

# PPE Society Seventh Annual Meeting 2023

## Event Schedule

**Thu, Nov 02, 2023**

8:00 AM

**Registration Open**

🕒 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Nov 2

**Coffee and Conversation**

🕒 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM, Nov 2

9:00 AM

**Corporate and Consumer Obligations in Non-Ideal Market Conditions**

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 2

📍 Grand Ballroom I

## **Abstracts:**

### **Who are the free sages? A comparative look at quasi-regulation in the market,** Ewan Kingston

Many production processes are unruly. Because of predictable difficulties in bringing about and enforcing effective and efficient regulation, firms can get away with production practices that are less than optimal, or even involve violation of rights. In response to this systematic unruliness, it is natural to want to ask market actors themselves to play some kind of quasi-regulatory role. That is, to take on auxiliary responsibility for this lack of regulation and take (sometimes costly) steps to try to remedy it. In this paper I focus on two dimensions of the variety of market actors – relative normative constraints attached to the actors' roles (i.e. free/bound) and the epistemic standpoint of those roles (i.e. sage/fool). I depart from most theories of quasi-regulation in one main way. I argue that consumers, as free fools, should not try to act as quasi-regulators by selecting or avoiding products, largely due to their poor epistemic standpoint. Instead, the task of selecting and avoiding firms on the basis of their respective ruliness should fall to *free sages* – job takers and leavers and individual investors. *Free fools* and *bound sages* both retain quasi-regulatory roles to play, but these are less direct.

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### **Who is Wronged by Wrongful Exploitation?** Brian Berkey

Most accounts of what makes exploitation impermissible, when it is, seem to imply that it is necessarily a narrowly directed wrong. Specifically, these accounts suggest that only those who are the vulnerable parties to exploitative transactions, and who are taken advantage of by the exploiting parties, can be wronged by the exploiting parties. If this is correct, then while those who are hired to work in exploitative sweatshop jobs are wronged by their employers, those who applied for the jobs but were not hired are not wronged by the employers in virtue of their exploitative labor practices.

There is much that is intuitively appealing about the view that exploitation is necessarily a narrowly directed wrong. And there are certainly some cases of exploitation in which the wrong is indeed narrowly directed. In this paper, however, I argue that there are strong reasons to think that in some cases of wrongful exploitation the wrong is not narrowly directed. Specifically, I claim that reflecting on the broader context within which even many of the paradigm cases of wrongful exploitation discussed in the literature, such as sweatshop labor, occurs suggests that exploitation often wrongs a much broader class of agents than those taken advantage of within a particular transaction.

One important reason to think this is that in typical cases of sweatshop exploitation, those who are hired view themselves as better off than those who applied but were not hired. Much theorizing about the wrong of exploitation focuses only on the features of the exploitative transactions, and neglects the processes by which it is determined who becomes a party to those transactions. But once we focus on the fact that in many cases large numbers of individuals attempted to become parties to the relevant transactions, but were refused, it looks more puzzling to hold that those who were selected are the uniquely wronged parties, especially if they end up better off than those who were refused.

I suggest in cases of this kind we should think that both the parties selected and the parties refused are wronged, and offer an account of the wrong. I note some central differences between my view and views on which the wrong of exploitation is narrowly directed, and highlight what I take to be some important implications of my view, in particular with regard to the remedial duties of parties guilty of wrongful exploitation.

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### **When Proud Boys Come for Fred Perry: Corporate Duty to Counterjack Hatejacking,** Jef Delvaux, co-authored by Kritika Maheshwari

When brands are hatejacked, namely, co-opted and appropriated by extremist groups, they are sometimes required to take firm defensive, corrective, or even preventative measures. In this paper, we discuss the question of what brands ought to do in response to hatejacking. Using the example of a recent case involving the hatejacking of British brand Fred Perry's laurel wreath symbol by an American far-right group, the Proud Boys, we argue that certain counter-measures adopted by brands risk cementing the meaning extremist groups impose onto the brand's symbol, rather than being successful in combatting hatejacking. Brands ought to avoid taking such counter-measures in virtue of the various morally, socially, and epistemically deleterious effects triggered by this reinforcement.

First, we explain that brands are vulnerable targets of a kind of non-linguistic dominating power that extremist groups exercise in declaring new status functions to over-determine the meaning of the brand's symbol.

Next, we discuss how in an effort to reject the declared status function, brands can sometimes contribute to its broader collective acceptance, thereby reinforcing rather breaking away from the unwanted meaning associations.

Finally, we delineate the scope of permissible counter-jacking strategies that brands might employ and argue that certain popular counter-measures like withdrawal of their product from the markets violate, rather than satisfy what we call the corporate duty to counterjack hatejacking.

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### 🚩 Speakers



**Ewan Kingston**

Assistant professor  
Santa Clara University, Leavey School of Business



**Brian Berkey**

Associate Professor  
University of Pennsylvania



**Jef Delvaux**

PhD Candidate  
York University

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### 🚩 Moderator



**Joshua Preiss**

Director of Philosophy, Politics, and Economics  
Minnesota State University

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## Amartya Sen's Contribution(s) to PPE

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 2

📍 Grand Ballroom II

**Panel Discuss...**

### Abstract:

Amartya Sen will turn 90 on November 3, 2023. We deem the overlap of his birthday with this year's PPE conference a welcome coincidence to celebrate the work and legacy of one of the most prolific philosopher-economists of the 20th century. Sen's primary scholarship is associated with economics – as illustrated by his 1998 Nobel Prize. Sen's work in economics ranges from foundations in social choice theory to expansions of the informational base in welfare economics to applied work on poverty, famine, and development. Yet, Sen is an influential philosopher in his own right. His 2009 book, *The Idea of Justice*, is considered by many as one of the most important contemporary contributions to non-ideal theories of justice. Moreover, in his role as public intellectual, Sen has shaped policy discussions in his home country India and on the level of the United Nations. In the context of the latter, Sen's work on the capability approach has led to the Human Development Index (HDI) which has reshaped the way the UN thinks about and measures welfare and human development. It seems fair to say that Amartya Sen is the PPE scholar *par excellence*.

This panel will consist of a moderator and four panelists – two philosophers and two economists – whose work has been influenced by Sen's scholarship. Each one of the panelists will cover a different area of Sen's work. The goal of the moderated discussion is to showcase the depth and breadth of Sen's oeuvre and its significance for the field of PPE.

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### 🚩 Speakers



**Luc Bovens**

Professor  
University of North Carolina



**Sanjay Reddy**

Professor  
The New School



**Adam Oliver**

LSE



**Malte Dold**

Assistant Professor  
Pomona College

Moderator



**Akshath Jitendranath**

Postdoc  
Paris School of Economics

## Money in Modern Philosophy

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 2

📍 Salon Room

### Abstracts:

#### **Smith, Kant, Market, and Mind**, Joe Tinguely

There are specific connections between the social order which Adam Smith attributes to capitalist economies and the mental order which Immanuel Kant ascribes to the mind engaged in aesthetic reflective judgments. This paper argues specifically that central innovations of Kantian aesthetics—purposiveness without a purpose, artistic genius, the free play of the faculties, and the contrapurposeful sublime—are to the philosophy of mind what the “invisible hand” is to capitalist social formation and economic practice. The relevant connection between Kant’s aesthetic psychology and Adam Smith’s capitalist political-economy is that each depends on the claim that order can emerge without an orderer operating according to prior intent, purpose, design, or conscious control. Along with Hume and the central framework of the Scottish Enlightenment more generally, Smith and Kant both seek to explain how order can arise spontaneously; they simply attend to different domains—Smith looking outward to social order and Kant looking inward towards mental order. However, once the logical and metaphysical structure of spontaneous order is seen as the key issue across multiple domains, then Kantian aesthetics and emerging capitalist social formations appear as two sides of the same coin.

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#### **Does Adam Smith have a Theory of Money?** Aaron James

Economics and philosophy tend to assume that Adam Smith offers a theory of money: money is fundamentally a means of exchange needed to reduce the inconveniences of barter. Taken as a theory of money, Smith’s famous money-from-barter parable in Book 1 of *The Wealth of Nations* largely obscures the distinctive service money provides in commercial exchange, as a means of payment or debt-settlement. But instead of reading Smith as proposing a false or misleading answer to the question, “What is money?,” his masterpiece is open to a more charitable reading: he was simply not concerned with the very nature of money in the first place. I suggest this is more consistent with his empiricism and his Book 2 picture of a prospering economy run in large part on bank credit used as a means of payment in circulating promissory notes.

By focusing on “the function of money,” as he called it from the start in Book 1, he set the very nature of money aside. What mattered for Smith was that money does function to ease commerce, smoothing many different “inconveniences,” so that it could serve as “the great wheel of circulation, the great instrument of commerce,” by which the revenue of society is distributed among its members (Bk. 2, ch. II, p. 314, 317). Crucial to his functional-normative picture of money as part of a stable system of credit-money regulation that steadily augments the wealth of nations is: his trust in banker prudence and merchant self-interest; his criticisms of mercantilist policy and special interests; and his skepticism about state credit-money experiments in the South Seas and North America. Silver and gold coin (“specie”) have a role in the story, but as one discipline device available in his day. The very nature of money aside from its “conveniency” was unessential and indeed unimportant. What did matter was his big idea that a free commercial society and largely self-regulating banking practice could be trusted to steadily augment the wealth of nations.

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#### **Adam Müller on Money**, Thimo Heisenberg

The economic thought of the politician and poet Adam Müller (1779-1829) has often been dismissed. Portrayed as heavily reactionary, philosophically unsubstantial, and internally inconsistent, Müller’s views have been rejected by thinkers across the political spectrum (from Karl Marx to Carl Schmitt). But in this paper, I argue that Müller’s economic thought deserves rediscovery. This is because Müller’s economic writings prove surprisingly prescient when it comes to one of their most prominent topics: the issue of money. Anticipating contemporary views long before they received wide-spread recognition, Müller argues that *the essence of money is debt*, and that the earliest human exchanges *relied on credit*, rather than, as many have claimed, on ‘truck and barter’. Indeed, defying many of his own contemporaries, Müller defends paper money and refutes calls for a return to precious metals as only medium of exchange. Müller, hence, despite many shortcomings, deserves to be recognized as an unlikely pioneer in the philosophy of money, whose thought still merits our attention today.

## 📣 Speakers



### Joe Tinguely

Associate Professor of Philosophy  
University of South Dakota



### Aaron James

Professor of Philosophy  
University of California, Irvine



### Thimo Heisenberg

Assistant Professor  
Rice University

## 📣 Moderator



### Nicole Whalen

University of Chicago

## Religion and Liberalism

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 2

📍 Executive Room

*This collection of papers focuses on several overlooked elements of religion and liberalism, including work on Jewish political thought, FA Hayek, and Montesquieu.*

### Abstracts:

#### **Between Covenant and Contract: Recovering Jewish Political Thought from Its Liberal Transformations,** Sarah Greenberg

Early-modern social contract theorists (mis)interpreted the Hebrew Bible by transforming a Jewish notion of covenant into a model of unitary sovereignty. This misinterpretation not only shaped social contract theory, but the ‘Western’ canon’s perspective on Jewish political thought, and is reified in liberalism. Our contemporary conception of authority comes out of this (mis)interpretation. Ultimately asking, what if our political practices were shaped by an alternative conception of authority — “covenantal authority”? And, this challenges the notion that ‘religion’ is the origin of political authority in its familiar, command-obedience form.

This piece develops a genealogy of the term covenant (b’rit in Hebrew), and discusses some of the ways that covenant was interpreted into contract – in religious and political contexts.

Furthermore, I will interrogate the property- and land-related elements of covenant and covenanting, to open up questions about covenant’s transformations over the course of political thought and its resonance for today.

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#### **Montesquieu on Religious Toleration and Regime Type**, Wanning Seah

Montesquieu is a thinker of liberal constitutionalism who has been interpreted as defending a view of political particularism and a more capacious version of liberalism—one where liberty could be consistent with different regime types. In addition, Montesquieu is recognized as a thinker of religious toleration who believed that religion should be tolerated depending on the extent of its political utility. This paper analyzes the normative connection between these two aspects of Montesquieu’s thought. How should we understand Montesquieu’s views on religion in light of his political particularism and argument for regime-plurality? Does *The Spirit of the Laws* provide an account of religious toleration that is sensitive to differences in regime type? Guided by these questions, this paper contends that Montesquieu’s political particularism suggests that religious toleration would ultimately have to take different forms depending on the type of regime. Just as the laws and institutions of a state must suit the specific characteristics of a nation and people, the mode and content of religious toleration should be adapted in accordance with the distinctiveness of a regime.

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🚩 Speakers



**Sarah Greenberg**

Ph.D. Candidate  
Cornell University



**Wanning Seah**

Duke University

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🚩 Moderator



**Laura Siscoe**

PhD Student  
USC

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**Formal Approaches to PPE: Algorithmic Fairness and Nozick's Framework for Utopia**

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 2

📍 Chairman's Room

## **Abstracts:**

### **Algorithms, Incentives, and Democracy, Maggie Penn and John Patty**

Classification algorithms are increasingly used in areas such as housing, credit, and law enforcement in order to make decisions affecting peoples' lives. These algorithms can change individual behavior deliberately (a fraud prediction algorithm deterring fraud) or inadvertently (content sorting algorithms spreading misinformation), and they are increasingly facing public scrutiny and regulation. Some of these regulations, like the elimination of cash bail in some states, have focused on lowering the stakes of certain classifications. In this paper we characterize how optimal classification by an algorithm designer can affect the distribution of behavior in a population—sometimes in surprising ways. We then look at the effect of democratizing the rewards and punishments, or stakes, to algorithmic classification to consider how a society can potentially stem (or facilitate!) predatory classification. Our results speak to questions of algorithmic fairness in settings where behavior and algorithms are interdependent, and where typical measures of fairness focusing on statistical accuracy across groups may not be appropriate.

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### **Algorithmic Fairness with Feedback, John Patty and Elizabeth Penn**

The field of algorithmic fairness has rapidly emerged over the past 15 years as algorithms have become ubiquitous in everyday lives. Algorithmic fairness traditionally considers statistical notions of fairness algorithms might satisfy in decisions based on noisy data. We first show that these are theoretically disconnected from welfare-based notions of fairness. We then discuss two individual welfare-based notions of fairness, envy freeness and equal opportunity, and establish that when individual preferences satisfy group independence they are equivalent to error rate balance in all binary classification problems. Finally, we introduce two more welfare-based notions, prejudice freeness and equal consequences, and show that, when the reviewer's preferences are group blind, these are each equivalent to predictive parity in all binary classification problems.

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### **Nozick's Framework for Utopia: A Formal Model of Nozick's Possible Worlds , Hun Chung and Susumu Cato**

Part III of Robert Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974) consists of a single chapter, Chapter 10, entitled "A Framework for Utopia." The *framework* is a vision of a utopian society; it consists of a collection of fully voluntary self-organized communities or associations "which people can enter if they are admitted, leave if they wish to, shape according to their wishes; a society in which utopian experimentation can be tried, different styles of life can be lived, and alternative visions of the good can be individually or jointly pursued..." (Nozick 1974: 307) "...but where no one can *impose* his own utopian vision upon others." (Nozick 1974: 312) This framework for utopia is based on an abstract model, what Nozick calls "the best of all possible worlds." (Nozick 1974: 297-306) The ultimate aim of the chapter was to demonstrate that the framework for utopia is, after all, equivalent to the minimal state, which was justified in parts I and II of the book. Throughout the chapter, several new concepts are defined (e.g., "association," "east-berlin," "stable worlds/associations," "mutually maximally appreciative group," "design devices," "filter devices," etc.) and several theoretical claims are made (e.g., that stable associations exist; that in each stable association, each person will receive his/her marginal contribution to the association, etc.) Nozick explains that his arguments are "intuitive" and that he "shall offer no formal argument" (Nozick 1974: 302) for these claims. This gives the impression that Nozick has left the task in a rather unfinished form, which in turn invites a more formal treatment of the several definitions and claims that Nozick made throughout the chapter in a rather informal manner. The main aim of this paper is to complement Nozick's original project by providing a rigorous formal model of Nozick's framework for utopia and his notion of the best of all possible worlds. In the paper, we will provide a formal model of Nozick's possible worlds model, formally define Nozick's notion of stable worlds, compare Nozick's notion of stability to other stability notions like core stability and Nash stability, characterize sufficient conditions for the existence of Nozick stable worlds, and examine whether each individual receives their marginal contribution in a stable world as Nozick contends. This is a novel attempt that nobody has done previously.

## Speakers



### Maggie Penn

Professor  
Emory University



### John Patty

Professor of Political Science and Quantitative Theory & Methods  
Emory University



### Hun Chung

Associate Professor, Faculty of Political Science & Economics  
Waseda University



### Susumu Cato

Associate Professor  
University of Tokyo

## Moderator



### Alexander Schaefer

University at Buffalo

## Social Epistemology and Its Limits: Institutional Perspectives

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 2

📍 Imperial Room

### Abstracts:

#### Doubting the Experts, Hrishikesh Joshi

Much ink has recently been spilled on the lack of public trust in experts, especially when it comes to public policy.<sup>(1)</sup> On the face of it such distrust seems irrational, and perhaps even morally blameworthy. This paper argues, to the contrary, that in many relevant cases, doubting the experts is epistemically permissible.<sup>(2)</sup> We can distinguish between two senses of expertise. Call someone a “genuine expert” with respect to some domain if they actually possess a sufficiently high level of knowledge and understanding with respect to that domain. Call someone an “institutionally recognized expert” if they are conferred certain types of social recognition and institutional status—for example, doctoral degrees, positions in universities or research centers, and so on. Genuine and institutionally recognized expertise can come apart—imagine a possible world where there are PhDs and research positions in astrology, for example. What such examples bring out is that for institutionally recognized experts to be genuine experts, it has to be the case that the relevant institutions are working well. In particular, individuals within these institutions must not face perverse incentives that might lead their inquiry astray.<sup>(3)</sup> Furthermore, those individuals must also be robustly disposed towards an ethos of following the evidence where it leads, and avoiding trespassing on other epistemic domains. From the perspective of the novice, however, it is reasonable to doubt whether these conditions hold when it comes to many policy relevant domains. First, the recent replication crisis within social psychology, among other fields, suggests that researchers often face non-ideal incentives.<sup>4</sup> Second, in cases where the researcher has values or subscribes to an ideology that the novice does not share, the latter may reasonably doubt whether the evidential standards or methods of inquiry used by that researcher produce evidence that is representative or useful to the novice (Lepoutre 2020). Now even if a genuine expert in the area would be able to wade through the literature to determine what sorts of work are unlikely to be replicable, say, a novice is not going to be in that position.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, novices might notice that experts sometimes epistemically trespass (Ballantyne 2019a; 2019b) on other domains. In addition, they may implicitly make value judgments that the novice may not share. Thus, consider an economist who claims that imposing tariffs on a particular good would decrease Americans’ welfare.<sup>6</sup> While the economist may be an expert when it comes to predicting consumer surplus or job gains, say, she is plausibly not an expert when it comes to weighing the normative import of job gains versus consumer surplus. What makes things harder is that even in non-normative domains, the novice will be unaware of how research subfields are properly individuated, and so she will often not be in a position to know whether a putative expert is trespassing.

All of this is consistent with a novice having higher credence in the domain-specific claims of institutionally recognized experts as compared to laypeople; nonetheless, it suggests that doubting the experts can often be a rational response.

<sup>1</sup> For a sample, see Levy (2022), Oreskes (2019), and Nichols (2017).

<sup>2</sup> For a useful recent characterization of doubt, see Moon (2018), on whose view, “*S* has some doubt that *p* if and only if *S* believes that  $\sim p$  is possible, and it’s not the case that *S* believes that the possibility that  $\sim p$  is insignificant.”

<sup>3</sup> See Longino (1990) for a classic discussion of how certain institutional structures are required for scientific objectivity.

<sup>4</sup> For a recent survey of issues around the replication crisis and “*p*-hacking,” see Ritchie (2020).



5 Indeed, the know-how required to make such distinctions will often be “esoteric,” in Goldman’s (2001) terminology.

6 For a concrete example, see Cockrell (2018). All of this is consistent with a novice having higher credence in the domain-specific claims of institutionally recognized experts as compared to laypeople; nonetheless, it suggests that doubting the experts can often be a rational response.

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### **Admirably Immoral Inquiry**, Michael Veber

Some allege that it is immoral to engage with arguments for certain “problematic” points of view. This is the most common justification for no platforming at universities. The conventional response from campus free speech advocates is to deny the charge of immorality. This disagreement generates debates over complex empirical and conceptual issues. Is offense a harm? How likely is it that discussion of an immoral idea will cause people to act on it? Is the idea in question really immoral? What if it’s true? And so on. In this paper, I concede that there are immoral ideas and that it is immoral to engage with them. But, I say, we should do it anyway. Full commitment to the epistemic mission of the university entails that some moral concerns must be overridden or ignored. This means any real university will have a good bit of immorality built right in. And that is a key part of the university’s value and importance to society. The argument begins with the oft-repeated notion that the purpose of the university is “to follow the argument where it leads.” On the view advanced by Thomas Kelly, following the argument where it leads amounts to having a disposition to change one’s mind in response to new evidence and arguments. I argue that it also requires a disposition to engage with new evidence in the first place, especially evidence that can undermine our most fundamental beliefs. Using some famous cases from philosophy as examples, I argue that the university’s level of commitment to this epistemic mission is unmatched by other social institutions. The next section of the paper discusses some famous challenges to “the overridingness thesis” in ethics. Against the idea that moral reasons outweigh all other kinds of concerns, Bernard Williams, Susan Wolf, and Michael Slote argue for the existence of (what Slote dubs) “admirable immorality”. The examples they rely on are all susceptible to the same criticism—what’s admirable in these cases is not immoral and what’s immoral is not admirable. Building on recent work in the psychology of humor, I argue that some things are admirable because they are immoral. In these cases, the admirability and the immorality are inseparable. I claim we should view the epistemic commitment of the university in the same way. Serious commitment to inquiry, especially philosophical inquiry, is impossible without breaking moral norms. Rather than shy away from this fact, we should embrace and celebrate it.

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### **A Generality Problem for Epistemic Collectivism**, Gordon Barnes

Recent work in psychology suggests that human reason is not always aimed at truth. Rather, the function of human reason, in an individual, is to secure one’s status in a group. For example, our capacity to give reasons for our beliefs was built for the purpose of persuading other members of the group to believe what we say. That is why we suffer from confirmation bias, and other self-serving biases. These biases actually aid us in the project of persuading others to believe us.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, our beliefs do not always function to provide an accurate map of the world around us. Rather, they often function to signal our group identity, and our commitment to that group.

That is why we are biased toward beliefs that are accepted by our in-group.<sup>2</sup> If this picture of human reason is correct, then it poses a serious skeptical challenge to many of our beliefs. Beliefs that are produced by processes that are not aimed at truth are not, in that respect, likely to be true. Thus, whenever we discover that one of our beliefs was produced in such a way, we have some reason to doubt the truth of that belief. So it would seem.

Enter the epistemic collectivist. The epistemic collectivist contends that the epistemic irrationality of our individual belief-forming processes need not prevent us from acquiring knowledge. If we belong to a group that is collectively reliable at transmitting accurate information, then we can acquire knowledge from our group, even if we acquire it in ways that are irrational. Such is the power of the epistemic collective. Like the Philosopher’s Stone, it turns the base metal of our irrationality into epistemic gold. However, in this paper, I will argue that matters are not so simple, because epistemic collectivism faces an especially difficult version of the Generality Problem. For ease of exposition, I will focus on one recent exposition and defense of epistemic collectivism, which is due to Neil Levy (2020). According to Levy, knowledge is often transmitted from one generation to another through cumulative culture. Moreover, the transmission of knowledge through cumulative culture is achieved in and through cognitive processes like unreflective imitation, which we would normally regard as intellectual vices. According to Levy, these intellectual vices are actually indispensable for the transmission of knowledge through cumulative culture. Nevertheless, the result of this transmission is genuine knowledge. Thus, according to Levy, we get genuine knowledge from intellectual vice. Presumably, the reason that the result constitutes genuine knowledge is that the process is reliable. Otherwise, there is nothing about the case that would recommend this conclusion. Thus, Levy’s view is based on a process reliabilist theory of knowledge. As such, Levy will need his thesis to be consistent with a viable solution to the Generality Problem for reliabilism.

This is the source of the problem for epistemic collectivism. Reliabilism tells us that a belief is justified if it is produced by a reliable cognitive process. However, reliability is a property of process types, not process tokens. Moreover, every process token is a token of many process types. The reliability of these different process types varies widely. Thus, the process reliabilist needs a principled way of determining which of the many process types is relevant to the justification of a given belief.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Levy’s epistemic collectivism requires a solution to the Generality Problem that is consistent with his collectivism. On reflection, it is doubtful that there is any such solution. Suppose that cumulative culture transmits a particular belief to a particular person through a process of unreflective imitation. Then this particular belief was produced by a cognitive process of the type: unreflective imitation. Of course, by hypothesis, the process that produced this particular belief was also a process of the type cumulative culture. Here we have an instance of the Generality Problem – this particular belief was produced by a cognitive process that belongs to two, different types. Moreover, these two process types have different degrees of reliability. Considered in itself, the process type unreflective imitation is not a reliable cognitive process. That is why we take it to be an intellectual vice. By contrast, as Levy has shown, the process type transmission of cumulative culture is a reliable process, at least under the right conditions. Now here is the problem. Levy’s view requires that, between these two process types, it is the process type transmission of

cumulative culture that determines the epistemic status of a particular belief. However, we could just as well say that the relevant process type is unreflective imitation, in which case the resulting belief is not an instance of knowledge. To solve this problem, Levy needs a solution to the generality problem that entails his preferred answer to this question. However, it is doubtful that there is any solution that will serve this purpose. This paper will canvas the available solutions to the Generality problem, and argue that none of the existing solutions to the Generality problem will serve Levy's collectivist purposes. The conclusion is that, thus far, epistemic collectivism has not succeeded in saving human knowledge from our natural cognitive biases.

*1 See Mercier and Sperber (2017).*

*2 See Funkhouser (2017), (2020), and (2021).*

*3 See Conee and Feldman (1998).*

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### 🗣️ Speakers



**Hrishikesh Joshi**

Arizona



**Michael Veber**

Associate Professor  
East Carolina University



**Gordon Barnes**

SUNY Brockport

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### 🗣️ Moderator



**Sam Morkal-Williams**

Bowling Green State University

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## Political Speech and New Communications Technologies

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 2

📍 Cotton Room

### Abstracts:

#### **TikTok's Place in an Open Liberal Democracy**, Derek Anderson

This talk focuses on a recent push within the US government to ban the social media platform TikTok. I will discuss the nature of TikTok and its place in an open liberal democracy, arguing that TikTok constitutes a unique public good that contributes to open democratic discourse and could not be recreated if banned. I also highlight ways in which the mode of restriction proposed in the RESTRICT act, the power it confers to the government to restrict public access to goods such as TikTok, would be highly damaging to democracy in the age of population-evolved massively interactive online communal spaces.

TikTok, like its predecessors Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, is a strange and new kind of entity on the scene of world politics. It is both privately owned and a public good. It is a space of information and disinformation; a means of gathering information; a source of entertainment, news, and propaganda; a place for debate and controversy; a place for art, comedy, and philosophy; a place for teaching and learning; a space of social interactions and relationship building; a space for conducting business and networking; and many other kinds of social interactions and projects that are characteristic of a free and open society. TikTok has 150 million users in the US, which is about 45% of the US population.

I argue that an entity of this kind constitutes a public good within a liberal democratic society, using a catalog of examples in which TikTok facilitates important functions of democratic discourse and embodies the ideals of freedom of expression and the marketplace of ideas while being freely accessible to all. I show how TikTok helps circumvent old power relations that perpetuate epistemic oppression of marginalized groups and facilitates the spread of emancipatory conceptual frameworks, enabling progressive discourse. I also argue that these ideals are consistent with a degree of oversight and government regulation. As with the banking system, the government must strike a balance between regulating and enabling the free organic activity of TikTok.

I then turn to examine the RESTRICT act and the potential harms and injustices that would predictably follow from its implementation. I generalize these observations to any similar government intervention. Drawing on examples from irreversible changes implemented on other social media platforms, I argue that as a population-evolved entity, TikTok once banned cannot plausibly be recreated. Thus, a successful attempt to fully abolish the communal space would permanently destroy it as a public good. Destroying such a public good constitutes a massive incursion against the possibility of democratic discourse. Vesting the government with the unchecked power to abolish such communities with no oversight is an attack on democracy within the 21st century

technosphere. I will also comment on the way in which the RESTRICT act was catalyzed by anti-Chinese political sentiments in the US, and so fits with a pattern of using racist political animosities to curtail democratic freedom within the US.

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### **Digital Amplification and The Right to Reach**, Étienne Brown

Imagine that a mainstream social media platform's recommender system systematically downranks your posts to the extent that only a handful of other users – let us say three – see them appear in their feed. You have been wondering if this was happening for quite some time, but now that the platform has implemented new transparency requirements, you know that it is happening. What is more, your speech is not reduced because the content you post violates public moderation guidelines, but simply because an algorithm predicts that your posts will not be of interest to other users. To generate revenue through targeted advertising, the platform must keep users engaged, but the recommender system estimates that your posts are unfortunately not very engaging.

Do you have any legitimate claim against your speech being systematically reduced? If so, what is the normative basis of this claim?

One reason to consider that you do not have a claim against this algorithmic treatment is that it does not infringe on your right to free speech. As Elon Musk, the CEO of Twitter, has recently tweeted: "Freedom of speech is not the same as freedom of reach" and the right to speak does not come with a right to be heard by many (see also DiResta 2018). When your speech is reduced on a social media platform, you have nonetheless externalized it, and other users can still find it by using the search function. To you, this might be but poor consolation. After all, the main reason you post on social media is not merely to externalize thoughts, but to communicate with others.

In this presentation, I suggest that social media users do have a right to reach. In my view, this right is grounded in the same fundamental interests that count in favor of granting people a right to free speech in the first place: (i) our personal interest in forging appropriate relationships with others (Shiffrin 2014), (ii) our political interest in being subjected only to decisions that we have had a fair opportunity to influence (Dworkin 2011) and (iii) our egalitarian interest not to stand in relationships of inferiority and superiority with others (Kolodny 2014).

After discussing these interests and suggesting that their promotion requires reach as opposed to mere speech (Bonotti and Seglow 2022), I contend that this right is currently infringed upon in the digital public sphere, and that social media platforms can reasonably be burdened with implementing measures which would tamper inequalities of reach (Lazar forthcoming). I then offer a survey of three such measures: (i) amplification floors (Miller 2021), (ii) circuit breakers (Keller 2021) and (iii) what I propose to call "affirmative amplification." I end by discussing predictable objections, including the claims that private social media companies have a stringent proprietary right to exclude speakers from their platform (Cohen & Cohen 2022) and that equalizing reach would hamper social media users' ability to maintain control over what content they are exposed to.

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### **Showing, telling, and expressing: synthetic media in political communication**, Megan Hyska

Generative artificial intelligence has given us synthetic media that are increasingly easy to create, and increasingly hard to distinguish from photographs and videos. These media include static images created through tools like Dall-E, Midjourney, and Stable Diffusion, as well as dynamic "deepfakes" that, while historically less accessible and persuasive, promise only to become higher in quality and more widely used. A common thought has been that, even as these media grant us new powers of visual depiction, they might also roll back some of the affordances associated with older communications technologies like photography and videography. Whereas an existing literature (e.g. Rini 2020, Fallis 2021, Matthews 2023) has been concerned with how these new media might make a difference for would-be knowers—the viewers of photographs and videos—I advance a thesis about how they will make a difference for would-be communicators—those who embed photos and videos in their speech acts. In particular, I am interested in the way that these new media will make a difference for *political* communication—for our ability to communicate the grounds of our political commitments to one another, and so organize the constituencies of collective action.

I claim that the presence of these synthetic media in our information environment reduces our ability to *show* one another things, even as it increases our resources for *telling*. And I argue that this has consequences beyond the disruption of knowledge acquisition; showing is a way that we preserve relational equality through superficial asymmetries in political communication, and thereby express respect for our audiences. If synthetic media reduce our options for showing, they then interfere in the way that we manage our relationships in the context of collective political action. On the other hand, the ability to turn text into vivid images without any particular technical or artistic skill is a massive boon to our ability to tell one another things.

