

## Call for papers

### Frames of European Human Rights:

#### How are climate change, migration, and authoritarianism framed within the Council of Europe?

Hertie School, Berlin  
16-17 November 2023

Human rights set normative standards for states to adhere to – but they also contribute to shaping debates on politically, economically, and socially controversial topics at a deeper level, influencing our understanding of underlying realities, diagnosing problems, and leaving some aspects aside as irrelevant or less important. The aim of this workshop is to explore these constructions of realities and normativities within human rights law, focussing on the frames and framers of climate change, migration and authoritarianism in European human rights.

Scholarship in social sciences has long shown the significance of frames in making sense of the realities of the social world. According to Erving Goffman, frames are principles of organisation through which we attribute not only subjective meanings to social events but also build consensuses around such subjective attributions (Goffman 1986 [1974]). An analysis of frames enables us to see that normativity does not necessarily follow definitions; as Judith Butler puts it, normativity might be 'built into' the definitions themselves, thus conflating the descriptive and the normative, even 'preempt(ing)' the descriptive altogether (Butler 2009). Frames operate as exclusionary and inclusionary heuristics in navigating the relationship between normativity and reality. They emphasise and include certain relevant considerations or conditions while leaving out others, raising questions of language, power, and knowledge production (Bianchi and Hirsch 2021).

This workshop aims to bring insights from frame analysis and related perspectives to bear on the European system of human rights law and politics. We invite contributions to critically analyse the emergence or shifts over time of the frames with regard to climate change, migration, and authoritarianism. What are the assumptions and terminology underpinning discussions of authoritarianism in Europe? What understandings of nature and its relation to the economy and human beings accompany discussions of climate change in the Council of Europe context? Along which lines are migrants classified within European human rights law, what kind of language is used to do so, and what gets invisibilised through these classifications? To explore the politics of different actors within the Council of Europe, we also seek to map the multiplicity of framers and how they interact with one another. To which actors can we trace certain frames used to address these topics? How do the vocabularies of various institutional actors within the Council of Europe and those of civil society and of scholarship overlap or conflict, and with what consequences?

Contributions focussed on the theoretical and empirical implications of applying frame analysis in the context of the Council of Europe are welcome, as are contributions from related perspectives such as discourse analysis or ideology critique (Marks 2000), and approaches including critical international legal theory, postcolonial studies or Third World Approaches to International Law (Baxi 2008; Chimni 2009; Kapur 2018) which can highlight structures often left out of the frame within human rights law. We also invite contributions bringing insights from these perspectives in conversation with socio-legal scholarship as to the role played by relative information, resources, political positionality, and regional limits in the making of human rights law under the auspices of the Council of Europe.

While by no means exhaustive, paper proposals could focus on the following questions:

1. What are the frames through which realities of climate change, migration, and authoritarian entrenchment are constructed in European human rights law?
2. Who are the key framing actors of the realities and normativities in the field of climate change, migration and authoritarian entrenchment in European human rights law, and how do their relative power and information or political positionality inform their framings?
3. How and with what consequences do the frames used and promoted by the Council of Europe shift across time?
4. What similarities or differences can we identify when we pay attention to the types and sources of information which dominate framings of realities across climate change, migration and authoritarianism? How do the robustness of evidence and distance to material realities, as well as competing political and economic considerations inform the framing of realities and normativities in these three fields?
5. How are sub-regional, regional or global tensions reconciled in and through such frames? What are the repercussions of the specifically European regional framework of the Council of Europe for the protection of human rights in the context of climate change, migration, and authoritarian entrenchment?
6. What types of reality constructions with what normative effects are included or excluded in such frames? Are frames used and promoted in European human rights law equipped to address climate change, migration and authoritarianism? What alternative frames would be possible?
7. What broader critical insights can be gained from analysing the frames and framers of climate change, migration, and authoritarianism in European human rights law? What are the implications for processes of knowledge production within and about the Council of Europe, and what does this mean for our understanding of and approach to European human rights law?

### **Submissions and other details**

We invite papers from any discipline that fall within the theme of the workshop. We particularly encourage submissions for co-authored papers by researchers from different disciplines.

- Please send your 500-words abstract in a PDF file with your name, affiliation, and email address to [e.guersel@hertie-school.org](mailto:e.guersel@hertie-school.org) by **23 June 2023**.
- Authors of the accepted papers will be notified by 7 July 2023.
- All selected participants will be asked to submit a think paper (3000-5000 words) by 31 October 2023.

The workshop will take place at the Hertie School in Berlin on **16 and 17 November 2023** with the support of the Volkswagen Foundation and in collaboration with Helmut Schmidt University. Funds are available to cover economy travel and accommodation costs of workshop participants, where necessary. We invite original submissions as we aim to explore publication options in an edited volume or journal special issue following the workshop.

### Workshop Organisers

Başak Çalı, Hertie School  
Esra Demir-Gürsel, Hertie School  
Jens T. Theilen, Helmut Schmidt University

### References

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- Kapur, Ratna. *Gender, Alterity and Human Rights. Freedom in a Fishbowl* (Edward Elgar, 2018).
- Marks, Susan. *The Riddle of All Constitutions* (OUP, 2000).