

ETHOS Newsletter

ETHOS Project
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ETHOS

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1. What is ETHOS?
2. Third Annual ETHOS Conference in Graz, Austria
3. Project outputs
4. Reflections

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1. What is ETHOS?

ETHOS is a multi-disciplinary research project funded by the European Commission under the Horizon2020 programme. The ETHOS project seeks to provide building blocks for the development of an empirically informed European theory of justice and fairness. In the project, we strive to refine and deepen our understanding of justice, in order to answer questions about: What is 'justice'? How is justice understood and experienced? Who is entitled to justice? Who is responsible for securing justice?

The project will inform a wide range of stakeholders about different understandings and experiences of justice with a view to supporting attempts to reverse inequalities and to promote justice.

Six institutes work together on "themes" (or thematic focal points). ETHOS is coordinated by the Utrecht University (the Netherlands) and has partners in Austria (European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, Graz), Hungary (Central European University, Budapest), Portugal (Centre for Social Studies, Coimbra), Turkey (Boğaziçi University, Istanbul) and the UK (University of Bristol).

ETHOS is a 3-year research project which started in January 2017 combining the disciplines of philosophy, social policy, sociology, law, economy, and political science.

2. Third Annual ETHOS Conference in Graz, Austria

On 14-15 November 2019, the ETHOS Consortium met for its final conference in Graz, Austria. The final conference was at the same time a stakeholder conference, serving the purpose to disseminate project results among a broad group of stakeholders and to engage in valuable discussion and exchange.

The first day of the meeting saw the project Consortium, including researchers from the six partner countries and two Advisory Board members, met at the Karl-Franzens University of Graz to share and debate final insights. They discussed three integrated papers on the European theory of justice and fairness. The first paper concludes that this European theory would be a non-ideal theory not defining an end state or utopia. The European theory on justice and fairness aims to understand partly agreements, misbehaviour and contexts of injustice and unfairness. It points at a trade-off between recognition, redistribution and representation for various groups and individuals; there is no definite concept of justice that fits all who deserve justice.

The second paper looks for mechanisms defined as governmental and (social) institutionalized entities and their activities. It concludes that high level cognitive justice principles exist at the highest (supranational/EU) level but that these have limited value at the lower governmental levels and in social institutions due to minimalized redistributive justice principles and inadequate representative justice principles. Activities that limit justice and fairness are differentiation by categorization and prioritizing desert above rights.

The third paper focusses on boundary lines among and within nation states; It concludes that exclusion from justice by political communities works along the lines of territorial affectedness, sedentariness and ethnic belonging. However, formal belonging is not sufficient due to boundary lines drawn in the context of austerity. Social closure, reciprocity claims and categorization along lines of age, able-bodiedness, ethnicity and gender pertain misdistribution, misrecognition and misrepresentation.

The objective of the second day of the conference was to engage a variety of stakeholders in discussion about justice in Europe. To this end, the Consortium invited guests from academia, media, policy, civil society and the general public to engage in a lively and open dialogue and fruitful exchange.

The setting was the Austrian Broadcasting Studio (*ORF Landesstudio Steiermark*), where the second day was festively opened by a press conference, which was attended by journalists from the six countries of the Consortium. In addition, there was an exhibition of findings from the Landscapes of Justice app, as well as the possibility to play an abbreviated version to discuss the live findings during the discussion. The Landscapes of Justice web app was an integral part of the overall communication strategy and served showcase how the public perceives their justice situation, thereby engaging people in 'thinking justice' regarding housing, health, political participation and representation, freedom of expression and sexual orientation.

Following a networking session to allow stakeholders to engage in dialogue with each other, the discussion itself was opened by an inspiring lecture on the investigative media project 'Lost in Europe', that tackles the issue of 10.000 migrant children lost throughout Europe.

The main event, the open discussion, saw over 80 people engage with each other on justice in Europe, speaking about topics like housing, health, the welfare state, participatory democracy, capitalism, and perspectives for the future. One of the vital discussion points was the embeddedness of justice concerns into broader political and economic dynamics and the emerging need and capacity for change-making. There was an overall sentiment of change-making and optimism in the room, with participants agreeing that public and ongoing deliberation is crucial to highlighting the responsibility of political actors and the importance of accountability in the political process. As such, participants from various sectors agreed that increased awareness and engagement for justice as a topic that concerns everyone in all spheres of life, is crucial to bringing justice (back) to the people. In order to foster change in the interest of justice, the topics of human dignity and societal solidarity must be put back into people's individual awareness. New and innovative forms of thought, decision-making, collaboration and debate can help strengthen justice claims to work against prevailing problems like distrust in the political systems, social injustice, legal questions, the responsibilities of Europe and national institutions within it.

There were guests from media and policy from all over Europe, including young media makers and senior policy officials. Everyone in the auditorium was able to join the discussion circle, which constantly rotated speakers. Live translation was provided (German-English-German) and a live protocol was written for everyone to see. A band of young asylum seekers carried the discussion musically.

The final ETHOS conference was a worthy ending to three years of intensive cooperation across six countries. Not only was it an unconventional event in terms of setting and framing - it was also possible to disseminate project findings and to truly engage in dialogue with a variety of stakeholders who experience and tackle justice differently.



3. Project outputs

Over the course of the project, there has been a breadth of research conducted across academic disciplines. Below you can find links to all of the papers that have been made public so far. Be sure to check back at www.ethos-europe.eu regularly over the next few weeks to stay updated on very final papers that are yet to be approved.