Diminished abilities to show primarily affect our political communication about events that have in fact happened—after all, these are the only things that could ever have been captured by photo or video. On the other hand, the increased ability to tell that I argue comes with synthetic media confers unique benefits on political communication about events that haven't, or haven't yet, happened: they allow us to make legible to one another our erstwhile private imaginings of alternative pasts or possible futures. The communicative effects of synthetic media are then deeply ambivalent, but their net effect is to shift our communicative powers from the actual to the merely possible. The question I raise, therefore, is what this will mean for our politics.

## 🔊 Speakers



### **Derek Anderson**

Senior Lecturer  
Boston University



### **Etienne Brown**

San José State University



### **Megan Hyska**

Northwestern University

## 🔊 Moderator



### **Jenna Donohue**

Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
University of Arkansas

## Exploring Republican and Cosmopolitan Themes in Marx

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 2

📍 River Room I

### **Abstracts:**

#### **Marx's Prudential Republicanism, S.M. Love**

In recent decades, there has been a surge of interest in republicanism. Philosophically, republicans are committed to the absence of domination: republicans are committed to eliminating relationships of subordination, where one party unilaterally makes decisions for another. Republicanism is both a historical tradition, most prominently explicated by Quentin Skinner, and a lively contemporary project, popularized especially by Philip Pettit. This growing interest in republicanism has coincided with a resurgence of interest in Marx's political theory, with Marx being described by many as a republican.

In this talk, I will outline Marx's distinctive republican view. Like other members of the historical republican tradition, Marx was committed to the elimination of relationships of subordination. But Marx's commitment was of a different sort than other historical republicans: while other historical republicans articulated a moral commitment to eliminate these relationships, Marx eschewed moral argumentation and offered instead a prudential justification for this commitment. I will start here by reconstructing a Marxian account of what constitutes domination, distinguishing forms of control that are taken to be problematic from those that are not. From there, I will sketch a Marxian psychological account of why it is prudent for us as human beings to eliminate these relationships of domination.

I will conclude by contrasting Marx's prudential republicanism with Pettit's extremely popular neo-republican view. Unlike Marx, Pettit articulates a moral commitment to eliminate domination. Further, while Pettit purports to offer a nonmoral definition of domination, this account has been widely criticized as relying on moral considerations to identify what constitutes domination. For example, Pettit argues that the detention of criminals and the coercive authority of the state do not constitute domination when they are forced to track the interests of a people as a whole. In contrast, I will argue that Marx offers both a distinctively nonmoral definition of domination and a nonmoral justification for eliminating it. On this Marxian view, all coercive relationships of subordination constitute domination and should be eliminated, including a coercive state. Marx's prudential republicanism thus offers an alternative republican framework for a more thoroughgoing contemporary critique of domination.

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#### **Kant and Marx on Labour and Labour Power, Nicholas Vrousalis**

The generic distinction between free and unfree work maps on to a distinction between merely serving others, on the one hand, and servitude—serving others as their servant—on the other. By definition, servitude is unjust subjection to the choices of others. In the case of work, such subjection entails that others possess unilateral control over your labour capacity in a way that subsumes your agential purposiveness to theirs. This paper argues that Kant's distinction between *opus* and *operam* and Marx's distinction between labour and labour-power presuppose the prior master distinction between service and servitude. Both Kant and Marx, in other words, affirm a domination-based account of unfree work. With the help of examples, I show that their criticism extends beyond slavery and feudalism into patriarchy and capitalism.

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## Assessing Marx's Cosmopolitanism, Jaime Edwards

Marx's call for global proletariat solidarity could be seen as inherently cosmopolitan, embodying a universalistic perspective transcending national boundaries. However, his primary emphasis on class struggle and the absence of clear advocacy for global governance structures complicates the issue. The aim of the present paper is two-fold: first, I will explore the extent to which Marx's ideas were cosmopolitan; second, I will use this exploration to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of both Marx's position and the broader cosmopolitan tradition.

There are three major varieties of cosmopolitanism—moral, economic, and political. Various cosmopolitans may adhere to one or more of these varieties. I will take these in turn, assess Marx's position concerning each, and assess their relative merits.

First, moral cosmopolitans argue that our moral obligations extend universally. They begin by articulating a particular moral theory (as Singer does drawing on utilitarianism, O'Neil does drawing on Kant, and Nussbaum does drawing on Greek and Roman ideas) and then showing how the relevant moral community is international rather than national in scope. I will argue that Marx fits oddly here since his posture is typically one of hostility to moral theorizing. Nevertheless, a thin sense of morality underwrites much of his work, which is cosmopolitan in extension and avoids the philosophical controversies that beset thicker theories.

Second, economic cosmopolitans (e.g., Hayek and Friedman) endorse a unified global economy with free trade and limited political intervention. This cosmopolitanism variant, popular in libertarian circles, is largely rejected by mainstream cosmopolitan philosophers, who believe free-market capitalism is more often a source of international exploitation than shared prosperity. Marx accepts something of both positions. His "historical materialist" stance acknowledges the profound exploitation in free-market capitalism, viewing it as a necessary precursor to achieving the material abundance essential for an exploitation-free future. The plausibility of this position relies on the validity of historical materialism more generally, which I will argue remains untested with respect to two very different yet fundamental objections—one concerning the need for this phase of exploitation to achieve material abundance and the other concerning the possibility of ever achieving by any means a sustainable material abundance.

Finally, political cosmopolitans (e.g., Beitz, Held, and Pogge) argue that the cosmopolitan approach should focus directly on the needs and interests of humans as global citizens rather than addressing them through their affiliation to specific states, and this requires concentrating on creating and fostering just international social institutions. Here, I will argue Marx is deliberately vague, but on grounds we need not accept. On the one hand he can be seen as cosmopolitan with respect to political institutions in his critique of the nationalistic and parochial biases that often shape them. Marx argued for a class-based analysis of society that transcends national boundaries, advocating for the international solidarity of the proletariat, who would ultimately lead an international revolution. What comes next, however, is woefully underspecified, and cosmopolitans, even those sympathetic to Marx, have reason to do better.

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### Speakers



**S.M. Love**

Georgia State University



**Nicholas Vrousalis**

Associate Professor  
Erasmus University Rotterdam / Harvard University



**Jaime Edwards**

Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
St. Norbert College

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### Moderator



**Rafeeq Hasan**

Amherst College

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## Justice in Acquisition and Distribution

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 2

📍 Terrace Room

### Abstracts:

**Redistribution and selfishness**, Harry Lloyd

One of the disadvantages of redistributive taxation is that it reduces people's financial incentives to increase

national wealth by engaging in productive activities. It is natural to suppose that the severity of this disadvantage will be proportional to the socially prevailing level of human selfishness. Suppose that an unselfish and impartially benevolent individual is deciding how hard she should work. Under low income taxes, the impartially benevolent individual would work hard in order to create wealth that she can donate to private charities aiding the poor and needy. And under high income taxes, the impartially benevolent individual will also work hard – this time in order to create wealth that the government can redistribute to the poor and needy. Increasing income taxes apparently reduces people’s willingness to work hard in wealth-creating activities only insofar as people are selfish. Thus, several advocates of redistribution (inter alia G. A. Cohen; Ha-Joon Chang) have argued that this disadvantage of redistribution need not be as severe as the critics often suggest, because human beings need not be so selfish.

My aim in this paper is to argue that even in a society entirely composed of unselfish and impartially benevolent individuals, redistributive taxation would still discourage productive activities which contribute to national wealth. The ‘invisible hand’ argument in favour of capitalism is applicable to unselfish as well as to selfish societies.

The problem with the redistributionists’ argument lies in its assumption that an impartially benevolent individual would be indifferent between (1) government redistribution to the poor and needy and (2) her own private charitable activities. The reason why this assumption fails is that differing individuals have different conceptions of what constitutes benefitting others. For instance, benevolent Mormons might believe that the best way to benefit their fellow citizens is to convert them to Mormonism (after all, this is only way to vouchsafe them blissful eternal life). In a redistributive society with high effective marginal tax rates, benevolent Mormons will choose to perform very little work within the secular economy, because such work will not provide them with many resources that they could spend on converting their fellow citizens, and will mostly subsidise people living non-Mormon lifestyles. Instead, the Mormons will spend most of their time personally preaching Mormonism. By contrast, in a capitalist society with low effective marginal tax rates, benevolent Mormons are likely to work extensively within the secular economy, contributing to national wealth. Performing such work provides the Mormons with resources that they can use to generously fund proselytization efforts.

In other words, capitalism induces the Mormons to benefit their fellow citizens according to those citizens’ *own* conceptions of what is beneficial even though the Mormons disagree with those conceptions, because doing this provides the Mormons with useful resources. Another potential example of this phenomenon is the establishment of Patagonia, Inc. by the environmentalist Yvon Chouinard. In the remainder of the paper, I relate my arguments to G. A. Cohen’s influential ‘camping trip’ argument for socialism in *Why Not Socialism?*.

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#### **Locke and George on Original Acquisition, Paul Forrester**

Nozick showed us, by way of the Wilt Chamberlain problem, that historical principles of distributive justice are incompatible with patterned principles of distributive justice (given that people are free to transact and there is some “natural” inequality in talent or effort). Most philosophers, in response to this argument, favor patterned principles like egalitarianism, prioritarianism or the difference principle. This is a mistake. The mistake is understandable because the historical principles familiar to philosophers—those of Nozick, Locke and the broader liberal tradition—are also badly flawed. My aim is to examine these problems and propose a new theory of historical distributive justice that avoids them

Historical theories of distributive justice have two parts: a theory of justice in acquisition and a theory of justice in transfer. This paper focuses on the former.

The right libertarian view of original acquisition exemplified by Locke and Nozick is far too permissive. It says that we can come to be entitled to the economic value of natural resources, such as land, minerals, water, etc., not just the economic value that we add to natural resources by labor. Locke’s argument that we can come to own the fruits of our labor is sound: we own our labor because we own our own body and mind; as such, taxing or taking the fruits of someone’s labor is impermissible. But Locke’s argument that we can come to own the natural resources that we labor upon is unsound. The thought is that if we “mix” our labor with natural resources, then taxing or taking those resources is analogous to violating self-ownership.

The problem with this argument is that it is easy to analytically separate the value of natural resources *in situ* and the value of improvements placed upon them by labor. Taxing or taking the former is permissible, but taxing or taking the latter is impermissible. What’s more, the Lockean proviso, that there must be enough and as good left for others, cannot be satisfied if we can own natural resources, but it can if we only own the value created by our own labor.

This brings us to Henry George, a prominent figure in the progressive movement at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. George, in his magnum opus *Progress and Poverty*, advocated for public ownership of all natural resources, though secure property rights in other domains. Georgist schemes have been implemented around the world, some with great success. I discuss how a Georgist left-libertarian theory constitutes a substantial improvement on the traditional Lockean theory. Lockean premises concerning self-ownership actually lead to Georgist conclusions.

Once we realize that the principles of just original acquisition are very stringent—and further, how much of the objectionable inequality we encounter in the world today is the result of unjust acquisition—the appeal of patterned principles of justice is undermined.

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#### **Egalitarianism for Us, Something Else for Past Individuals, Marc Hewitt**

Parfit’s Levelling Down Objection to Telic Intrinsic Egalitarianism is well known. In the same lecture that

presented the objection, Parfit raised a less well-known objection, which we might term the Stone Age Gatherer Objection.

According to Telic Intrinsic Egalitarianism (TIE), inequality is bad, at least if those who are worse off are worse off “through no fault or choice of theirs” (1995: 40, n8). Stated this bluntly, inequalities between any people are bad, with no restrictions. In particular, it does not matter when the people involved are alive, nor where they live. And, as Parfit puts it, “on the Telic View, this seems the natural answer. If it is in itself bad if some people are worse off than others, why should it matter where or when these people live?” (1995: 7). In particular, then, to take Parfit’s examples, the view implies that it is bad that we are better off than Inca peasants or Stone Age huntergatherers. Yet, so the objection goes, there is nothing intuitively bad about the fact that Inca peasants were worse off than us.

It seems, from what he says, that Parfit thinks that restricting TIE temporally in any way is ad hoc. And indeed, it seems that there is quite a bit of intuitive appeal to this thought. For many of us, though, TIE also has lots of intuitive appeal.

This should lead us, I think, to question whether it is really clear that there is nothing intuitively bad about the fact that Inca peasants were worse off than us. I think that, for many of us, myself included, the opposite verdict is initially the intuitive one. Nevertheless, it does seem right in light of considering what reasons we would have if the inequality between us and Incas were bad, versus those we would have if the inequality between contemporaries is bad, that the former is not bad, or at least much less clearly so.

This suggests a possible view, Contemporaries-Only Telic Egalitarianism (COTE), which restricts the claim of TIE to contemporaries. This view would avoid the Stone Age Gatherer Objection: we are not their contemporaries.

But can this view be well defended? Isn’t Parfit right that on any telic egalitarian view, it will be ad hoc to restrict the egalitarian claim in any way, including temporally? I think it can, by paying attention to the metaphysical status of past individuals. On presentism, they don’t exist, and so there is no inequality to begin with. On a view where past individuals are abstract entities, or one where they are specifically ontologically on a par with fictional objects, it seems, and I will argue, that inequalities between us and them will not matter, because inequalities between people with our ontological status and abstract or fictional objects do not matter. COTE nevertheless has a significant implication, yielding what looks a bit like a paradox. Even if only inequality between contemporaries is bad, nevertheless inequality between past individuals and us are the sign of something bad.

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#### 🗨️ Speakers



**Harry Lloyd**

Yale University



**Paul Forrester**

Yale



**Marc Hewitt**

PhD student in Philosophy  
Brown University

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#### 🗨️ Moderator



**Armando Perez-Gea**

Fellow to Diversify Teaching and Learning  
Stanford University

## History of PPE

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 2

📍 Tower Room

[Papered Sess...](#)

## **Abstracts:**

### **Politics, More Art than Science: Recovering the Non-Humean James Madison, Aaron Zubia**

What is the theory of human nature that underlies *The Federalist*? Since the mid-twentieth century, scholars have suggested that we consider Madison's reliance on David Hume's philosophy to approach such a question. Adair (1957), for example, famously argued that Madison operated on Humean ideas when constructing his theory of the extended republic. More recently, Frank (2014) has suggested that Madison drew from Hume's theory of the imagination when theorizing about constitutional veneration.

Although Madison did not engage in overt, technical debate about philosophical concepts in *The Federalist*, he did take for granted a certain understanding of "human nature," particularly when using terms such as "reason," "experience," "truth," and "duty." When using these terms, however, Madison, as White (1987) emphasized, did not always write in a Humean mold. In fact, Madison's moral theory is rationalistic. It is distinct from the empiricism that typifies Hume's "new political science."

Recovering the non-Humean Madison allows us to recognize, as I argue in this paper, that *The Federalist* places intellect above imagination and portrays rights and duties as derivative from man's essence. The non-Humean Madison relies less on the management of the passions via institutional design (Zuckert 2020) than on moral development via public deliberation.

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### **A Republic of the Living: The Temporality of Anti-Aristocracy in Revolutionary America, Paul Gutierrez**

Recent years have seen a resurgent interest in the history of oligarchy and "anti-oligarchic" practices in response to economic inequality and political-economic concentration in our time. The growing scholarship around "class-specific institutions" like the "Plebian Tribune" and the longer history of the antimonopoly tradition are emblematic; scholars have focused on spatial solutions like "partitioning" "the people" into "the few" vs. "the many" or "breaking up" monopolies as primary responses to inequality and concentration. This paper intervenes in these literatures by instead focusing on the temporality of oligarchy. It foregrounds, traces, and examines how Revolutionary Americans—particularly Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine—understood, assessed, and addressed the threat of what they called aristocracy as spatio-temporal threats. The commitment to combat inequality and concentration, I argue, also entailed a commitment to ensure a republic of the living; the intergenerational transmission of wealth, property, privileges, and power through legal institutions accordingly remained a primary point of intervention, with responses ranging from the constitutional prohibition of perpetuities to the affirmation that rights of bequest were at best a civil privilege subject to democratic adjustment. As scholars continue exploring ways to combat inequality and concentration in our time, I argue we also should recover this temporal conceptualization and critique of oligarchy.

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### **Gaetano Mosca on Parliamentary Corruption and the Spirit of Technocracy, Peter Giraud**

The Italian political theorist Gaetano Mosca is well known for his concept of the ruling class. While interpreters emphasize that Mosca viewed the ruling class as a trans-historical phenomenon, this paper argues that this concept emerged from Mosca's analysis of nineteenth-century Italian parliamentarism. While Mosca believed parliamentarism could in theory guarantee private liberty, he was convinced that parliamentarism in practice encouraged corruption and undermined liberal freedoms. The central problem with parliamentarism, especially in post-unification Italy, was that it generated a politics based on favoritism and fraud. Since oligarchs and the mafia determined mass voting behavior, ministers had to ingratiate themselves to these "great electors" in order to acquire parliamentary majorities. Once in power, ministers doled out favors: they staffed ministerial agencies with individuals who would bend the law to the electors' will. Electoral corruption, either via vote buying or threats to economic dependents, produced bureaucratic arbitrariness.

Mosca believed that the establishment of a non-democratic second chamber provided the only solution to this problem. Three groups in each province—university graduates, businessmen, and trade unionists—would select the chamber's members. In contrast to democratic elections, individuals would have to establish trust among their peers and demonstrate their moral commitment to service to gain selection. This was not a corporatist scheme of representation because Mosca did not view these groups as representing distinct interests that ought to find expression in the national legislature. Instead, these groups were the vehicles through which a ruling class imbued with "intellectual and technical culture" emerged. The second chamber would represent this unitary culture with equal legislative powers and not merely aim to slow down the corrupt democratic chamber. Mosca was confident that, after a period of contest between the chambers, the technocratic second chamber would demonstrate its independence from oligarchs and superior ability to guarantee liberal freedom.



## 🔊 Speakers



### Aaron Zubia

Assistant Professor of Humanities  
University of Florida



### Paul Gutierrez

Assistant Professor  
Boston University



### Peter Giraud

Student  
Princeton University

## 🔊 Moderator



### Juman Kim

Assistant Professor  
Towson University

10:30 AM

## Break

🕒 10:30 AM - 10:45 AM, Nov 2

10:45 AM

## The Philosophy, Politics, and Economics of Re-Industrialization

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 2

📍 Grand Ballroom I

Panel Discuss...

### Abstract:

This panel discussion will explore moral, political, and economic case for *re-industrialization* and place-based economic development. Political leaders around the world, including Joe Biden and Emmanuel Macron, are calling for a the “return” of domestic manufacturing and a focus on greater productive and energy independence. They invoke the need for industrial policy - including capital ring-fencing and state subsidies - to bolster national and regional development, combat climate change, and counter the use of such policies elsewhere, most notably China. As Macron recently declared “We have to implement this doctrine without delay. We have to take back control of our supply chains, energy and innovation. We need more factories and fewer dependencies. ‘Made in Europe’ should be our motto. We have no choice, as sovereignty is intertwined with the strength of our democracies.”

These trends raise a number of essential, and essentially PPE, questions. Proponents of re-industrialization point to the rising inequalities within most countries as a product of interrelated factors of automation, advances in communication, the *financialization* of the economy, and the rise of global value chains. These factors leave large parts of democratic countries, particularly those most exposed to *China shock* (Autor, Dorn, and Hanson 2021) out of many of the fruits of economic growth. People in these areas are far more likely to experience what Anne Case and Angus Deaton call deaths of despair. Nonetheless, these factors have brought with them a dramatic decline in global poverty, and the rise of a global median class (Milanovic 2016). Do efforts to move manufacturing and employment to wealthier countries, as a result, unjustly re-distribute wealth and opportunity to comparatively wealthy workers and their families?

More generally, in what ways do (or should) philosophical and economic theories of justice, freedom, welfare, and human development incorporate place (such as community, region, nation, or beyond)? For example, when firms utilize GVCs to (ideally) produce the most for the least cost, they also use *global wealth chains* (GWCs) to finance this production, book their profits, and pay taxes. Agents, in effect, choose which set of laws applies to them, in ways that often divorce production and human capital development from paper profits. Does tax evasion or tax avoidance undermine freedom or inclusive prosperity? Should prominent accounts of economic freedom recognize any loss of political accountability or democratic sovereignty?

In addition, proponents of re-industrialization note the steady rise of right and left-wing populism and an astounding decline in support for liberal and democratic institutions (Hopkin 2020, Luce 2017, Blyth and Lonergan 2020). Should philosophers and economists build these and other political concerns into their models? Does a revival of industrial policy threaten to put citizens of free societies on the *road to serfdom* (Hayek 1944)? Finally, in what ways, if any, do these issues illustrate the importance of (public) PPE scholarship?

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🗣️ **Speakers**



**Alan Thomas**  
University of York



**Lee Harris**  
Reporter  
The American Prospect

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🗣️ **Moderator**



**Joshua Preiss**  
Director of Philosophy, Politics, and Economics  
Minnesota State University

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**Pursuing Progress**

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 2

📍 Grand Ballroom II

## **Abstracts:**

**Two Strategies for Pursuing Progress: A Computational Exploration** , Keith Hankins, Ryan Muldoon, and David Wiens

Debates about so-called “ideal theory” raise an important question about the kind of strategy we should adopt for pursuing social and political progress: *Should our practical efforts to improve upon the status quo be oriented toward realizing an ideally just society?* Ideal theory supporters answer “yes”: ideal theories provide a “long-term goal [to] be achieved, or worked toward, usually in gradual steps” (Rawls 1999, 89; also Buchanan 2004, Robeyns 2008, Shelby 2016). Skeptics answer “no”: we can improve upon the status quo without having a picture of the ideal society (e.g., Anderson 2010, Sen 2009, Wiens 2012). We can think of this dispute as being about which of two competing strategies we should adopt for the purpose of pursuing progress: skeptics recommend that we take steps *to increase comparative value*, whereas supporters recommend that we take steps that bring us *closer to realizing the ideal*. Against the former strategy, supporters argue that our efforts to achieve progress are liable to fall short of full justice unless we are guided by a picture of an ideal society (e.g., Simmons 2010, Robeyns 2012). Against the latter strategy, skeptics argue that our epistemic limitations prevent us from forming credible expectations about attributes of distant ideals (e.g., Barrett 2020, Gaus 2016, Gaus and Hankins 2017, Nili 2018).

This debate is at a stalemate: it is hard to see how to get beyond the current state of play without reverting to mere speculative intuitions. This is partly due to the vague specification of the candidate strategies — beyond first impressions, it is hard to see how we might operationalize them for the purpose of assessing their performance. But even if we had more precise operationalizations of these strategies, it is hard to see how we could form credible expectations of their performance using conventional philosophical methods. To overcome this stalemate, we develop a computational model in which agents navigate a space of possibilities in an effort to improve upon their starting point. Given the limitations of existing debates, our model has two virtues (among others besides): it forces us to operationalize the two candidate strategies precisely, and it allows us to use computer simulations to form credible expectations about their respective performance. We introduce several performance measures, which we use to comparatively assess the two strategies. Our preliminary analyses suggest that the two strategies are nearly identical with respect to most dimensions we might use to assess their comparative performance. This suggests a hypothesis for further investigation: Which strategy we choose may not make any practical difference over time.

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**Identity Politics and the Challenge of Scaling Up** , Eduardo Martinez

Identity politics has been both derided and lauded. Some scholars and commentators, who we call identity politics skeptics, raise concerns about the effects of identity politics on democratic citizens and institutions. Skeptics argue that our collective identity attachments (partisan, religious, racial, etc.) hinder citizens’ political reasoning and inhibit collective action to address big and complex challenges.(1) Identity politics optimists, in contrast, highlight how our identity attachments can facilitate democratic accountability and drive productive social change. Optimists argue that identity attachments help citizens navigate complex informational environments and mobilize citizens to take political action, especially among marginalized and alienated constituencies.(2) We defend a qualified optimist position in response to this debate. We propose a particular diagnosis about the effects of identity attachments in contemporary democracies but note that this result is not inevitable. Identity politics can facilitate democratic accountability and promote productive social change, but this depends on citizens’ uptake of civic responsibilities to attend to inter- and intra-group heterogeneity.

Skeptics are right to worry about the role of identity in many contemporary democracies and the impediments it raises to social change to advance shared goals. We argue that these deleterious effects are the result of the pervasiveness of tightly-scripted identities, which restrict how we act, how we think and feel, and who we associate with.(3) Fortunately, the restrictiveness of our identities is not completely fixed — it is up to us, collectively, as democratic citizens. We argue that citizens, in their capacity as constituents, representatives, and contributors to background conditions, have civic responsibilities to identify, amplify, and act according to the heterogeneity present in the identity groups and coalitions to which they belong. If citizens take up these responsibilities, identity scripts will be made more flexible, and better suited to carry out the tasks that optimists have set out for them.

It can be especially difficult, however, to maintain uptake of these responsibilities at the large scales required to influence state- and national-level policy. Organizations and social movements face the challenge of scaling up: given a tendency for more heterogeneity at larger scales, as well as less familiarity with that heterogeneity amongst constituents and representatives, uptake of our civic responsibilities tends to be more difficult to maintain. Using examples from contemporary social movements, we describe three approaches for addressing this challenge: linked struggle, single-issue, and bonds of solidarity. While some debates about these approaches treat them as alternatives, we argue that they are best understood as complementary such that organizations and movements should toggle between them as their circumstances change. We then conclude by identifying some general lessons about how identity-based organizations and movements can best overcome the challenge of scaling to facilitate uptake of our civic responsibilities.

1. E.g., Amy Chua, *Political Tribes: Group Instinct and the Fate of Nations* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2018); Francis Fukuyama, “Against Identity Politics: the New Tribalism and the Crisis of Democracy,” *Foreign Affairs* 97 (2018): 90-115.
2. E.g., Iris Marion Young, *Inclusion and Democracy* (New York: Oxford University, 2000); Maxime Lepoutre, “Democratic Group Cognition,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 48 (2020): 40-78.
3. Building on Kwame Anthony Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

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🗣️ **Speakers**



**Keith Hankins**  
Chapman University



**Ryan Muldoon**  
Associate Professor of Philosophy, Director of PPE  
University at Buffalo



**David Wiens**  
Associate Professor of Political Science; Faculty Affiliate in Philosophy  
University of California, San Diego



**Eduardo Martinez**  
University of Cincinnati

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🗣️ **Moderator**



**Jacob Barrett**  
Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Political Science  
Vanderbilt University

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**Money's Use and Social Form: Essays in Honor of David Dick**

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 2

📍 Salon Room

Memorial

## **Abstracts:**

### **Money and Recognition, Aaron James**

In a 2019 article, David Dick and Sarah Vooyoys offer an insightful reply to the view that money just is whatever happens to perform enough money-like functions in a group, whether or not people take any particular attitudes to it (Smit, Buekens, and Du Plessis 2011, 2014; Guala 2015).

Unless someone accepts an item “for its capacity to be exchanged for other things,” as opposed to its mere “use value” (as a lovely bookmark, home decor, or kindling in a fire), they argue, the item in question is used not as money but as a mere barter object. Thus “money and mental contents will stand or fall together” (2019: 3444). In this discussion I second their point. I suggest their argument for “recognition-dependence” is best understood and appreciated as a point about the implicit agreement required for money to serve its essential function in payment or debt settlement. Without basic “acceptance” of a payment obligation in a population (as when a buyer asks a seller, “What do I owe ya?”), a money-like item is not a bona fide *money*, but something rather different: a means of pacification or force-aversion strategy, akin to giving a thief what he’s after so he’ll fee, or to steering clear of predators. Money, by its very nature, thus depends on our attitudinal “recognition” of it as settling debts.

Guala, F., 2015. “Philosophy of the Social Science: Naturalism and Anti-naturalism.” *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Science*.  
Smit, JP, Buekens F., and Du Plessis, S., 2011. “What is Money? An Alternative to Searle’s Institutional Facts.” *Economics and Philosophy* 27(01), 1-22.  
\_\_\_\_\_, 2014. “Cigarettes, Dollars, and Bitcoins—An Essay on the Ontology of Money.” *Journal of Institutional Economics* 12(2), 324-347.  
Vooyoys, S., and Dick, D., 2019. “Money and Mental Contents.” [Synthese](#) 198(4), 3443-3458.

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### **Debt and the Value of Money in Book I of Plato’s *Republic*, Graham Hubbs**

Plato’s *Republic* opens with a conversation between Socrates and an elderly, wealthy shield-maker named Cephalus. Socrates asks Cephalus about the realities of old age and the benefits of wealth. Commentators have treated Cephalus with varying degrees of sympathy: some (e.g., C.D.C. Reeve) see him as a presentation of naively good character, whereas others (e.g., Julia Annas) read him as shallow and a target for Socratic irony. Here, I will side with the former camp, taking Socrates at his word that we should learn from Cephalus’s experience, particularly regarding the value of money.

Cephalus does not love money for its own sake, nor as status symbol, nor for the material goods it can purchase. According to Cephalus, the value of money is that it keeps one free of debt and, in turn, from the anxiety of being in debt. Cephalus says that those closest to death will be most keenly aware of this value, for they are the most concerned about carrying debts into Hades and then having to pay them in the afterlife. These are remarkably rich claims. First, they are voiced by a character who has money, who knows its value, and who has gained much of his wealth through commercial success. He is perfectly positioned to describe money’s value as Aristotle does, viz., as a convenient medium of exchange, but he instead grounds this value in social relations of debt. Considered within the frame of contemporary debates on the ontology of money, Cephalus’s position is thus closer to that of the chartalists than it is to the orthodox commodity view. Second, Cephalus’s remarks are the starting point of the *Republic*, and they shape the dialectic of the discussion of justice for the next several books. There are interesting parallels between this fact and Nietzsche’s arguments in essay 2 of the *Genealogy of Morals* that the underlying logic of modern morality is the logic of debt. Finally, Cephalus argues that the anxiety of debt is fully felt as one considers taking that debt into Hades, whose name in the original Greek, *ἄιδου*, means “unseen place.” Cephalus is immediately talking about the unseen place that lies on the other side of death, but in his day, the failure to repay one’s debts with money might send one or one’s family to other unseen places: for example, one might be forced to pawn off one’s children as slaves in order to pay a debt. Even as such practices have become less common today, the tie between debt, anxiety, and death remains. Tragically—although, as a number of empirical studies have shown, not uncommonly—these three phenomena knot together in suicide. One of money’s debt-powers is thus to free individuals from anxiety that they might otherwise escape by choosing their own death.

Annas, J. 1981. *An Introduction to Plato’s Republic*. Oxford UP.  
Reeve, C.D.C. 2013. *Blindness and Reorientation: Problems in Plato’s Republic*. Oxford UP.

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## **🗨️ Speakers**



**Aaron James**  
Professor of Philosophy  
University of California, Irvine



**Graham Hubbs**  
Professor  
University of Idaho

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## **🗨️ Moderator**



**Joe Tinguely**  
Associate Professor of Philosophy  
University of South Dakota

## Limits of Wealth and Positional Goods

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 2

📍 Executive Room

### Abstracts:

#### Paper 1, TBA

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#### **Limiting Inequality rather than Absolute Wealth: Positional Goods and Proportional Justice,** Nunzio Ali

The relevance of positional goods for theories of social justice has constantly increased in recent times. Not surprisingly, their particular features make them a theoretical resource for both the distributive and relational justice camps. Precisely, positional goods are fundamental to explain why material inequalities matter to justice, regardless of our commitment to an intrinsic value for equality. In this article, I suggest that positional goods might represent a decisive bridge between distributive and relational pictures of justice.

First, I argue that positional goods should be understood as the benchmark for a compelling conception of political and social justice. On the one hand, I agree with relational scholars that justice is mainly concerned with how members of a society are positioned against one another in terms of wealth, authority, status and so on, and only derivatively on how much one has in absolute terms. On the other hand, due to their shift from merely distributive concerns, relational egalitarians tend to water down distributive criteria and principles. The problem with relational accounts is that a political society should assign or 'distribute' some kinds of 'goods,' like political rights, basic liberties, access to public offices, wealth, and so on; otherwise, the risk is to provide a conception of social justice that is highly indeterminate, leaving all substantive questions open. I sustain that this problem might be overcome by grounding a relational conception of justice on the 'distribution' of those positional goods (manifest or latent, ordinal or cardinal) which are indispensable to being free participatory citizens on a par with others.

