



“The Diversity of Human Rights: Human Rights and Capitalism”

30. August - 5. September 2015, IUC Dubrovnik

Organizers

Prof. Dr. Bernd Ladwig, Freie Universität Berlin

Prof. (em.) Dr. Georg Lohmann, Berlin

Dr. Ana Matan, University of Zagreb

Course Description

The annual course “The Diversity of Human Rights” addresses different problems within the human rights discourse. The participants come from various countries and bring in different disciplinary competences relevant for human rights theory and practice. The course aims at an interdisciplinary debate, especially between philosophy, jurisprudence, and political science. Furthermore, the course intends to establish a dialogue between researchers and human rights activists from the region.

The topic of this year’s course will be “Human Rights and Capitalism”. Using the term “capitalism” to signify the global economic order is controversial. While many publications in German rather refer to the seemingly non-ideological term “global liberal market economy”, the Anglo-American literature speaks of a capitalist economy describing a politically and juristically deregulated economy that is organized according to shareholder interests, as the global financial economy illustrates.

From the perspective of human rights there are many different questions concerning the relation between capitalism and human rights. For a start, capitalism does not seem to work without the recognition and institutionalization of (some) human rights. The claim that human rights are a necessary condition for capitalism was already put forward by Marx in his critique of human rights. Thus, the question arises which human rights exactly are necessary for capitalism, and in which way? Or does this claim even hold true for all human rights?

On the other hand, it seems possible to conceive of human rights as a resource for a critique of capitalism. There are many issues that point to a human rights-based critique of (deregulated) capitalism, such as the large gap between the poor and the rich, the persistence of extreme poverty, the deregulation and disintegration of the welfare state, the destruction of the environment, the excessive exploitation of natural resources, the commodification of nearly all spheres of life, the lack of political control and the disempowerment of democracy. With regards to all these questions, human rights might provide a basis for a critique of capitalism.

At this point, there are a number of more specific questions, such as: Is it possible to obligate TNCs to respect, to protect and to fulfill human rights? How should we conceive of the relation between voluntary self-regulation (e.g. “Global Compact”) and control by global enforceable law? What is the specific role and effect of the ILO? With regards to capitalism, in which way do the economic human rights – such as the right to work and the right to form and join trade unions – figure? How should we conceive of the human right to property?

These as well as further questions shall be tackled within this year’s course from an interdisciplinary perspective. The organizers invite researchers to send in abstracts addressing some of the problems and tensions just indicated, concerning the concept, conceptions, implementation and/or enforcement of human rights. The course will give room for the presentation of papers and will include workshops especially designed to give students and young researchers the opportunity to present their work in progress. Each director will invite excellent students to participate in the course. The course language is English.

Details

Topic: „The Diversity of Human Rights: Human Rights and Capitalism“
Location: Inter-University-Centre Dubrovnik, Croatia
Date: 30. August - 5. September 2015
Deadline: April 1, 2015
Contact: dubrovnik.humanrights@gmx.de