

EDITORIAL

Going Fully Open Access

When the first issue of our journal was published 55 years ago, in the auspicious year of 1968, it was produced on a typewriter and sent out to its first readers via postal mail. In 2014, the first issue went online on the internet, in the e-library of our publisher NOMOS. Since then, most issues have been available there free of charge without a paywall, except for the three most recent volumes. Over time, VRU/WCL has become the most accessed journals at NOMOS, with readers from all over the world.

With this issue, we take another big step in our media evolution: We are becoming a fully open access journal with all content freely available (and subject to a CC-BY-license). At the same time, we will continue to publish a printed version, available to subscribers at a reduced price.

We hope that this transformation to a fully open access journal will not only make our content more easily accessible in general, but that it will also and specifically dismantle further barriers to access to knowledge in and from the Global South. Not only will scholars and readers in the Global South and less well-endowed institutions around the world have free access to all journal issues; our authors and contributors from the Global South will now be able to disseminate their scholarship published with VRU/WCL even more widely and timely. We thus hope that as a fully open access publication venue, VRU/WCL will continue to attract excellent scholarship on and from the Global South, and its entanglements with the Global North.

Our move to open access comes at a time when academic publishing is in a process of deep transformation and uncertainty. The traditional model of covering publishing costs through paid subscriptions is increasingly replaced by open access models. However, publishing still costs money. Therefore, the transformation to open access also requires a transformation of funding structures in academic publishing – a transformation whose exact shape and implications have yet to be firmly established. Hence, for now our move to open access remains an experiment. For this experiment to work out, we depend on you – our readers and subscribers: If you can, please continue your subscriptions if you have one already, and do consider purchasing a support subscription if you have the means to do so.

In addition, you can follow us on Twitter (@WCL_VRU). There we will intensify our activities, starting with a new series on “Archives of the South”, looking back at 55 years of VRU/WCL publications from today’s perspective.

Feminist Constitutional Scholarship from the Global South

We begin our first fully open-access volume with two symposia on feminist scholarship from the Global South. In the first, *Aparna Chandra, Jhuma Sen and Rachna Chaudhary* introduce the Indian Feminist Judgments Project. Imagining themselves as missing feminist judges and scholars, they and an exquisite group of scholars present four rewritten decisions and corresponding commentaries. These works from the Indian context show how the often unquestioning deployment of judicial power can uphold unequal distributions of power. As an alternative, the contributions to this symposium interrogate the apparently neutral judicial decisions to expose the gendered assumptions, articulations, and consequences that hide behind them.

For the second symposium, *Martha Gayoye* invited scholars from or working on Africa and South Asia to ‘ask the woman question’ of constitutions in the Global South. Herself and the authors she assembled question in how far existing western discourse on feminist constitutionalism is applicable to postcolonial contexts. With a lot of sensibility for the distinctness of different societal constellations, the symposium identifies a range of shared themes, nonetheless, and, most importantly, ends with a fullhearted invitation to others to join this important comparative conversation.

With these two rich and thought-provoking symposia we kick-start the new, fully open access era of our journal. We hope it is intellectual fun and inspiration for more critical engagements with the law and for new submissions.

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