Second, this argument allows me to deal with the normative significance of the distance in economic resources between the best-off and worst-off. Given the competitive nature of the political and socioeconomic spheres, this gap becomes a chief concern. And yet, surprisingly, even within the relational school, nothing is said about the acceptable limits of the magnitude of the gap, nor do we find a distributive principle or criterion to say when inequality becomes too much. In this respect, this article argues that although Robeyns' limitarianism proposal marks a novelty that goes in the right direction, what matters is not the absolute level of wealth enjoyed by the richest but the magnitude of the economic gap with the worst-off. Therefore, this article suggests that both distributive and relational scholars should endorse as a principle of distributive justice, at least for the background justice, the 'principle of proportionality,' (Ali 2022) which states that economic inequality should not exceed a certain range or proportion to enable both the best-off and the worst-off to be co-authors of the legal, political, and socioeconomic rules that govern the 'social' relations in which they are involved.

**Key words:** *Positional goods, Principle of Proportionality, Limitarianism, Relational Egalitarianism, Distributive Justice.*

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#### **Credit, Positional Competition, and Housing Wealth,** Daniel Halliday

This paper seeks to examine ways in which the concept of a positional good might illuminate attempts to theorise about justice and credit markets.

Under ideal conditions, credit markets relieve wealth inequality by enabling people lower in the wealth distribution to accumulate wealth by gaining access to future income earlier in life. Without credit, wealth inequality would largely ossify. Real world credit markets do not, of course, live up to this ideal. Qualification criteria for loans that do offer such a pathway often unjustly exclude some borrowers. Such borrowers must instead purchase credit at high interest rates that risk resulting in credit being more entrapping than emancipating.

In general, concepts such as creditworthiness, borrowing power, etc. involve conferral of relative advantage rather than absolute advantage. This is true even if lenders are not consciously ranking borrowers in the manner familiar from other positional competitions.

The concept of positionality may have especially strong application to loans that are typically thought to be morally defensible, particularly mortgages. These are among the loans most conducive to wealth accumulation, because interest rates are lower than for more predatory types of lending, and the asset purchased has potential to appreciate in value (plus other benefits of homeownership). But housing markets are something of an outlier insofar as the strong limits on supply of housing mean that the pursuit of credit for home purchases has a more competitive structure than other types of credit.

Accordingly, I will seek to draw some conclusions about how the competitive tendencies of mortgage lending might bear on the case for limiting the amount that people can borrow, and/or the case limiting inequalities in borrowing power across individuals. I will also seek to integrate these with some features of mortgage lending that might raise issues of justice, such as the way in which housing markets suggest conflicts between different birth cohorts who enjoy (or suffer from) rather different levels of access to credit.

## 🗣️ Speakers



### Nunzio Ali

Postdoctoral Research Fellow  
University of Catania



### Daniel Halliday

University of Melbourne

## 🗣️ Moderator



### Gerard Rothfus

UNC

## Racial Justice

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 2

📍 Chairman's Room

Papered Sess...

### Abstracts:

#### Reparative Justice and Reparations Politics, Jennifer Page

Reparations to Black Americans, despite their moral pull, are politically inexpedient.

This, anyway, is Derrick Darby's position.<sup>1</sup> Darby identifies two issues with reparations: (1) the conservative postracial worldview, and (2) the defense mechanisms that White people put up to maintain a positive group self-image. Instead of reparations, Darby advocates postracial remedies, viz., distributive justice-based policies aimed at remedying racial inequality while being outwardly race-neutral. I argue, however, that there is pragmatic value in pushing for reparations that Darby's pragmatic argument for distributive justice underappreciates.

Political science research has demonstrated Americans' racialized perceptions of government social spending. Viewing Black people as "lazy" is the "strongest determinant of whites' beliefs about welfare," Martin Gilens writes.<sup>2</sup> Examining research on the "laziness" stereotype of Black people in the U.S., as I argue, that an overwhelming majority of African Americans support reparations is unsurprising. In belonging to a group whose history includes being enslaved and subjected to the violence and stolen opportunities of an apartheid system, then being continually scolded for cultural values said to explain why Black people lag behind on various indices of health, wealth, and wellbeing, it's helpful to have a language to talk about injustice as the reason for racial inequalities. Orienting one's claims on the state in reparative terms is a political act, one that loudly disavows any explanation of racial inequalities centered around Black culture and character.

My argument, then, is that distributive justice-based policies are already implicitly racialized, affecting how much support sizeable redistributive policies can garner. Reparations offer a way forward by engraving it on the official historical record that injustices were done. The ideological landscape we occupy is malleable, and the U.S. government's formal admission of responsibility for harms to Black people would serve as a point of reference for future generations as they are socialized into understandings of the country's racial past and present.

How to achieve reparations in a country with deep political divisions over race? The key is resisting zero-sum approaches. As Heather McGhee argues, the U.S.'s overall economic potential is held back by the weakness of its investments in Black communities. By ending forms of structural and institutional racism, what results is better outcomes for everybody: "[T]he economy would be eight trillion dollars larger in 2050 if the United States... [ended] racial disparities in health, education, incarceration, and jobs," she writes.<sup>3</sup> There is promise in political messaging around reparations that says that everyone, including White people, stand to gain.

However, is "anti-zero-sum reparations thinking" a noble lie? Would reparations really benefit White people—or is saying so simply a potentially useful political strategy? And, if the message is that White people would benefit, doesn't this make it all the more likely that reparations would be designed in a way in which White people do benefit? I conclude my pragmatic defense of reparations with responses to these questions.

<sup>1</sup> Derrick Darby, *A Realistic Blacktopia* (New York: OUP, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> Martin Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare* (Chicago: U. Chicago Press, 1999), 80.

<sup>3</sup> Heather McGhee, *The Sum of Us* (London: One World, 2021).

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**The Racially Ineligible and Their Striving for U.S. Citizenship: Democracy, Imperialism, and Asian Naturalization in the U. S., 1882-1906, Juman Kim**

According to the Naturalization Act of 1790 (1 Stat. 103), no alien but “a free white person” could apply for American citizenship through naturalization. Congress extended the right to naturalization to racial minorities in 1870, but not by striking out the racial prerequisite for naturalization altogether. Instead, they passed the law (16 Stat. 254) extending naturalization eligibility to another specified racial group: “aliens of African nativity and ... persons of African descent.” Hence anyone who was considered neither “white” nor “black” remained excluded from acquiring citizenship by naturalization. Prior to the emergence of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization in 1906, however, state courts often played a profound role in administering naturalization services unmoored from the close supervision of the federal government. Without openly calling for the revision of the nation’s naturalization restrictions, state courts at times managed to use their discretion to open the possibilities of naturalization to some Asians but not to others. This paper explores how racial discrimination against Asians took shape through a variety of institutional efforts between 1882 and 1906, and how these years witnessed a glaring dissonance between the federal naturalization laws and the realities on the ground. In addition to providing an analysis of relevant case law as well as institutional development, this study focuses on the lives of two Korean immigrants living in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Washington D.C.—Philip Jaisohn and Pom Kwang Soh—and charts the strategies through which they strove to achieve American citizenship in an unfavorable legal and political context. It also highlights the evolution of multi-layered racial categories, the then expanding national government power over race relations and immigration—often in conflict with states’ enduring regulatory power—and the role of racial minorities and immigrants as transformative agents in the politics of naturalization.

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### **Pareto Optimality and Oppression, Patricia Marino**

The concept of Pareto optimality is central to normative economics. A Pareto improvement is a change that benefits at least one person, while leaving no one worse off; a situation is Pareto optimal when no further Pareto improvements are available. One common view is that Pareto improvements are straightforwardly good and obviously unobjectionable: as Boardman et al.'s standard textbook on cost-benefit analysis says, only a "malevolent" person could object to such a change. Against this, it is pointed out that when gains go to the already privileged, inequality increases: health economist Richardson describes the assumption that Pareto optimality is self-evidently desirable as "aggressively counter-factual." White says that the Pareto standard enjoys "nearly universal acceptance," yet Pareto optimal outcomes can be "intolerable" or "disgusting": if a few people live in luxury and everyone else is starving, the situation is Pareto optimal under the minimal assumption that the rich prefer to keep their wealth (Hausman, Sen).

Much existing debate over the normativity of Pareto optimality focuses on consent. Rather than focusing on consent, here we take up a different political perspective, asking what theories of social inequity and oppression tell us about Pareto improvements.

We argue first that that from the structural point of view, Pareto improvements can lead to oppression: when gains go to the already privileged, structural inequities are reinforced and exacerbated. Structural theories of oppression call attention to the ways that marginalization, powerlessness, and inequity are embedded in social and institutional structures and thus extend beyond analysis of individual actions and attitudes (Frye, Young, Mills). Many structural theories share two elements: 1) inequities and asymmetrical power relations embedded in social structures constitute oppression, and 2) acts and practices that support and reinforce structural inequities are oppressive while those undermining them are anti-oppressive.

We argue that where there are conditions of oppression that include inequity, gains to the already dominant social group will exacerbate oppression, even if people in the marginalized are not made individually worse off. To illustrate this, we consider the example of health care resource allocation, where it is argued that decisions based on Pareto optimality can be benign (Heath). In this context, treatments can be evaluated for the cost-effectiveness, based on the idea of maximizing likely future years of healthy life per unit cost. When health care resources are allocated, anyone who receives a given treatment is made better off, while those who do not receive a treatment are no worse off, so allocations can be seen as Pareto improvements.

A methodology focusing on cost-effectiveness faces several well-known problems, some of which concern inequality and discrimination. It can deprioritize people with existing health conditions, even if those conditions are due partly to poverty, structural racism, and other forms of oppression. Since "a QALY is a QALY," the process is insensitive to questions of distribution and equity. We argue that when gains go to those in a dominant group, the use of cost-effectiveness in resource allocation can exacerbate oppression.

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### **Speakers**



#### **Jennifer (Jen) Page**

Assistant Professor  
University of Zurich



#### **Juman Kim**

Assistant Professor  
Towson University



#### **Patricia Marino**

Professor  
University of Waterloo



Moderator



**Samuel Dishaw**

Teaching Assistant Professor  
UNC Chapel Hill

## Capitalism, Property-Owning Democracy and Beyond

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 2

📍 Imperial Room

### Abstracts:

#### **Capitalism, Investment, and the Problem of Democratic Usurpation**, Chiara Cordelli

If, following the publication of Rawls' *A Theory of Justice*, accounts of economic injustice mostly focused on the unfair distribution of an already produced social product, in recent years there has been a shift towards a focus on the mode of production itself. Some argue that a more equal distribution or even-pre distribution of economic resources would be insufficient to address the fact that, as long as the means of production remain privately owned, those who own such means will be able to unilaterally control the working lives of non-owners. The solution to this form of structural domination, they conclude, must include mechanisms for worker control, in the form of workplace democracy or, in a more radical version, the collectivization of the means of production themselves. I call this *the productivist account of capitalist injustice*. In this paper, I first argue that, because it abstracts from money, the productivist account mistakenly assumes that private ownership of the means of production is sufficient to confer to the capitalist the power to dominate workers. This in turn leads to an excessively narrow, and ultimately misleading account of the relevant dominating structure under capitalism. Second, and most importantly, the productivist account fails to consider forms of injustice, which pertain not to the *mode of production* but rather to the *mode of investment*. I argue that the mode of investment in capitalist economies, including welfare capitalism, is incompatible with the value of collective self-determination, and this is so even if the capitalist does not actively attempt to hijack the political process. Workplace democracy, and even the collective ownership of the means of production are insufficient means to address this problem. The only solution is a democratization of investment decisions themselves along the lines of what some economists have called "participatory planning."

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#### **Rematerializing Property in Contemporary Theories of Property-Owning Democracy**, Nicole Whalen

There is a long tradition of political thought that connects property ownership to the republican idea of independence. According to this outlook, material (i.e., economic) independence prevents individuals from being subject to forms of domination and arbitrary governance by other individuals and the state. However, while property ownership was historically associated with the ownership of land, in contemporary political thought it is commonly associated with the ownership of immaterial forms of wealth. The assumption here is that since it is no longer possible to return to a society consisting of small-scale enterprises (or an agrarian republic), property ownership must be reconceived as something other than the direct ownership of the means of production. This article argues, however, that the normative conception of property as immaterial wealth raises problems for contemporary proponents of POD, both because the ownership of corporate shares is not a sufficient means for its republican ends, and because of the growing global importance of inequalities in material wealth, i.e., in land. I argue, moreover, that a return to the focus on land inequality in the agrarian republican thought of POD's predecessors can serve as a helpful corrective to these shortcomings.

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#### **Rawls, Property-Owning Democracy, and the Environment**, Manuel Rodeiro

Which of John Rawls's preferred liberal equalitarian property regimes (property-owning democracy or liberal socialism) is best suited to justly promoting ecological health and sustainability? If Rawls's theory is to remain realistically utopian, it must incorporate sustainability concerns and be responsive to adjustment when new general facts come to light. Otherwise, it risks becoming an idle curiosity and only distantly utopian.

I argue that on balance property-owning democracy (i.e., a property regime that allows for *private ownership* of productive resources) offers a better approach for confronting environmental problems than liberal socialism (i.e., a property regime based on *public ownership* of productive resources). This position seems counterintuitive since "in the story favored by most environmentalists, private property is the bad guy" (Merrill 2004, 69). But I contend that property-owning democracy can assist in preventing ecological collapse and "securing background justice over time" in a manner that is more consistent with respecting liberal pluralism and better able to generate overlapping consensus which promotes social stability (Rawls 2001, 135).

To summarize, the main environmental issue with liberal socialism is that public ownership of productive resources requires democratic decision making for determining how these resources are used. As such, liberal socialism may lead to situations in which persistent minorities' environmental interests are routinely frustrated. Citizens attempting to maintain traditional subsistence practices or other sustainable relations with the natural world may pervasively lose out to the broader society regarding the usage of property such that it frustrates their pursuit of a reasonable conception of the good. As Rawls states, "the status of the natural world and our proper

relation to it is not a constitutional essential or a basic question of justice” (Rawls 1993, 246). If citizens’ particular relationships to the natural world do not rise to the level of constituting a violation of basic entitlements, then these interests can be subject to the political will of the majority.

If productive resources (including land) are dispersed widely to private citizens, it enhances citizens’ freedom to pursue a plurality of ways of relating to the natural world. In other words, since property-owning democracy does not rely on collective decision making to determine how to use productive assets, it is less likely than liberal socialism to impose one vision of how citizens ought to relate to nature.

In recent work, I have explored how environmental harm may violate basic liberties, specifically “liberty of conscience” and “right to personal property” (Author 2021 and 2022). It is true, however, that severing some relationships with natural entities will not necessarily rise to the level of violating basic liberties. Moreover, my research left it unclear how citizens who strive to establish new eco-friendly ways of life are entitled to have these aims respected as basic rights. By providing citizens greater control over their real property, property-owning democracy secures wider opportunity for pursuing unique environmental interests beyond what is respected as a matter of right.

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#### 🗨️ Speakers



##### **Chiara Cordelli**

Associate Professor in Political Science  
University of Chicago



##### **Nicole Whalen**

University of Chicago



##### **Manuel Rodeiro**

Mississippi State University

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#### 🗨️ Moderator



##### **Marcos Picchio**

Postdoctoral Fellow  
National Institutes of Health

## **Democracy and the Good**

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 2

📍 Cotton Room

### **Abstracts:**

#### **Making Democracy Safe for the World: Precautionary Social Evolution as a Response to Value Pluralism** , Xavier Hays

Democratization is often welcomed as liberation, since popular sovereignty is presumed to not just tolerate but welcome a multiplicity of different values. Indeed, democracy’s distinctive break from older forms of government is its unique ability to broaden the range of opinions which are both acceptable and capable of affecting political outcomes. While such broadening of acceptable opinions has the obvious potential to bring about more representative government, it introduces problems for those who believe in objective goods such as freedom. In response, I argue that some forms of value control in democracies are desirable and even necessary to democratic governance.

The process by which the values of both citizens and political institutions diverge is often necessary and even welcome as a state’s originating values are found wanting. However, as Mill and many others have observed, it may also introduce new values and ideologies which are “unfit for liberty” and which may undermine liberal social and political institutions. The freedom of opinion which democracy engenders may also be the foot in the door for illiberalism. Similar scenarios are possible for other values such as a democratic state which valued a form of moral objectivism.

Deviation from moral norms may increase freedom in this case, but would be a harmful implementation of democracy in so far as it fails to maintain what is considered valuable outside of personal preference.

Given this conflict, it is sensible to argue that a democracy that is to produce the social features it is valued for must take actions that initially restrict the influence of public opinion. The obvious concern with this response is that this state intervention in public debate may more immediately undermine the democratic process. A variety of

interventions would meet this criteria and prevent meaningful popular governance. However, I argue for a policy of precautionary social evolution that aims to slow rather than halt the process of values diverging in a democracy. This process would, in addition to preventing rapid changes that might reconfigure a society before meaningful resistance could arise, allow time for changes to affect the population so that their impact might be felt before useful, initial values are abandoned. This could take the form of constitutional entrenchment or the use of other facets of state power such as public education or selective funding to preserve values. In this way, values can be conserved while not eliminating the role of the governed in deciding policy and also preserving the ability of a state to change in response to the failure of its values.

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### **Restoring the Principles of Democracy: Media and the Truth of Representation** , Carlos Lara-Gonzalez

Recently, democracies throughout the world have altered our understanding of the public good as well as challenged what we perceive and define to be “good”, and with an ever changing political landscape, it is easy to see where the translation of the good has become relative, but what if it wasn’t so relative? What can help strengthen a democracy and its “goodness”?

In this essay, I will analyze the importance of the media on maintaining the integrity of a democracy as well as how the media clearly has a relation with our own values as people. Seeking the truth is what arguably gives humans purpose. It is this purpose that naturally brings the “good” in us out. It is here where the media, truthful, honest, media can cultivate the concept of a free and fair democracy through the direct implication of the truth. In order to do so, we derive our definition of what “truth” is from Aristotle who defined truth as “To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true.” Challenging this definition and the definition of “good” is the idea of absolute or pure relativism which, by definition, implies no existence of a set truth or good and would ultimately make these definitions null to our overall argument. On the other hand, Elizabeth W. Gachenga implies through her work, the importance of ethical relativism, which highlights the importance of truth seeking, used by the media and how it has been able to help countries in the African continent who are starting to experiment with the idea of democracy. Her analysis of how seeking the truth is the human purpose and that through this truth we can bring the best out in people and consequently the government thereof. In particular, her focus on Kenya provides us with a starting point from which we can effectively see the effects of media and media bias on the “good” of the people and the overall democracy. The good in this case can be interpreted as political, economic, and or even educational prosperity toward the citizens of said government. Through the use of the media, people are able to represent who they are and what they stand for and when led by the idea of truth, can prove quite effective in bringing social, political, and economic stability.

Likewise, using political theory of representation, such as descriptive v. substantive representation, we can better understand how truth within a democracy can lead to an overall good form of democracy. The US is a perfect example of how representation has a crucial role in civil order and the overall good of a democracy.

### **“Break in Case of Emergencies”: Why We Should Just Settle for Democracy**, Heyjin Jang

Defenders of democracy advocate on its behalf for a variety of noble reasons: that democracy makes citizens more autonomous; that it incentivizes them to develop their critical thinking skills and become better informed about the socio-economic-political realities they live in; that open dialogue in service of democracy improves their ideas and corrects their misconceptions; and that through all of this, massive disagreements among them can be resolved into harmonious agreement. Of course, what we find in real life is that actual citizens are not especially autonomous, are not devoted to critical thinking, are ill-informed, and are happier to hurl insults at their political opponents than to calmly discuss their (ever-increasing) differences. In view of all this, should we give up on democracy?

I argue that the answer is no—we should not give up on democracy. The superiority of democracy over other political systems lies in its internal coherence, not in whatever hypothetical benefits it may bring to individual citizens. Democracy may not be the most efficient at bringing about the best outcomes for the citizenry, but it is the only political system which inherently provides a mechanism through which the citizenry can eliminate political decision-makers they find dissatisfying. Other political systems which reject the citizenry’s participation as a tenet lack an inherent mechanism by which despots may be replaced. In such times of despotic crisis, it is precisely popular political participation—democracy—that is relied on to replace the authority. In other words, democracy is the only political system whose “break in case of emergencies” glass-encased button doesn’t compromise or undermine its own tenets. When those in power make the wrong decision, democracy provides a peaceful way to change the course of political decision-making without resorting to tumultuous violence—vote the offending person or people out.

Of course, democracy does not have an answer for the true worst-case scenario—what happens when the “illusion” breaks and citizens no longer buy the myth of democracy and believe that elections are rigged against their individual or group-specific interests? What happens when a critical mass of citizens refuse to accept the results of democratic elections? However, as I argue, this disillusionment problem is not unique to democracy, since any political system may be confronted with the problem if enough citizens begin to doubt that it genuinely serves their interests. In fact, democracy is better positioned than any other system to solve the problem, since the source of political disillusionment is citizens’ belief that their interests are not adequately represented—which means that the solution to political disillusionment is more democratic governance, not less.

## 🔊 Speakers



**Xavier Hays**  
DePauw University



**Carlos Lara-Gonzalez**  
DePauw University



**Hyejin Jang**  
Student  
DePauw University

## 🔊 Moderator



**Brandon Long**  
Bowling Green State University

## Subjective Well-Being and Collective Trauma: St. Louis as a Case Study

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 2

📍 River Room I

Panel Discuss...

### Abstracts:

The global rise of interest in taking well-being outcomes as an important policy concern—“well-being policy”—has taken a variety of forms. One influential approach, in the UK and elsewhere, adopts an extreme variant of Bentham’s utilitarianism, arguing that policy should aim directly at maximizing collective happiness, understood in terms of self-reported life satisfaction. Yet such measures increasingly show a troubling disconnect from reality, including objective signs like a global pandemic, systemic racism, and other evidence of psychological distress. Our discussion will focus on this disconnect and its implications for the use of well-being metrics in policy.

We use the history of the St. Louis metropolitan area and its recent stress and well-being data to show that: (1) the assessment and responsible promotion of well-being is more complex than its advocates are willing to admit, and (2) to create conceptual space for the role that collective trauma should play in discussions of well- or ill-being, especially if such evaluations are to influence policy.

While well-being is one among other plausible policy concerns, policy prescriptions must account for other worthy goods such as social and economic justice, intergenerational justice, and equality. One well-being concern that our panel will address is collective trauma. Collective trauma occurs when a collective experiences a negatively valenced event that threatens the relations constituting the collective (or the procedural and material basis for those relations), giving rise to long-term changes in collective identity, collective memory, and collective behavior that reduce the well-being of the collective and resist their own reparation. Collectives can respond to traumatic events in similar ways that individuals do, including coping strategies and pathological responses, introducing a level of analysis in social malaise above the level of the individual.

The history of St. Louis, with its many examples of historic injustice that continue to have ramifications for the city and county, is a prime example of collective trauma. Despite this collective trauma, recent stress data from the zip codes with the highest rates of poverty, ill health, and negative encounters with the criminal justice system show reports of high levels of optimism and relatively low levels of self-reported stress, as compared with some of the wealthiest zip codes in the area. We highlight this paradox to show that self-reports of well- or ill-being do not simply convey information about how well people see their lives going for them, but also how people may interpret their lives. Yet, it would be a mistake to use these self-reports for policy guidance if, for example, resources were distributed away from the areas that, by most indications, are in fact worse off. This panel is the result of collaborative work in St. Louis, and we think that this conversation would be an excellent contribution to re-thinking common approaches to well-being policy.

## 🗣️ Speakers



**Yolonda Wilson**  
Saint Louis University



**Carl Craver**  
Professor  
Washington University Saint Louis



**Dan Haybron**  
Vitali Chair of Philosophy  
Saint Louis University



**Judith Carlisle**  
PhD Student  
Washington University St. Louis

## Norms for Navigating Polarization: Political Emotions, Suspicious Beliefs, and Politicizing Actions

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 2

📍 Terrace Room

### Abstracts:

#### **Moral Disagreement and Political Emotions, Delaney Thull**

Many pluralistic Western democracies are experiencing drastic political polarization characterized by deep moral disagreements and accompanied by rising affective polarization, or the antipathy and distrust that citizens feel for their partisan opponents. To address this apparent threat to democracy, some theorists argue that individual citizens need to improve how they do political engagement via cultivating their dispositions like empathy and love, or their skills like listening and deliberating. On a more structural level, other theorists argue that the realization of certain values like civic friendship, relational egalitarianism, or fraternal love are foundational to the theoretical justification for democracy, and that these values ought to inform the design of democratic institutions. These theories broadly share an approach. First, they identify something that is intuitively essential for flourishing in personal relationships, like empathy, love, or friendship. Then, they call for that value to be expanded or extended beyond the personal realm to guide interactions in the public and political civic realm.

In this paper, I push back against these calls for doing politics using the norms that serve our intimate lives by arguing that there is a deep asymmetry between personal and political relations when it comes to the norms we ought to use for navigating emotion about moral disagreement. The limits of human moral psychology combined with the differing purposes of personal vs political relationships mean that we shouldn't extend intimate practices on the scale and scope required to encompass highly contentious political life with strangers. Personal interactions aim at developing and sustaining a kind of "moral alignment," of sharing values and applying them to shared life projects, while building up a shared history and mutual understanding. Whereas political interactions aim at developing and sustaining mutually tolerable circumstances for living together, often under deep moral disagreement with strangers. And human psychology appropriately uses different strategies for emotion in both contexts.

Therefore, it is not a suitable strategy to advise citizens to cultivate distinctly political virtues of gentleness, nor to predicate our political theories, practices, or institutions upon people having those virtues. And it'll be costly and harmful for citizens to face the toll of living under pernicious moral disagreement, without ways to navigate it successfully. The norms we have for interpreting, responding to, and negotiating emotion in politics are and ought to remain different from the ones we use in our personal lives. Norms for functional civil discourse erode when we import the personal norms for navigating emotion about conflict and disagreement into our public lives. This suggests that shoring up the boundary between the two is perhaps an avenue for alleviating polarization and for increasing democratic health.

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#### **Circumscribing Suspicion: The Ethics of Belief in Political Discourse, Z Quanbeck**

Ideology-critique—which aims to reveal how ideologies function to rationalize power and domination by masking and distorting the underlying nature of social reality—can play an important role in political discourse. Engaging in ideology-critique often involves adopting a "hermeneutics of suspicion" that seeks to diagnose how oppressive ideologies unconsciously influence our attitudes (beliefs, desires, preferences, intentions, emotions, etc.) and undercut these attitudes' justification or rationality. Generalizing, especially in our polarized political climate, it is often useful to recognize and evaluate how non-rational psychological and political forces shape—and sometimes undercut the justification for—both others' attitudes and our own attitudes.

Yet adopting such suspicious, distrustful, and debunking interpretations of others' attitudes— and thereby “psychologizing” them by dismissing their avowed reasons for their attitudes as mistaken and/or regarding their attitudes as unjustified due to their distorted etiology—incur moral risks. Dismissively psychologizing others can plausibly wrong them by disrespecting their rational agency. Moreover, adopting suspicious interpretations (often) entails regarding others from the Strawsonian “objective stance” and can constitutively undermine trust, which is a central component of flourishing interpersonal relationships and an important social good.

This talk aims to show how we can preserve a significant role for ideology-critique and debunking explanations in political discourse while minimizing the moral dangers of dismissively psychologizing others. On my proposal, while we often ought to adopt suspicious interpretations of a *group's attitudes* or *our own attitudes*, there is a moral presumption against adopting suspicious interpretations of the attitudes of *other individuals* to whom we stand in valuable interpersonal relationships.

My argument has two steps. First, our evidence often underdetermines whether we should believe a) that an individual's or group's avowed reason(s) for an attitude expresses their real reason(s) for holding this attitude or b) that their attitude is irrational. Moreover, adopting a suspicious interpretation of a group's attitudes often rationally permits—but typically does not rationally require—likewise adopting a suspicious interpretation of the attitudes of individual group members in virtue of their group membership. Thus, when our evidence permits adopting either a suspicious interpretation or a trusting interpretation of an individual's or group's attitudes, moral considerations can determine which of these interpretations we all-things-considered should adopt.

Second, we morally owe it to others—*qua* individuals to whom we stand in valuable interpersonal relationships—to be disposed to trust them and refrain from blaming them. Trust enhances, and blame *impairs*, our interpersonal relationships. Psychologizing others undermines (epistemic or practical) trust and can sometimes constitute (epistemic or moral) blame. So, we should (by default) adopt a trusting interpretation of others' avowed reasons for their attitudes. By contrast, we do not have obligations to trust or refrain from blaming groups or ourselves. Consequently, when political discourse involves evaluating the attitudes of other individuals to whom we stand in valuable interpersonal relationships, we (often) all-things-considered ought to refrain from adopting suspicious, distrustful, debunking interpretations of their attitudes, *even if* we are all-things-considered permitted or required to adopt such interpretations of their group's attitudes or our own attitudes.

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#### **Politicization and Polarization, Rich Eva**

Allegations of politicization fill headlines. Common claims are that athletes politicize sporting events, relatives politicize holidays, and politicians politicize government institutions like the CDC, the IRS, and the Supreme Court. To politicize in this sense is to use a nonpartisan good as means to a partisan end. The verb politicize can be thought of as a three-place predicate involving a politicizer, a nonpartisan good, and a partisan end. A basketball player (a politicizer) might politicize a basketball game (a nonpartisan good) by making a political gesture upon scoring to support a particular presidential candidate (a partisan end). Or a news agency (a politicizer) might politicize news reporting (a nonpartisan good) by selectively reporting stories for the purpose of expanding the influence of Republican power (a partisan end). I argue that there is a moral presumption against the commission of politicizing actions. This presumption arises from the (heretofore unanalyzed) relationship between politicization and polarization.

Politicization exacerbates polarization in two major ways. First, politicization is in a feedback loop with polarization. Politicizing actions typically signal partisan allegiances to others. These signals facilitate political sorting, and political sorting is accompanied by social sorting, which increases “well-sorted” identities. Well-sorted identities are found in individuals whose social identities line up along partisan lines (e.g., a white, wealthy, rural, churchgoing Republican has a well-sorted identity). Recent scholarship has established that individuals with well-sorted identities are more socially polarized *regardless* of their policy views. Social polarization is characterized by increased partisan prejudice, emotional reactivity, and political activism. Well-sorted citizens are more inclined to seek partisan ends in public-facing ways, so we should expect more politicization among well-sorted citizens. Thus, the feedback loop completes itself.

The other way that politicization exacerbates polarization is by undermining remedies for polarization. One proposed remedy is that citizens participate with one another in nonpartisan cooperative activities, like cleaning a public park or playing a sport. The problem is that politicizers seek to coopt such activities to make their partisan points. Thus, politicization undermines nonpartisan cooperative activities and reduces opportunities for nonpartisan cooperation.

Social polarization is widely seen as a threat to a well-functioning democracy. We have an increased number of people engaging in politics not on the basis of reasoned policy disagreements, but on the basis of social identity and ingroup bias. Politicization exacerbates polarization, so this gives us a strong reason against politicizing. This reason, coupled with the availability of other ways of pursuing partisan ends, results in a moral presumption against politicization.

## 🗣️ Speakers



**Delaney Thull**

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



**Z Quanbeck**

Princeton University Center for Human Values



**Rich Eva**

Baylor University

## 🗣️ Moderator



**T. Allan Hillman**

Associate Professor of Philosophy  
University of South Alabama

## Feminist Perspectives in the History of Political Philosophy

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 2

📍 Tower Room

### Abstracts:

#### **A Female Perspective from Poland: Karolina's Critique of the Gendered Enlightenment Ideal of Human Progress, Olga Lenczemska**

In *Emile, or On Education* (1762), one of the most important treatises of the Enlightenment, Jean-Jacques Rousseau presented a hierarchical concept of the male and female sexes based on “natural” biological differences. He argued that men and women “ought not to have the same education” (1762/1979, 363): for women, unlike for men, familial and domestic responsibilities should take precedence over public affairs; participatory citizenship, by contrast, is a male prerogative.

