

**Three Lectures on**  
**Reconsidering the State in the New**  
**Global Order**



**Tilburg, 02.06.2008 - 04.06.2008**

## Synopsis

In recent decades political and economic interconnectedness has increased enormously, and philosophical inquiries about the state have not remained unaffected by these developments. Traditionally, the most pressing philosophical question about the state was how to justify its imposition vis-a-vis the anarchist. But increasing interconnectedness triggers its own questions about the state. In particular we must ask now whether we should really think of fellow citizens as being connected to each other in normatively relevant ways, and we must wonder whether there ought to be states in the first place and how their powers ought to be limited. These three lectures explore aspects of these questions. The talks are connected, but are also meant to be respectively intelligible on their own.

**Organizers:** Paul Cobben (Tilburg University), Stephan Hartmann (Tilburg University)

**Invited Speaker:** Mathias Rissew, Harvard University

## Mathias Risse

Mathias Risse is Associate Professor of Public Policy and Philosophy. He works mostly in social and political philosophy and in ethics. His primary research areas are contemporary political philosophy (in particular questions of international justice, distributive justice, and property) and decision theory (in particular, rationality and fairness in group decision making, an area sometimes called analytical social philosophy.) His articles have appeared in journals such as *Ethics*; *Philosophy and Public Affairs*; *Nous*; the *Journal of Political Philosophy*; and *Social Choice and Welfare*. Risse studied philosophy, mathematics, and mathematical economics at the University of Bielefeld, the University of Pittsburgh, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and Princeton University. He received his BA, BS and MS in mathematics from Bielefeld, and his MA and PhD in philosophy from Princeton. Before coming to Harvard he taught in the Department of Philosophy and the Program in Ethics, Politics and Economics at Yale.

## Program

**Monday, 2 June 2008, 16.00-17.30**

*Lecture I: 'Imagine There's No Countries' ? A Response to John Lennon.*

This talk explores the question of what is normatively peculiar about that state; that is, it asks whether special obligations hold among citizens that do not hold among people who do not share a state. The talk offers an affirmative answer that does not enlist any appeal to nationalism. We will also explore the question of whether there ought to be states in the first place and assess what one can sensibly say about that question.

Background reading: **M. Risse, What to Say about the State.**

This lecture is also part of the Philosophy Department's Colloquium Series.

**Tuesday, 3 June 2008, 16.00-17.30**

*Lecture II: A New Theory of Human Rights.*

The idea of human rights has become ever more important in recent decades as a device to restrict the scope of state power. But the foundations of human rights remain disputed. This talk proposes new foundations for human rights. Among other things, these foundations make explicit use of the increasing political and economic interconnectedness that has given rise to a structure that is often called the "global political and economic order." Human rights, on this account, are understood as membership rights in that order.

Commentator: Professor Paul Cobben

**Wednesday, 4 June 2008, 16.00-17.30**

*Lecture III: How does the Global Order Harm the Poor?*

There has been much discussion recently about whether the global political and economic order as such harming the global poor. This theme has been particularly prominent in the work of Thomas Pogge and has exerted a great influence over many political philosophers. This talk develops a critical stance on his view that the global order does indeed massively harm the poor. We will ask how exactly the global order harms the poor, and will find some of Pogge's main arguments in this area wanting.

Commentator: TBA

This lecture is based on two published papers:

1. M. Risse, *How Does the Global Order Harm the Poor?*, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 2005, 33(4).
2. M. Risse, *Do We Owe the Poor Assistance or Rectification?*, *Ethics and International Affairs*, 2005, 19(1).