

Book Review: *Regional Protection of Human Rights* D. L. Shelton and P. G. Carozza.
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The shared history and socio-cultural values of various societies and peoples in different regions of the world commend the establishment of regional human rights systems. While the regional protection of human rights started off on a generally weak note, they have since become very important players in the global system of human rights. They serve as a critical complement to the work of international system to advance the cause of human rights. Dinah Sheldon and Paolo Carozza recognise and affirm this reality in this second edition of their book, *Regional Protection of Human Rights*.

Sheldon and Carozza draw on an extensive body of primary texts and secondary literature to expose the reader to the work of the regional systems for the protection of human rights. They not surprisingly focus mainly on the well-established European, Inter-American and African human rights systems. However, they also pay attention to regional political groupings where human rights protection is at a formative, emerging, or developing stage. In this regard, the book examines the situation in regional formations like the Asia-Pacific Region, Arab League and Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), and sub-regional ones like the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. This is one of the strong points of the book since only cursory attention is typically paid to these emerging or developing regional and sub-regional human rights systems in the literature.

While not explicitly stated in the book, the chapters generally track what the authors rightly identified as the contents of a human rights system, namely the existence of a list of guaranteed rights, statement of duties of state parties, permanent institutions, and compliance or enforcement procedures usefully identified by the authors (p.11). The first chapter provides an overview of evolution of human rights, the development of regional and sub-regional organisations and the role of human rights in them. Chapter two addresses the interaction of regional instruments with domestic systems. Chapter three explores the workings of the regional systems describing the procedural and institutional frameworks, the composition of the staff, functions and powers of the regional bodies their reporting systems, jurisdiction and monitoring and compliance procedures. The complaint procedure at the heart of human rights mechanisms is the focus of chapter four which examines the admissibility

procedures, post-admissibility measures and remedies for human rights violations in regional systems.

In chapter five, the authors discuss the core issues on the application of regional human rights instruments; interpretation, subsidiarity, relationship between regional and universal norms, limitations, claw-back clauses and the nature of state obligations in ordinary times and periods of emergency. Chapter six presents the jurisprudence on selected rights like the right to privacy, physical and personal integrity, political participation and economic and social rights. Chapter seven examines responses to widespread violations of human rights by regional systems. The final chapter looks into the future challenges and prospects of the regional systems offering thoughts on how to strengthen them, improve their effectiveness and the possibilities for developing new regional systems for the protection of human rights.

Important pedagogic features of the book include questions and comments at the end of each section which can be used by students for personal reflection and either adopted or adapted by tutors for class discussion or formal assessment purposes. The authors also provide further reading lists at the end of each section of a chapter. This is quite useful for further research. However, why also include the 'Bibliographical Note on Print and Internet Resources' as part of the front matter of the book, since this also serves the same overall purpose?

In light of its design as a cases and materials book, the authors should consider revising the chapter structure. Rather unusually, this voluminous book is organised into just eight chapters. A text of this nature and size (over a thousand pages) is better presented in more chapters. The current chapters are closer to thematic divisions. The book would be more user-friendly reorganised into more manageable chapters. The current structure is rather cumbersome, even sometimes confusing.

Notwithstanding any structure concerns, *Regional Protection of Human Rights* is clearly the most comprehensive cases and materials text on the protection of human rights in regional systems. The integrated approach adopted by the authors sets the book apart from single-system studies which dominate the works on regional human rights systems. This is a fine, balanced exposition of the jurisprudence of regional human rights systems. The book is particularly significant in light of the fact that regional protection of human rights has more direct normative and practical relevance for, if not superior legitimacy in, various regions of the world. *Regional Protection of Human Rights* is a worthy resource of immense value for the advanced students of human rights and a veritable reference for scholars and

professionals in the field of human rights practice and advocacy. It should also be of interest to students of politics and international studies.

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