Rousseau's take on women's role is by no means unique in eighteenth-century Europe. Rather, it reflects mainstream attitudes of his time and follows the popular views on social roles and educational reforms expressed by numerous other leading Enlightenment voices.

Immanuel Kant, another leading Enlightenment philosopher, notoriously excluded women from the process of striving to become “enlightened” (to develop one's rational capacities and be able to think independently and critically). This exclusion was due to various socio-political and cultural factors that prevented women from being “active citizens”, i.e., from legal personality, civil independence, and participation in the sphere of public affairs (Kleingeld 1993, Wood 1999, Sabourin 2021). Many other thinkers of the time shared this gendered view of the quest for enlightenment, claiming that the education of *women* in particular ought to be directed at the realization of their “threefold vocation [*dreifache Bestimmung*]” as a wife, a mother, and a homemaker (Pockels 1797). This vocation, many of them further argued, reflected not only the contingent socio-cultural circumstances of the time, but the very *nature* of women who have lesser intellectual capacities than men (Campe 1789).

This paper will examine the dominant Enlightenment-era view that women's socio-political and educational opportunities ought to be limited to the task of caring for men, taking a critical look at this view from within the intellectual discourse of the time. More specifically, I will analyze how this restricted view of women's socio-political and educational opportunities was challenged by an unknown, proto-feminist Polish female thinker and educational reformist, Karolina.

Karolina's under-studied views, presented in an essay published semi-anonymously in a leading Polish cultural magazine *Monitor*, exhibit insightful early-feminist arguments against the confinement of women to the “private” sphere of the household and their inability to take an active role in the Enlightenment project. She criticizes the existing norms around women's upbringing and social interactions, protesting young women's inability to participate in public affairs and their lack of freedom to express their true opinions on these matters. I also show that her evaluation could be put in terms of Kant's distinction between making a private and a public use of one's reason, and that she can be seen as critiquing women's perpetual intellectual confinement to the private use of reason and lack of intellectual freedom to (learn how to) make public use of reason and to consequently take a fully-fledged part in the life of their society.

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**Rethinking enslavement and racialized labor in Kant and Marx: A Feminist Approach,** Jordan Pascoe

This paper explores Kant's and Marx's conceptualization of enslaved and racialized labor. A persistent weakness of Marxist analysis is its failure to analyze distinctive features of raced and gendered labor – and the problems that this poses for class solidarity. This has not prevented Marx from playing a critical role in materialist feminism and the black radical tradition. But it does point to a limit of Marxist analysis for (a) theorizing labor beyond wage labor and (b) addressing problems of interracial, intersectional, and decolonial solidarity. In this paper, I turn to Black feminist conceptualizations of enslavement, such as those developed by Angela Davis and Saadiya Hartman, in order to locate the limits of Marx's argument. And then, following Davis and Hartman, I argue show that Marx's failure to theorize reproductive, caregiving, and service labor creates a critical gap in his conceptualization of enslaved and racialized labor.

I turn to Kant's political philosophy as a surprising resource for addressing this gap, arguing that we can find resource in Kant's thinking on labor to theorize labor beyond production/wage labor in ways that can help us identify and address how raced and gendered divisions of labor complicate standard Marxian visions of class consciousness and solidarity. I'll argue that Marx failed to properly conceptualize racialized labor because he assumed that as slave labor was abolished, it would be subsumed into wage labor – namely, the wage labor of industrial capital. He missed the peculiar forms of labor that would become what Du Bois "second slavery": a pattern of labor both structurally and politically distinct from wage labor, subject to its own particular patterns of domination and background coercion. It was a form of labor that Kant would carefully conceptualize: domestic and service labor, labor properly located "in the home" but increasingly outsourced into semi-public service labor along raced and gendered lines. Kant, unlike Marx, understood that this labor was a distinctive kind of labor relation that produced patterns of domination and dependency essential to the illusion of the self-sufficient, independent citizen-consumer. Following Davis and Hartman, I explore how the racialized outsourcing of reproductive, caregiving, and service labor was a key feature of both enslavement and global colonialism, and how it has served, since then, as a structural feature of a racialized workforce. I show that when we understand it as a distinctive pattern of dominative labor – something, I argue, that Kant's theory of labor gives us the tools to do – then we can clarify both how labor after the end of enslavement remained racialized, and why this racialized political economy undermines the very possibility of the kind of proletarian solidarity for which Marx hoped, generating instead what we might call, in a Kantian key, a "passive citizenship" strategy for cashing out what Du Bois called the "wages of whiteness". And from here, we can more clearly assess the limits of Marxian analysis for addressing intersectional patterns of domination.

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#### **Feminism and the Duck-Rabbit Effect in the History of Political Philosophy, Susanne Sreedhar**

In his 2020 *California Law Review* article, "Textualism and the Duck-Rabbit Illusion," Cass Sunstein describes a phenomenon where something like Wittgenstein's duck/rabbit illusion occurs in legal interpretation. The duck-rabbit illusion is a widely known exercise in perspective in which a single drawing of figure looks like a duck to some and a rabbit to others. Sunstein argues that when reading a particular constitutional or statutory provision, some interpreters clearly perceive one kind of proposition, while others clearly perceive an entirely different, and often opposing, proposition. Some "genuinely see a duck; they insist that a duck is the only thing that reasonable people can see. Their perception is automatic, even though it might have been primed, or a product of preconceptions. But reasonable people might well see a rabbit" (p. 463). He uses this to argue against originalism and textualism as methods of interpretation, using the Free Speech Clause of the First Amendment as one of his primary examples.

I argue that something similar can happen when reading texts in the history of political philosophy, especially on questions about gender. Sometimes the misogyny of historical texts is unambiguous, but in the most interesting cases the claims made about women are open to interpretation. In some of these cases, a reader of the secondary literature encounters wildly different interpretations of the same passage. Consider the passage in which 17th century social contract theorist Thomas Hobbes describes how men come to rule over women (*Leviathan* 20.4). This passage has a duck/rabbit effect on readers: some (e.g., Sharon Lloyd and Joanne Wright) see Hobbes as undermining the foundations of patriarchy and paving the way for gender equality. Call this the "duck interpretation." Others (e.g., Carole Pateman and Mary Nyquist) see the passage as not just advocating but reinforcing patriarchy. Call that the "rabbit interpretation." These two interpretations are not just different but are mutually exclusive. They are P and not-P, to use terminology favored by analytic philosophers.

Research on the visual phenomena of the duck/rabbit case has shown that priming effects whether or not people see the duck or the rabbit. Sunstein demonstrates how this occurs in the originalist interpretation of legal texts. I argue that something similar is happening when feminist scholars disagree about how to read the propositional content of certain important passages. People are predisposed to see one thing or another, depending on the disciplinary commitments they bring to their reading of the figure. I'm not making the obvious point that scholars disagree about how to interpret passages, that some see ducks while others see rabbits. Rather, I'm interested in cases in which people with one set of disciplinary commitments tend to see ducks; those with another see rabbits.

In this paper, I draw on key passages in Hobbes that have lent themselves to duck- rabbit interpretations in the secondary literature to demonstrate how disciplinary differences, mainly between the more philosophically-inclined and the more historically and literarily- inclined, serve to prime people to see either a duck or a rabbit.



## 🗣️ Speakers



**Olga Lenczewska**  
UNC Wilmington



**Jordan Pascoe**  
Professor, Philosophy  
Manhattan College



**Susanne Sreedhar**  
Boston University

## 🗣️ Moderator



**Maria Mejia**  
Elon University

12:15 PM

## Lunch Break

🕒 12:15 PM - 2:00 PM, Nov 2

2:00 PM

## Norms of Interpersonal and Political Disagreement

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 2

📍 Grand Ballroom I

### Abstracts:

#### **Democratic Fairness and Zetetic Intransigence, Hrishikeshi Joshi**

Peer disagreement puts some pressure on us to moderate our beliefs in their direction. If you and I add up a bill and get different figures, I should probably suspend judgment. Of course, epistemic peerhood is rare—others rarely have the exact same evidence or level of expertise when it comes to more interesting cases (King 2012). However, so long as we think the other person is more reliable than chance, that should put some pressure on us to moderate, *ex post*.

Now, disagreement within a democratic setting poses a unique problem—that of asymmetric compliance with the above stated principle. Thus, suppose two groups of people disagree about some issue. Let's call these groups the Twisters and the Stickers, following Worsnip (2023). The Twisters, when they notice disagreement with the Stickers, moderate their confidence in the Stickers' direction. However, this adjustment is not mutual—the Stickers keep their confidence levels put.

This raises a dilemma. If the Twisters vote according to their post-disagreement adjusted beliefs, the political center of gravity, as it were, will shift towards the Stickers. This seems unfair; the latter are being rewarded for being epistemically irresponsible! On the other hand, if the Twisters vote according to their original beliefs—which they no longer hold, post-moderation—then this seems to violate a sincerity norm. An elegant solution out of this, which can be independently motivated, is the following. People should vote according to their “personal takes” (Worsnip 2023), i.e. their judgment of what their first-order evidence (bracketing the higher-order disagreement based evidence) supports.

However, the problem of asymmetric compliance with epistemic principles raises its head again, when we consider our zetetic responsibilities. Proper epistemic conduct is not merely about responding to evidence, as has been emphasized in classic discussions, but also about appropriately gathering new evidence (Friedman 2020; Hughes 2023; Flores and Woodard forthcoming). If that's right then we can imagine the same scenario as above, but home in on the zetetic aspect. Thus, suppose the Twisters, recognizing that they may be in an epistemic bubble (Nguyen 2020; Sheeks 2022), take appropriate steps to gather evidence from the outside. This will likely lead them to favor somewhat modified positions, which will now be supported by their total evidence (bracketing the disagreement based higher-order evidence). To simplify, we can imagine them now supporting a more moderate position. However, if the Stickers don't reciprocate, this again will shift the center of gravity towards them, and the “personal take” solution no longer works.

I argue that such zetetic asymmetries are significant insofar as consumption from different sources and informational ecosystems drives much of the polarization we observe today (Levy 2021). What this means is that within a democratic setting, we are bound to face normative tradeoffs in the face of epistemic intransigence. To ensure fairness, each of us must do their part to diversify our sources of information. And if that's right, then “voting well” may indeed be reasonably demanding, more so than is commonly thought (cf. Maskivker

2019).

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## Going Along with What's Wrong, Amy Berg and Craig Agule

We frequently face situations where living up to our principles requires imposing them on others, or where choosing instead to go along with others comes at a cost to our ability to stand on principle. These cases point to a complexity in interpersonal morality. We have *first-order* moral reasons, the considerations which count for and against actions, independently of others' views about those actions. But we also have reasons to act *sociably*. Sociability is the (often overlooked) virtue of being disposed to get along with others; it's virtuous because it enables us to participate in a shared life where we treat others as equals. Others' mistaken moral beliefs give us reasons to be sociable even when we reject their first-order moral reasons. An act that would be wrong when considered in isolation can be all-things-considered the right thing for us to do when we take others' beliefs into account.

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## The Ethics of Interpretation, Amy Flowerree

Is the person grandstanding, or merely animated and sincere? Is the group rioting or protesting? Does the leader give a speech of hope and unity, or blather on with wishful thinking? Am I overreacting, or is he gaslighting me? Here, I explore the ethical question of how we should interpret the contested action of another person. A contested action is one where there is agreement on the basic form of the act – certain bodily movements were performed – but there is not agreement on the significance or moral status of those bodily movements. The question matters because which interpretation we endorse will determine whether the other person is blamed, praised, admired, or excused. The quality of our relationships depends on how we interpret each other.

I explore two strategies of how to answer this question. The first strategy, the Authority View, holds that what determines the meaning of an action will rest on its intentional description. While this is an important component of understanding the meaning of an action in many cases, I argue that it is not sufficient as an account of the meaning of an action. This is for two reasons. First, some actions have socially constituted meanings such that the individual's intention in acting is not particularly relevant (e.g., performing blackface). Second, sometimes the meaning of the action rests on what the agent ought to have intended, rather than her actual intentions. The second strategy, the Social Meaning View, holds that the meaning of an action is constructed by widely shared social schemas that provide interpretations of actions. Meanings of actions are conventional. While this view captures how we do interpret actions, it doesn't settle how we ought to interpret actions. Social schemas are in constant need of critique. We should not default to them.

Turning from these more traditional approaches, I then examine the sources of distortion that beset the interpretation of an action. Distortions embody a failure to recognize the essentially inter- and intra- personal purpose of interpretation. There is no single best interpretation that can be stipulated independently of our purposes. Every going is a coming. When we ask for the "best" interpretation of the cases that animate the project, we are asking for the interpretation that best captures the morally relevant features that ground our reactive attitudes. So the "best" interpretation will be the one that tracks the features that matter to the relationship. Engaging in the interpretive task well requires developing ethical thinking.

## 🔊 Speakers



**Hrishikesh Joshi**

Arizona



**Amy Berg**

Assistant professor  
Oberlin College



**Craig Agule**

Rutgers-Camden



**Amy Flowerree**

Assistant Professor  
Texas Tech University

## 🔊 Moderator



**Jp Messina**

Assistant Professor  
Purdue University

## Pathologies of the Administrative State

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 2

📍 Grand Ballroom II

### Abstracts:

#### **Political Corruption for Moral Progress**, Mario Juárez García

Some scholars observe a trend in the history of liberal societies: moral norms that constrain actions have decreased, which increases the realm of individual liberties. For example, believing in a different deity was once punished, today it's tolerated; lending money for a profit was once a criminal offense, now it is a prestigious profession; female chastity was once required for marriage, now it is irrelevant; homosexuality was once prohibited, now it's normalized, etc. And yet, in the later years, we see an opposite trend to more laws, more prohibitions, and overcriminalization of different spheres of life. Can we re-establish the trend towards de-moralization and hence moral progress?

It is not easy to identify the laws that must be eliminated and those that must remain. A famous liberal strategy to identify such laws is to look for those that are not justified. The problem is that moral change is often quicker than moral justification, in which case, we might be stuck with defective laws before we have available reasons to justify their elimination. In this paper, I propose a way to identify and eliminate defective laws, which would allow us to re-establish the trend of de-moralization in liberal societies without depending on available justifications. I argue that some cases of political corruption (using public office for private gain) are the result of defective law, not of defective people, in which case the law must be changed given that it is over-moralized (moral considerations are putting illegitimate restrictions on individual liberty). I think that the prohibition of drugs is the clearest current example of this phenomenon. Because political corruption allows the existence of black markets of drugs, it is the laws against drugs that must be de-moralized and changed, but instead, current political discourse focuses on punishing corrupt law enforcers for receiving bribes. Yet, it is difficult to find reasons that can publicly be shared for legalizing drugs, even when the black market (and hence people buying drugs in the shadows) is booming. The main goal of this paper is to demonstrate that some cases of political corruption indicate that it's time to de-moralize the law.

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#### **Expert Knowledge in the Administrative State**, Alexander Schafer and Jordan Lofthouse

Over the past century, the administrative state has vastly expanded its power and political independence. Some prominent academic voices, such as Cass Sunstein and Joseph Heath, have argued that we should endorse the administrative state's large and growing powers to reap the benefits of technical expertise. We introduce an important qualification to this claim by highlighting the contingency of expert knowledge. First, the reliability of expertise is institutionally sensitive, and there are epistemic drawbacks to centralized administrative rule. Second, the relevant notion of expertise is task-dependent. Who qualifies as an expert depends on the project at hand and the kind of knowledge required for its completion. The implication of these two contingent features of expertise entails that, although experts provide crucial input into intelligent policy design, without the correct epistemic ecosystem expert rule is liable to produce expert failure. After presenting this qualification, we show

how polycentric governance may offer an alternative institutional arrangement that is capable of retaining the benefits of expertise while mitigating many of its pathologies. By introducing competition, contestation, and diversity into the epistemic ecosystem, polycentric governance facilitates the discovery, communication, and implementation of useful knowledge. In this way, we argue, polycentric political systems can enhance the effectiveness of expertise.

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### **Reasonableness as a Quality of Good Government**, Joseph Heath

As a supporter of the welfare state, it often pains me to observe the public sector in action, and in particular, to see how its operations appear from the perspective of the average citizen. Regardless of the urgency of environmental, social and economic problems, it can be difficult to persuade our fellow citizens to accept an expansion of the role of government in their lives when the state so often interacts with them in a way that is indifferent, unresponsive, legalistic, or coercive. As Bo Rothstein has observed, when considering the issue of state legitimacy there is a tendency to vastly overvalue procedures such as democratic elections, which provide “inputs” to the political system, and to underestimate the importance of state “outputs.” Elections are not only infrequent, they are also entirely abstract for most citizens, producing outcomes that are, at best, only observed through media. By contrast, citizens interact routinely with state officials, whether it be in the form of primary school teachers, police officers, transit employees, postal workers, or customer service representatives at the motor vehicle licensing office. These interactions provide them with a fund of concrete personal experience that has an enormous impact on their attitude toward government. Rothstein has argued that partisans of the welfare state should pay a great deal more attention to the quality of these interactions.

Obviously there are many ways that public officials can interact with citizens that will serve to erode state legitimacy. Corruption is the most obvious, and in many countries the most pressing concern. In this paper I would like to focus on a pathology that is less corrosive, but that remains a problem even in developed countries that enjoy relatively high quality of government, which is that state officials often exhibit unreasonableness in their actions. The notion of reasonableness that I am concerned with is equivalent to what Eugene Bardach and Robert Kagan, in their discussion of regulatory enforcement, refer to as “site-level unreasonableness.” They introduce this conception in order to emphasize that even rules that are perfectly well-justified can be applied in a way that undermines their legitimacy. Most often this involves applying the rules inflexibly, without reference to the purpose for which they were instituted (i.e. “going by the book”). Bardach and Kagan provide many compelling examples of this, yet unfortunately the formal definition that they offer of unreasonableness is excessively narrow. Thus the first objective of the paper is to introduce a broader conception of reasonableness, in order to identify more clearly the problematic interaction style that state officials sometimes adopt.

Having articulated this conception of reasonableness, and having distinguished it from other prominent uses of the term with respect to public administration, I will go on to describe my reasons for thinking that the reasonableness of state officials constitutes an important feature of good government. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has generated considerable interest in the phenomenon of state capacity, especially given the rather striking differences in the ability of different states around the world to achieve broadly similar public health objectives. One thing that became clear is that state capacity is tied, not just to the organizational achievements of state institutions narrowly construed, but to the ability of state actors to elicit cooperation from members of the public at large. The problem with unreasonableness, or more specifically, with an institutional culture in the public sector that either tolerates or promotes unreasonable decision-making, is that it limits the ability of the state to elicit cooperation from the public. I will go on to note certain features of public institutions that can have this unfortunate effect. The most important, I will argue, is a misguided effort to eliminate administrative discretion.

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#### Speakers



#### **Mario Juarez-Garcia**

Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Political Economy  
Tulane University



#### **Alexander Schaefer**

University at Buffalo



#### **Jordan Lofthouse**

Mercatus Center



#### **Joseph Heath**

Professor  
University of Toronto

 Moderator



**Matthew Jeffers**  
Independent Scholar  
Georgia State University

## Bias and Noise in Algorithms

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 2

📍 Salon Room

### Abstracts:

#### **Bias, Noise, and Algorithmic Groups**, Katie Creel

Previous work on algorithmic fairness has focused on unfair distributions of algorithmic outcomes due to social bias or discrimination against members of protected groups. This focus is eminently reasonable. Social bias concentrates unwarranted negative treatment on the same people in virtue of their shared characteristics and in multiple spheres of their existences. Due to her perceived membership in a group, an individual might encounter discriminatory treatment while pursuing housing, employment, legal recourse, state benefits, and social relationships. Indeed, one of the pernicious functions of bias is to coordinate ill treatment across multiple domains of life, concentrating it on members of the same groups. In algorithmic decision-making, too, errors, bad outcomes, and other forms of ill treatment are unequally distributed between groups.

However, determining whether a decision-making algorithm is deciding on the basis of group membership is notoriously difficult. Many algorithms are opaque – closed to inspection, difficult even for experts to understand, or both. Even with transparent access to an algorithm, determining the relationship between group membership and outcome can be difficult. Some algorithmic decision-making with discriminatory impacts occurs not directly on the basis of social categories such as race and gender – assume they are excluded from the dataset – but instead on the basis of proxy variables. Proxy variables are categories that are highly correlated with but not identical to protected categories such as race, gender, or national origin. For example, in a racially segregated society, zip codes can be used as proxies for race.

Some scholars have posited that machine learning systems might rely on novel features created during the learning process that conjoin existing features in the data, whether sensitive or not, in unusual or disjunctive ways. Robyn Repko Waller and Russell L. Waller coin the term “assembled bias” to describe “emerging feature spaces that encode novel algorithmic bias involving already marginalized groups.”

Waller & Waller’s assembled biases raise an as-yet unanswered question for algorithmic bias. How should we think about errors or other bad outcomes that happen to novel algorithmic groups? And under what circumstances does a collection of individuals treated similarly by an algorithm deserve attention as a novel group? For example, Kearns et. al. have argued that because no classifier is perfect, the exclusion of “the subgroup of individuals defined ex-post as the set of individuals [a classifier] misclassified” is unfortunate but not unfair. But under what circumstances might this subgroup, or some subset of it, warrant a fairness claim? In this paper, I will explore ill treatment of novel groups with the aim of defining the circumstances under which it is a special concern.

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#### **Recommended bias**, Silvia Milano

Given an objective, an algorithm can be said to be (by its own lights) biased if it performs less well against that objective for different groups of target users. For example: face recognition software can be biased in this sense if it is less accurate at recognising black women than it is for white men. I consider what a similar notion of bias for recommendation algorithms might look like. In order to articulate bias, one needs to define the specific objective or goals of the recommendation algorithm. Once the objective is established, bias can be identified by examining the performance of the algorithm across different groups of users.

The task of a recommendation algorithm is canonically defined as that of ‘finding good items’, but what counts as good? A standard way to cash this out, reflected in the dominant use of accuracy metrics for recommender systems evaluation, is in terms of correspondence with a user’s preferences. On this standard interpretation, a recommendation algorithm performs well if it accurately predicts the preferences of its users, and recommends the items that rank highest according to each user’s preference ranking.

The standard interpretation appears to provide a baseline for assessing whether a recommender system is biased. For example, a music recommender system will be biased if it is less good at predicting the listening preferences of some groups of users, compared to others. However, using preferences as the criterion to judge the quality of recommendations comes with challenges. Here we examine two challenges to the standard interpretation, which derive from: i) the presence of feedback effects between recommendations and predictions; and ii) the ambiguous understanding of preferences in the recommendation setting.

First, the presence of feedback effects highlights how recommendations cannot be based solely on predictions, on pain of deteriorating over time (in addition to posing other familiar risks, such as polarising their users or placing them in filter bubbles). However, this leaves open the question of what other criterion, aside from user

preferences, could be used and justified in specific context.

Second, the understanding of user preferences is ambiguous, in recommendation settings, because the frame of reference for the choices faced by individual users is not equivalent to the representation of the options implicit in the recommender system design. For example, the way in which different groups of users interact with news recommendations depends on contextual factors that are not captured by the recommender. This again implies that, to function as a baseline, revealed preferences need to be supplemented by an understanding of the implicit frame of reference that embeds them.

These two challenges put into question whether user preferences can provide an adequate standard to evaluate recommendations in a practically meaningful sense.

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### Is calibration a requirement of algorithmic fairness? David Grant

Recent empirical work suggests that the predictive algorithms institutions use to decide how to treat us are often unfairly biased against marginalized groups. In response, computer scientists have proposed a variety of statistical criteria of fairness: formal measures of algorithmic performance that purport to capture dimensions along which an algorithm can be fair or unfair. Much of the recent philosophical literature on algorithmic fairness has focused on two of these criteria, Equalized Odds and Calibration Within Groups. While both criteria are intuitively plausible, satisfying both is mathematically impossible when the base rate of the feature being predicted differs across groups.

This paper argues that Calibration Within Groups is a requirement of algorithmic fairness—and reconciles it with Equalized Odds—by defending it against two important objections.

Benjamin Eva has recently argued that Calibration Within Groups is not a necessary condition of fairness by appeal to cases in which violations of the requirement do not result in a net disadvantage for either affected group. For example, a recidivism risk score of 6 might represent a greater risk of recidivism for black defendants than white defendants, but a risk score of 4 might represent a greater risk of recidivism for black defendants than white defendants. I argue that these cases do not show that Calibration Within Groups is not a requirement of fairness. Instead, they show that we need to be more inclusive about which groups are relevant to statistical criteria of fairness. The set of relevant groups is typically understood to include only protected classes (and intersectional combinations thereof), but I argue that it should be expanded to include groups defined in terms of arbitrary combinations of features. With this modification, cases like Eva's no longer show that an algorithm can violate Calibration Within Groups without treating anyone unfairly. While neither racial group is treated unfairly overall in the example above, subgroups of both groups are—namely those whose risk of recidivism is overestimated relative to others.

A second objection to Calibration Within Groups starts with the observation that predictive errors are only problematic from the perspective of procedural fairness if they are liable to affect outcomes. Since some failures of Calibration Within Groups cannot influence outcomes—say, because the miscalibration only affects risk scores that are too far away from the decision threshold to make a difference—Calibration Within Groups is not a requirement of procedural fairness. I concede that Calibration Within Groups is thus not a requirement of procedural fairness, but maintain that it is nonetheless a requirement of fairness in algorithm design. I argue that, in cases where the context of deployment is uncertain, ensuring that a predictive algorithm satisfies Calibration Within Groups is necessary to avoid violations of Equalized Odds. The upshot is that if we accept Equalized Odds as a requirement of procedural fairness, we should also accept Calibration Within Groups as a requirement of algorithmic fairness—at least in some contexts.

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#### 🗨️ Speakers



##### **Kathleen Creel**

Assistant Professor  
Northeastern University



##### **Silvia Milano**

University of Exeter / LMU Munich



##### **David Gray Grant**

Assistant Professor  
University of Florida

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#### 🗨️ Moderator



##### **Ryan Doody**

Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Political Economy  
Brown University

## Trust and Social Capital

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 2

📍 Executive Room

### Abstracts:

**Gender, Social Capital, and the COVID-19 Pandemic**, Alexander Craig, co-authored by Stefanie Haeffele

The COVID-19 Pandemic caused extensive disruption of the social fabric of Americans' lives. Using data from a survey conducted during August 2020, we show that the impact of the pandemic on men and women's social ties in the US was not identical. Women were more likely than men to report loss of social connectedness in several types of relationships, especially their more distant relationships. Men may have gained in connectedness to their close family. We explore changes to household care duties and jobholding to explain this phenomenon. Using data from the American Time Use Survey, we find it unlikely that increased childcare duties led to women's decline in social capital, but men's gain may have come from their increased provision of childcare in the home.

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**A New Method of Studying Trust, Norms, Poverty**, Kevin Vallier, Masoud Movahed, and Shaon Lahiri

This paper examines the connection between trust, social norms, and poverty through a national survey of six thousand Americans. Our empirical study is underway and in the data collection phase. In the fall, we will develop and advance an interpretation of our work on trust and norms.

We will also report the results of our attempt at a measurement innovation. Researchers often use vignettes to measure social norms. But we will, for the first time, use vignettes to scrutinize the tie between trust and norms. We calculate the presence of a norm in a community and then indicate persistent norm violations in those communities to the subject. We then ask subjects whether a new community member will engage in trusting behavior.

This paper uses familiar accounts of social norms and trust. But it will advance new empirical hypotheses about the connection between these two ideas. Our study focuses on impoverished individuals in the United States. Low trust and pro-poverty norms may interact to preserve poverty, and trust-norms explanations should complement other, more familiar approaches to understanding poverty.

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**Trust Lost**, Abdul Ishaq Ansari

"With the very first blow", Jean Amery writes of torture in Auschwitz, "he loses something we will perhaps call 'trust in the world'." This paper offers a philosophical account of losing trust in the world. What is this harrowing response? Is it ever an appropriate or rational position? Though victims of torture and state sanctioned violence often talk about losing trust in the world, we won't find answers in the recent philosophical literature on trust. Philosophers tend to ask what is it to trust somebody, with something particular (a secret, a promise, a piece of furniture), and when such trust is appropriate. In this talk I demur. Drawing on post bellum case studies, I argue for two claims. (1) Lost trust is a distinct affective attitude rather than a mere absence of trust. Compare: Hating someone isn't just not-loving them. (2) So understood, losing trust is an appropriate response to something as nebulous as 'the world' just in case the victim has good reason to believe no person or institution could compensate them and offer restitution for their injuries. It follows that the pressing question, 'How should we restore trust?', is sometimes about managing a negative affective stance and a belief about other agents.

## 🔊 Speakers



**Alexander Craig**  
Postdoctoral Fellow  
New York University



**Kevin Vallier**  
Associate Professor Of Philosophy  
Bowling Green State University



**Masoud Movahed**  
University of Pennsylvania



**Shaon Lahiri**  
Postdoctoral Researcher - PPE  
University of Pennsylvania



**Abdul Ansari**  
Ph.D. Student  
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

## 🔊 Moderator



**Jason Byas**  
University of Michigan (Ann Arbor)

## From Conflict to Connection: Overcoming Hurdles and Harnessing Potential in University Civil Discourse Projects

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 2

📍 Chairman's Room

### Abstracts:

#### **Meeting in the Middle? Difficult Conversation About Race on University Campuses,** Winston Thompson

This presentation delves into the ethically difficult nature of engaging in discussions about race within university settings. Despite universities often-assumed status as ideal contexts for rigorous intellectual discourse on major social issues of (in)justice, conversations about race can often present unique challenges and ethical dilemmas for discussion facilitators. This presentation aims to shed light on these challenges and explore the potential for coherence between popular approaches to discussing race in the university context.

The presentation critically examines both ontological and normative dimensions of approaches to race. In this work, the referenced ontological approaches include, inter alia, "natural kind accounts of race" and "racial constructivist accounts of race". Intersecting with these ontological positions, normative approaches to race include "racial conservatism" (which seeks to continue usage of the concept of race) and "racial eliminativism" (which seeks to eventually eliminate the concept of race); these normative positions complicate how even a skilled facilitator might ethically and non-paternalistically engage university-based participants in a thoughtful discussion of race. The central focus of the presentation considers whether and how these approaches might be compatible with one another, despite the fundamental, meaningful, and nuanced differences they provoke. By exploring compatibility and potential coherence between these perspectives, the presentation sheds light on the ethical complexities that arise in civil discourse initiative events focused on race within university campuses.

Through a critical examination of these practices in a delicate social and political context, the presentation aims to deepen the attendees' understanding of the ethical challenges present in university discussions about race.

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#### **Citizens and/or Students: Balancing Autonomy and Paternalism in Civil Discourse Programs on Campus,** Jamie Herman

This presentation discusses the relationship between campus civil discourse and the public aims of higher education institutions. Given their role as public institutions, universities are part and parcel of liberal democratic society and have obligations to create and sustain democratic spaces and civic education on their campuses. These public missions could be achieved by civil discourse initiatives in that they provide forums for democratic dialogue and harness the potential for cultivating civic engagement among participants. In this sense, civil discourse achieves both public missions of higher education: fostering democratic engagement and civic



education.

The relationship between civil discourse and the public aims of higher education is not, however, as straightforward as it may seem. In civil discourse initiatives, student participants are simultaneously citizens and learners. Their entitlements in campus spaces, including participation in campus discourse, is mediated by their status as autonomous citizens. But they are also students, justifiably treated paternalistically by the institution in pursuit of its educational ends. There is a key tension here between autonomy and paternalism. Generally, this tension is mitigated by consent, but consent in higher education is not sufficiently satisfactory to justify institutional paternalism in ways that will be illuminated by this panelist. In the case of civil discourse programs, students' status as citizens and learners complicates the nature of their participation, the dynamics of civil discourse, and the viability of these programs as means of achieving higher education's public mission.

