



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

4. – 10. September 2016, Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik

Organizers

Prof. Dr. Bernd Ladwig, Free University Berlin
Prof. (em.) Dr. Georg Lohmann, Berlin
Dr. Ana Matan, University of Zagreb
Prof. Dr. Christian Neuhäuser, Technical University of Dortmund
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Details

Topic: The Diversity of Human Rights: Human Rights and Security
Location: Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik, Croatia
Date: 4. - 10. September 2016
Deadline: April 1, 2016
Course Fee: 50 Euro
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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 next course’s topic will be the relation between human rights and security. At first glance, it seems reasonable to assume a conflict between human rights as liberty rights and security as a standard threat to these very liberties. This is the case, for instance, with regard to the right to respect for private life, which can be violated by surveillance measures as the discussion about the NSA illustrates. Against this stark dichotomy, however, Jeremy Waldron and others have problematized the assumption of a simple trade-off between liberty and security. As they argue, physical security is itself a human right. Furthermore, the costs of enhancing security might be distributed unequally. Improving the security of some often comes at the price of restricting liberties and/or impairing the security of others.

The relation between human rights and security is thus much more complex than initially assumed. In a very general sense, all human rights are somehow related to ‘security’ since human rights are meant to guarantee secure access to the good at stake. This is clearly mirrored in the much discussed UN doctrine of a “Responsibility to Protect”, which essentially amounts to securing human rights on a global level, even by military intervention if necessary. In a more specific sense, the issue of security matters particularly with regard to those human rights protecting physical integrity.

Regarding the idea of securing rights, Josef Isensee has claimed the existence of an implicit right to security within the German constitution. Hans-Peter Friedrich and other politicians even proclaimed the right to security as “Supergrundrecht” (supreme constitutional right). Against this suggestion, the leading opinion – at least among German lawyers – still holds that there is no other supreme constitutional right than human dignity and that the ultimate point and purpose of constitutional rights is the equal liberty of all.

A related discussion takes place within International Relations under the heading of “securitization”. Here, security is taken to be a license for the use of extraordinary and irregular means, which thereby threatens democracy and basic rights leading to a de-politicization of social conflicts.

These as well as further aspects and questions shall be tackled within the course. The organizers invite researchers to send in abstracts (deadline: April 1, 2016) 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 for students and young researchers to present their work in progress. Each director will invite excellent students to participate in the course. The course language is English.