

DO GERM-CELLS OF A GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS CULTURE EXIST?  
A CASE STUDY OF THE INNER LEGAL CULTURE OF THE EUROPEAN COURT  
OF HUMAN RIGHTS

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis is a study of the inner legal culture of the European Human Rights Court. In first instance, the objective of the study is to determine whether the Court has a unique inner legal culture. No study prior to this one has looked into the legal culture of the Court to determine its characteristics. Current literature on the Court is more interested in the rulings or output of the Court without consideration of the traditions, attitudes, habits, and values that are inherent to the output. This study takes into account the historical and institutional background of the Court, and the role of staff, lawyers and judges in the decision-making systems of the Court. This institutional analysis is complemented by a series of interviews with sixteen judges of the Court to improve understanding of the traditions, attitudes, values, and habits that compose the legal culture of the Court.

In second instance, this thesis aims to understand whether it is possible that the court's inner legal culture transcends common barriers between different legal traditions and whether it can be considered supranational in nature.

This thesis concludes that the Court has a unique inner legal culture, and that it is effective in transcending barriers posed by different legal traditions that come together in the Court. This is possible on the basis of shared human rights principles and beliefs, despite its predominant Western origin and ideology. This study contributes to the general understanding of supranational institutions of law and their power to transform both domestic legal systems and other supranational legal institutions.

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