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### **How Civil Discourse Projects Aid Campus Dissonance, Sally Moore**

Universities regularly tout their commitment to noble ideals through value-laden mission statements. However, a quick look online reveals countless examples of universities acting in contradiction to their messaging, such as the creation of fake classes for student-athletes (Lyll 2014), denying tenure to an esteemed professor whose work focuses on slavery (Robertson 2021), and a Vice Chancellor for Research who plagiarized on a federal grant (McConnell 2022). Such dissonance leads some to believe universities lack a genuine desire to create cultures that match their espoused values (Gaudet 2020).

Investing in civil discourse programs is one way to connect university virtue signaling and daily operations. Successful programs provide a unique opportunity for students to engage in ethical thinking and discussion outside the classroom, invite ethical dialogue, encourage creative problem-solving, and foster a general "spirit" of ethical awareness on campus (Green et al. 2020, 224). In addition, by existing outside of classrooms, public discourse programs allow for interdisciplinary collaboration and connections to a broader campus community (Pritchard and Borden 2021; Meyers 2021; Doorley 2020; Ferguson and Louder, 2018).

This presentation explores how targeted civil discourse programs can create a culture of connection and genuine ethical exploration on university campuses.

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## Speakers



### **Winston Thompson**

Associate Professor of Educational Studies; Associate Professor of Philosophy (by courtesy)  
The Ohio State University



### **Jamie Herman**

PhD Candidate  
The Ohio State University



### **Sally Moore**


Ph.D. Student  
The Ohio State University

 **Moderator**



**Sahar Heydari Fard**  
Assistant Professor  
The Ohio State University

## **Authoritarianism**

 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 2

 Imperial Room

## **Abstracts:**

### **What is Authoritarianism?** Alexander Motchoulski

I develop a general account of the concept of authoritarianism which I call justificatory authoritarianism. According to this view, authoritarianism is a justification of the imposition of political power over others by appeal to a prospect for considerable collective benefit where that justification serves to suspend or suppress normal standards for the justification of the exercise of political power. I believe that this conception of authoritarianism is suitably general so as to be the basic concept of a general theory of authoritarianism. In support of this, I argue that justificatory authoritarianism is a better account of the concept than the accounts developed in the social sciences because it better captures the wide range of phenomena that can appropriately be called authoritarian. Moreover, I show how justificatory authoritarianism is a productive concept for social and political philosophy by showing how this account provides a precise characterization of the way in which authoritarianism is anti-individualistic.

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### **A New Psychology of Authoritarianism,** Thomas Costello and Alexander Motchoulski

What does it mean for a person to be authoritarian? In this cross-disciplinary research effort, we develop and test a measure of generalized authoritarianism—a novel psychological construct modeled on both theoretical insights from political philosophy and manifest similarities among existing measures of authoritarianism in psychology. We contend that, as a personality trait, authoritarianism involves a tendency to (1) perceive and attend to collective threats, rewards, and other sources of group benefit,

(2) perceive and attend to hierarchies and group differences, and (3) wield power over other people for instrumental and symbolic purposes, which ultimately leads authoritarians to view individual rights as substantial obstacles to achieving collective benefit. Across six surveys and several thousand research participants, we find that this new model accounts for the majority of variance in extant (yet problematic) measures of right-wing authoritarianism and left-wing authoritarianism and is modestly related to political conservatism. We then identify a constellation of key cognitive, personality, and worldview hallmarks of authoritarianism (e.g., closed-mindedness, antagonism, instrumental utilitarianism, hierarchicalness, competitiveness). We close by arguing that the model and measure offer a leading-edge means of describing, modelling, and understanding the psychology of authoritarianism.

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### **Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Long Run,** Jacob Barrett and Samuel Bagg

Democratic governments are plagued by problems of short-termism. They focus too much on short-term costs and benefits and ignore the long run. Some of the causes of short-termism trace to generic features of human psychology or the human condition. But others arise due to the structure of democratic accountability mechanisms, which incentivize politicians to focus on the present interests of their present constituents rather than on their longer-term interests or on the interests of future generations. In light of this difficulty, some who are particularly concerned with our long-term prospects have endorsed technocratic or even authoritarian forms of government that are heavily—if not entirely—insulated from the pressures of democratic accountability. Although the fall of the Soviet Union diminished the appeal of centrally planned, “eco-authoritarian” utopias, China’s rise has reignited speculation that non-democratic forms of governance might be better suited to grappling with climate change, as well as with long-term risks posed by AI and other emerging technologies. This paper critically assesses this long run argument for authoritarianism, arguing that while we can learn something from it, its core conclusions must be rejected.

One common response to authoritarian arguments appeals to the intrinsic value of democratic procedures. Yet however strong such considerations might be, we are skeptical that they will always outweigh the very serious stakes associated with the long-run future. Instead, we engage the long run case for authoritarianism on its own instrumentalist terms, arguing that the best way to promote long-term welfare is to ensure that political decision-makers are subject to robust forms of democratic oversight. Drawing on prior work, we argue that any non-democratic political structure greatly increases the risk of state capture—and indeed, that this risk only becomes more severe when we adopt a long-term perspective. While a well-designed authoritarian system might have certain advantages over its democratic rivals in the short term, the key disadvantage of any non-democratic power structure is its vastly greater susceptibility to disastrous, all-encompassing forms of capture— whether via usurpation or gradual decay.

All that said, critics of democracy are right that institutional reform is sorely needed in order to address long-term problems more effectively. And in some cases, a promising approach might indeed be to relax certain mechanisms of democratic accountability—for example, by making greater use of independent administrative bodies. Embracing such locally technocratic institutions within a system that remains broadly democratic is compatible with our instrumentalist approach; in fact, a focus on resisting state capture makes it easier to identify the most promising reforms in this regard. Crucially, however, we conclude that the case for full-throated authoritarian alternatives to democracy grows weaker, not stronger, as we shift our focus to the long run.

## 🗣️ Speakers



**Thomas Costello**

MIT



**Alexander Motchoulski**

University of Virginia



**Jacob Barrett**

Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Political Science  
Vanderbilt University



**Samuel Bagg**

Assistant Professor of Political Science  
University of South Carolina

## 🗣️ Moderator



**Sam Koreman**

PhD Candidate  
University of Virginia

## Social Ontology and Economics Methodology

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 2

📍 Cotton Room

### Abstracts:

#### **Eliminativism and the End of Economics**, Kobi Finestone

Economics is an ongoing scientific research enterprise, shaped by the contingencies of history; both intellectual and social. From this has arisen a highly complex and diverse research program encompassing investigative methods ranging from game theoretic modeling to field experiments to largescale statistical measurements and analysis. But despite this evident complexity and diversity, there are those within mainstream economics who claim that there is but one ‘engine for the discovery of the truth’ in economics. And for them this one engine is contemporary microeconomics, exemplified by agential modeling and constrained optimization methods. From this it follows that ideally, macroeconomic aggregate modeling will not be supplemented or complemented by microfoundations but eliminated from the economic corpus.

Economic eliminativism, as I am referring to it as, is a radical methodological position. It calls for the wholesale reorganization, both methodologically as well as sociologically, of economics. And yet despite its revolutionary aspirations, it has largely permeated mainstream economics becoming, as I argue, the standard methodological position. Charitably, economic eliminativism is concerned less with the short-run developments evident in economics and more with the long-run evolution of the discipline. Taking this wide-ranging perspective, the eliminativist can hold that while it may be useful to continue doing macroeconomics in the here and now, come the “end of economics” such flawed methods will be dispensed with.

Exemplified by Nobel laureate Robert Lucas Jr., this position looks for the day when “the term ‘macroeconomic’ will simply disappear from use and the modifier ‘micro’ will become superfluous” (Lucas 1987, p.107). And as I argue, this methodological position differs in principle from traditional Nagelian reductionism and many philosophical conceptions of economic microfoundations.

But despite its broad acceptance within mainstream economics, economic eliminativism is an untenable methodological position which, I argue, ought to be abandoned by both economic methodologists and practicing economists alike. Specifically, economic eliminativism invites a theoretical inconsistency wherein economic aggregates must simultaneously be eliminated and utilized. Relatedly, economic eliminativism is itself an unstable methodological position as there remains no principled reason to end the eliminativist program with microeconomics, inviting attempts to eliminate not only macroeconomics, but economics in its entirety. For these reasons, economic eliminativism should be rejected, not only because there is little prospect of achieving successful microfoundations in the short-run but because in the long-run the elimination of macroeconomics is simply and principally untenable.

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Kevin Hoover argues against a strong microfoundationalist account in macroeconomics, which requires macroeconomic models' conclusions to be shown to be derivable from the choice pattern of individual economic agents. Hoover describes this as an eliminative reductionist approach devoted to the euthanasia of macroeconomics (Hoover, 2001, 2008, 2012)—i.e., there is no need for a separate field to study economic aggregates because all that is needed is microeconomic theory. Interestingly, Hoover and most of the critics have based their arguments on the idea that the microfoundationalist approach is ontologically inaccurate—e.g., DSGE models do not accurately represent individual economic agents' choice patterns of an entire country (King, 2012) or that macroeconomics phenomena are not entirely constituted by the choices made by economic agents (Epstein, 2014, 2015).

I focus on one argument found in Hoover's *Causality in Macroeconomics* book, which proposes that macroeconomics is suitable for structural causal analysis. This account appears to be a methodological approach, which I do not see as problematic. The problem is that in a closer look, it becomes evident that this account relies on an ontological dichotomy among macroeconomic aggregates, which is only plausible if one accepts the metaphysical view that macroeconomic aggregates supervene on microeconomic properties, but the former is not reducible to the latter. To look at this is important because the arguments that have challenged Hoover's claims about the nature of macroeconomics have only challenged the metaphysical relationship of supervenience between macroeconomics and microeconomics (e.g., Reiss, 2004; Epstein, 2014). These debates have not addressed an important question concerning the division of labor and the relationship between metaphysics and methodology. This is important because if a methodological account turns out to be feasible due to metaphysical reasons, and an account to defend such reasons has been put forward, it is then crucial to challenge the plausibility of the latter because this will simultaneously challenge the plausibility of the former.

So, in this paper, first, I argue that Hoover's ontological dichotomy between macroeconomic aggregates concerns difficulties measuring macroeconomic aggregates instead. Because of this, it is not clear that his macroeconomic methodological approach gets off the ground. Second, I draw attention to Dan Rodrik's modeling evaluation in economics account to shed light on a different way to assess the need (or absence) for microfoundations in macroeconomics modeling. My claim here, therefore, should not be confused as an argument that advocates for Rodrik's account as the modeling account for economics. Instead, my claim is more general. I claim that the microfoundations debate reveals different answers through a model evaluation procedure—i.e., why (and when) to give up (or not) microfoundations makes for empirically accurate compelling macroeconomic models.

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**The Economist as a Social Theorist: The Case of Kenneth Arrow**, Yam Maayan

The expanding role of economists in analyzing social institutions, norms, and values using formal tools since the 1960s has primarily been discussed within the context of "economic imperialism." This perspective asserts that economists' methods offer a superior means of explaining social patterns. However, economists' interest in social institutions has also been driven by another critical factor: the recognition that social institutions play a crucial role in providing the infrastructure that underlies market operations and should therefore be incorporated into economic analysis.

To delve into this interest in social institutions, our paper focuses on the work of Kenneth Arrow. We argue that throughout his career, Arrow dedicated himself to developing a social theory that could serve as the foundation for a unified analytical framework in economic analysis. When we refer to "social theory," we do not specifically mean Arrow's pioneering work in Social Choice Theory but rather the broader endeavor of explaining the formation and functioning of human societies.

Arrow's theory posits that society consists of individuals who continually strive to understand the state of the world, relying on social institutions to bridge informational gaps. The critical concept in Arrow's framework is the concept of "beliefs", derived from rational decision under uncertainty theory. This concept plays a central role in emphasizing the influence of society on individuals. Thus, Arrow's alternative approach utilized the standard assumptions of rational decision theory to replace the neoclassical framework, which he believed oversimplified the role of markets in promoting people's well-being by assuming optimal incentives.

This argument may surprise those familiar with Arrow's significant contributions to neoclassical economics, such as the fundamental welfare theorems and the existence of general equilibrium. However, it is precisely his interpretation of these results that forms the basis for his critique. In particular, Arrow employed the general equilibrium under uncertainty model to highlight the role of uncertainty and informational gaps in economic reality. Thus, he saw the general equilibrium model as a nonrealistic normative ideal, revealing why real-world markets inevitably fall short.

While Arrow's approach complicated economic analysis by considering a broader perspective of social reality and its interaction with economic activity, it also carries a critical internal tension. By emphasizing the influence of individuals' beliefs on economic behavior, Arrow sought to incorporate social institutions within the formal language of mathematical economics, ultimately reducing them to entities of beliefs and preferences. Therefore, although this unified framework offers a sophisticated approach to policy analysis, it ultimately reduces normative aspects of policy evaluation to questions of efficiency.

We argue that understanding the dialectical nature of Arrow's work clarifies some inherent tensions within contemporary economics. Arrow's analytical framework, while a powerful critical tool, requires careful consideration of its normative implications. In particular, caution should be exercised in taking the ontological claims of this theory too seriously from a normative standpoint. While informational market failures can explain the inadequacy of markets in providing certain goods, they cannot fully elucidate the underlying need for those goods. This argument will be illustrated through examples.

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### 🗨️ Speakers



#### **Kobi Finestone**

Postdoctoral Research Associate  
Chapman University



#### **Nadia Ruiz**

Stanford



#### **Yam Maayan**

PhD Candidater  
Tel Aviv University, CHOPE Duke University

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### 🗨️ Moderator



#### **Annalisa Costella**

Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam

## **The Ethics of Voting**

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 2

📍 River Room I

### Abstracts:

#### **The Importance of Collective Action for Justice (with a Focus on Voting)** , Julia Maskivker

This paper presents an argument in favor of the importance, for justice, of duties to contribute to institutionalized collective action and, specifically, in favor of the duty to vote as an instantiation of said type of duties. I aim at dispelling some serious objections—mainly from libertarian corners—to the effect that a supposed duty to participate in joint pursuits does not make sense from an instrumentalist perspective concerned with the promotion of justice because other values such as personal freedom and individual effectiveness must take priority. I focus on a putative duty to vote as an example of a collective duty necessary for justice since the literature skeptical of collective duties has been particularly occupied with it.

Besides the objection against the moral obligatoriness of collective action based on individual freedom interests, the menu of reasons against concerted action also includes a more specific, and perhaps more powerful, claim. This is the idea that when engaging in joint action with others, it makes no sense (morally and rationally) to contribute to the collective activity in question if our single contribution will turn out to be negligible, a proverbial drop in the ocean. This “futility” objection is quite familiar in discussions of voting behavior, but it is also addressed at activities other than participation in elections such as individual efforts to fight climate change and pollution, among others. What makes recent reenactments of the futility objection interesting is that they come accompanied by the claim that neglecting to participate in collective action—for example, neglecting to cast a ballot in elections or neglecting to be environmentally conscious—is required by a utilitarian-inspired altruism that seeks to be more helpful to others in society than contributing to large-scale activities may be. The idea is that one is most effective in acting for others when one redirects one’s efforts to situations in which our single acts have non-negligible effects on the welfare of other people.

My main task in the essay is to show that the logic in favor of maximizing individual expected value reflects a misguided reluctance to acknowledge the existence of any and all moral requirements to cooperate with others in the realization of worthy objectives that are only able to come to fruition via the accumulation of many, perhaps millions, of individual efforts, and by supporting institutions that can constrain the behavior of actors that

contribute disproportionately to collective social problems. Maximizing social utility often requires individuals to engage in acts whose impact as single acts is small. It also requires lending support to collective agents that can elicit change more effectively than individuals. Secondly, I am interested in explaining why neglecting to conceive of voting as a collective obligation may be more socially disutility-producing than detractors of a duty to vote realize; and specifically, why recent examples of “bleeding-heart” libertarianism that reject a duty to vote well are internally inconsistent.

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#### **Place Your Bet, Then Cast Your Vote**, Chris Freiman

Recent work suggests that a vote in certain swing states has a much higher chance of being decisive than previously thought. This finding has led some social scientists and philosophers to argue that voters in these states should vote to change the outcome of the election. However, swing-state voters should vote only if they are justified in believing that they are casting their vote for the better candidate—otherwise they risk changing the outcome of the election for the worse. Arriving at justified beliefs about the value difference between candidates is exceedingly difficult for a variety of reasons, one of which is that it’s hard to forecast the long-term effects of a presidential administration.

This paper argues that swing-state voters should test their forecasting ability by using a political prediction market to place bets on various political and economic matters such as Supreme Court nominations, GDP growth, climate change, and more. If someone is unable to make money from such predictions, they have evidence that they are a poor political forecaster. Consequently, they have reason not to cast a (swing state) vote. The paper considers several objections—for instance, that it’s morally wrong to profit from a prediction of a harmful event and that voters are unable to bet on many politically relevant matters—and concludes that none are successful.

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#### **The Expressive Duty Not to Vote**, Joseph Porter

Many (if not most) democratic theorists believe that there is a duty to vote. Some argue in particular for an *expressive* duty to vote—a duty to vote as a means of what Stanley Benn calls “moral self-expression.” I argue on the contrary that most democratic citizens have several expressive reasons *not* to vote, and that they—or we—therefore have a *pro tanto* expressive duty not to vote.

I begin by discussing three main expressive reasons democratic citizens may have not to vote. First, not voting can express citizens’ refusal to be complicit with the unjust states to which they are subject. Most (if not all) democratic states enforce countless unjust laws and policies—in addition to committing untold *illegal* injustices. Since democratic elections are administered by the very same states which commit these injustices, and since the injustices these states commit are often systemic rather than party- or politician-specific, not voting uniquely expresses citizens’ refusal to be complicit with them.

Second, not voting can express citizens’ refusal to be complicit with false legitimations of democracy. Emilee Booth Chapman argues that higher voter turnout can increase democratic legitimacy by “mak[ing] the ... formal political equality of all citizens *manifest*.” But this formal political equality belies (and indeed obscures) deeply entrenched inequalities of *de facto* political power among democratic citizens. Hence, by not voting, citizens can express their refusal to be complicit with false legitimations of democracy which overstate citizens’ *de facto* political equality.

Third, paradoxically, not voting can express citizens’ opposition to excessive expressivism in democratic political cultures, which are often characterized by an overemphasis on largely symbolic actions like voting at the expense of other actions which may be less praised but more impactful. By not voting, democratic citizens can express their opposition to the prevailing inclination to focus on appearance over substance.

The upshot of these expressive reasons not to vote, I suggest, is that democratic citizens have a *pro tanto* expressive duty not to vote. To be sure, this duty can presumably be overridden under some circumstances—for instance, circumstances under which expressing opposition to a particular electoral candidate may be more important than expressing opposition to an unjust democratic state itself. Nevertheless, I argue, many democratic citizens still have all-things-considered expressive reason not to vote.

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#### Speakers



**Julia Maskivker**

Rollings College



**Chris Freiman**

West Virginia University



**Joseph Porter**

DePauw University

 Moderator



**Keith Hankins**  
Chapman University

## The Limits of Affective Liberalism

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 2

📍 River Room II

### Abstracts:

#### **Pity and Self-Deception in The Profession of Faith, John Warner**

The cultivation of pity is widely recognized to be central to Rousseau’s political and moral project for its ability to extend self-love and facilitate social sentiments like “generosity, clemency, and humanity” (DI 84). In this paper, however, I examine the ways in which the experience of pity can reinforce the very forms of selfishness it is said to mitigate, focusing in particular on its capacity to conceal from subjects themselves the self-interested character of their actions and motives. In short, I argue that pity is for Rousseau problematic due to its tendency to induce self-deceptive mental states. I make this argument by focusing on The Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar, whose eponymous character not only deploys pity in suspiciously selective and inevitably self-interested ways but does so fully persuaded of his own virtue. This kind of self-opacity is attributable in part to pity itself, which gives an ethical sheen to the vicar’s most crudely self-serving impulses and allows him to maintain his illusions in spite of the evidence that problematizes them. My argument, with its emphasis on the connections between pity and self-deception, builds on existing concerns about pity’s “pathologies” (Boyd 2004) while developing the subversive suggestion that the vicar, far from being the exemplar of “sincerity” that he is commonly taken to be, is instead a serial self-deceiver.

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#### **Playing the Victim: Pity and Equality Judith Shklar’s Moral Psychology, Michelle Schwarze and Timothy Tennyson**

What is the value of pity in liberal politics? Although scholars have increasingly sought to “bring the passions back in” to liberal theories of justice, whether compassion is beneficial or harmful to liberal democracies is far from obvious. We explore the complex moral psychology of pity in the political thought of one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s most skeptical liberals, Judith Shklar. Shklar, like Rousseau before her, highlights the potential promise of pity for liberal politics, going so far as to call it the “cure” to cruelty, the *summum malum* of her liberalism of fear. She also rightly recognizes, at least in her incisive work on Rousseau, that pity creates an unequal relationship between pitier and victims that threatens the political equality liberal democracies require. We explore Shklar’s moral psychology of victimhood here to elucidate the tension in employing pity as the affective means to combat cruelty.

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 Speakers



**John Warner**  
Associate Professor  
Kansas State University



**Michelle Schwarze**  
UW-Madison



**Tim Tennyson**  
University of Wisconsin, Madison

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 Moderator



**Gerard Rothfus**  
UNC

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## Democracy and Distrust



🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 2

📍 Terrace Room

### **Abstracts:**

#### **Challenges of Justified Distrust for Contemporary Liberalism, Joshua Paschal**

Grant that one is justified in distrust of another who endorses an oppressive feature or system. They commit a special type of wrong by failing, especially when confronted, to recognize reasons to think otherwise. In this presentation, I argue that, while all true, this poses a quite serious issue for contemporary liberalism because it is not clear what the limits of an endorsement are, assuming there are any at all. For example, a descendant of an oppressed group may be rightly suspicious of another celebrating a patriotic holiday. If this is true, the common ground necessary for trust between citizens may be too small and, further, increasingly small in the context of digital disinformation. I argue that while the role of oppressive institutions is difficult to resolve, ordinary citizens can best foster trust by engaging in grassroots politics. I make this argument by drawing on examples from activism. But this need to engage in grassroots politics, in turn, means we may be justified in distrusting someone who fails to adequately engage in politics beyond the ballot box.

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#### **Dealing with Distrust in Liberal Free Speech Jurisprudence, Mark Satta**

A common rationale given in favor of freedom of speech (understood as freedom from governmental regulation of or interference with speech) is the governmental distrust rationale. The governmental distrust rationale, in brief, is the view that the government should not have the power to regulate, suppress, or silence speech because the government should not be trusted with such responsibility. Those who endorse the governmental distrust rationale do so because they think the government would use the power to regulate speech inappropriately or poorly. Arguably, the governmental distrust rationale is part of what has motivated the U.S. to have a rather hands-off approach to free speech regulation. On the other hand, such a hands-off policy has arguably helped fuel the rampant spread of disinformation designed to undercut trust in government, in experts, and in many institutions. Thus, this provides at least some counterbalancing considerations in favor of more free speech regulation (at least speech that constitutes certain kinds of harmful disinformation). However, as is evidenced by the previous presentations in this session, there are tricky questions about what separates disinformation critiquing government, experts, and institutions from warranted critique of government, experts, and institutions. This presentation seeks to find some useful dividing lines that could be used by judges, legislators, and others.

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#### **👤 Speakers**



**Joshua Paschal**

Indiana University



**Mark Satta**

Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
Wayne State University

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#### **👤 Moderator**



**Lindy Ortiz**

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

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### **Asking, Evaluating, Criticizing: The Ethics and Epistemology of Resistance**

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 2

📍 Tower Room

### **Abstracts:**

#### **The Epistemic Preconditions of Resistance, Genae Matthews**

When up against oppressive social circumstances, how might we resist? Options that readily come to mind include public protesting, boycotting, civil disobedience, or otherwise conveying a message of revolt. While there is ample philosophical work on what it is to resist and, in particular, what it is to resist well, extant accounts of resistance have important but largely undertheorized epistemic preconditions for resisting. For instance, Gottlieb (1983), Reed (2001), and Cudd (2006) each promote some version of the claim that resisting oppression requires recognizing certain injustices as the results of oppression and then taking some sort of action against them as such. However, these preconditions render their accounts extensionally inadequate by virtue of excluding many intuitive cases of resistance.

This is because 'epistemically aware' agents – who not only recognize the relevant injustices but appreciate them

as products of oppressive norms and practices – are hard to come by. Most of us are instead ‘epistemically obtuse’ to some degree – we experience oppression-based injustices but the oppressive nature of those injustices is (to varying degrees) obscure to us. This is no accident; conditions of ideology are well-suited to keeping us ignorant of the oppressive nature of certain practices and thereby unable to recognize them as such. Turning our attention towards what resistance requires epistemically, per the extant accounts, thus illuminates the following worry: if we can’t resist until we’ve unearthed the oppressive nature of certain injustices and most of us are ‘obtuse’ to some degree, most of us are less capable of resistance than we might have assumed and some of us – i.e., who face significant degrees of epistemic obtuseness – might be unable to resist at all.

In this paper, I argue that resisting oppression does not require anything so strong as recognizing certain unjust conditions as products of social oppression. First, I illustrate how the extant accounts, by virtue of their epistemic requirements on resistance, admit of a distinction between resisting and quasi-resisting – the former of which meets the relevant epistemic requirements by consisting in actions taken against injustices recognized as products of oppression and the latter of which fails the epistemic requirement by consisting in actions taken against injustices not so recognized. In the first part of the paper, I show how vindicating certain actions – particularly, those taken by the ‘epistemically obtuse’ – as resistance rather than quasi-resistance carries deep normative and political importance.

In the second part of the paper, I present a positive proposal about what resistance requires of us epistemically, according to which an agent resists social oppression by **≡≡≡**-ing in case 1) she represents a given injustice under what I call ‘the guise of the bad,’ and 2) that representation is connected her **≡≡≡**-ing in the right way. This conclusion yields two insights: first, that classifying certain ‘epistemically obtuse’ acts as resistance is not merely normatively important but extensionally accurate, and that if I’m right, then, contra the extant accounts, knowledge-gathering actions such as gaining the hermeneutical tools to recognize certain injustice as products of social oppression might themselves be a form of resistance.

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### **Moral Criticism as a Tool Against Oppression,** Gabriella Hulsey

Most, if not all, people want to be good – morally speaking – people. But being a good person is difficult! You must be able to recognize when you are in a situation with moral stakes, be able to identify and appreciate the morally salient features of a situation, and then of course you have to figure out what you ought to do. We are imperfect beings, and there are various ways in which we might fail to do what we ought. So it’s very important that we put ourselves in the best position possible to succeed.

I will argue that moral criticism has been underappreciated as one way we can put ourselves in the best possible position to succeed at doing what we ought. When someone criticizes us for a moral failing, they are providing us with valuable information about the moral status of our action, and calling us to reflect on what we have done.

Thus, for someone who wants to be a moral person, the right attitude to have towards criticism is one of curiosity and openness. Criticism is best understood as a practice of offering and drawing the criticized person’s attention towards reasons bearing on the moral status of the criticized person’s action. This means that criticism is a valuable form of feedback on our moral performance.

A first-line defensive response to being criticized, while understandable, is thus a serious impediment to moral improvement. Like the student who sees she got a bad grade on her paper and refuses to read the professor’s comments, the person whose first response to criticism is to defend herself without considering what the critic is trying to draw her attention towards, reveals herself to be less interested in learning how to do better than in protecting her view of herself as someone who is already good. By responding defensively to criticism, a criticized person refuses to allow her attention to be drawn to reasons offered by others. So defensiveness also discounts the critic’s perspective as not worth substantive consideration.

My argument is not that we must be happy when we’re criticized, nor that we must always take criticisms of us as true or correct. Rather, I’m arguing that to be a good member of a moral community and a good person, it is essential that we cultivate the disposition of openness to allowing others to draw our attention towards reasons we had to act differently and to considering those reasons in good faith. Lastly, being willing to receive and consider criticism is a necessary part of our journey towards moral improvement. As such, my argument has implications for those who count themselves as allies to the oppressed. Not only is criticizing others for their moral failings an important part of allyship, cultivating openness to being criticized by those one has allied herself with.

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### **Unmoralizing Resistance: Three Lessons from the Ground,** Tamara Fakhoury

In her article, “What is Trans Philosophy?” Talia Mae Bettcher suggests that the value of philosophy lies in its ability to illuminate everyday experiences with oppression. If philosophy has anything to offer people living under systemic injustice, it is not puzzles, critical interventions, or a pathway to perplexity where there was none there before. If philosophy is going to help us it is by providing “fearless, even iconoclastic, *illuminations* of our experiences” with oppression. This emphasis on illumination does not foreclose the possibility of critical intervention, but it does mean that judgement is always beholden to the task of clarification. If a prevailing way of thinking hinders our ability to make sense of ourselves, then that constitutes a serious philosophical challenge to that way of thinking.

Bettcher calls this project of illumination “Ground-Bound Philosophy”. In this talk, I discuss how the aims of “ground-bound philosophy” should shape discussions in the ethics of resistance.

Current literature on resistance is overwhelmingly focused on moral evaluation. Questions of praise, blame, responsibility, and requirement tend to take center stage. I suggest that if our priority is to illuminate and make

intelligible victims experiences with their oppression then we should work towards unmoralizing our discussions of resistance. We should, in other words, try to reduce the dominance of impartial morality in our thinking about victims' responses to their oppression. I share three lessons I learned from observing real-world cases of resistance that have been integral to unmoralizing my own thinking about resistance: (1) Impartial moral values are not the only values that may bear relevantly on resistance. There may be other compelling reasons to engage in resistance independently of impartial moral concerns. (2) there is no guarantee that conflicts will not arise between these reasons in practice. Oppression can create circumstances in which victims have to choose between incommensurable ethical values, such as between upholding justice and preserving one's wellbeing, or being loyal to one's family and maintaining one's self-respect. (3) There may not be a way of cleanly resolving conflicts between our values when they arise. Moral evaluations of resistance do not settle the question of their ethical value (at least not without further argument).

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#### 🔙 Speakers



**Genae Matthews**  
UNC



**Gabriella Hulsey**  
PhD Student  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



**Tamara Fakhoury**  
Assistant Professor  
University of Minnesota - Twin Cities

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#### 🔙 Moderator



**Rosa Terlazzo**  
Associate Professor  
University of Rochester

3:30 PM

#### Break

🕒 3:30 PM - 3:45 PM, Nov 2

3:45 PM

#### Diversity and Rationality

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 2

📍 Grand Ballroom I

##### Abstracts:

##### **Diversity improves performance by defining it**, Connor Mayo-Wilson

Over the last three decades, philosophers and scientists have discovered that, in appropriate circumstances, diverse groups of problem-solvers outperform homogenous groups. Philosophers and economists have developed idealized mathematical models to explain the value of diversity, but the phenomenon has also been confirmed empirically in a variety of fields, from medicine, to business, to higher education. Further, the finding is robust across different forms of diversity: gender, racial and class diversity, for example, all seem to contribute to group performance, under appropriate circumstances.

In this paper, I argue that diversity improves performance, in part, because what constitutes “good performance” is often that which meets the needs of suitably diverse individuals. For example, as the number of women medical researchers has increased, so has our accuracy in certain predictive and diagnosis tasks. A now classic example is the diagnosis of heart attacks. Increasing gender diversity in medical research increased the accuracy of heart attack diagnosis for three related reasons: (1) all other things held equal, the accuracy of a diagnostic method for heart attacks will increase if it becomes more accurate in diagnosing women, (2) men and women’s symptoms for heart attacks differ, i.e., diagnostic methods that are accurate for men need not be accurate for women nor vice versa, and (3) women researchers have a vested interest in making sure that women are correctly diagnosed for heart attacks. But notice the first fact is a consequence of a simple mathematical equation: overall diagnostic accuracy is a weighted average of diagnostic accuracy for men and for women.

The thesis of this paper is that philosophical theories of evidence, knowledge, and understanding – the most general measures of cognitive performance – are like measures of diagnostic accuracy for heart attacks: our theories pick out goods that meet the needs individuals with diverse interests. I illustrate the thesis for theories of statistical evidence. I argue that what likelihoodism designates as evidence is information that, under appropriate conditions, empowers decision-makers with diverse beliefs and values. I sketch an argument that similar remarks

apply to some philosophical theories of knowledge.

