

## **‘The *Parthenon* Equilibrium’: The tripartite architectural structure of the International Humanitarian Law**

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A novel architectural theory of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) can be proposed by using the *Parthenon*, an icon of ancient Greek architectural construction, as a metaphor to explain consistency and balance of the IHL. Accordingly, it can be argued that IHL functions as a tripartite structure grounded in the foundational equilibrium of military necessity and humanity, operationalised through three interdependent supports: (1) limitation of means and methods of warfare, (2) protection of protected persons & properties, and (3) reduction of unnecessary suffering and destruction. Based on this foundation, there are three fundamental load-bearing pillars: (i) Principle of Distinction, (ii) Principle of Proportionality, and (iii) Principle of Precaution, which can be translated into practice. *Inter alia*, these pillars uphold the roof of humanity, demonstrated in three protective dimensions: (a) protection of civilians, (b) protection of *hors de combat*, and (c) protection of specific protected persons. By drawing IHL’s normative architecture into the *Parthenon*’s physical structure, this study seeks to explore how IHL’s stability relies on the balance between its humanitarian considerations and military necessities. The ‘*Parthenon* Equilibrium’ thus offers a unified model for understanding the basic structure of International Humanitarian Law. Hence, this architectural metaphor provides a unified theoretical framework for understanding how the foundation, pillars, and roof of IHL must exist in dynamic equilibrium to effectively constrain the conduct of warfare while acknowledging legitimate military necessities anticipated. Accordingly, this study will employ a qualitative research methodology, grounded in a descriptive analytical approach, with the objective of conceptualising and critically examining the tripartite architectural structure of International Humanitarian Law. This methodological framework enables a comprehensive exploration of the underlying principles, interdependent support, and normative foundations that sustain the equilibrium between military necessity and humanitarian considerations.

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