

## Call for Blogposts! - A Winter's Tale: Standing on the Shoulders of Giants

In academia, we are often pressured to present everything about our research as original, to the degree of over-exaggerating the contribution it will make to scholarship. Of course, when you identify a gap in literature, your research proposal or your article should be going the distance to fill that gap in its entirety. We are expected to promote our own writings on LinkedIn and Twitter (as long as that lasts) and take every opportunity possible to present our research to our peers as well as to communicate about its relevance to the general public.

Well, as we have now reached the darkest month of the year and tis the season for sharing, we are all about appreciating the people around us and giving back to the community. So, let's step out of our individualist mindset and think about what this community or – more precisely – certain people within this community have done for us. For years, Google Scholar has been rightly pointing out that we are '[standing on the shoulders of giants](#)'. Before Google, there was Isaac Newton who admitted in 1675 that "If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." Indeed, day in, day out, we are looking at what others have written before us. When I say giants, I am sure most of you will think about the most senior of professors, people holding impressive chairs in prestigious institutions and people with multiple pages of publications including multiple monographs. Perhaps you think of people holding keynote speeches or those you would contact to write the preface of your first book. Well, that would be a valid but very obvious way to paint the picture of an academic giant. What I am instead going for is the kind of giant you had never heard of, but you stumbled upon in the late hours of doing literature review and who then became indispensable for your own work.

The giant whose shoulders you frequently stood/stand on might not always reach all that many readers and would probably be quite surprised to see multiple references to their 'forgotten work' in your published research. Of course, everyone has multiple giants – and certainly the abovementioned 'most senior of professors' are not excluded from this category – but not all giants receive the same amount of credit or have the same visibility. There are countless interesting contributions stuck in the *maze* of publication pressure that are barely (or ever) read.

Sometimes it is even unclear where your personal giant has moved on to. You know them from a particular paper in a particular timeframe. Some might not be in academia anymore and some might have advanced to be judges at the *Bundesverfassungsgericht*. The publication that got them their giant status (for you personally) might not even make it to their most-relevant-publications-list, submitted on applications for grants or fellowships.

Here at Völkerrechtsblog, we sadly cannot provide a platform for shout-outs to people who have been assigned giant status because they took time out of their day to write the most critical but detailed and helpful peer review reports or to the amazing and inspiring lecturer who sparked an interest that brought you to where you are today. What we can do – as a blog devoted to the promotion of open-access legal research – is to provide you with a platform to bring attention to the research your personal giant has published.

## So, What Do We Want From You?

Well, we are not looking to receive a *laudatio* for a specific researcher, instead, we want to bring the focus to their work: the journal article, the chapter, the book, the master thesis or even the blogpost. We are looking for answers to some – but not all – of the following questions: 1. Why do people need to read it? Does the contribution offer a detailed methodology that you have built on? Does it include a clear definition in a context that is plagued by terminological inconsistency? Was it the first one to apply a certain methodology to a specific theme? Does it manage to explain a delicate issue in clear and direct language? 2. Who needs to read it? Which audiences have not picked up on it but should have done so? For whom could the methodology be interesting? Was it missed because of the chosen language? 3. What was its relevance for you personally? How did you (and perhaps others) build on it? Did you manage to discuss your own findings with the author in person? 4. How did you find out about the contribution/research in question? Was it shared or promoted to you by another researcher (perhaps unknown peer reviewer A)? Was it presented at a conference (and where)? 5. How does it fit into existing literature? How does it relate to your research? 6. Where can our readers find it? In which language was it written?...

Please send your abstract in English of up to 500 words to [editorial-team@voelkerrechtsblog.org](mailto:editorial-team@voelkerrechtsblog.org) (please mention 'Standing on the shoulders of giants' in the subject line). The deadline for abstract submissions is 20 January 2023. Selected abstract authors will be asked to hand in a blogpost by 24 February 2023. Submissions should also mention the affiliation of the authors, contain a short bio (max. 200 words), and, if available, links to their social media accounts. We are interested in authors (and giants) from all around the globe. In the selection process, we aim to reflect diversity in terms of gender, geography, and so on.

- Deadline for abstract submission: 20 January 2023
- Confirmation of selection: 27 January 2023
- Submission of blogpost: 24 February 2023
- Symposium: 13-17 March 2023