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Patchwork compliance: political dialogues about contested human rights

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Curriculum Vitae

Violet Benneker works as an advisor to the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy since 2019. Her work focuses on political dialogue in emerging democracies and fragile and conflict-affected settings. In 2014, she graduated cum laude from the research master Social Sciences at the University of Amsterdam with specializations in International Politics and Mixed Methods. She worked as lecturer in Political Science at the University of Amsterdam in 2014-2015. She started her PhD research and teaching position at the Institute of Political Science at Leiden University in 2015. She was visiting researcher at the Centre for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan in 2017. Her main research interests include political dialogue, human rights, and international norm contestation. She was born 4 May 1988, and completed her atheneum education at the Nijmeegse Scholengemeenschap Groenewoud in Nijmegen between 2000 and 2006.

There are very few states in the world, if any, that are in full compliance with human rights norms. Instead, states tend to comply with some articles of a human rights treaty extensively, only up to certain extent with some, and openly violate others. Up to now, we have not been able to unravel these patchworks of compliance.

This study presents a political dialogue model to start this process of unraveling. It shows how political decision-makers create patchworks of compliance, as they need to mediate between the mismatching norms of different national and international communities.

When successful, such dialogues allow decision-makers to make small improvements in human rights compliance. However, when communities are not sufficiently represented in the dialogue or their norms are being violated, harmful backlash effects against human rights can develop.

This manuscript uses a mixed-methods approach. It analyzes the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in a global quantitative study and two in-depth case studies of Jordan.