



Introduction

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In this issue we have a set of diverse articles. They are diverse in their academic fields, research methods, and geographic areas. There is one article that comes from critical cultural studies and discusses the relationship between human rights and Asian cultural values in the Far East countries. Another is based in critical legal studies and focuses on procedural rights of the accused in criminal justice system of Pakistan. Yet another is based in international law and discusses how international human rights law has yielded grounds to the principle of diplomatic immunity in the case of Jamal Khashoggi. There is also an article from humanities field that throws light on human rights violations in Kashmir at the hands of Indian law enforcement agencies. Finally, we have one article that comes from peace and conflict studies, and it discusses the aspect of human security in modern counter-insurgency policy and practice.

This issue begins with Alvin C. Lim's article on Asian values debate. Alvin focuses on the relationship between Asian values and human rights. Reading the case of Cambodia, where the ruling political party has strictly limited political rights of its opposition, Alvin highlights how Asian governments wish to cut down upon political rights by arguing that these rights have Western underpinnings and therefore they are not in consonance with Asian values. These governments want to re-contextualize political rights from Asian values point of view so that their new sphere of operation

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could be determined, which obviously would suit governments. They justify re-contextualizing by giving references to requirements of local cultures and of stable economic growth. However, Lim questions these justifications of Asian governments and argues that they are more about politics and control than about culture and economic growth.

Ali Chughtai's article focuses on the question of the due process and procedural rights of the accused in Pakistan. By discussing the much debated and publicized murder of a minor girl named Zainab in the Punjab province, Chughtai highlights how such cases involve the risk of abridging the standard criminal procedure. In this case, he demonstrates that the immense public outrage caused the prosecution and the courts to reach a decision in an expedited fashion such that the special procedure of anti-terrorism courts was even further sped up. The prosecution had to build corroborative evidence beyond reasonable doubt, but it hadn't had enough time to do so. Thus because not much substantive evidence was available, the courts had to rely on the mix of a weak corroborative evidence and confession, which the accused had made at some point during the remand. Chughtai argues that in such high profile cases although the prosecution and courts are tested for speedy justice, they should not compromise on the principle of the due process and procedural rights of the accused.

Amrita Ghosh's article focuses on the dismal condition of human rights in Indian controlled Kashmir. She approaches this condition by looking into the emerging English literary writings by Kashmiri writers. She picks up two such writings: Mirza Waheed's novel *The Collaborator* and Basharat Peer's memoir *Curfewed Night*. By giving examples from these writings she presents an account of how Kashmiri subjects feel and perceive the ongoing violence. In order to understand this violence and subjugation, she takes a theoretical trajectory engaging Foucault's concept of biopolitics, Agamben's concept of *homo sacer*, and Achille Mbembe's concept of necropolitics. She argues that while the state has been using excessive force to subjugate these helpless people, it has still been unable to stop their sovereign agency.

Jumoke Adegbonmire's article takes up one of the most cold-blooded murder in a diplomatic mission—that of Jamal Khashoggi. While much has been written on this cold-blooded murder,

Adegonmire's article focuses on how this incident exposed the troubled relationship between international human rights law and the international law principle of diplomatic immunity. She questions the cover up provided to this murder through the pretext of diplomatic immunity as well as individual versus state responsibility. She refers to other similar cases, especially that of *Pinochet*, and highlights that the grounds gained against the principle of diplomatic immunity by human rights law seem to have been forfeited in the present case. She points to the growing weakness of international human rights law in the face of rise of strong authoritarian governments.

Aamer Raza discusses the question of human security in counter-insurgency policy and practice. By critically analyzing the counter-insurgency Manual (2006) of the US Armed Forces, he points to how counter-insurgencies fail due to lack of attention to the question of human security. He discusses the case studies of two vulnerable segments of populations—women in Afghanistan and Christians in Iraq—and makes the argument that the US efforts at counterinsurgency in these two countries failed because they did not prioritize securitizing these vulnerable segments of the population. He further argues that a counterinsurgency is not mere defeating insurgents, but securitizing the vulnerable people from them. In this way, a counter-insurgency policy should focus on empowering the local people, so that their vulnerability against and susceptibility to insurgency is addressed.

Toward the end I would like to mention that this year we received more than 35 full-length articles. These articles went through a rigorous process of editorial and peer review. Only five of them could make it to the publication stage. In this way our acceptance rate for the year was 14.29%. I would also like to mention that our editorial team has worked hard on each step of the process to make the process smooth and fair. This year we also moved to open journal system (OJS) platform so that our journal becomes available free of cost to everyone.