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### **Epistemic Coherence vs. Epistemic Diversity, Kenny Easwaran and Reuben Stern**

There are various results in formal epistemology promoting the value of epistemic coherence for individuals. There are various results in philosophy of science, political theory, and social epistemology promoting the value of epistemic diversity for groups. Importantly, diversity and coherence are opposites – an epistemically diverse community contains beliefs that cannot be consistently fit into a single probability function. We believe that the arguments for diversity, to the extent that they work, should work at the individual level as well. But we do not believe that this refutes the arguments for coherence. Rather, we believe that short-term considerations provide reason to be coherent, and that medium-to- long-term considerations provide reason to be diverse.

Examples of the arguments for epistemic coherence involve both pragmatic and veritistic arguments. Dutch book, arbitrage, and decision-theoretic arguments show that if an agent fails to have coherent beliefs, then they are willing to engage in some acts that guarantee worse outcomes, by their own lights, than if their beliefs are coherent. Accuracy arguments show that if an agent fails to have coherent beliefs, then there is a set of coherent beliefs that is guaranteed to be more accurate than their beliefs, regardless of what the truth is.

The arguments for epistemic diversity generally show that a community in which all agents have the same beliefs will be less likely to achieve the most accurate beliefs in the medium-to-long run than communities in which agents have diverse beliefs. Kitcher and Zollman argue for the benefits of epistemic diversity in the medium-to-long run accuracy of the community. A coherent community can end up chasing a local maximum, while a diverse community will successfully explore a larger space of hypotheses. Hong and Page argue for the practical benefits of epistemic diversity. A community whose individuals all employ the individually most successful strategy will be outperformed by a community whose individuals employ distinct strategies, even though most are individually less successful.

To the extent that an individual cares not just about their current pragmatic success and accuracy, but their medium-to-long term pragmatic success or accuracy, these considerations should motivate diversity within an individual as well. For example, as Aronowitz suggests, an individual who goes back and forth at different times between two competing theories may eventually have better success at finding the truth, even if that individual is less accurate along the way.

One mitigating thought is that if an individual is a member of a community that contains sufficient epistemic diversity, then it may be advantageous for that individual to have strongly coherent and distinctive beliefs, in order to best provide for the diversity of the community. But if an individual is in a non-diverse community, or isolated from a community, that individual may do better to have more individual diversity. This may relate to some of the views of Philip Tetlock on the success of “foxes”, who synthesize many competing viewpoints, but the value to the community of “hedgehogs”, who provide distinctive viewpoints that are individually less accurate.

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### **Diversity in the Representation of Value, Sara Aronowitz**

Where do values live in thought? A straightforward answer is that we (or our brains) make decisions using declarative value representations which are our values. Recent work applying reinforcement learning to decision-making and planning suggests that more specifically, we represent both the instrumental expected value of actions as well as the intrinsic reward of outcomes. In this talk, I argue that identifying value with either of these representations is incomplete. For agents such as humans and other animals, there is another place where reward can be located in thought: the division of the space of possibilities or state space. Using a reinforcement learning framework, I show that when state spaces are not fully consistent with current values, we can articulate a coarse-grained set of latent values which are no less part of what an agent wants.

Imagine a person, Masha, who grew up in a religious Jewish household. As an adult, she became an atheist, explicitly disavowing the significance of rules such as the separation of dairy and meat. Encountering her right now, we might expect her explicit values to be in line with a secular life. But at the same time, when planning her day, she divides the task between Shabbat and the rest of the week, and when planning what to eat for lunch, will ask herself questions such as: “should I have meat or dairy?”. The state space, part of Masha’s “descriptive” outlook on the world, is permeated with the older, disavowed values.

What does Masha really value? You might think the answer is obvious: she values a secular life. After all, that is reflected in her conscious thoughts, her emotions, and her speech, as well as her choices. In this talk, I’ll try to convince you that while this is true, she also still values aspects of her former religious life. This is because these values survive in her view of the world, and in particular, in her division of the giant and complex future into coarse-grained options and outcomes. These values influence her actions as well, such as when raising the question “meat or dairy?” leads to a different dinner plan than the question “spicy or non-spicy?”

To make the case that state space divisions are part of valuing, I’ll first put forward a version of the simple view, which identifies value with reward in a reinforcement learning model. Then, I’ll illustrate how state spaces can be derived from explicit values along with probabilistic expectations given certain background assumptions using a value-of-representation approach. The next section explores how in humans, this abstract and idealized derivation is neither actual nor optimal. Instead, several independent sources feed into the process of building and modifying state spaces. I conclude that for the very reason state spaces didn’t themselves contribute to value in the idealized case, they are part of value in the human case.

## 📌 Speakers



**Conor Mayo-Wilson**  
University Of Washington



**Kenny Easwaran**  
UC Irvine



**Reuben Stern**  
Assistant Professor  
Duke University



**Sara Aronowitz**  
University of Toronto

## 📌 Moderator



**Shadi Heidarifar**  
PhD Candidate  
University of Florida

## Commodities and Commodification in Classical Greece

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 2

📍 Salon Room

*Session overview: Writing in the first generations after the rise of large-scale domestic markets had transformed the Mediterranean world, Greek thinkers established theories of money and exchange that continue to shape our own, for better and for worse. They also approach political economy from a distinct perspective, with quite different presuppositions than ours. The papers in this session study ambivalent discussions in the classical Greek world about market exchange and what can and cannot be given a price.*

### Abstracts:

#### **The Sophists and the Commodification of Wisdom, Håkan Tell**

Plato repeatedly remarks that the sophists teach for money. In *Hippias Major* (282c-d), for example, Socrates elaborates a distinction between the wise men of old, who did not think it right to charge fees, and the sophists of his own day, who all made great profits from their instruction. This comparison is not incidental; it is integral to Plato's characterization of the sophists and their practices. But why is money so important as a distinguishing feature, and why does Plato adopt it as basic to his portrayal of the sophists?

In this paper, I will explore what we know about the monetary practices surrounding teaching for pay, which is surprisingly little. We will compare the material we have on the sophists with what we know about the philosophical schools of Isocrates, Plato, and Aristotle. We will also pay attention to practices in related fields, such as medicine, divination, and poetry. The poets, in particular, share some significant overlaps with the sophists in that they were also said to make their services available for pay. Finally, we will contrast the characterization of Socrates in Aristophanes' *Clouds* – where he is repeatedly said to accept pay for instruction – with the portrayal of his attitude to money in Plato and Xenophon.

What emerges from this exploration is that commodification of wisdom was never a culturally condoned or acceptable practice. On one extreme, Xenophon (*Mem.* 1.6.13) labels those who sell their wisdom to anyone who wants it sophists, and he goes on to compare them to prostitutes. In instances where we have solid historical evidence that practitioners of wisdom accepted pay for their services, these transactions were often clothed in the language of friendship, and the instruction was frequently referred to as serving the larger public good. The economic and transactional aspects of the student-teacher relationship was thus embedded in the established social norms, and the fee appeared both decorous and socially acceptable.

In light of these findings, I suggest that the intense discussion of teaching for pay in Plato should be understood as less concerned with describing actual historical practices – given how reluctant practitioners of wisdom were to characterize their relationships with students as transactional – but instead as focused on portraying certain practitioners of wisdom as less legitimate and deserving of intellectual authority. This is not to say that the sophists did not teach for pay. They most likely did, but so did many others. What stands out with the sophists, however, is the insistence with which Plato seeks to characterize their practices – as well as the practitioners themselves – as transactional and unencumbered by the traditional association of teaching and teachers with friendship and civic-minded benevolence, that is, with practices that traditionally had been seen as non-transactional and culturally embedded. This insistence, I suggest, lines up with Plato's larger ambition of distinguishing the sophists from what he saw as the genuine philosophical tradition.

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### **The Exchange of Incommensurable Values in Plato's Republic**, Brennan McDavid

The central organizational principle of Plato's ideal political philosophy is specialized production in a division of labor. We can, Socrates observes, produce all of the things we need if each of us specializes in the production of just one good (*Rep.* 370c). Each specialist trades his surplus for the surplus of others. Accordingly, we are made to understand the value of products as commensurable. This despite Socrates' assertion, in his dialectical argument with Thrasymachus, that "the benefit of each craft is peculiar to it" (τὴν γε ὠφελίαν ἐκάστης τῆς τέχνης ἰδίαν) (346c). The peculiarity of goods is not sufficient to render them incommensurable. Socrates institutes a currency for facilitating exchange, confident that a single measure will apply to all goods in supply (371b).

There are two specialties in the ideal city that produce goods scarcely commensurable with the products of traditional labor and craft, though: the rulers and the soldiers each make the city wise, courageous, moderate and just by their work (428e-433b). These goods—and they should certainly be counted as goods, for Socrates had classified them alongside all other goods (357b-358a)—are prior in value to any other (445a). That is, the value of any of those goods commensurable by a single currency is reduced to zero, or even to negative value, if one does not possess virtue.

It is a wonder, then, that Socrates repeatedly refers to a "wage of guardianship" (μισθὸς τῆς φυλακῆς) that the soldiers and rulers will receive from the producers as (416e; 464c; 543c). This word—*misthos*—was invoked in the Book I debate about the proper telos of craftsmen (346a-347e). They aim at the end of their craft—e.g., the doctor aims at health—and earn a wage only incidentally. So, too, a *misthos* was received by sophists in exchange for their instruction and was denied ever to have been received by Socrates (*Apology* 31b-c). The philosopher rulers of the ideal city are not above a *misthos*, however.

My paper discusses the place of the guardian's wage in the value theory of the *Republic*, and I argue that it underscores the system of incommensurable goods rather than undermining it. Specifically, the *misthos* paid by the producers for the maintenance of the guardian classes does not compensate them for their work. Even if the producers, who pay the wage via taxation, might be made to conceive of it as fair compensation, it is not conceived as such by the guardians themselves. We see this in the moral psychology of the dialogue: the soldiers and the rulers are desirous of honor and of truth (or goodness), respectively (581c). The rulers in particular find satisfaction in freedom from unjust rule (347d). It is the satisfaction of those desires that compensate the guardians, not their *misthos*. Nevertheless, the division of labor in the city requires that exchange be possible across the three classes, so that the object valued by the producers (money-lovers) may be utilized as a payment on their part.

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### **Aristotle on Monetary Policy and the Worth of Human Beings**, Zoli Filotas

In his seminal discussion of market exchange in the *Ethics*, Aristotle argues that currency (*nomisma*) can be used to establish a fair price for any commodity, enabling transactions that "hold the city together" (EN V.5, 1133a34). The short text has had a long and varied influence, but it is also rife with interpretive difficulties.

In this paper I show that the passage consists of policy advice directed to legislators (*nomothetai*) and politicians (*politikoi*), in keeping with the overall purpose of Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Politics*. Indeed, it consists in large part of a series of recommendations ranging from the general (that as many things as possible should be assigned a price, the better to facilitate exchange, 1133b14-15) to the specific (that the state should erect a shrine to the Graces in order to ground market exchange in attitudes of generosity and gratitude, 1131a2-4).

I argue that the main goal of Aristotle's monetary proposals is to preserve the nearest possible equivalent of "gift exchange" (*antidosis*) in the face of what he sees as one of the main dilemmas facing any complex, commercial society: that those communities are composed of qualitatively different people, but that institutions must treat them as equals. He offers what contemporary philosophers might call a "non-ideal theory" to solve this problem. The appropriate monetary and commercial policies, he argues, might recognize – imperfectly but "nearly enough" (*hikanos*) – the diverse things he believes people need, want, and deserve in any community.

This context helps to clarify the most striking and controversial feature of Aristotle's treatment of money, namely the view that monetary policy should address the value of the *people* – not just goods – involved in commercial exchange. Following Gabriel Danzig, I conclude that Aristotle does not believe that commercial transactions flatten out the hierarchies represented by traditional gift exchange. Although it cannot reproduce them exactly, Aristotle believes that canny monetary policy tends to maintain the differences in status implicit in a given community's conception (or misconception) of justice, just like the gift exchange of the archaic period.

## 🔊 Speakers



**Hakan Tell**  
Dartmouth College



**Brennan McDavid**  
Chapman University



**Zoli Filotas**  
Associate Professor of Philosophy  
University of South Dakota

## 🔊 Moderator



**Joe Tinguely**  
Associate Professor of Philosophy  
University of South Dakota

## Polycentricity and Agency

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 2

📍 Executive Room

### Abstracts:

#### **Experiments in Polycentricity**, Gregory Robson

In a polycentric society, what I call political experiments in living (“experiments” for short) include novel institutional arrangements and policies. Experiments enable participants and third parties to *learn about* (i) the effectiveness of public institutions and policies and (ii) demands and principles of justice. Experiments also help citizens to *secure practical improvements in* (iii) justice and related values such as human welfare. I shall argue that one thing a community can learn from experiments is an answer to the question, “what is justice?” A community can learn what it means to be just, where it has failed to be just, and, in some cases, what to count as doing better. I offer a characterization of political experiments in living and defend the positive role that experiments can play in orienting a polycentric society towards justice.

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#### **The Philosophical Anthropology of Polycentrism**, David O'Connor

A philosophical anthropology supportive of the polycentrism of Elinor Ostrom (1933-2012) can be developed with resources from two surprising 19th Century figures, John Ruskin (1819-1900) and Pope Leo XIII (1810-1903). Polycentrism addresses issues about social coordination and social welfare, but it has the potential to help us better understand moral agency in mutual exchange, beyond mere calculation of net benefit. Ruskin was a fertile thinker about the agency of the operatives in a firm, as opposed to the executives. This respect is an essential component of (what Ruskin calls) the affection that animates the worker-manager relationship. He developed this view explicitly in *Unto This Last* (1862), but the underlying anthropology of agency is best described in a famous section of his earlier *The Stones of Venice*, titled “The Nature of Gothic.” Pope Leo XIII’s famous encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891) promulgated the idea of subsidiarity, a model of the correct cultivation of moral agency across different levels of a social or economic hierarchy. Ostrom, supplemented by Ruskin and Leo XIII, enriches the questions about social coordination and social welfare so long central to PPE and its models.

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#### **The Open Society’s Polycentric Community**, Chad Van Schoelandt

Though many critics allege that liberal, free, and open societies are atomistic and antithetical to community, I argue that such societies support diverse and flourishing communities. Even so, it matters for the functioning of the society, considered as a whole, how its distinct communities relate. I defend the value of a polycentric model of communities as a social guiding ideal for supporting stability and resisting polarization in liberal, free, and open societies.

## 🗣️ Speakers



**Greg Robson**

Iowa State University & University of Notre Dame



**David O'Connor**

Associate Professor  
University of Notre Dame



**Chad Van Schoelandt**

Director of the Murphy Institute's Center for Ethics, Associate Professor of Philosophy  
Tulane University

## 🗣️ Moderator



**Jane Li**

Tulane University

## Values in Measuring and Modeling Segregation

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 2

📍 Imperial Room

### Abstracts:

#### **Are Segregation Indices Value-Laden? Thin Evidence for Thick Concepts**, Mark Risjord

The concept of “hypersegregation” both describes a high degree of segregation in a location and supports the normative inference that there is something wrong with or deficient about that place. It is well established that thick concepts like hypersegregation play an important role in science, especially in inquiries with policy relevance. However, it has become a commonplace in philosophy of science to suppose further that moral or political values must factor into any empirical support for claims involving thick concepts (so-called mixed claims). Thick concepts, the thinking goes, require operational definitions that preserve their evaluative content, and these values influence the empirical support of mixed claims. This essay contends that such a line of argument is mistaken because it rests on an overly simplified conception of operational definition.

The historical development of “hypersegregation” and its measurement indexes follows a pattern of operationalization commonly recognized by social scientists (cf. Adcock and Collier 2001). Operationalization has two components, one semantic and the other epistemic. Semantically, operationalization requires that a vague and ambiguous background concept like “segregation” be specified by capturing part of its meaning in a precise way. “Hypersegregation” thus has a technical definition: a minority group is hypersegregated if and only if it scores at least 0.6 on segregation indexes corresponding to evenness, exposure, concentration, centralization, and clustering. This new definition may retain—and in the case of hypersegregation we argue, does retain—the evaluative thickness of the original background concept. However, operationalization also requires the development of indexes or other instruments for measuring instances of the specified, technical concept and thus for providing evidence for mixed claims. Segregation indexes, we argue, have an epistemic function, not a semantic function, and do not retain the implicit values of “hypersegregation.” We argue that the standard philosophical conception of operational definitions conflates the semantic function of scientific definitions with the epistemic function of measurement indexes. Once this distinction is appreciated, it becomes clear that, not only *can* mixed claims be empirically supported in a value-free way, they *ought* to be.

*Adcock, R. and Collier, D. (2001). Measurement validity: A shared standard for qualitative and quantitative research. American Political Science Review, 95(3):529–546.*

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#### **Can Segregation Models Redline? When Modelers' Purposes Become Ideological**, Jared Milson and Kareem Khalifa

Many accounts of scientific representation require agents to intend, make, or use a model in order for it to represent the relevant target (for a review, see Frigg and Nguyen 2020). These accounts let users determine the kind of similarity, morphism, or exemplification relation in virtue of which the model represents. They also invoke users’ purposes to establish the relevance of various empirical considerations, such as the reliability of conclusions drawn from the model. More precisely, the thought is that choosing the right model depends on trading certain epistemic considerations off of others and that users’ purposes determine those tradeoffs. Consequently, what makes a model suitable for representing a given target system will, in part, be determined by the purposes of the user. Since the latter reflect users’ values, such user-based requirements ensure that a model’s adequacy is a thoroughly value-laden affair (Lusk and Elliott 2022).



However, the history of segregation modeling puts pressure on this account of values and scientific modeling. Early versions of so-called human ecological theories modeled segregation as resulting from “natural” processes such as competition, invasion, succession, cooperation, and other adaptations (Engel-Frisch 1943; Park and Burgess 1925). These models of segregation were used by urban planners for the purposes of redlining and discriminatory lending practices (Garcia 2019). On the preceding line of thought, these insidious purposes determine the appropriate tradeoffs between epistemic considerations. Hence, it would seem that several prominent accounts of scientific representation entail that the use of human-ecological models to enforce and maintain unjust segregation was warranted.

In this paper, we offer an account of scientific modeling that blocks this unseemly consequence while accommodating the value-ladenness of model-choice. On the one hand, our account holds that models represent only insofar as they support inferences that are highly constrained both by measurements and by canons of induction. Since early human-ecological models fell short on these fronts, they are not licensed on our view. On the other hand, values can still play a legitimate role insofar as the conclusions of these inferences must answer relevant questions, and both epistemic and non-epistemic values—including moral principles and political goals—play a role in determining which questions are relevant for scientists.

- Engel-Frisch, Gladys. 1943. "Some Neglected Temporal Aspects of Human Ecology." *Social Forces* 22 (1): 43-47.
- Frigg, Roman, and James Nguyen. 2020. *Modelling nature: an opinionated introduction to scientific representation*. Cham: Springer.
- Garcia, Ivis. 2019. "Human Ecology and Its Influence in Urban Theory and Housing Policy in the United States." *Urban Science* 3 (2): 56-67.
- Lusk, Greg, and Kevin C. Elliott. 2022. "Non-epistemic values and scientific assessment: an adequacy-for-purpose view." *European Journal for Philosophy of Science* 12 (2): 35-57. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13194-022-00458-w>
- Park, Robert Ezra, and E. W. Burgess. 1925. *The City*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

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### Is There an Imperative of Integration? Valerie Soon

Neighborhood segregation robustly correlates with inequalities in social outcomes, particularly with social mobility (Massey and Denton 1993, Sharkey 2013, Chetty et al 2018, 2022a, 2022b). Segregation therefore undermines the liberal ideal of fair equality of opportunity: an individual's life prospects should not be influenced by morally arbitrary factors such as race, class, and geographic location (Rawls 1971). Thus, Elizabeth Anderson (2010) argues that there is an “imperative of integration”: a just society would be a racially and economically *integrated* one, and it is morally urgent that we progress towards this vision.

If integration is an imperative, we need to know how to measure progress towards it. We also need to know what operationalization of integration would best realize the underlying values motivating integration. For both of these goals, the main toolbox at hand consists of segregation indices. Since segregation is a multidimensional and vague concept, it has multiple different operationalizations, such as evenness, exposure, clustering, concentration, and centralization. In particular, evenness, as measured by the dissimilarity index, dominates social scientific research and policy. Evenness measures the distribution of a minority population among smaller areal units relative to a larger areal unit. Despite its popularity, it has long been criticized for failing to capture an intuitive understanding of substantive integration (Cortese et al 1976, Wong 2014). The larger project of integration itself has also been criticized as missing the point of racial justice (Shelby 2014).

Following these criticisms, this paper explores the use of evenness as the main operationalization of integration. Methodologically, it argues that minimal models can be used to guide the operationalization of segregation indices by illuminating the dynamics that would be at work in the ideal integrated state. Specifically, it argues that while evenness delivers equality of opportunity, it sustains inequalities of power. Two different processes realized in a state of evenness work against each other. On the one hand, the increased network connectedness likely to be created by evenness promotes equality of opportunity by enabling the diffusion of opportunities between groups. Proponents of integration focus on this mechanism. On the other hand, minimal cultural evolutionary models reveal that even environments are ones in which minority groups are at a bargaining disadvantage, simply because of a minority/majority split in the population (O'Connor 2017, 2019). Thus, realizing equality of opportunity via evenness is compatible with inequalities in power. These implications for evenness also hold for exposure.

The upshot is that equality of opportunity and equal power may be in tension with each other in an integrated society. Whether a just society is one that should realize the imperative of integration depends on how these two values trade off against each other in a comprehensive theory of justice. But if equality of opportunity is an overriding goal, exposure can better accomplish this goal without some of the moral costs of evenness.

- Anderson, Elizabeth. (2010). *The Imperative of Integration*. Princeton University Press. Chetty, R., & Hendren, N (2018). *The Impacts of Neighborhoods on Intergenerational Mobility I: Childhood Exposure Effects*. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 133(3), 1107–1162.
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- Massey, D., & Denton, N. A. (1993). *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Harvard University Press.
- O'Connor, C. (2017). *The Cultural Red King Effect*. *The Journal of Mathematical Sociology*, 41(3), 155–171.
- O'Connor, C. (2019). *The Origins of Unfairness: Social Categories and Cultural Evolution*. Oxford University Press.

## 📣 Speakers



**Mark Risjord**  
Professor of Philosophy  
Emory University



**Jared Millson**  
Assistant Professor Of Philosophy  
Rhodes College



**Kareem Khalifa**  
Professor  
UCLA



**Valerie Soon**  
Assistant Professor of Political Science  
University of California San Diego

## 📣 Moderator



**H. Bondurant**  
Visiting Assistant Professor  
University of Richmond

## Paternalism and Personal Values

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 2

📍 Cotton Room

### Abstracts:

#### **Justifying Hard Paternalism**, Alex Bacall

Much of the literature on paternalism seeks to defend weaker conceptions of paternalism, e.g. soft paternalism and libertarian paternalism. Less attention however, has been given to conceptualizing when exactly hard paternalism is justified. This is problematic and leaves little room for guidance if an individual believes *any* hard paternalistic policies, such as requiring boaters to carry life jackets, are justified. This paper thus develops an account of when hard paternalism is justified.

I argue that the most significant wrong of paternalistic interference is it assumes an agent's ultimate goal is health and safety when they might explicitly value the risky endeavor over their health and safety. For instance, consider a policy that would paternalistically require a free solo climber (a climber who climbs without any safety gear) to use safety ropes. The activity would be safer. However, it would undermine the purpose of the activity and would prevent the climber from taking a risk they found meaningful. Agents should be allowed to take meaningful risks so this paternalistic interference would not be justified. My argument is as follows: (I) The biggest wrong of paternalism is that it stops people from taking risks that they value over their health and safety. (II) Generally, the value that a person gets out of an activity is tied to the purpose of the activity. E.g. The value people get from sailing results from being on the water and thus being able to fish, cruise, etc. (III) Paternalism can be effective at increasing safety and wellbeing, something the vast majority of people value though to varying degrees. Therefore, since paternalism can provide some benefits, hard paternalism is justified if the interference does not undermine or change the activity's purpose. For example, under this framework, paternalistically requiring sailors to carry a lifejacket is justified because it provides a safety benefit to the sailor and does nothing to undermine or change the purpose of boating.

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#### **Why Restrict Medical Effective Altruism?** Travis Quigley

In a challenge trial, research subjects are purposefully exposed to some pathogen in a controlled setting, in order to test the efficacy of a vaccine or other experimental treatment. Challenge trials became recently prominent in the Covid-19 pandemic, when some believed that they might meaningfully accelerate vaccine development. Many bioethicists rejected challenge trials on specifically ethical grounds. Blocking challenge trials, when both researchers and volunteer participants are ready to move forward, is an instance of paternalistic intervention to block what we can call *medical effective altruism* (MEA). There are other examples of MEA, such as regulations around voluntary organ donation, but I focus here on challenge trials as an example of MEA in a research context.

There is a general tendency toward conservatism among medical ethicists in such cases, which has been recently criticized by some philosophers. This is especially striking in emergency conditions like Covid-19, but is worth

evaluating in general. Often the underlying rationale is an appeal to bioethical role obligations which are difficult to assess. The crucial question is how much harm research subjects can permissibly risk, but the underlying appeal is often a conclusory reference to the principle of Do No Harm, or, in a more sophisticated form, a reference to an intuitive balancing of Beauchamp and Childress's famous four principles of bioethics. We should want some independent way of assessing these appeals, especially in high stakes circumstances, otherwise we defer to the intuitions of medical professionals and bioethicists with no means of critically evaluating their judgment.

I consider one recent and structurally plausible approach to critically evaluating bioethical role obligations, developed by Alex London. London defends a *social consistency* test for research risks: that is, we should compare the risks undertaken by research subjects to relevantly similar risks which are accepted in other spheres of society. While London's conclusions are somewhat less conservative than the norm, I believe he does not follow the argument through to its natural conclusions, which are quite radical. To quickly advertise: I argue there is no good reason not to consider volunteer military service as a relevant social comparison, and that this implies there is essentially *no cap* on acceptable risks on the social consistency rationale. This presents us with three choices. We can accept the radical conclusion, which I prefer. We can reject the radical conclusion, and retreat to deferring to the unexplained intuitions of doctors and bioethicists, which I find unacceptable. Or, finally, we can develop some alternative means of independently assessing bioethical role obligations. This is an attractive but difficult option: the promise of the social consistency approach is that it avoids appealing directly to any controversial moral theory *and* avoids appealing directly to the judgments of practitioners. The former, such as an approach grounded on utilitarian or Kantian premises, is unlikely to persuade very many; the latter offers little illumination or room for constructive debate. A good competitor to the social consistency approach would similarly avoid both traps, which is difficult to do.

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### Self-Nudging: How to Non-Paternalistically Nudge, Will Cailes

Nudges represent a paradigmatic case of a libertarian paternalist intervention. Thaler and Sunstein have endorsed nudging as a tool to alter people's behaviour, arguing that nudging is not problematic as the practice is consistent with their account of libertarian paternalism. This account claims that institutions are able to influence people's lives in ways if (1) they influence the chooser's choice in ways that make the chooser better off as judged by themselves; and (2) the chooser's freedom of choice is preserved by allowing them to easily opt out of the option they are being influenced to choose. The promotion of nudging has given rise to a suite of philosophical worries about nudging and autonomy, with many fearing that nudging is too paternalistic and not sufficiently libertarian. These concerns have broadly fallen into three types of worries: (1) that nudges undermine autonomy by making the nudger the author of the nudgee's action; (2) that nudges exploit the nudgee's irrational or arational processes and thus the nudgee is not autonomous; and (3) that nudges are a tool that governments can use to dominate their populace. This paper examines whether these concerns remain when we look at a specific kind of nudging: self-nudging. A self-nudge occurs when both the nudger and the nudgee are the same person, sometimes involving a third party to help select and administer the nudge. This can take many forms but may look like an individual selecting a goal, considering a range of nudges that could facilitate them achieving their goal, and then implementing a nudge or series of nudges to realise their goal. Self-nudges appear to be able to overcome the autonomy and paternalistic concerns regarding nudging as they (1) allow the nudgee to be the author of their own action; (2) necessarily require rational processes to be implemented; and (3) remove the threat of domination by external sources. Thus, if successful, this paper will have shown that self-nudges can be a powerful tool for behaviour modification while avoiding the paternalistic and autonomy concerns associated with non-self-nudges.

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#### 👤 Speakers



**Alexandra Bacall**  
University of Arizona



**Travis Quigley**  
PhD Candidate  
University of Arizona



**Will Cailes**  
PhD Candidate  
University of Arizona

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#### 👤 Moderator



**Sam Morkal-Williams**  
Bowling Green State University

## Constitutions, Norms, and Common Knowledge

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 2

📍 Terrace Room

### Abstracts:

#### **Frederick Douglass and the Equivocal Constitution**, Emma Saunders-Hastings

This paper uses an analysis of *political equivocation* to provide a novel interpretation of Frederick Douglass's evolving views on the US Constitution.

Equivocal utterances are ambiguous and open to multiple interpretations—sometimes innocently so. For abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison, objectionable equivocation was distinguished largely by the speaker's intentions (e.g. to avoid frankly acknowledging an unpalatable truth; or deliberately to mislead or deceive, by relying on the audience to interpret an ambiguous utterance in ways that predictably serve the speaker's purposes while retaining plausible deniability). Douglass makes some similar criticisms of moral or political equivocators. However, he also has a second and more distinctive way of building a charge of equivocation, by focusing on speakers' insufficient attention to the context of their utterances. On this interpretation, equivocation can arise through negligence as well as through deliberate dishonesty. By the same token, Douglass objects to insulate oneself from charges of equivocation simply by more precisely articulating one's own beliefs or intentions, without regard to the ways that context must shape the ways one's utterances are interpreted. Among other things, this leaves him better positioned than Garrison to analyze the ways that equivocators can deceive themselves.

I show how Douglass develops and deploys this distinctive contextual theory of equivocation. I also show how it illuminates other aspects of his political theorizing, including his developing views on moral responsibility and his arguments about why it can be corrupting or harmful to debate the justifiability of slavery. Finally, I consider the importance of equivocation in Douglass's interpretation of the founding documents. I argue that we can understand Douglass's evolving views on the Constitution as a move from pure criticism of equivocation (focused on conscience), through an increasing attention to the ways that context and reception shape meaning, and finally to a theory of how equivocal statements and documents can be repurposed.

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#### **Constitutional Deception and Deference**, Matthew Landauer

In this paper I identify and analyze a set of practices that I call *constitutional deception*: institutions and practices that exploit ambiguity or uncertainty to offer (at least some) citizens avenues of participation that appear to satisfy their demands to share in a constitutional order as equal citizens, but which in reality fail to do so. I argue that constitutional deception is both a serious constitutional failing and, given fundamental uncertainties in politics and asymmetries of knowledge, a perennial political problem. Constitutional deception is on its face unjust: such practices are incompatible with the liberal democratic commitment to free and equal citizenship. But I also argue that constitutional deception, especially when it is recognized as such, may have pernicious second order effects: it can undermine *constitutional deference*, that is, the willingness of political actors to treat constitutional norms and rules as authoritative, and to view the constitutional order as imposing strong limits on their actions. Practices of constitutional deception may thus contribute both directly and indirectly to the subversion of liberal democratic constitutional orders.

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#### **Elite Forbearance as a Requirement of Democratic Stability**, Sean Ingham

Some scholars argue that democratic stability requires political elites to practice *forbearance*: "restraint in deploying their institutional prerogatives" (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018). Rigorous definitions of the concept are hard to find, however. Absent a better definition, the potential contribution of this concept to explanations of democratic backsliding, as well as the normative implications of such explanations, remain unclear. This paper explains the shortcomings of existing definitions and proposes an alternative, according to which the concept is defined neither in terms of a distinction between formal and informal rules, nor in terms of the extent ("maximal" or "limited") to which an actor exercises their power, but rather in terms of actors' higher-order beliefs about institutional rules. Elites exercise forbearance when they refrain from actions whose compatibility with those rules is not (sufficiently close) to common knowledge among the relevant parties. I illustrate the implications of adopting this definition for questions about how democrats should respond to violations of democratic norms.

