

Among the themes tackled at the symposium there was one that gained special prominence, namely the sociological study of contemporary ethics, given that different papers presented and discussed current sociological theories and empirical sociological work about practical ethical issues. This theme revolved in particular around the foundations of ethical values in today's societies and focused upon some developments in Scandinavia, such as the Protestant ethics of the environment and the ethical challenges arising from ongoing scientific research.

Another important issue debated at the symposium was the foundation of the ethics of capitalism, in particular in relation to the current crisis of the global capitalist system. In this context we discussed the relation between ethics and economics and the possibility of developing an ethics of the common good in the capitalist system.

Further, the symposium included different papers on democracy and ethics within the context of critical political philosophy. This also extended to the debate about the relation between ethics, law and democracy, conceived from the perspective of different influential social and political philosophers.

Concerning the Arctic theme, the discussion focussed upon select aspects of the many environmental, ethical, political and legal issues facing the Arctic region today. We had in particular a discussion of the new Icelandic constitution and the challenges that Iceland faces as a member of the Arctic community.

In this special issue we have collected some of the papers from this wonderful meeting, which benefitted from intense and thought-provoking discussions. We hope that the reader will be able to feel the same enthusiasm as the participants did during the two days of presentations and discussions.

A note on the papers from the winter symposium of the Nordic  
Summer University held in Akureyri, Iceland, March, 1st-3rd 2013 | 2

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