analysed the developments of human dignity in the field of constitutional law and human rights in Europe since the 1990s. Her publications on this topic include: *Importing the Law in Post-communist Transitions: the Hungarian Constitutional Court and the Right to Human Dignity* (Hart 2003), and *The Age of Dignity: Human Rights and Constitutionalism in Europe* (Hart 2015). She is currently completing a co-edited collection on human dignity and democracy (E Elgar 2021 forthcoming).

Abstract

This paper positions human dignity in the post-totalitarian paradigm anchored in the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This has been subsequently endorsed around the world through the adoption of regional human rights instruments and national constitutions, (almost) all of which have referred to and developed the solemn dignity promise formulated under Article 1 of the UDHR. Due to human dignity's central position within the human rights framework, both as its foundation and ultimate aim, the paper suggests that this concept might offer new interpretative perspectives, especially in relation to the rights of future generations. In particular, human dignity might arguably help us think – and re-think – the understanding of time on which human rights systems of protection rest. The paper explores what is perhaps the most familiar conceptual construction of time as distinguished into past, present and future through its significance for future generations. Drawing on human dignity's unique conceptual connections with time and humanity, the paper explores how these familiar dimensions of time might be re-imagined to bridge the theoretical and temporal gap between current and future generations.

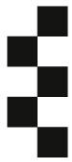
Marcus Düwell is a moral philosopher. His research topics include foundational questions of moral and political philosophy, philosophical anthropology, bioethics and climate ethics. He is particularly interested in all questions related to human rights within contemporary transformations. From 1991-2001 he was acting director of the Centre for Ethics at the University of Tübingen. Between 2002 and 2020 he held a chair for philosophical ethics at Utrecht University, a function in which he was responsible (among others) for building up and directing of Utrecht University's Ethics Institute, the Netherlands School of (Practical) Philosophy. He is Vice-President of the Helmut-Plessner Society. He is main editor of the *Cambridge Handbook on Human Dignity* (CUP 2013) and *Towards the Ethics of a Green Future* (Routledge 2018). He published *Bioethics. Methods, Theories, Domains* (Routledge 2013).

Abstract:

The position of Climate change within the human rights regime is not uncontested. While traditionally the human rights aimed at protecting human beings against extreme atrocities (e.g., Genocide) ecological challenges has not been addressed. While this changed over the last decades, there is still a consistent theorization missing since including protection against climate change into the human rights regime has systematic consequences: Human beings have to be protected against rights violations in the future and even human beings that are not (yet) born deserve human rights protection. Furthermore, protection against climate change has to be weighed against other rights, particular liberty rights. The paper will introduce some conceptual starting points that are important for an appropriate understanding of the role of human rights in the protection against climate change.

Dina Lupin Townsend is a post-doctoral researcher in the philosophy department at the University of Vienna, where she works on the project "Giving groups a proper say: the pragmatics and politics of group speech". Dina's research examines the ways in which socially marginalized groups suffer practices of silencing and epistemic injustice in their efforts to participate in decisions that affect them. Previously, Dina was a researcher at the Department of European and International Public Law at the Law School of Tilburg University in the Netherlands. She has conducted research into mining and extraction, human dignity, climate change, participatory rights, Indigenous peoples' rights, gender and sexuality rights and civil society. Dina's book, "Human dignity and the adjudication of environmental rights" was published by Edward Elgar in 2020.

Dina previously worked as a Senior Attorney at the Centre for Environmental Rights in Cape Town. At the Centre, Dina represented a range of communities and activists in their battles for more transparent, accountable environmental and water management in the mining sector.



Abstract:

The importance of public participation in addressing climate change and its effects has been recognised at least since the drafting of the UNFCCC in 1992. However, participation in addressing climate change is often understood in a thin or procedural way, more closely concerned with public awareness than with ensuring meaningful engagement and inclusion. In this talk, I examine the right to participation through a human dignity lens, arguing that it is in fact a much more demanding requirement.

What is more, when participation is seen as a demanding, substantive, dignity right, the impossibility of meaningful and inclusive participation for many marginalized groups becomes apparent. I will describe some of the ways dignity-based participation is made impossible for marginalized communities, with a particular focus on Indigenous peoples and gender and sexual minorities. As a result, I argue that we need to radically change our understandings and what participation is, of how participation is done and of what it demands of decision-makers and scientists.