

Promoting Human Rights and Democracy in Today's World: Digital Activism, Popular Culture and Environmental Advocacy Among South Korean Youth

Miriam Bartolozzi

PhD in Global Studies. Justice, Rights, Politics, University of Macerata

Non-faculty expert in Comparative Public Law and History of Political Institutions, University of Macerata

Civil society has shaped and sustained South Korea's democracy over the past four decades. While the nation's citizens have shown remarkable resilience, recent challenges have put the democratic system to the test. The younger generations, historically at the forefront of democratic movements, are now influencing discussions on local and global issues in innovative ways. These shifts can be viewed from two key perspectives: first, the evolving methods of amplifying voices through digitalization and online platforms, and second, the emerging focus on new challenges, such as environmental concerns and the risks of AI-generated content. Youth and university movements have introduced innovative protest strategies, utilizing popular music, playlists, and social media to spread information and support. Beyond the demonstrations that have taken place in the second half of 2024, a recent challenge has been about climate change lawsuits filed by young people, including children, accusing the government of human rights violations, culminating in a landmark ruling by the Constitutional Court in August 2024. The study analyzes how social movements influence legal and cultural change (*demosprudence*), highlighting how new challenges and tools have shaped the approach of younger generations over time in addressing local and global issues on democracy and human rights.

Short Bio

Miriam Bartolozzi is an emerging scholar who recently earned a PhD in Global Studies, specializing in Korean Law, from the University of Macerata's Department of Political Science, Communication, and International Relations (Italy) under the supervision of Professor Gyooho Lee from Chung-Ang University, Seoul. Her doctoral dissertation explored the influence of Neo-Confucianism on South Korean legislation, politics, and civil society. She also serves as a non-faculty expert in Comparative Public Law and History of Political Institutions at the University of Macerata and co-coordinates the 'Asia and Asian Legal Systems' focus for the renowned Italian journal *The New Company Law*. Miriam's research interests encompass East Asian constitutionalism, Korean law, culture and public diplomacy, as well as South Korean civil society, democracy and human rights.