### 🔊 Speakers



**Emma Saunders-Hastings**  
Ohio State University



**Matthew Landauer**  
Associate Professor  
University of Chicago



**Sean Ingham**  
University of California - San Diego

### 🔊 Moderator



**Natasha Piano**  
UCLA

## In Honor of Geoff Brennan

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 2

📍 Tower Room

Panel Discussion

Memorial

### Abstract:

The goal of this panel is to honor the contribution that Geoffrey Brennan has made to the PPE community. Instead commenting on his work directly, each speaker will present a project that builds on themes from Geoff's projects. Each speaker will introduce their work by commenting on how Geoff had an impact on their work.

**Feasibility in Theory**, Nic Southwood

**Moving towards the Median: Compulsory Voting and Political Polarization**, Alexandra Oprea

**Esteem Engines**, Ryan Doody

**Hijacking Harsanyi's Theorem**, Chad Lee-Stronach

### 🔊 Speakers



**Alexandra Oprea**  
Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
University at Buffalo



**Ryan Doody**  
Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Political Economy  
Brown University



**Chad Lee-Stronach**  
Assistant Professor  
Northeastern University

### 🔊 Moderator



**Chris Melenovsky**  
Assistant Professor  
Suffolk University

🕒 5:30 PM - 6:00 PM, Nov 2

📍 Grand Ballroom II

Regrettably, Brad DeLong was unable to join us for the conference. We welcome you to join us before the Welcome Receptions for opening remarks by PPE Society Director Geoff Sayre-McCord.

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👤 **Moderator**



**Geoff Sayre-McCord**

Director, PPE Society  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

6:00 PM

**Welcome Reception**

🕒 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM, Nov 2

📍 Riverbend Ballroom

Join us for drinks, canapes, and conversation!

**Fri, Nov 03, 2023**

8:00 AM

**Registration Open**

🕒 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Nov 3

**Coffee and Conversation**

🕒 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM, Nov 3

9:00 AM

**Confronting Past and Ongoing Injustice: Insights from philosophy, law and political economy**

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 3

📍 Grand Ballroom I

## **Abstracts:**

**Historical Injustice, Political Violence, and Transitional Justice** , Colleen Murphy, co-authored by Kelebogile Zvobgo

Historical injustice (political violence, for our purpose), is temporally distant and sometimes temporally extended. The transatlantic slave trade and colonialism are two prominent examples; violence in the past reverberates into the present. This paper explores possibilities for transitional justice for historical political violence, with an emphasis on racialized violence. Throughout, we address both slavery and colonialism. While some scholarly and public discussions often separate the two, discussing each in isolation, this separation is a mistake. Slavery was one of the engines of colonialism; the so-called “New World” was built through the labor of enslaved peoples on stolen Indigenous land. Part of our argument draws attention to the problems that arise when states try to divide history into discrete periods and pursue piecemeal transitional justice. We begin by discussing some of the reasons historical injustice should be included in transitional justice. We then turn to the challenges of doing so. Finally, we explore how transitional justice efforts might be re-imagined to better respond to historical injustice.

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**Morally Diversionsary Reparations**, Eric Miller

At its core, reparations establishes the moral connection of wrongdoers to particular wrongs and victims and empowers victims to hold wrongdoers accountable for the injuries they have inflicted when those injuries have persisted over generations. Given the difficulties of applying the liability model to structural harms, more recent accounts of reparations argue that communities or institutions, rather than individuals, should be broadly responsible for systemic oppression. Under the community model, the demand that we identify individual wrongdoers can seem "morally diversionary." However, the moral requirement at the core of reparations requires identifying wrongs and wrongdoers, even for systemic injuries captured under the broad heading of racial oppression. One way of linking the actions of individuals to systemic injury is by identifying the multitude of historically enduring social practices that create, entrench, and maintain discrete systems of oppression. These practices are engaged in by groups of people, made up by individuals acting to empower themselves through their private or public roles, all of whom can plausibly be identified.

One set of practices of oppression are *historically* diversionary activities that obscure the ways in which generations of people leverage their power by maintaining practices of oppression over time. Historical diversion in turn maintains *morally and politically* diversionary practices that preclude victims from holding the right wrongdoers responsible for these wrongs. Instead, the community model often inserts proxies for the real wrongdoers based on the facially attractive claim that deep-pocketed or powerful institutions can provide financial and political redress. However, where the actual wrongdoers are not held to account, their still-entrenched practices of subordination, used to empower real oppressions within communities, continue to undermine the social, political, and economic power of impacted communities.

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**Beyond Resistance: Repairing Moral Relations in the Context of Historical and Enduring Injustice**, Ashwini Vasanthakumar

Political theorists and philosophers have focused on resistance as the appropriate, even morally required, response to injustice and oppression. For the most part, scholars focus on what forms of resistance are permissible, with recent inquiry into uncivil disobedience and rioting. Relatively little attention, by comparison, is paid to conceptual analysis of resistance: what results is a capacious conception of resistance that includes any action that could have negative consequences, however unintended, for oppression. Such conceptions are of limited analytic utility and is not sufficiently action-guiding.

In this paper, I combine social sciences scholarship on transitional justice and peacebuilding with philosophical analyses of social and political oppression. I argue for a limited conception of resistance as actions undertaken to dismantle oppressive structures and practices. And I elaborate on the range of *other* responses required in response to oppression—including responses that are precursors to resistance and that are required after resistance. In particular, I focus on mechanisms of *repair* that repair victims’ moral relations with themselves, with one another, and between victims and non-victims. Here, I turn to social sciences scholarship on transitional justice to explore mechanisms of addressing injustice that are inherently future oriented: processes that address past wrongdoing *in order to* secure social and political transformation. Mechanisms of repair may be focused *within* communities of victims given the ways that large scale oppression and violence infiltrates and breaks down communities. Repairing moral relations amongst victims may be necessary for victims to engage in resistance efforts that will help dismantle oppressive structures and practices. Mechanisms of repair are also needed to repair relations between victims and non-victims in ways that can bring about a more just society. I conclude with reflections on the relationship between different mechanisms of repair, and on the tensions between addressing past wrongdoing and the pragmatic considerations of social and political transformation.

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### 🔊 Speakers



**Colleen Murphy**

Roger and Stephany Joslin Professor of Law  
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign



**Eric Miller**

Loyola Law School



**Ashwini Vasanthakumar**

Associate Professor and Queen's National Scholar in Legal & Political Philosophy  
Faculty of Law, Queen's University

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### 🔊 Moderator



**Brandon Hogan**

Associate Professor  
Howard University

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## Diversifying Methods and Demographics in PPE Majors

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 3

📍 Grand Ballroom II

Panel Discuss...

### Abstract:

While Politics, Philosophy, and Economics as a discipline provides a multi-disciplinary approach to social problems, it has nevertheless traditionally been fairly homogeneous in at least two important ways: it has historically seen a low representation of women and racial and other minorities among its practitioners, and it has traditionally exhibited a high concentration of libertarian commitments and approaches in the work it produces. This panel discussion will serve as a resource for professors who are interested in diversifying the future of the discipline of PPE by diversifying either the methods (i.e. the set of substantive content taught) or the demographics (i.e. the makeup of the majors and/or minors) of their undergraduate PPE programs.

The session is intended to be useful for a broad range of professors from a broad range of program types, and we have therefore deliberately chosen a set of panelists who are diverse not just in terms of gender and race, but in a variety of other ways as well: some of our panelists direct PPE programs, while others teach in but do not run them; some of our panelists come from long-established PPE programs, while others come from programs that are so new they have not yet graduated any students; some of our panelists come from large state universities, while others come from small, private universities; some of our panelists work in PPE programs that are well-resourced and can undertake many new ventures, while others work in PPE programs that are almost entirely constrained by the courses already available; some of our panelists are tenured, while others are not. We intend the session to be useful for audience members whether they are looking to make small changes to individual assignments, or looking to start a PPE program from scratch.

We intend the panel to be an opportunity for participants both to share approaches that have worked for them, and to ask for help or advice with problems they face. Some of the topics addressed might include: structuring and designing PPE major requirements with an eye to diversity; selection of readings and other academic content within a single PPE course; particular pedagogical approaches to teaching or assessment within a single course or between courses within a major; connections and partnerships with other programs on campus or in the community; and strategies for recruiting students. The panelists will share their expertise, but the session will also include ample time for learning from and discussing solutions for the experiences of audience members.

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### 🔊 Speakers



**Rosa Terlazzo**

Associate Professor  
University of Rochester



**Sahar Heydari Fard**

Assistant Professor  
The Ohio State University



 Moderator



**Eric MacGilvray**

Professor  
Ohio State University

## Seeking Justice: Democracy and Du Boisian Moral Frameworks

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 3

📍 Salon Room

### Abstracts:

#### **You Say I Want a Revolution**, Wendy Salkin

An overlooked insight of Du Bois's *John Brown* is that Brown worked for much of his life to cultivate democratic relationships with the Black Americans with and for whom he worked. Brown did so through practicing deference and deliberation, and by seeking authorization. However, Brown's commitment to these practices faltered at a crucial moment in decisionmaking: when he raided Harpers Ferry absent widespread support. Examining this aspect of John Brown brings into relief an overlooked tragic choice Brown made: To act in accordance with his own substantive vision of what justice required, Brown eschewed democratic ideals and practices that grounded the distinctive relations of equality he had cultivated with the Black communities with and for whom he worked.

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#### **The Expressive and Experimental Moral Values of Democracy: A Duboisian Defense**, Elvira Basevich

In a democracy, not all first-personal dialogical inputs are alike, even if they are each good-faith contributions to free and open deliberation. On the contrary, W.E.B. Du Bois notes in *Souls* (1903) and *Darkwater* (1920) that some insights are sharper than others, such that an *asymmetric* distribution of moral insight among groups appears. This essay explains Du Bois's account of the nature of asymmetric moral insights in terms of the expressive and experimental moral values of a democratic practice. The former strives for inclusion, whereas the latter seeks to reconstitute the terms of free and equal civic belonging on an ongoing, experimental basis. For Du Bois, both kinds of democratic practices should be incubated in black counter-publics and shape the moral insight of its participants. Du Bois concludes, however, that only democratic experimentation leads to moral innovations beyond the widely accepted public standards of a white-controlled polity-at-large, making an explicit but qualified link between the grassroots democratic practice of the oppressed, the shared experience of oppression, and asymmetric group moral insight.

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#### **The Future of Double Consciousness: Epistemic Virtue, Identity, and Structural Anti-Blackness**, Emmalon Davis and Orlando Hawkins

Introduced by W.E.B. Du Bois (1897/1903) to describe a quality of lived-contradiction attendant to the Black struggle in post-emancipation America, double consciousness has since come to signify a range of epistemic, social, psychic, and phenomenological dimensions of multiplicity. While such deployments generally retain the spirit of Du Bois's focus on dominated or oppressed peoples, recent scholarship extends the concept to contexts of racial and other social privilege. This paper considers two such extensions—white double consciousness (Alcoff 2015) and kaleidoscopic consciousness (Medina 2013). While the former characterizes double consciousness as a capacity for white racial self-awareness, the latter characterizes double consciousness as a kind of universal epistemic/intellectual virtue. We explicate these concepts and challenge them on the grounds that they lack continuity with their Du Boisian precursor and face problems of practical feasibility. We argue that while various forms of racial self-awareness and lucidity are attainable from positions of privilege, these experiences cannot be conceptualized coherently in terms of experiences of oppression. As we show, such attempts obscure structural barriers that make white double consciousness and kaleidoscopic consciousness unlikely antidotes to the kind of racial domination that double consciousness was first introduced to illuminate. We conclude that while more intersectional and pluralistic accounts of double consciousness may be desirable, the project of expansion has moral limits. Instead, we outline ways in which double consciousness—as a tool for conceptualizing the genealogy of structural anti-Blackness—remains valuable in the absence of ever-expanding revision.

## 🗣️ Speakers



### Wendy Salkin

Assistant Professor of Philosophy and, by courtesy, of Law  
Stanford University



### Elvira Basevich

Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
University of California, Davis



### Emmalon Davis

Assistant Professor  
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor



### Orlando Hawkins

University of Oregon

## 🗣️ Moderator



### Jenna Donohue

Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
University of Arkansas

## Fairness: Theory and Applications

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 3

📍 Executive Room

### Abstracts:

#### **What If Everyone Did That?** Aaron Salomon

Suppose that we are walking around our neighborhood, and I am about to throw some trash onto the sidewalk, knowing that most other people hold on to their trash until they get home. In order to stop me, you might ask me “what if everyone did that?” In asking me this, you are trying to get me to see that, by littering, I would be making an exception of myself—what philosophers might describe as free-riding.

You might, moreover, think that by asking me “what if everyone did that?” you are mounting a very *particular* kind of moral objection, but not the only kind. Many prominent ethical theorists disagree. Orthodox contractualists, rule consequentialists, and Kantians think that, for any action, what would happen if everyone did that action determines whether that action is permissible. For them, “what if everyone did that?” is the fundamental moral question.

By making “what if everyone did that?” the fundamental question of good moral reasoning, these moral theories can easily justify prohibitions on free-riding. If everyone in our neighborhood littered instead of holding on to their trash until they got home, our neighborhood would have trash everywhere and would be an unpleasant place to be.

Nonetheless, a serious problem seems to arise because of these ethical theories’ focus on the question of what if everyone did that. Just because a perfectly pacifistic world would be a lovely, peaceful place to live does not mean I should not sometimes use violence in self-defense. This is the ideal world problem. How, then, can a moral theory condemn my free-riding without possessing the very feature that makes moral theories face the ideal world problem—namely, the focus on the question “what if everyone did that?” What we have, here, is a puzzle.

My main aim in this paper is to argue that it was a mistake for moral theorists to generalize from an objection appropriate to cases of free-riding to all of morality. In contexts of the relevant kinds, we should understand the question “what if everyone did that?” to give expression to one, and only one, kind of objection to one’s action—namely, that not making an exception of oneself is a necessary condition on one’s action being morally permissible. If we limit the scope of “what if everyone did that?” in this way, we can justify prohibitions on free-riding while avoiding the ideal world problem.

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#### **Affirmative Action and the Unfairness Objection,** Karolina Wisniewska

One of the main criticisms raised against affirmative action policies in hiring is the unfairness objection. This objection states that affirmative action policies treat some job applicants unfairly. It starts with the observation that merit-based hiring is required by the principle of equal opportunity. It then notes that affirmative action violates this requirement. By treating some applicants favorably in hiring procedures on the basis of race or

gender, affirmative action policies select among candidates on grounds other than merit. Insofar as meritorious candidates are denied opportunities in favor of those with less merit, they are treated unfairly by affirmative action policies. The unfairness objection is predicated upon the thought that procedural fairness in the distribution of advantaged social positions demands that such positions be awarded to those who win contests of merit. Viewed in this light, the unfairness objection to affirmative action is one instance of a more general objection to departures from meritocracy in hiring.

Those sympathetic to affirmative action have responded to the unfairness objection by broadening the notion of merit to include qualities like race and gender, so long as these qualities enable someone to perform a job. Merit consists in the ability to successfully execute the tasks associated with a job. If race or gender can better enable someone to perform these tasks, then assessments of merit should take that into account. Once we adopt this expansive understanding of merit, it turns out that affirmative action is not a deviation from merit-based hiring at all. In fact, meritocratic hiring actually requires consideration of qualities like race and gender where these are relevant to someone's ability to perform a job. If affirmative action is understood as a form of merit-based hiring rather than a departure from it, the unfairness objection loses all force.

In this paper, I argue for two claims. First, I argue that this "wide merit" response to the unfairness objection fails because it misunderstands the challenge posed by the unfairness objection. For while the "wide merit" response may be able to impersonally justify affirmative action schemes as a whole, it cannot impersonally justify such schemes to those who are denied opportunities on their basis. In particular, it cannot justify affirmative action against the complaint that it treats the meritorious applicants disadvantaged by affirmative action policies unfairly, and in doing so positions them as inferior to beneficiaries of affirmative action. Second, I argue for an alternative response to the unfairness objection. In particular, I argue that departures from merit-based hiring do not necessarily amount to unequal treatment of applicants and, in the case of some affirmative action policies, actually fulfill the principle of equal opportunity better than strict adherence to merit. I conclude that the unfairness objection ought to be taken more seriously than it has been by those who advance the "widemerit" response, and that only a specific view of merit and affirmative action is capable of offering a satisfactory reply to the unfairness objection.

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### **How to Exploit an Altruist**, Aaron Segal

Many bioethicists have worried that offering payment to research participants risks exploiting them, and have accordingly sought to limit the extent of payment as an incentive in medical research. High levels of payment, they worry, risks coercing participants, unduly inducing them, or exploiting them. Instead, many argue, we should seek to enroll altruists in medical research, or individuals for whom participation in research is its own reward. I argue, by contrast, that instead of minimizing or eliminating the risk of exploitation, the practice of recruiting altruists often exacerbates exploitation. In recruiting altruists, many medical research institutions impermissibly leverage a type of unfairness in the agreement-making circumstances to their benefit, and to participants' detriment.

I begin by isolating a particular type of exploitation rooted in unfairness in the background circumstances in which agreement-making takes place. The sense of fairness at issue in the circumstances of agreement-making is one concerning how much say or control the parties have over the agreement. And when one party uses their greater say to secure a better deal than they would otherwise receive, they take unfair advantage of the other party, or exploit them. I explain why altruists might appear to be immune to this type of exploitation: in particular, altruists voluntarily accept deals that are worse (from the perspective of their self-interest) than they are entitled to. But this appearance is misleading: in such cases, altruism not only makes one vulnerable to inequalities in how much say individuals have, but in fact partially constitutes one such inequality.

I conclude by considering the implications of this argument for the practice of medical research, especially with respect to economically disadvantaged participants. Roughly two thirds of clinical trials are now run by private companies that have a strong interest in minimizing expenditures, including compensation to participants. And because researchers know (and even ensure through the language in consent forms) that participants will deliberate altruistically, these companies leverage the unfairness in the agreement-making circumstances to keep compensation low. Accordingly, by seeking to recruit altruists, private medical research institutions—and potentially some public institutions as well—often wrongfully exploit research participants.

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### Speakers



#### **Aaron Salomon**

Research Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Research Fellow at the Hong Kong Center for Catastrophic Risk  
Lingnan University (HK)



#### **Karolina Wisniewska**

PhD Candidate  
University of Arizona



#### **Aaron Segal**


Postdoctoral Fellow  
National Institutes of Health


 **Moderator**



**Lucia Schwarz**  
Assistant Professor  
Tulane University

## **The Politics of Asylum and Refugeehood**

 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 3

 Chairman's Room

*The theme of this session is the political dimensions of asylum and refugeehood. Each presenter is focused on a different element of the institutions of asylum and refugeehood. The first presenter interrogates the relationship between asylum, persecution, and the state-system. The second presenter argues for reparations for refugees harmed by receiving states' deterrence policies, and the third presenter illuminates the epistemic landscape of the U.S. asylum-regime.*

## **Abstracts:**

### **Reconstructing 'Persecution': Beyond State Violence, Ariana Peruzzi**

This essay puts forth a definition of 'persecution' apt to the context of asylum. I argue that, in this context, 'persecution' is best understood as serious harm that a person, group or institution inflicts on an individual in recognition of specific properties imputed to that individual. I call this the targeted harm view. This account is novel insofar as it does not define 'persecution' in terms of any kind of state action or inaction. In this respect, my account departs from extant philosophical accounts, which either define 'persecution' in terms of active state misconduct, or passive failures of the state (Shacknovne 1985, Hathaway 2005, Price 2009; Lister 2013, Cherem 2016). Indeed, the key contribution of this essay is to challenge (1) the received notion that there is a tight connection between persecution and state conduct, and (2) the confused picture of the state that underlies the received view of persecution.

I argue that it is only plausible to define 'persecution' as a harm that manifests state failure if we endorse "the omnipotent state view," i.e., the view that the state is more or less omnipotent over the territory it governs. The omnipotent state view holds that the state has a monopoly over *all* violence within its territory. This view holds that states *ought* to have a monopoly over all violence, and that "strong" states *do* in fact have a monopoly. Drawing on the work of social scientists and legal theorists, I argue that this imagined omnipotent state does not exist, and probably cannot be brought into existence (Gupta 1995, Beek 2012, Herzog 2020). We would do well to remember that the state is an entity with a monopoly over *legitimate* violence in its territory. I argue that no state is powerful enough to prevent all illegitimate violence without committing human rights abuses in the process. As anthropologists have pointed out, the fulfillment of human rights is not a task the state is solely responsible for: it depends on the willing cooperation of various non-state institutions (Gupta 1995, Beek 2012). Philosophers of migration ought not assume that all persecution stems from some failure on the part of the state, for this position imputes powers to the state it simply does not have.

My account of persecution has implications for who counts as eligible for asylee status according to the Geneva Convention definition. In the United States disparities in access to asylum, and in asylum determinations, reflect the implicit assumption that asylum is primarily intended for victims of persecution by the state. These disparities are unjust: victims of persecution by non-state actors have equal claim to asylum. My view also has implications for the broader question: Who *ought* to be afforded asylee status? If persecution is not defined in relation to the state, then we ought not think that it has special political significance relative to other kinds of serious harms. This gives us reason to think that other kinds of nonvoluntary migrants, besides the persecuted, may deserve protection as asylees.

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### **Reparative Obligations to Refugees, Khang That Vinh Ton**

I argue that liberal Western democracies owe reparative obligations to refugees because of the harmful deterrence policies they have put in place. I begin by surveying the extant philosophical literature on our moral obligations to refugees. Along the way, I provide a taxonomy of the various ways to ground our moral obligations: duty of rescue, duty of legitimacy, and duty of gratitude. After that, I introduce and defend another way to ground our moral obligation: duty of reparation. I first motivate the idea that our moral obligations to refugees can be grounded on a duty of reparation, understood as a duty to redress a moral wrong. In a case where there is clearly a perpetrator and a victim of a moral wrong, the perpetrator owes their victim some reparative obligations (e.g. acknowledging the injury, issuing apologies, making amends, compensation, etc). In many cases, the actions of the state wrong refugees and asylum seekers, and it is not difficult to see how reparative obligations are generated (e.g. Trump's administration zero-tolerance policy and the Migrant Protection Protocol separate families and wronged asylum seekers).

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### **Structured Failures: Knowing in Asylum, Ezgi Sertler**

Asylum regimes house both credibility-related and intelligibility-related forms of epistemic injustice – such as testimonial and contributory epistemic injustice (Fricker 2007, Dotson 2012) – under their roofs (Wikström 2014, Sertler 2018). From first-level interviews to courtrooms, decision-makers persistently not only *fail to believe* applicants but also *fail to understand* them and *make sense of* their lives, realities, and experiences (McKinnon 2012, 2016). While such interactions between asylum-seekers and decision-makers render perceivable significant and persistent epistemic exclusions asylum seekers suffer from, understanding the epistemic landscape of asylum regimes goes beyond these interactions. In this paper, I aim to shed some light on the constitutive elements of this epistemic landscape. It is my hope to demonstrate that the epistemically unjust situations asylum seekers are forced into can help us unearth how this uneven playing field is structured. This paper, while noting the parallels between different institutions of asylum in different countries, investigates the institutionalized practices of asylum in the U.S. more closely. In what follows, I will identify, at least, three constitutive elements of the epistemic landscape of the asylum regime in the U.S: 1. Range of epistemic affordances, 2. Problem of epistemic agency, and 3. Set-up of categorization. I conclude by suggesting that these three constitutive elements of the epistemic landscape help us illuminate why the current institution of asylum has structured failures.

## Speakers



### Ariana Peruzzi

Graduate Student Instructor  
University of Michigan



### Khang Tô

Sawyer Pre-doctoral Teaching Fellow  
UC Davis/Illinois Institute of Technology



### Ezgi Sertler

Utah Valley University

## Moderator



### Michael Blake

University of Washington

## Paternalism, Agency, and Hierarchy

9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 3

Imperial Room

### Abstracts:

#### Paternalism and Kolodny's Account of State Action, Taylor Koles

In a long series of work (Kolodny 2014a, 2014b, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2023),<sup>1</sup> Kolodny has argued that traditional objections to paternalism, if they are good objections at all, should be reframed as problems of subordination and social inequality.<sup>2</sup> State interventions that improve an agent's choice situation by interfering in her self-regarding choice do not violate any rights against invasion, and so are unproblematic so long as the state is constituted in a way that does not result in social hierarchy.<sup>3</sup>

I argue that the central problem with his treatment of paternalism is that antipaternalists in both the perfectionist and antiperfectionist camps have articulated persuasive objections to the state's adoption and enactment of a particular conception of the good *itself*. My objection to paternalism may therefore not be based in how the state affects my choice situation *per se*, but to the way in which the state aims to intentionally "improve" that situation — we can object not just to how our choices are treated, but also to how we are treated in the process. Because it focuses on an agent's choice situation, Kolodny's framework tends to mischaracterize the force of these objections. These objections become even more pressing when the state's intervention is based on a conception of the good contrary to that held by a *group* of people, such as a religious or cultural minority. If correct, this analysis shows that there is a significant way in which objections to paternalism cannot be reduced to concerns about social hierarchy.

<sup>1</sup> Kolodny, Niko, *Rule Over None I: What Justifies Democracy?* *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 42:3 (2014): 195–229; *Rule Over None II: Social Equality and the Justification of Democracy.* *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 42 (2014): 287–336; *Political Rule and Its Discontents.* *Oxford Studies in Political Philosophy* 2 (2016); *What Makes Threats Wrong?* *Analytic Philosophy* 58 (2017): 87–118; *Being Under the Power of Others.* In Yiftah Elizar and Geneviève Rousselière, eds., *Republicanism and Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 94–114; *The Pecking Order: Social Hierarchy as a Philosophical Problem.* Harvard University Press, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Kolodny 2016, p. 67; Kolodny 2017, pp. 115–16.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Kolodny 2023, ch. 19 & 20.

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#### Addiction and the State of Nature, Klara Andersson

Addressing the mortality and human suffering caused by drug addiction is an urgent policy problem in the United States. This paper seeks to lay out what nonideal Kantian moral theory could contribute to this issue.

According to Kantian moral theory, we have duties of respect to all autonomous agents. Discharging these duties involves treating people as free to make up their own minds about what to think and how to act. These duties are grounded in the value of autonomy, which raises the question what duties we owe to those who are not autonomous.

Tamar Schapiro (1999) has developed a nonideal Kantian moral theory about what duties we owe to children, and on what grounds we owe these duties to them given that they lack autonomy. She argues (within an overall egalitarian framework) that children essentially find themselves in a predicament. Like all humans, they face a unique, practical task: to make up their own mind about what to do and how to live. However, children lack the reflective capacities that would allow them to do this.

Importantly, this is not a claim about biology, or a claim about children's degree of development. What is needed to explain why our duties to children seem intuitively different from those we have to adults is a normative account about moral status. Schapiro develops such an account by setting up an analogy with the state of nature. The state of nature is characterized by *normative instability*. This means that in this condition, individuals acknowledge a need for certain normative concepts which they nevertheless lack. Normative claims about e.g. the right and the good are unstable because there is no authority—no constitution—that can adjudicate their content. To overcome this instability, people in the state of nature need to constitute themselves as a state. Analogously, children lack the capacity for practical reasoning because of the condition of normative instability that they find themselves in. They need to integrate themselves and develop values and commitments to guide their practical lives—to form a stable self (authority) to adjudicate between their various motivational impulses. It is our duty to help them to this.

I will explore the prospects for extending Schapiro's picture to people suffering from addiction. The suggestion is that, perhaps, addiction can be thought of as a form of normative instability. By reinforcing certain motivational impulses, it might undermine the values and commitments that were previously central to the addicted person's self. On this view, this fragmentation can be understood as a threat to the person's capacity for autonomous action. Perhaps then, it is our duty to help her preserve this capacity.

I will develop this suggestion and then proceed to critically assess this way of extending Schapiro's theory in two ways: first, by observing some disanalogies between the child case and the addicted person case, and second, by comparing how it fares with regard to two contemporary models of addiction: the medical model and the life process model (the latter being more associated with harm reduction policies).

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### **Platonic Paternalism, Ned Howells-Whitaker**

Objections to paternalism typically draw their force from concerns regarding autonomy; as an imposition from above, paternalism threatens autonomy. Justifications of paternalism, then, typically seek to demonstrate that paternalism (under some adequately restricted definition or within some sufficiently demarcated domain) need not objectionably inhibit autonomy. In this paper, I draw on the *Laws*—Plato's last and most pragmatic dialogue—to develop a stronger claim: autonomy requires paternalism. More precisely, the meaningful exercise of both personal and political autonomy requires thoroughgoing epistemic paternalism on the part of the state.

I proceed in two stages. First, I sketch out a Platonic conception of autonomy. In doing so, I rely on the realistic moral psychology and non-ideal epistemology presented in the *Laws*, and in particular Plato's close attention to the various epistemic and motivational vulnerabilities characteristically faced in the practical deliberation of ordinary agents (i.e. agents lacking the incontrovertible, dialectically-grounded knowledge of the philosopher). Autonomy in Plato's sense amounts to overcoming these vulnerabilities: acting and deliberating on the basis of rational opinion, without the undue influence of our forceful, self-involving desires. I briefly note some appealing features of this conception, by contrast with prominent contemporary accounts of autonomy.

Second, I show why on Plato's view autonomy turns out to require heavy-handed epistemic paternalism. In brief, Plato takes the widespread achievement of autonomy to be a tremendously difficult task, requiring the unified effort of a society whose basic institutions are largely oriented towards mitigating these vulnerabilities: most notably a highly participatory democracy; a universal and mandatory educational program; a formally and materially egalitarian social structure; the outright abolition of commerce and profit-seeking; and a wide range of startlingly illiberal restrictions on expression, occupation, and social life in general. The citizens of Magnesia are neither free to choose how to live their own lives nor even to form their own idea of a good life. In Plato's view, however, this radical paternalism is not inimical to but constitutive of any autonomy worth wanting; autonomy can only be achieved in a sufficiently supportive social context. I conclude by arguing that the core of Plato's view can be separated from his convictions concerning the unity of reason, and so from his most troublingly authoritarian conclusions.

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### Speakers



#### **Taylor Koles**

PhD Candidate  
University of Pittsburgh



#### **Klara Andersson**

PhD Student  
University of Pittsburgh



#### **Ned Howells-Whitaker**


PhD Candidate  
University of Pittsburgh

 **Moderator**



**Xin Hui Yong**  
MIT

## **Non-ideal theory**

 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 3

 Cotton Room



## **Abstracts:**

### **Thinking With Ideals in a Non-Ideal World**, David Wiens

Idealistic models of society can't perform a normative function: they can't serve as targets for practical political action; they can't serve as benchmarks for comparatively evaluating social states of affairs; they can't serve as standards against which we judge the propriety of institutional arrangements; and they can't serve as bases for justifying our acceptance of particular normative principles for the purpose of regulating our thought and behavior. Idealistic models can nonetheless sharpen our thinking about real-world politics by performing a conceptual function: they can help to interpret and operationalize the content of the concepts we use to describe and evaluate political institutions and behavior.

I start by showing how idealistic models can be used to interpret and operationalize the content of political concepts. I then demonstrate two implications of this claim. The first is that idealistic models make a distinctive contribution to non-ideal normative theory not despite the fact -- widely noted by ideal theory skeptics -- that they abstract from real-world impediments to the realization of certain normative values, but precisely because they do so. The second is that idealistic models, by virtue of their conceptual function, are integral to achieving the explanatory aims of social scientists. Together, these points suggest an integrative view of political inquiry, in which normative and explanatory modes of thought are more tightly intertwined than they are conventionally thought to be.

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### **Why bounded rationality?** David Thorstad

Bounded rationality gets a bad rap in some quarters. Critics argue that theories of bounded rationality are too context-sensitive, conventionalist, or reliant on ordinary language (Carr 2022, Pasnau 2013). My aim in this paper is to make sure that bounded rationality gets the rap sheet it deserves.

The first order of business is to lay out an approach to bounded rationality inspired by traditional theories of bounded rationality in cognitive science. My approach has five core commitments.

First, *bounds matter*. Paradigmatic bounds such as limited cognitive abilities and the cost of computation bear on how it is rational for us to cognize.

Second, rationality is *procedural*, moving upwards from the lower-order question of what an agent should believe to the higher-order question of which processes of inquiry she should use to form and revise beliefs.