Work package 2 - Philosophical foundations for a European theory of justice and fairness

- [Report on the European heritage of philosophical theorizing about justice](#) – Simon Rippon, Tom Theuns, Sem de Maagt, Miklos Zala and Bert van den Brink
- [Report on the workshop “Ideal and Non-Ideal Theories of Justice”: Towards a Non-Ideal Theory of Justice in Europe](#) – Bert van den Brink, Simon Rippon, Tom Theuns and Miklos Zala
- [Multidisciplinary Perspective on Justice in Europe](#) – Trudie Knijn, Tom Theuns and Miklos Zala
- [Report on a second workshop on “Justice and Beliefs about Justice in Europe”: Democracy, Stability and Reflective Equilibrium](#) – Sem de Maagt, Simon Rippon, Tom Theuns and Miklos Zala
- [Report on a special issue proposal “Real European Political Philosophy”](#) – Bert van den Brink, Simon Rippon, Tom Theuns and Miklos Zala

Work package 3 - Law as or against justice for all?

- [Report on a theoretical review of the conceptualization and articulation of justice in legal theory](#) – Orsolya Salat
- [Report on Four of Fewer Freedoms: Contested conceptions of justice in Europe between 1941 and 1957](#) - Barbara Oomen and Alexandra Timmer
- [Justice in Europe Institutionalized: Legal Complexity and the Rights of Vulnerable Persons](#) - Marie-Pierre Granger, Barbara Oomen, Orsolya Salat, Tom Theuns & Alexandra Timmer
- [Coming ‘Home’: the right to housing, between redistributive and recognitive justice](#) - Marie-Pierre Granger

- You can find links to six country reports here: <https://ethos-europe.eu/working-papers-country-reports>
- [A comparative report on the legal rules and practices regulating the exercise of the right to vote \(eligibility and representation\) in local, national and EU elections of marginalised groups](#) - Tom Theuns
 - You can find links to six country reports here: <https://ethos-europe.eu/working-papers-country-reports>
- [Comparative report on the right to education: An assessment of the legal framework of six countries from the perspective of recognitive and redistributive justice](#) - Orsolya Salát
 - You can find links to five country reports here: <https://ethos-europe.eu/working-papers-country-reports>

Work package 4 - Political, advocacy, and media discourses of justice and fairness

- [Report on a theoretical review of the conceptualization and articulation of justice in political theory](#) – Ayse Bugra
- [Justice in European Political Discourse – comparative report of six country cases](#) - Dorota Lepianka
- [Discourses on minorities \(and vulnerable groups\) access to education, inclusionary and exclusionary aspects](#) - Ayşe Buğra and Başak Akkan
- [Mapping the construction of justice and justice related tensions in Europe](#) – A comparative report - Dorota Lepianka
- [Historical memory and the practice of commemoration in public space – mapping moral sentiments of opinion leaders](#) - Başak Akkan and Jing Hiah

Work package 5 - Justice as lived experience

- [Report on the conceptualization and articulation of justice: Justice in social theory](#) – Bridget Anderson, Claudia Hartman and Trudie Knijn
- [‘How does it feel to be a problem?’ What we can learn about justice as political representation from empirical case studies](#) - Bridget Anderson and Pier-Luc Dupont
 - You can find links to six country reports here: <https://ethos-europe.eu/working-papers-country-reports>
- [Justice, care and personal assistance](#) - Bridget Anderson
 - You can find links to five country reports here: <https://ethos-europe.eu/working-papers-country-reports>

- [Boundary lines between private and public care; Living independently at home or in a home](#) - Trudie Knijn
- [Just Deserts? Justice, deservingness and social assistance](#) - Bridget Anderson and Pier-Luc Dupont
 - You can find links to six country reports here: <https://ethos-europe.eu/working-papers-country-reports>

Work package 6 - Struggles for justice

- [Report on Economizing Justice](#) – José Castro Caldas
- [Comparative report on the types of distributive claims, interests and capabilities of various groups of the population evoked in the political and economic debates at the EU and at the nation state level](#) - Maria Paula Meneses, Sara Araujo, Silvia Ferreira and Barbara Safradin
- [Impact of the Social and EU Charters in times of crisis](#) - Sybe de Vries and Barbara Safradin
- [The effectiveness of social dialogue as an instrument to promote labour and social justice](#) - Sara Araújo and Maria Paula Meneses
- [Comparative Report on Labour conflicts and access to justice: the impact of alternative dispute resolution](#) - Sara Araujo, Barbara Safradin and Laura Brito

Work package 7 - Towards a European theory of justice

- [Report containing a conceptual framework for integration of findings](#) – Trudie Knijn and Dorota Lepianka
- [Framework paper on the methodological tool for reflecting and reviewing empirical findings of ETHOS](#) – Tom Theuns, Sem de Maagt and Trudie Knijn

Work package 8 - Policy guidance and dissemination

- [Report on the 'European landscapes of Justice' web app](#) - Wanda Tiefenbacher, Barbara Schmiedl and Klaus Starl
- [Media handbook on justice and fairness](#) - Wanda Tiefenbacher and Klaus Starl



4. Reflections

This project has been in inspiring and unique in numerous ways.

ETHOS has been successful in helping to foster understanding for *doing* and *thinking* justice and has provided the groundwork for a more nuanced and informed debate, awareness and knowledge on the topic of justice. Not only that – it has been possible to put justice on the agenda of various stakeholders, to showcase its relevance to daily experiences (and thereby to everyone!) and to highlight the complex and often conflicting nature of it to derive what possibilities exist for combatting injustices.



We would like to thank everyone who has been a part of our three-year project, from partners in research to interviewees, from attentive audiences to helpful reviewers. This project would not have been possible without the cooperation and mutual support of everyone involved. We truly believe to have laid the groundwork for further research and activism and look forward to publishing the book “Justice and vulnerability in Europe; an interdisciplinary approach”, edited by our project leaders Trudie Knijn and Dorota Lepianka, in 2020.