



FATİH ÜNİVERSİTESİ
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International Conference at Fatih University, Istanbul

**PLURALISM AND CONFLICT: DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE BEYOND
RAWLS AND CONSENSUS**

June 6–8 2013

Convenors: Prof. Dr. Manuel Andreas Knoll (mknoll@fatih.edu.tr), Nurdane Şimşek, M.A. (nsimsek@fatih.edu.tr), Department of Philosophy, Fatih University

Call for Abstracts

Over 40 years have passed since John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* was published in 1971. During this period "social and political justice" became the most discussed topic in political theory and political philosophy. Following Rawls, the prevailing thought aims at some form of consensus about justice. Rawls conceives of this as a consensus about an initial choice situation for principles of justice, as a rational consensus about which principles to choose, or as an "overlapping consensus", which a pluralist society should reach with regard to the political conception of justice he proposes. Even Michael Walzer, who has a far more pluralist theory than Rawls, hopes that his approach is able to establish a consensus on the standards and criteria, according to which different social goods should be distributed in different spheres of justice.

The idea of a consensus on justice was questionable from the beginning. For some theorists this was made evident through Robert Nozick's strong disagreement with Rawls's fundamental moral intuition that the inequalities of natural endowments are undeserved and call for social redress or compensation. Likewise, Rawls's idea that individuals are equal as moral persons does not allow for a consensus. Going back to Aristotle, John Kekes argued that people who habitually harm others have a lower moral worth than people who habitually



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do good. In this case, isn't Rawls's rationalist creed that all persons should be convinced by the same arguments, and must therefore reach a rational consensus on principles of justice, highly questionable? In her systematic study of justice Dagmar Herwig showed, as early as 1984, that throughout the history of political philosophy there are irreconcilable conceptions of social and political justice. While egalitarians hold it is just to establish arithmetic, numeric or simple equality, non-egalitarians like Plato, Aristotle or Nietzsche conceive of a just distribution of goods as a distribution in proportion to existing inequalities. For non-egalitarians, it is just to allot equal shares only to equals, not to everyone.

The conference takes as its point of departure the well-researched conviction that there are fundamental disagreements about social and political justice. On the one hand, the conference strives for a more detailed comprehension of the various aspects of the irreconcilable pluralism of conceptions of justice. On the other hand, it investigates the reasons for the fundamental opposition of existing moral intuitions and conceptions of justice. Are these reasons social, cultural, psychological, historical, or even biological? One main focus of the conference will be the relation between conceptions of justice and images of humanity. Do the opposing conceptions of justice derive mainly from opposing anthropological convictions about the equality, or inequality, of men? Do the different understandings of human worth, or value, provide a key to comprehending the fundamental disagreements about social and political justice? In addressing these questions, the conference aims at a more adequate understanding of the concept of justice and the human sense of justice, which can be achieved beyond the idea of the consensus.

Abstracts of no more than **one page** for talks and suggestions for **panels** should be sent to both convenors by **March 1, 2013**. Decisions will be made within two or three weeks. The length of the talks will depend on how many proposals are accepted, but will be at least 25 minutes. The registration fee of 100 USD covers three lunches and the final conference dinner on a boat on the Bosphorus. For students who want to participate in the conference the registration fee is reduced to \$ 50.



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CONFIRMED INVITED SPEAKERS: Professor Renato Cristi (Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada), Professor Giovanni Giorgini (Bologna University, Italy), Louis I. Jaffe Professor Lawrence Hatab (Old Dominion University, Norfolk, USA), Professor Michael Haus (Heidelberg University, Germany), Professor Christoph Horn (Bonn University, Germany), Professor Peter Koller (Graz University, Austria), Professor Angelika Krebs (Basel University, Switzerland), Professor Lukas Meyer (Graz University, Austria), Professor John Skorupski (University of St Andrews, Scotland), Assist. Prof. Barry Stocker (Istanbul Technical University), Professor Harun Tepe (Hacettepe University, Ankara), Professor John Tomasi (Brown University, Providence, USA), Doc. Dr. Gülriz Uygur (Ankara University), Professor Jonathan Wolff (University College London)