Johannes von Kries’ Conception of Probability, its Roots and Impact
September 13th – 14th, University Club Bonn

Johannes von Kries (1853–1928), philosopher, psychologist and physiologist, was the first to propose (in his “Die Prinzipien der Wahrscheinlichkeitsrechnung” as well as in his “Logik”) a conception of probability that became later known, mostly through the works of Poincaré and Hopf, as the “method of arbitrary functions”. Since then, this approach to probabilities has played a certain role in scientific contexts and philosophical discussions and is nowadays present in different varieties. The aim of the conference is, first, to review von Kries’s original “Spielraumtheorie” in its historical context, second, to discuss related modern developments and their connection to mainstream accounts of probability, and third, to give some applications of those von Kriesian approaches.

Confirmed talks:

Marshall Abrams (University of Alabama at Birmingham): Mechanistic Probability – Implications for a Puzzle about Types and Tokens in Evolution

Claus Beisbart (University of Bern): A Lewisian Guide to the ‘Spielraumtheorie’ – On the Relationship between David Lewis’s Humean Chances and Probabilities according to the ‘Spielraumtheorie’

Bernd Buldt (Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne): Fries, Lotze and von Kries

Guido Fioretti (University of Bologna): Von Kriesian Uncertainty in Economics

Helmut Pulte (University of Bochum): tba

John Roberts (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill): tba

Jacob Rosenthal (University of Bonn): The ‘Spielraumtheorie’ and Related Modern Approaches to Probability

Carsten Seck (University of Bonn): The Early Moritz Schlick and the von Kriesian Heritage

Sandy Zabell (Northwestern University, Chicago): The Principle of Indifference and its Modern Successors

Temilo van Zantwijk (University of Jena): The Distinction between a Spatio-Temporal, a Physical and an Abstract View of the World