Kantian Theory and International Human Rights Courts

MultiRights Workshop & Graduate Conference
University of Oslo, 27-28 August 2012

Human rights are rapidly becoming an important force in international relations. The number of human rights covenants and conventions is increasing, human rights courts and other regulatory organs proliferate, and the discourse of human rights has become important to global political agents ranging from NGOs to world leaders. While this indicates a new respect for human dignity and the rule of law it also raises several difficulties. How are human rights courts to be legitimate unless they are held accountable in properly democratic procedures? How can human rights treaties avoid reflecting ethnocentric values? What is the justification for the margin of appreciation courts sometimes gives states when it comes to human rights? At the deepest level: what is the philosophical foundation of international human rights?

This workshop will explore the contribution of Kantian theory in understanding these difficulties. Kantian theory is often invoked in debates about international human rights, but rarely systematically and with attention to the connection between principles and institutions such as courts. Participants are encouraged to explore how human rights should be understood in a Kantian perspective, and what the implications are for the legitimacy of the emerging international human rights regime.

Workshop program
- Katrin Flikschuh (LSE): ‘Universal Human Rights and Selective Enforcement: some Kantian Reservations’
- Peter Niesen (Darmstadt): ‘Border-crossing Speech as a Human Right: a Kantian Perspective’
- Thomas Pogge (Yale): ‘Kantian Theory and International Human Rights Courts’
- Howard Williams (Aberystwyth): ‘Kantian Underpinnings for a Theory of Multirights’

Graduate conference
A graduate conference on Kantian philosophy and human rights jurisprudence will take place on August 28. Abstracts of less than 200 words may be submitted by May 18 to Jacob Lautrup Kristensen at j.b.l.kristensen@ifikk.uio.no.

Organizers
Norwegian Kant Society, http://tinyurl.com/c7g5q42
Norwegian Association for Legal Philosophy: http://tinyurl.com/c73zdnl

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