The 9th International Roundtable for Semiotics of Law (IRSL 2010)
3-6 September 2010 - Poznań

LEGAL RULES, MORAL NORMS
AND DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES

Conveners:
Adam Mickiewicz University Poznań, University of Łódź, Poznańskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk

Conference Venue:
Department of Philosophy, Adam Mickiewicz University & PTPN, Poznań

Honorary Chairmen:

Prof. Tadeusz Buksiński
Director of Department of Philosophy
Adam Mickiewicz University Poznań

Prof. Marek Zirk-Sadowski
Chairman of the Department Theory and Philosophy of Law at the University of Łódź
Vice – president of the International Association for Legal and Social Philosophy (IVR)
Vice-president of the Polish Supreme Administrative Court

Organizing Committee:

Dr Karolina M. Cern
Poznań

Dr Piotr W. Juchacz
Poznań

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CALL FOR PAPERS

We live in the world of rapid global changes, nonetheless, we try to manage the solid universal development. There are many differing factors aiming at the most exact and fruitful description of the world in change. Among them we can distinguish a specific world-wide tendency for democratization of our lives in social, individual and political dimensions. As some point out, there are just a few political orders that would not claim themselves democratic ones.

Though, this peculiar global trend gives rise to doubts as well as problems, the most profound seems to concern the question whether the “democratic turn” is a real or just a virtue one. Democracy generally means the governance by people – but who are the people? What kind of governance by people can be claimed democratic – everyone or only a chosen one?

What – if any – is the normative issue of such a governance? Democracy, after all, is not a simple descriptive model of governance; it is deeply rooted in our preferences and hence normative patterns of conduct which are not yet to be understood as the norm but rather as founding principles. Democracy is a thoroughly normative model. It is always as constructed and uttered in the picture of life at the same time.

Does it mean that democracy, as a normative project, can fit only a part of our world and can not fit the other part believing in different gods, philosophies or systems of values? Or maybe democratic principles are to be understood from a secular-rational value perspective (postweberian values) as formal frames that give people real possibility to fill it with theirs convictions of the preferred norms that should be obeyed in the name of equality and freedom. But does it not presume a special civil engagement and a strong civil participation? Further, does it not entail self-expression built on a strong feeling of a self-direction? All of it utters posttraditional values which are not yet dominant throughout the world. For this reason a question is raised, what, if any, is the legal issue of democratic political order. Are - following Sir Neil MacCormick - normative order, institutional normative order and institutional order three different ones or cross themselves somewhere or do they even have the same issue that keeps dividing itself into different orders?

Should be morally impartial legal rules the great if not the only support for peace in a pluralistic world? But then, altering Ronald Dworkin’s question, we can ask how is – if it is at all - democracy possible here?
The 9th International Roundtable for the Semiotics of Law invites all interested in problems concerning Legal Rules, Moral Norms and Democratic Principles to take part in our meeting in Poznań (Poland). The perspective of considerations – whether it is purely semiotic, legal, philosophical, sociological, cultural, sociolinguistic etc. – is free to be chosen by each participant.

We invite everyone who would be interested to participate in The 9th International Roundtable for the Semiotics of Law to send us an application till the 1st of May 2010. It should be prepared in either English or French (max 300 words) and sent by e-mail to bartwoj@op.pl; karolinacern@yahoo.com; juchaczp@amu.edu.pl and to Anne Wagner at valwagnerfr@yahoo.com.

Selected papers will be published in a special annual issue of the International Journal for the Semiotics of Law (http://www.springer.com/).