

The University of Hong Kong



Department of Politics and Public Administration

Presents

Giving Rise to Cost

Relative to a particular harmful situation where a person is under threat of harm, people may *give rise to cost* through their location, movements, or actions, or they may give rise to no cost. When a person gives rise to cost, someone will be harmed or killed as a consequence. Most people in the world do not give rise to cost in this way; and I refer to these people as bystanders. Morality must say something about how this cost should be borne. My proposal is that it would be unreasonable to require the (innocent) person under threat to bear the *full* cost of other people's whereabouts *even* if those who give rise to cost are innocent. When people give rise to cost this should affect their duties to bear cost to help protect those under threat of harm, as well as the permissibility of harming them for the same purpose. This simple idea shows that the doing and allowing distinction is only a sub-distinction within the broader distinction between bystanders and those who give rise to cost; it provides an alternative to the doctrine of double effect; it is an essential part of a solution to the trolley problem; and it provides a justification for why it is permissible to harm innocent threats and aggressors. I will explore some of this in my talk.

Dr. Gerhard Øverland

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Gerhard Øverland is Project Leader at Centre for the Study of Mind in Nature, University of Oslo, and Senior Research Fellow at Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics, Charles Sturt University. His research is in moral philosophy, and in particular issues related to global justice and ethics of war. Øverland has published in journals like *Ethics*, *Journal of Moral Philosophy*, *Law and Philosophy*, and *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*. He is currently heading the research projects 'Responding to Global Poverty: On what the affluent ought to do and what the poor are permitted to do' and 'Who owns it? Land claims in Latin America: their moral legitimacy and implications' at University of Oslo.

Date: December 6, 2012 (Thur)

Time: 4:30 pm

Venue: Room 9.66, The Jockey Club Tower

(Tea & coffee will be served at 4:15 pm)

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