

This special issue of *Nordicum-Mediterraneum* contains selected proceedings from the meetings of two Nordic Summer University (NSU) research circles: *Crisis and Crisis Scenarios: Normativity, Possibilities and Dilemmas* and *Human Rights and International Relations*.

The program of the research circle *Crisis and Crisis Scenarios: Normativity, Possibilities and Dilemmas* runs from 2014 to 2016 and examines the concept of crisis as it is used today in academia and public discussion. In the current global society, the general situation is considered by many intellectuals, politicians and citizens as a simultaneous aggravation of the financial, political, cultural and environmental elements of the ongoing crisis at the local, regional, national and international levels. On the other hand, hope has also been expressed for the emergence of a new social, cultural and political order based on a genuine possibility for emancipation and dialogue about world problems in the international community. The crisis research circle examines the paradoxes related to the general situation and the tensions leading to, on the one hand, increased problems vis-à-vis economic, social and environmental world justice and, on the other hand, to the growing presence of voices and signs suggesting a paradigmatic shift towards sound politics and good governance. On the basis of some possible explanations of the causes of the crisis, the research group will discuss some of its most urgent dilemmas.

The program of the research circle, *Human Rights and International Relations*, runs from 2015 to 2017. This circle explores how human rights militancy and more generally the protection of human rights are affected by the international human rights regime and the way this regime enters state relations, and it also examines how the international human rights regime modifies the relations between states and how this is explained in international relations theory. The contributions from this circle concern the history of human rights. The last decades have seen a growing literature on this subject. This is partly due to the 50th and 60th anniversaries of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1998 and 2008, but it also expresses a growing interest in trying to understand the international human rights regime. This regime has become much more important, intermingling with all sorts of political questions, and it has as such also become much more controversial. For this reason, there is an urgent interest in understanding the regime of human rights.

The following papers were presented at the two research meetings:

Esther Oluffa Pedersen

*Arguments for the Normative Validity of Human Rights.*

*Philosophical Predecessors and Contemporary Criticisms of the 1789 French Declaration of Human and Civic Rights.*

This paper highlights clashes between different conceptions of right, law and justice crystalizing in the French Declaration of Human and Civic Rights from 1789 and the criticisms it aroused. Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651) and Rousseau's *Contrat Sociale* (1762) are discussed as important predecessors. The philosophical conceptions of law, justice and right stated by Hobbes and Rousseau and in the Declaration will be discussed in connection with two seminal criticisms. By excluding women from politics, Olympe de Gouge objected, the Declaration contradicted the universal understanding of human rights. Jeremy Bentham protested against the Declaration's core idea of inalienable human rights.

Eyassu Gayim

*The Discourse on Human Rights and the International Regime of Human Rights*

The international regime of human rights governs the kinds of freedoms, liberties, benefits and protection which human beings are entitled to, what kind of obligations we have in this connection and what the roles of states have in recognizing and protecting these rights. Yet, the sources, foundation and justifications for these rights and who we are by nature to deserve some rights has been contentious over the centuries, not least because we live in social context, which requires balancing rights by meeting the broader community interests: political order, stability, and satisfying the general welfare. This paper re-visits the major contentious positions in the discourse on human rights for purposes of explaining how the international community has navigated when shaping the contours of the international regime of human rights. Has this regime endorsed, rejected or avoided some of these positions? Does it follow a clear political ideology?

Giorgio Baruchello

*The Economic Ethics of Arthur Fridolin Utz*

The present essay offers a detailed, reasoned synopsis and a brief discussion of the 1994 book *Economic Ethics*, written by the German-Swiss social philosopher Arthur Fridolin Utz (1908-2001). Utz is known chiefly in German-speaking theological circles and in Catholic ones in particular. He is also known in those of southern Europe where, to date, only a few of his many books have been translated into Spanish, French and Italian. Utz's research deserves attention, both for its inherent value and in connection with Peter Koslowski's reflections on economic ethics, about which Jacob Dahl Rendtorff has recently reported to our NSU research group. Thus, this essay is a spin-off of Jacob's own foray into economic ethics and an integration of the same, for it deals with a different, well-established approach. Equally, it is an attempt at bringing to the attention of Nordic scholars, especially in the human and social sciences, the work of a thinker that is still hardly known in my adoptive country, Iceland, as well as in Scandinavia. Finally, given the absence of English-language translations and comprehensive studies of Utz's books, it is also a useful reference work for Anglophone academia at large.

Kristian Alm and Jacob Dahl Rendtorff

*Whistleblowing as employee's freedom of speech - Günther Wallraff's authorship as an illustrative case*

In this paper, we use Günther Wallraff's authorship as an illustrative case in order to discuss whistleblowing understood as employees' freedom of speech. We define the phenomenon according to significant democratic values; the public, fallible search for a deeper truth. When it comes to the sources, our point of departure is based on several of the most significant books published by Wallraff during a period from the end of the 1960-ties to the end of the 1980-ties. We trace some of the personal motivation behind his whistleblowing-project in Marxism and focus that he applies the undercover methods of journalism on the profession of journalists themselves. We argue that the Wallraff-case deals with three important issues; 1) investigative journalism linked to the discussion of the legitimacy of lying, 2) freedom of speech as an active choice of publically disclosing

unethical behavior and different types of repression in organizations, and 3) Wallraff's whistle-blowing in organizations as related to analogues modern types of freedom of speech. In the end, we use different social theories to explain why the type of whistleblowing Wallraff is famous for was necessary.

Mogens Chrom Jacobsen

*Human Rights. The question of origins*

The article outlines two traditions of philosophical thought proposing each their understanding of human rights. The significance of these two traditions goes beyond the question of rights and touches on the role of morality in human life. One tradition considers that humans have limited social obligations towards each other in order to ensure peaceful co-existence, while the other tradition considers moral perfection an essential aim of social life, thus enabling man to realize its humanity. This outline is attended by a critique of Samuel Moyn's book *The Last Utopia*. Finally, the article proposes a third conception based on autonomy.

Peter Aagaard

*The Fourth Age of Political Communication: Democratic decay or the rise of phronetic political communication?*

The 'fourth age' of political communication is emerging. In the fourth age the logics of media and digitization shapes the public sphere, because algorithms and polarized drama increasingly determine what we become aware of in digital and mass media. The result may very well be a less informed public sphere. The emerging class of policy professionals has the opportunity to mix the logics of mediatization and digitization. While such a mix may very well lead to democratic decay, based on elitism, it may also hold fruitful potentials for a more democratic and ethical type of political communication, called phronetic political communication.

Øjvind Larsen

*From Piketty's Capital to Marx's das Kapital*

Thomas Piketty's book *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* has created a very new platform for a discussion of the global economy. There is possibly no other book on economy which has been published in so many languages, printed in so many copies, and has found its way to such a varied global public. Piketty's *Capital* has been discussed in many high ranked academic journals, and at the same time, it has come out to a broader audience with advertisements in places like the underground public transportation in metropolises around the world. The title of the book is also very ambitious in so far as the title *Capital* claims to be a follow up of Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* for the twenty-first century. Piketty is similar to Marx in his ambition to give a large historical, or a world historical perspective on the significance of capitalist economy for the development of global society. Given this background it could be interesting to consider the relations between Piketty's *Capital* and Marx's *Das Kapital*.