

# Principled Issue Networks and Norm Contestation in the Field of Human Rights

Section S44: Networks and Ordering in (Inter)National Politics

## Panel Chairs:

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## Abstract

Human rights have always been a field of intense contestation and a prime example of the important role of principled issue networks and in international relations. In her now classic text, Kathrin Sikkink (1993) described the emergence of a “principled issue-network” in the field of human rights composed mainly of transnational non-state actors and “driven primarily by shared values or principled ideas”, thus helping to move international relations away from a purely statist perspective.

However, recent scholarship building on those early insights has shown that norm contestation in the field of human rights is becoming increasingly diversified as both progressive and conservative political actors make appeals to human rights universalism and use legal constitutionalism in order to advance their goals. Case studies on education (Mourao Permoser and Stoeckl forthcoming), arms control (Bob 2012), religious freedom (McCrudden 2014), and other areas have shown that the so-called “culture wars” over societal values has now reached the international arena, with conflicting principled advocacy networks competing with each other in international organizations and courts in an effort to (re-)shape the international human rights order. Also in the field of migration we observe intense societal and political mobilization on both sides of the ideological spectrum, from PEGIDA to grassroots migrant solidarity groups, each making their own appeals to particular understandings of fundamental rights and freedoms.

This panel invites papers that address the role of principled issue networks and norm contestation in the field of human rights. It is interested both in progressive and conservative actors and networks, and it particularly invites papers that investigate networks on both sides, examining how conflicts between contradictory sets of values and principles play themselves out in the field of human rights. Papers could address any sub-field of human rights, including but not restricted to issues of legal constitutionalism, education, migration, religious freedom, freedom of speech etc. The panel welcomes submissions from diverse theoretical and methodological backgrounds

To submit a Paper proposal, you need to create a MyECPR account (if you don't already have one) and send the following information to [Julia Mourão Permoser](mailto:julia.mourao-permoser@uibk.ac.at) by **4 February**:

- your name, academic affiliation and email address
- a title for your paper
- an abstract of up to 500 words
- 3-8 keywords