



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Dignity and the Rise of Authoritarianism

Regilme, S.S.

Citation

Regilme, S. S. (2019). Dignity and the Rise of Authoritarianism. *Leiden International Relations*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/71931>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

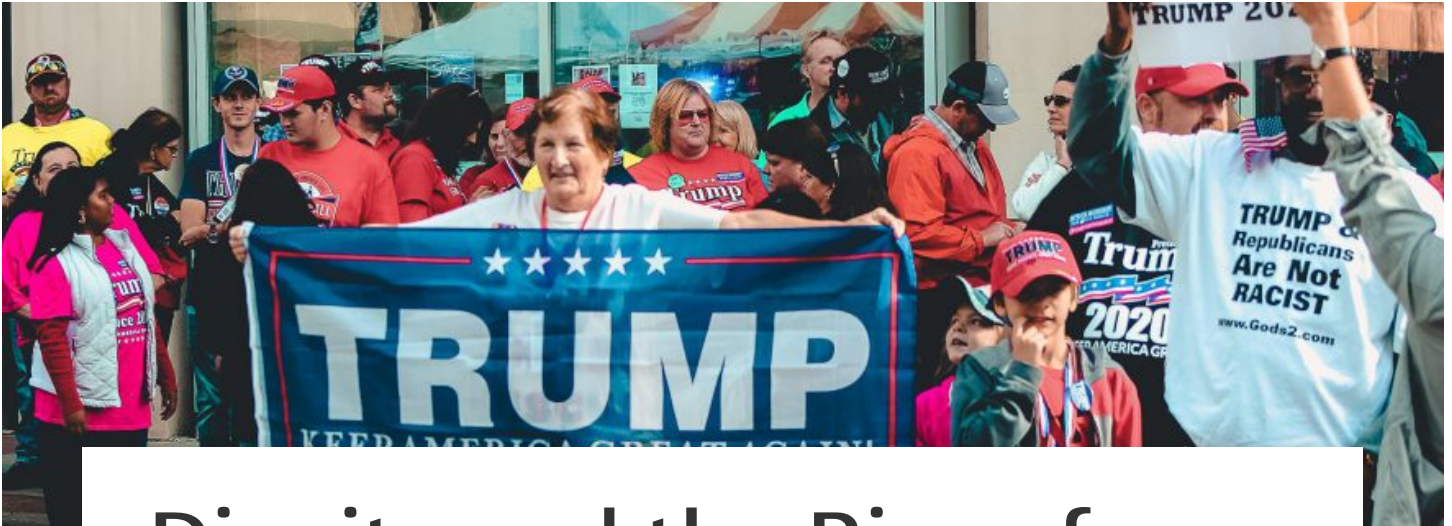
License: [Leiden University Non-exclusive license](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/71931>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).



Salvador Regilme
University
Lecturer



Dignity and the Rise of Authoritarianism

March 29, 2019

Considering the rise of Trump in the US as authoritarian politics gain traction elsewhere, how and under which set of conditions can we hope to transform the international human rights regime?

Authoritarian politics emerges in many parts of the globe, as demonstrated by recent developments in once-vibrant democratic societies in Thailand and the Philippines and by the rise of the far-right political parties in Europe followed by the increasingly racist and exclusivist political discourses that undermine the future of European integration. Trump's presidency motivates some commentators that his leadership (or lack thereof) could dramatically undermine the enduring tradition of American leadership in the global human rights promotion. Indeed, the racist, bigoted, and sexist political discourses that emerged therein seemed to whiplash the



gains of human rights advocacy in the past years. Where is the world (dis)order headed to, especially when it comes to the prospects of an increasingly converging global system founded on a common understanding of the protection and promotion of human dignity of everyone?

In a recent and open-access peer-reviewed article in the *International Political Science Review*, I critically analyze some of the most recent works in the empirical and normative scholarship on international human rights norms. My core argument states that reform of the international human rights requires not only a shift to an emphasis on human dignity but also a strong commitment to rectify material injustices between and the Global North and Global South.

I advocated for a three-pronged reform of international human rights: (1) a shift from Western human rights to the more inclusive and pluralist notion of human dignity; (2) the promotion of global justice by rewriting the rules of global economic governance; and (3) mandatory political education on human rights and human dignity.

By ensuring that human dignity is rooted not only in the ontology of the individual but also in its crucial communitarian dimensions, we are able to see social problems not only as concerns of individuals but as issues of global interdependence, justice, and fairness. We need to radically change the rules of global economic governance, particularly by directly addressing head-on the problem of severe poverty in the Global South and in some parts of the rich Global North. That global reform should also consider in what ways can rich countries in the Global North can compensate poor countries for all the historical and enduring costs of colonial and neocolonial forms of exploitation. For a truly just and meaningful international human rights order to emerge, the global debate has to courageously face and rectify the sins of the past through new rules of global justice and fairness.



Stay Connected



Links

Universiteit Leiden

International Relations (MA)

Journal of Contemporary European

Research