

**CfP: Racism, sexism, fascism– What duties do citizens have to counter unjust attitudes and behaviours in everyday life?**

**20 June 2025 University of Potsdam**

**19-20 September 2025 UiT – The Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø**

The aim of this workshop series is to bring two distinct literatures and debates together, in order to develop a coherent account of the kind of duties citizens have in diverse societies. In much of contemporary theorizing, the particular duties of “ordinary” citizens are neglected, even though much more attention has been paid to how informal everyday norms shape societies and how people fare in them. The workshop wants to bring together researchers that attempt to fill this gap and come from a variety of backgrounds. We will hold the first workshop at Potsdam University on June, 20, 2025 and the follow-up workshop will be at the Arctic University of Norway in Tromsø on June, 19 and 20, 2025.

Both workshops will focus on two areas which are central to a functional and just democratic system while also relying heavily on the civic sphere.

The first focus is on patterns of discrimination, racism, and sexism (including discrimination against LGBTQ+ persons) which have a long historical endurance and shape citizens’ relations with each other, but also influence which policies citizens support or reject. Among others, discussions around racist stereotypes of Sami and how they create hostile public (online) environments, around the role that affirmative action with regard to gender equality should play in the public as well as private sector, as well as around duties to admit and integrate refugees fall under this umbrella. Here, the project asks which duties citizens might have to address structural injustices and prejudices that permeate civil society and shape these discussions and relations between citizens. Traditionally, these questions have been pursued on the state level and have centered around state reparations, apologies, and education campaigns. However, as important as such initiatives are, they still primarily set a frame for public discourse – whether it is picked up or refused partially depends on an understanding by citizens of what their own duties are. Moreover, minorities are embedded in civil society and thus will be impacted heavily by remaining forms of prejudice and mistrust, but also more positively by forms of solidarity and recognition that other citizens display.

The second and connected focus is the rise of extremist and neo-fascist parties and the popular support they have gained. The rise of the Alternative for Germany in Germany, of the Rassemblement National in France, and the re-election of Donald Trump in the US all fit into a broader pattern of a renewed ethnic nationalism that threatens liberal democratic values and social cohesion across the EU. These movements drive polarization and re-mobilize prejudices and distrust of minorities for their own political ends. The success of these parties depends on citizen support which gives them electoral mandates and creates a ‘new normal’ in which norms of civility, fairness, and respect are worn down. Much has been said about the economic and political drivers of such support. Yet, it has been much less investigated which moral duties citizens have in such circumstances. Does a feeling of political powerlessness and economic vulnerability justify voting for an undemocratic party out of protest? Must we speak up when others violate established norms of respect and civility even at a cost to ourselves? Is active solidarity with attacked minorities and political

counter-organization a duty or an act of supererogation? What are the boundaries of such duties in the face of threats of violence? These are the questions that arise here.

We see questions about citizen duties regarding past and enduring injustice and citizen duties in the face of rising extremist political movements as tightly linked. We invite contributions from all philosophical traditions that contribute to a better understanding of this link and/ or speak to how we should understand the content and justification of citizen duties to address and resist discriminatory practices and attitudes by their co-citizens. Please submit your abstract of 300 words to [Kerstin.reibold@uit.no](mailto:Kerstin.reibold@uit.no) and [Fabian.schuppert@uni-potsdam.de](mailto:Fabian.schuppert@uni-potsdam.de) by April, 15<sup>th</sup> and please indicate which workshop (Potsdam or Tromso) you would like to attend. We will make decisions on the abstracts in early May.