



FRIAS
FREIBURG INSTITUTE
FOR ADVANCED STUDIES
ALBERT-LUDWIGS-
UNIVERSITÄT FREIBURG

International Conference

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg

July 7–9, 2016

Conference Description

Disagreement in ethics is pervasive and persistent, both among laymen and among trained philosophers. People disagree about first-order moral questions as well as about principles ('Should a moral theory be consequentialist or deontological? Particularist or generalist? Intuitionist or inferential?'). What is more, we are in constant need to decide moral issues, many of which are of common interest and in need of regulation.

Let us call disagreements *deep* if there is no further evidence or compelling argument available that could resolve them and if they are not due to misunderstandings. Are moral disagreements deep in this sense? If yes, does that imply that at least one of the opponents is mistaken? Or is there room for *faultless* moral disagreement?

Moral realists, who claim that there are moral facts, should apparently deny the possibility of faultless moral disagreement. This, however, seems implausible—especially in light of standard positions on *peer disagreement* that advise to adopt agnosticism in the case of deep disagreement. So much the worse for moral realism? According to the metaethical *argument from moral disagreement*, the best explanation for persistent moral disagreement is that there are no moral facts to be discovered. The phenomenology of moral discourse, however, casts doubt on this conclusion. The mere fact that we try hard to convince each other in moral disputes calls for an explanation.

Our aims for this conference are to explore

- what makes disagreements about moral matters special;
- how to deal reasonably with persistent disagreements that are in need of political decision or legal regulation;
- the implications that arguments from moral disagreement have for ethical and metaethical theories;
- the connections between the debate on peer disagreement and ethics;
- the connections between the debate on faultless disagreement and ethics; and
- the analogies to discussions in legal philosophy such as the Hart/Dworkin debate.