



MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE
FOR COMPARATIVE PUBLIC LAW
AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

Human Rights Discussion Group
Friday, 12 February 2016, 14:30 – 16:00, Room 014

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“Food Governance and Sustainability Challenges: Responses to Food Waste in a Sharing Economy”

*Food begins as seed. The seed is sacred. Food is sacred.
“Annam Brahman”-food is the Creator. We are what we eat. When we are careless with food we are careless with ourselves.
Will we wake up only when the last peasant and the last seed disappear?
Or will we turn to the sacred duty of protecting our sacred seeds?
(Vandana Shiva)*

The presentation discusses on the needs to find solutions to waste in general and to food waste in particular in a legal perspective, since the time has come for a shift from the past experiences of consumer-oriented marketing strategies toward the stimulation of a new paradigm, focused on the effective sustainability of the choices and a clear set of responsibilities for public authorities, business operators and civil society.

The analysis starts with some reflections on the need to refresh the expressions used in this new area of research, as well as to coin new terms that might support the legal scholarship and the policy makers. A critical analysis of the concept of consumers is provided, explaining the reasons why a shift of paradigm is needed from an epistemological perspective, in order to embrace an integrated approach and to reframe the “EU food policy box” in terms of sustainability and ecology.

A relevant part of the work is dedicated to the analysis of virtuous models of sustainable development, where the interaction of key elements plays a pivotal role for the paradigm shift: the mechanisms of a sharing economy, replacing the new actors in curbing consumerism and waste and the participatory dynamics governing their actions.

Margherita Paola Poto has completed her PhD in Public Law from the University of Pavia and her Postdoctoral studies from the MPIL in Heidelberg and the Wageningen University, NL. Since 2004, she is qualified as an Attorney in Torino, and since 2013 as an Associate Professor in Administrative Law (MIUR, Italy). She has a lecturing experience in multidisciplinary backgrounds to a diversified target audience in both national universities (Unito) and international institutions and research institutes (ITC-ILO; Rwanda; Sierra Leone, Egypt, Tanzania). She was Visiting Scholar at the Tsinghua, Peking and Renmin University of China; the American University, Washington DC; the Hong Kong University; the SOAS and BIICL, London. She has published around 100 works, including two monographs and has been serving as an editorial board member of repute. Her current research interests comprise food governance, environmental protection and sustainability, regulation and TK applied to medicine and food. Since 2007, she has been sharing her passion for new discoveries with her daughter Camilla.



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