



Babylon Teach-in

“Who’s interested in ...?”:

18 June 2014,
11:00-13:00, room DZ 005

Who’s interested in ... *20th century concepts of freedom?*

Drawing on the liberal Enlightenment, the 20th century saw a battle of different concepts of freedom, with two clearly opposed camps. One, liberal and later neoliberal, emphasized what Isiah Berlin would call “negative freedom” (not being inhibited by others) and another, socialist and communist one of “positive freedom” (the freedom to do certain things). In this talk, the deeper foundations of this distinction will be sketched, highlighting the very different views of man underlying both types of freedom, the abominable abuses of freedom in the name of both and the way in which this distinction bears empirical weaknesses. In view of the latter and drawing on Amartya Sen, another more complex kind of freedom will be proposed, developing in a more nuanced notion of private vs public space.