Third, it is often rational for agents to form judgments using a particular kind of cognitive process: fast-and-frugal *heuristics*.

Fourth, rationality is *ecological*, or environment-relative. Because all heuristics perform well in some environments and badly in others, we cannot ask whether a heuristic is rational or irrational full-stop. We must always ask instead: in which environments would this process be rational to use?

Finally, the right approach should ground a program of *vindictory epistemology* which aims to show how many seeming irrationalities are in fact instances of boundedly rational cognition.

The next order of business is to show how this approach answers some recent criticisms of bounded rationality by Jennifer Carr (2022). Carr argues that theories of bounded rationality are unacceptably conventionalist, relying on arbitrary epistemic conventions formed by communities of inquirers. But my approach is not conventionalist in any way.

Carr also argues that theories of bounded rationality are unable to specify which bounds matter to rational cognition. Focusing on internal cognitive bounds, Carr offers several examples of bounds that matter and bounds that do not, but argues that no plausible theory of bounded rationality can distinguish them. I propose a traditional Bayesian understanding on which the bounds that matter are those determined by an agent's fixed cognitive architecture. I argue that this approach correctly sorts the bounds that matter from those that don't on Carr's lists.

An enduring question about bounded rationality is whether and to what extent traditional approaches to bounded rationality are compatible with Bayesian theorizing. Recent work has suggested that bounded rationality may be not only compatible with, but essential to Bayesian theorizing: careful attention to cognitive bounds has led to innovations such as decisionmaking by sampling, probability heuristics, and resource-rational analysis that have improved the descriptive and normative plausibility of Bayesian theories. On this basis, I argue, bounded rationality should be viewed as a welcome addition to existing theories of Bayesian epistemology.

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### **Against coherence**, Sven Neth

I argue that it's sometimes okay to be incoherent. By "incoherent" I mean, roughly, that you are willing to act in a way that leads to sure loss over time. Many philosophers and economists have taken coherence to be a rational requirement, but I argue that incoherence is sometimes rationally permissible. To make my case, I focus on agents who have some (slight) uncertainty about how they will react to future evidence. I show that such agents are incoherent. I argue that these violations of coherence are analogous to buying insurance, because agents are willing to suffer sure loss to reduce their losses in the worst case. Since buying insurance is often a reasonable thing to do, the violations of coherence are rationally permissible.

## 📣 Speakers



### David Wiens

Associate Professor of Political Science; Faculty Affiliate in Philosophy  
University of California, San Diego



### David Thorstad

Assistant Professor  
Vanderbilt



### Sven Neth

PhD Student  
University of California, Berkeley

## 📣 Moderator



### Jacob Barrett

Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Political Science  
Vanderbilt University

## Regulation and Governance

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 3

📍 River Room I

### Abstracts:

#### **The Ethics of Mergers and Acquisitions: From Management to Regulation, Kobi Finestone**

Recent high-profile mergers and acquisitions, such as *AT&T-Time Warner* and *H&R Block*, have not only driven headlines but have also reshaped entire sectors, affecting the lives and livelihoods of investors, managers, workers, and consumers – whether successful or not. Commonly, mergers and acquisitions are subjected to extensive legal and economic analyses wherein a potential action is assessed for legal compliance and financial feasibility but given their great influence on a range of stakeholders, they deserve additional ethical scrutiny.

Understanding the ethical status of mergers and acquisitions must, I argue, begin with a recognition and understanding of the complex legal-regulatory framework which governs mergers and acquisitions. Within the United States, mergers and acquisitions are well recognized legal categories and are subject to both state and federal statutes which detail various disclosure and compliance responsibilities for relevant parties. Importantly, mergers and acquisitions are subject to federal antitrust regulations which require premerger notification and approval. For this reason, mergers and acquisitions differ from most other business actions in that success is explicitly dependent on prior regulatory approval. Because of this, I classify mergers and acquisitions as *comprehensively regulated actions*. And, I argue, comprehensively regulated actions require shifting the locus of ethical analysis away from the firm and towards legislatures and regulatory bodies.

Management and ownership do retain considerable authority throughout mergers and acquisitions. Because of this, neither management nor regulators are unconstrained by ethical considerations. But to make an analogy with sport, mergers and acquisitions represent that special circumstance in which a referee determines the outcome of the game. Usually within adversarial contexts, referees are not supposed to have this kind of influence but on occasion it does become necessary for the referee to make a ruling, which will invariably be determinative. Similarly with mergers and acquisitions. And for this reason, understanding the ethical status of mergers and acquisitions requires a detailed consideration of the *regulatory process* and the associated ethical issues which arise therein.

But throughout mergers and acquisitions, management and ownership possess an important ethical constraint, which although almost always in effect takes on greater importance when a firm pursues a comprehensively regulated action. Specifically, firms are obligated to abstain from any attempts at regulatory capture through which the firm or a related party influences the regulatory process. Importantly, regulatory capture is often perfectly legal and is often considered sensible business, especially during high stakes negotiations. However, by identifying the ethical locus of mergers and acquisitions with regulators, the dictate to abstain from attempts at regulatory capture become heightened. And relatedly, because regulatory capture is often legal, by adopting this ethical account, there remains room for a genuinely action guiding business ethic which goes beyond mere legal compliance. Broadly then, mergers and acquisitions exemplify those *comprehensively regulated acts* which shift the ethical locus away from management and towards regulators, thereby highlighting distinctive and critical ethical constraints which go beyond legal compliance.

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**Social Norms, Indirect Regulation, and Climate Change, Sara Constantino and Ewan Kingston**

The effects of anthropogenic carbon emissions are already being felt in many parts of the world and have the potential to trigger abrupt changes in climate and ecosystems that would be catastrophic for the well-being of humans and other species. Despite recent legislation in the US and elsewhere, fluctuating political priorities and lobbying by vested interests have stifled the top-down regulation of carbon emissions and other measures needed to achieve the scale and pace of decarbonization recommended by the IPCC and other scientific bodies. Against this backdrop, scholars and policymakers have increasingly looked for opportunities for bottom-up actions and movements to drive systemic change. Many hope that social norms and the social processes that sustain can help address large scale collective action problems like climate change.

Individual actions, beliefs, and support for and compliance with policies are socially interdependent — that is, what one person does or believes often depends on their perceptions of the social norms in their surroundings or in their referent groups. Social norms can thus reinforce or stabilize the status quo and play a role in regulating individual and collective thoughts and actions. Today, many prevailing social norms, such as those around how we eat, travel, heat our dwellings, reinforce unsustainable development pathways and consumption patterns. However, the same social dynamics can also create widespread and rapid shifts in cultural values and practices, including increasing pressure on politicians to enact ambitious policy. The logic of these so-called social tipping processes typically starts with circumscribed change among a subset of the population committed to a minority or alternative view. Once this subset reaches a critical mass, social interdependence can trigger abrupt, widespread, and nonlinear change, eventually tipping societies toward a new social norm, and providing, effectively, indirect regulation of a collective action problem.

There is growing interest among policymakers and scientists in leveraging these social dynamics to strategically “seed” new social norms using modest, targeted interventions to create a critical mass that might in turn ‘tip’ society towards the desired social norm. However, societies are complex and our ability to understand when this change might happen and where or how it should be seeded is currently limited. Furthermore, the idea of seeding social norms raises ethical concerns. The kind of transformations generated by social tipping can redistribute benefits and losses in ways that might differ from the distributional effects of conventional regulation. Social norm seeding might also raise concerns about violation of the autonomy of individuals and groups. These concerns are worth investigating on their own right, but also because they might fuel reactance or backlash against these interventions. In this presentation, we review literature on rapid social norm change, the promises and pitfalls in engineering such change as a form of indirect regulation of climate change and the ethical and pragmatic challenges that come with top-down efforts to create bottom-up change.

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**Who Knows What, and Who Cares? The Epistemic Challenge for Smart Regulation and Meaningful Corporate Responsibility in the Mid-21st Century,** Wayne Norman and Aaron Ancell

Technology companies – including most of the biggest firms also making or retailing physical “stuff” or managing other people’s money – are increasingly seen as incapable of regulating themselves. This has led to calls for governments to step in and impose serious regulations on corporate development and use of new and experimental technologies; from social media platforms, to autonomous vehicles, and generative AI bots. Yet there is also skepticism about whether government regulators possess the knowledge and expertise necessary to craft regulations that are effective, efficient, and fair (or at least, that don’t create more problems than they solve). In ways unimaginable during the industrial era in the post-WWII decades, when virtually all major regulatory agencies were born, it now seems that the knowledge necessary to craft good regulations is only available within the very firms that need to be regulated. And that technology and knowledge often differs radically from one firm to another within what regulators presume to be same “sector.” This seems to leave a choice between self-regulation by businesses that can’t be trusted, on the one hand, or regulation by government agencies that can’t possibly understand the products, services, or technologies they are regulating, on the other. We try to identify a plausible way to tether the horns of this epistemic dilemma by rethinking the roles and responsibilities of businesses within regulatory processes. We focus, in particular, on the ways in which different kinds of knowledge need to be distributed and shared between businesses and their regulators, and how the distribution and flow of this knowledge will give rise to epistemically based obligations on the part of businesses and regulators alike. These responsibilities will generally not be as publicly noticeable or glamorous as the traditional hallmarks of firms that are lauded for their “social responsibility” and “good corporate citizenship” (or excoriated for their misdeeds). But capitalism in the 21st century risks impaling itself on one of the horns of the epistemic dilemma if we can’t find reliable mechanisms and commitments for regulators and the regulated to share the know-how and manage the unknown risks.

## 🔊 Speakers



### **Kobi Finestone**

Postdoctoral Research Associate  
Chapman University



### **Sara Constantino**

Assistant Professor of Public Policy and Psychology  
Northeastern University



### **Ewan Kingston**

Assistant professor  
Santa Clara University, Leavey School of Business



### **Wayne Norman**

Mackowski Distinguished Professor of Ethics  
Duke University



### **Aaron Ancell**

Bentley University

## 🔊 Moderator



### **Dan Shahar**

MBA Director and Teaching Assistant Professor  
West Virginia University

## Slavery and Commerce in the History of PPE

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 3

📍 River Room II

### Abstracts:

#### **Aristotle's Commercial Alternative to Slavery in the *Politics*, Sam Hage**

Modern commentators are virtually unanimous in the view that the theory of the “natural slave” presented in Book 1 of the *Politics* does not constitute an adequate defense of the ubiquitous chattel slavery of Aristotle’s day. Many critics also see this inadequacy as intentional, claiming that the abundant inconsistencies in the theory constitute a subtle yet devastating indictment of slavery as indefensibly unjust. This reading is plausible, but does not do full justice to Aristotle’s apparent ambivalence toward the practice through the *Politics* as a whole. A careful reading in fact reveals, in addition to a subtle critique of slavery, what seems to be a limited *endorsement* of the institution as a regrettable and unjust *sine qua non* of political life as such. But even this endorsement is later undermined by Aristotle’s nuanced treatment of commerce, which he seems to view, in the final analysis, as equally capable of providing the level of wealth that a stable and flourishing polity requires.

This paper tries to make sense of Aristotle’s highly dialectical treatment of slavery and commerce, and seeks to explain why, alongside his clearest indications that slavery is unnatural and unjust, the institution returns as a feature of Book 7’s regime “according to prayer.”

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#### **Slavery and the Art of Weaving in Plato’s *Statesman*, Cynthia Ma**

In their joint search for the knower of political things, the Eleatic Stranger and young Socrates divide the causes and cocauses of the *polis* (*Pol.* 287b-289c). After identifying the various possessions of the city, the Stranger discovers the statesmen ruling in the cities, most surprisingly, in the class of slaves and servants (289d, 291b-c). Such a harsh evaluation of present-day statesmen is made from the consideration of *politikē* as a science or *epistēmē*. However, we observe an analogous demotion of *politikē* itself at the close of the dialogue. The statesman comes to light as a weaver of two heterogenous kinds of human beings, the courageous and the moderate, through law and through intermarriage. In light of the previous reference to certain statesmen as slaves, it is all the more striking that the discussion of *politikē* at the end raises again the theme of slavery. The opposing virtues, courage and moderation, are each conceived of with respect to slavery: excessive moderation and unbridled courage both lead to enslavement, against which the statesman is tasked to defend (307e-308a). The present study considers the role of slavery in the dialogue’s conception of the statesman as a weaver.

The paradigm of the statesman as a weaver indicates a significant shift in the dialogue’s presentation of political rule. While the first part of the dialogue modeled *politikē* on mathematical knowledge, the second part

introduces a causal-productive account of *politikē* as a *technē*. Most crucially, the two paradigms diverge with regard to their ends. The first aims at describing political science as a gnostic knowledge, whereas the second looks to the production of defense for the citizen body, just as a woolen garment shields the naked body against inclement weather. This latter account brings about a reorientation of *politikē* as aiming at a lower good, the preservation of the citizen body, as opposed to higher goods of virtue. The Stranger presents the statesman as an artisan who utilizes the virtues of courage and moderation *for the sake of* protection against enslavement. The statesman emerges as a technician against slavery. By curbing the ambitions of *politikē*, the Stranger finally distinguishes between *politikē* and political philosophy, thereby completing the intellectual trial of Socrates in the *Theaetetus-Sophist-Statesman* trilogy.

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#### **Thomas Carlyle on the Age of Mechanism: Commerce, Slavery, and Aristocracy**, Dimitri Halikias

Thomas Carlyle ranks among the nineteenth century's most ferocious critics of liberal democracy and commercial society. His attacks on industrialization and the "cash-nexus" character of the market economy influenced and impressed thinkers from Friedrich Engels and John Ruskin to Ralph Emerson and Orestes Brownson. This paper treats Carlyle's diagnosis of modernity as an "age of mechanism," in which questions of political, social, and economic life are no longer matters of authoritative decision, but are instead left to the working of amorphous, uncontrolled, structural forces. It focuses in particular on the parallel diagnoses Carlyle develops of "sham democracy" and laissez-faire economics, both of which purport to have abandoned formal interpersonal hierarchy.

A striking feature of Carlyle's reactionary critique is its refusal to separate politics and economics. Later generations of social reformers took Carlyle's denunciation of the market as inspiration for models of social democratic or communitarian reform. Carlyle was contemptuous of the economic order theorized and implemented by the classical liberal economists of his day. But Carlyle did not separate political authority and economic structure. Nor did he accept a crude Marxist assertion of the priority of economic base over political superstructure. The core failure of any economic system, Carlyle claims, is precisely the attempt to cordon off a realm of economic activity from the reach of political rule. His repudiation of the "dismal science" of economics—one of Carlyle's many influential coinages—is not merely an attack on the unregulated market and a defense of slavery, but a critique of a social order that elevates doctrines of social rationality over those of political will.

This paper makes particular use of Carlyle's *Past and Present*, which contrasted the life of twelfth century monasticism with that of proletarianized England. Carlyle's treatment inspired English social reformers who sought to restore a society of craft production and intimate communal life. But Carlyle was not fundamentally concerned with a rejuvenation of civil society. Rather, he sought a recovery of heroism and aristocracy. That did not entail a return to hereditary aristocracy—a class Carlyle held in contempt. On the contrary, heroism and seriousness can survive through electoral means, as the example of monastic election suggests. In like manner, though Carlyle famously defends plantation slavery and denounces proletarian wage labor, he demands a sanctification of work that is in various respects more consistent with American free-labor than it is with plantation servitude. With respect to both economic and political criticism, Carlyle is surprisingly agnostic as to precise institutional forms. He is more concerned with a rejection of liberal formulas concerning the "rule of law," and with the restoration of a spirit of human mastery and authority.

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#### **Speakers**



**Sam Hage**

Tulane University



**Cynthia Ma**

Tulane University



**Dimitrios Halikias**

PhD Candidate  
Harvard University

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#### **Moderator**



**Armando Perez-Gea**

Fellow to Diversify Teaching and Learning  
Stanford University

## Theorizing Autonomy and Non-Domination

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 3

📍 Terrace Room

### Abstracts:

#### **Frederick Douglass on Domination and Freedom, Rafeeq Hasan**

According to republican political philosophy, the task of a well-functioning polity is to ensure the freedom of persons—where freedom consists in not being dominated or subjected to the wills of others. But what exactly does it mean to be subjected to the will of another?

Compare: a mugger holds a victim up at gunpoint; a boss denies a worker bathroom breaks on the job. Are these the *same* forms of subjection? If not, what is the relevant difference? And should one rather than another serve as the paradigm case around which to focus our political energies?

My aim in this paper is to think through these questions with the help of one of the greatest theories of domination of which I am aware: Frederick Douglass's *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855). Republican theorists have long treated the relation between master and slave as expressing the essence of domination. Douglass's account of the 'slave system' is a crucial philosophical resource for thinking more broadly about the nature of republican freedom.

Specifically, I argue that Douglass provides a highly-nuanced account of what I call the problem of standing. One might think that what makes the boss's action different from the mugger's is that it not only adversely affects the worker's basic material interests, but also expresses to the worker their own subordinated status within a legally-sanctioned hierarchy. There thus seem to be two distinct elements of the subjection relation—thwarting of essential interests and denial of equal standing. How should we understand the relation between these elements? Does this make a difference to republican politics?

Based on a close-reading of several key passages in *My Bondage and My Freedom*, I attribute to Douglass what I call a transformative rather than additive conception of domination. According to the transformative conception, it is in virtue of denying equal standing that an act counts as one of domination in the first place: between the mugger and the boss there is no common factor. The transformative conception, I argue, is to be preferred to the additive conception both as an account of the wrong of subjection and as a theory of action. The additive conception of domination, I contend, founders on what I call the problem of relevant act descriptions in that it cannot successfully individuate distinct action-types. Here, I favorably contrast Douglass's transformative theory of domination with the well-known additive theories of Philip Pettit and Frank Lovett.

Ultimately, if the account I extract and defend from Douglass is correct, then what we care about when we want to be immune from subjection to the wills of others is nothing less than a society organized around a robust vision of social equality. The *I* of the free person depends upon the *We* of a community of equal recognition.

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#### **Alienation, Autonomy, and Hermeneutical Injustice, Javiera Perez Gomez**

Alienation has long been understood as a problematic separation between two objects that properly belong together. This view has its roots in Marx's analysis of alienated labor: alienation is problematic because it is caused by wicked social conditions (e.g., a capitalist political system) and because it prevents flourishing (e.g., by undermining our social and creative nature). Fortunately, precisely because, on this view, alienation is caused by these wicked social conditions, there is a clear remedy to it: to make the appropriate changes in the world (i.e., to bring about the end of wage labor through the rise of communism). This is an appealing view: it's practical, hopeful, and intuitive. But it faces two important shortcomings: it leaves it unclear why alienation would not happen in alternative political orders (e.g., communism, socialism), and it does not tell us very much about what a state of nonalienation would involve.

In this paper, I propose an alternative way of conceiving of alienation that avoids these two problems but preserves some of our core intuitions about being alienated. On the view that I defend, alienation is constituted by a specific kind of reflective state: one in which we consider the reasons and justifications for viewpoints that are fundamentally different from our own and discover a lack of common ground with another person or group of people, with little prospect of finding a common ground. On this view, alienation can occur independently of the wickedness of the world, and thus need not gesture at problematic or otherwise oppressive social conditions.

Moreover, alienation sometimes plays a positive, epistemic function, and thus need not prevent flourishing. Indeed, I argue, alienation is a manifestation of autonomy, which is why a state of nonalienation would almost never be preferable to a state of alienation.

Alienation of the type that I describe is not regrettable in itself, but it can be regrettable for at least two reasons. One is if it undermines agency, which may happen when alienation is so pervasive that, over time, one begins to doubt one's judgments of the world. This may, in turn, lead one to a state of epistemic limbo, or, worse, to lose trust in reason and in one's own capacity to reason. The other is if alienation occurs in relation to hermeneutically unjust conditions: that is, if it occurs in relation to concepts and narratives that have been developed unjustly. This is true especially of evaluative concepts that deeply impact to how we navigate the social world (e.g., that something or someone is "racist"). In such cases, alienation may also undermine agency, but when it does, it does so in a way that is unjust.

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## Cosmopolitan Solidarity: A Reconciliation of Freedom and Collective Action, Jaime Edwards

Theorists from across the ideological spectrum (Hayek, Arendt, Shklar, etc.) have expressed the worry that there is a fundamental conflict between the principles of freedom and solidarity. They argue that an emphasis on solidarity, which aims to promote collective unity and mutual support, inevitably compromises individual freedoms, as the push for societal cohesion requires the suppression of an individual's distinct pursuits.

The aim of this paper is to show how solidarity, suitably understood and extended, enhances freedom rather than threatens it.

First, following MacCallum, I will defend the view that freedom is best conceptualized as follows: an agent X is free (or not free) from conditions Y that would prevent them from doing or becoming (or not doing or becoming) Z. This is a descriptive account that tells us what freedom is, and the extent to which we have it (or lack it) in particular cases and with respect to specific aims. It does not tell us what we should want to do or to become.

Second, I will argue that most of the things that most of us do in fact want to do or become are fundamentally enabled by our acting in concert with others. This includes everything from providing our most basic material goods (food, clothing, shelter, medicine, etc.) to developing and maintaining institutions that foster our higher-order capacities for sensation, imagination, and thought (educational, cultural, etc.).

Taking these two claims together, I conclude that the things that most of us as individuals want to be free to pursue are enabled rather than frustrated by acting in concert with others. I then define solidarity as an agent's recognition of this fact and commitment to pursue these collectively-enabled goods with others who similarly recognize this fact and wish to pursue these same goods in collaboration.

I then apply this concept of solidarity to critique two prominent strands of political thought.

First, I argue that libertarians have a deficient account of freedom. By typically endorsing a negative concept of liberty, which focuses exclusively on an individual's absence of constraints, coercion, or interference from others, particularly from the government, the libertarian account fails to consider the myriad aims enabled by acting in solidarity with others.

Second, I argue that a prominent strand in liberal thought, the liberal-nationalist strand (expressed in the work of the later Rawls, Miller, Raz, and Kymlicka, among others) largely recognizes the freedom-enhancing value of collective action but artificially demarcates the bonds of solidarity at national borders. Doing so fails to recognize the many ways that we are presently engaged in collective action on an international level, frustrates our ability to enhance this collective action in the future, and obscures the actual relations of reciprocity that solidarity requires us to recognize. I conclude that the solidarity we should seek instead is cosmopolitan in scope.

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### 🗣️ Speakers



**Rafeeq Hasan**

Amherst College



**Javiera Perez Gomez**

Assistant Professor Of Philosophy  
Marquette University



**Jaime Edwards**

Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
St. Norbert College

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### 🗣️ Moderator



**Graham Hubbs**

Professor  
University of Idaho

## The Philosophy, Politics, and Economics of Hybrid Schools

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 3

📍 Tower Room

*This session will explore the concept of “hybrid schools” – schools in which students attend classes in physical buildings 2-3 days per week, and are homeschooled on the other days. Hybrid schools might be thought of as more formalized versions of homeschool co-ops. The first presenter will speak on the reasons families choose hybrid schools, how these schools operate, and will present a picture of the current landscape around the country. The second speaker will look at one specific aspect of these schools – commute patterns – from an economic perspective. Our third speaker will discuss the political evolution of the West Virginia Hope Scholarship program, a new program that has the potential to greatly expand the number of hybrid schools in that state. Abstracts for each presentation are below.*

## **Abstracts:**

### **A National Survey of Hybrid Schools, Eric Wearne and John Thompson**

This report presents the findings of the second annual National Hybrid Schools Survey, and is an attempt to help continue clarifying the landscape of “hybrid schools” in the U.S. We define “hybrid schools” as schools in which 1. most or all of the curriculum is decided by the school (though varying levels of instruction and grading may be done by parents), and 2. students attend live classes fewer than 5 days per week in a physical building, and are “homeschooled” the rest of the week. In this second survey, conducted online and gathering responses from hybrid school leaders around the country, we find continued growth in the number of hybrid schools around the country. We also continue to find diversity in their operations. A few questions that persist even as we are a few years past the depths of COVID prompted school closings and the subsequent rise in prominence of school models like hybrid schools, microschoools, and learning pods, are: What do we know about these schools? Where are they located? Who attends them, and why? How do they work? Hybrid schools as a sector are difficult to study, as they do not neatly fit into existing data collection efforts; this project is the first and still only effort to study this sector in a consistent way over time. This presentation will define hybrid schools, and discuss what we know about how they work, why families choose them in increasing numbers, and how they fit into the broader school choice landscape.

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### **Comparing Commutes Between Hybrid and Conventional Schools, John Thompson and Eric Wearne**

One schooling sector that had been growing before the pandemic, hybrid schools, in which students attend physical classes fewer than five days per week and are homeschooled on the other days, has seen recent continued growth. One could argue that, for several reasons, families would be willing to drive farther to have their students attend them than they would be to drive to a conventional five-day private school. On the other hand, one could also argue that families may be more likely to be drawn to particular aspects of conventional, five-day private schools, and more willing to commute farther for their students to attend. A third possibility is that no difference exists among these sectors. Which of these possibilities seems to be occurring is the question this study seeks to address. In this manuscript, using individual student address data, we examine the commute distances made by students at four schools: one conventional, 5-day private school in the suburbs, and one closer to a major city; and one hybrid school (in which the students attend classes only 2-3 days per week) in the suburbs, and one closer to the same city. We find that suburban hybrid school students do commute longer distances, but fewer total miles per week.

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### **Education Savings Accounts and West Virginia's Hope Scholarship, Garrett Ballengee**

In 2022, the State of West Virginia enacted a large-scale education savings account (ESA)-style program, known as the Hope Scholarship. This program will enable significantly more West Virginia students to attend hybrid schools. This presentation will discuss the landscape of ESAs across the country, the specific political history of the West Virginia bill, and its practical effects for families and hybrid schools.

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## **👤 Speakers**



**Eric Wearne**  
Associate Professor  
Kennesaw State University



**John Thompson**  
Kennesaw State University



**Garrett Ballengee**  
Executive Director  
Cardinal Institute

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## **👤 Moderator**



**Colleen Hroncich**  
Policy Analyst  
Cato Institute



10:30 AM

## Break

🕒 10:30 AM - 10:45 AM, Nov 3

10:45 AM

## Gaus Memorial Session: “Individuals, Norms, and the Basic Structure”

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 3

📍 Grand Ballroom I

Gaus Memorial Prize Session

Memorial

The 2023 Gaus Memorial Prize goes to [Shiying Li \(UW-Madison\)](#) for her paper, “*Individuals, Norms, and the Basic Structure*,” which argues that the Rawlsian “basic structure” should properly include at least some social norms. In particular, the essay argues that the basic structure should include those norms that work to shape the basic distribution of how rights and duties are realized in a society.

*This essay offers a significant advance in how we can understand the domain of justice, and provides a tractable way forward to incorporating the analysis of informal arrangements alongside formal institutions into mainstream political philosophy. Judges find that this move is both interesting as an approach and consequential in how we then rethink our conception of a well-ordered society. This work is exciting in part because it creates a fertile ground for future research.*

### [Read the paper.](#)

### **Abstract:**

Critics of liberals such as Sally Haslanger (2017) and G. A. Cohen (1997; 2008) have charged mainstream liberal theories including John Rawls’s theory of justice as not able to account for the importance of cultures and ideologies due to their statist orientation. Rawls famously argued that principles of justice apply only to the basic structure, which many have interpreted as being constituted by formal institutions – the political constitution and the major economic and social institutions. However, Haslanger’s concept of social meanings is not clearly defined. Cohen’s overly broad and individualistic understanding of ethos makes it difficult to consider the ethos as a part of the basic structure. We run into the trouble of including all individual sentiments and attitudes into the basic structure. Instead, I would like to shift our attention to the concept of social norms. The account of social norms I adopt, largely in line with the one developed by Cristina Bicchieri (2005), has operational definitions and testable consequences. Thus, the model is explanatorily and predictively powerful. It is also widely used by social scientists and extensive empirical research on the origin, evolution, and impact of social norms and mechanisms of norm-following have been produced. Using results from empirical research, I argue that at least some social norms meet the Rawlsian criteria of the basic structure because they significantly affect the distribution of fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation. Paradigmatic examples include those sustaining phenomena such as market-maximizing, gendered division of labor, and social stigmas. Like formal institutions, they exert coercive force on individuals, to a greater or lesser extent depending on situations and other factors, through various mechanisms. Social norms also meet the conditions of stability and publicity which are important considerations in Rawlsian theories of justice. Moreover, they fit especially well with an alternative characterization of the basic structure by A. J. Julius, as globally consequential, collectively alterable, individually unchosen, systematically action-shaping and goods-distributing. We not only underappreciate how some social norms have the same essential characteristics as formal institutions do. But we also have other moral and political reasons to subject them to the purview of justice, including our needs for a comprehensive approach to normatively evaluate social norms, and theoretical tools to develop theories of legitimate political interventions on norms.

In addition, I aim to shed light on another difficult question that has haunted many liberals especially those endorsing a more expanded understanding of the basic structure – what the content and the extent of individual duties of justice are. I do not attempt to provide a complete answer to this question, but I hope to advance our understanding by making some substantial suggestions. Even if my arguments fail to persuade my opponents, I hope that my discussion can at least highlight the moral and political significance of social norms, clarify the conceptual space on the issue of what demands justice makes on individuals, and lend support to a more expansive view on the issue. While I pursue these aims, I respond to proponents of a statist understanding of the basic structure such as Gina Schouten, A. J. Julius, and Samuel Scheffler.

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### 👤 Speakers



#### **Shiying Li**

PhD Student  
University of Wisconsin-Madison



#### **Lori Watson**

WUSTL



#### **Cynthia (Cindy) Stark**

Professor  
University of Utah


 Moderator



**Ryan Muldoon**

Associate Professor of Philosophy, Director of PPE  
University at Buffalo

**Just Policing by Jake Monaghan**

 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 3

 Grand Ballroom II

**Author Meets Cr...**

**Abstract:**

*Just Policing* offers a PPE analysis of the justice and legitimacy of policing non-ideal societies. It employs an “informal model based reasoning” method for defending its conclusions (namely, that justice demands strategic, discretionary policing). It draws on work in a variety of fields, including political philosophy, political theory, empirical political science, criminology, and the economics of crime. The proposed session includes critics with interdisciplinary perspectives (especially in public policy and philosophically informed social science) that are both important for the broad PPE project and also underrepresented in PPE. The session takes up a timely topic and incorporates a wide range of methods and perspectives that should be of interest to most PPE Society Members. The critics are established researchers in policing and it would be valuable to draw them into the PPE fold.

 Speakers



**Jake Monaghan**

Assistant Professor  
University of Southern California



**David Thacher**

Associate Professor of Public Policy and Urban Planning  
University of Michigan



**Jennifer (Jen) Page**

Assistant Professor  
University of Zurich


 Moderator



**Kirun Sankaran**

Dartmouth College

**Applied Epistemic Injustice**

 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 3

 Salon Room

## **Abstracts:**

### **Finding Yourself: Epistemic Injustice & Medical Feedback in Adolescence, H. Bondurant**

Sometimes, the truth hurts. When assessing medical feedback, a distinction between descriptive and normative claims is necessary to determine whether harm is warranted. Accounts of epistemic injustice focus on cases of harming someone by unfairly discrediting or diminishing their abilities as a knower. Given the way epistemic injustice affects one's status as a knower, is there an even greater harm if that knowledge pertains to the self? In this paper, I explore the ethical norms of medical feedback when giving diagnoses to adolescents. While it's important to give a patient feedback to make an informed decision, medical authorities are at risk for stigmatizing as seen in cases related to mental health and sexually transmitted infections. We must ensure a patient's autonomy while allowing the doctor's expertise to play the appropriate role. Cases of diagnosing adolescents raise a particular issue for epistemic injustice as they are learning to form a sense of identity. A positive outcome of diagnosing at an early age is that those patients can receive important care and support. For example, parents can give their children medication for a mental disorder or allow treatment like suppression of endogenous puberty for transgender teens. Yet controversy surrounds these medical interventions especially for younger patients due to the long-term nature of the technology against the fluid identities of the patients. Along with any stigma attached to the diagnosis, medical interventions can carry dangerous long-term effects that can harm adolescents in not only how they see themselves but also their future behavior. Therefore, an ethics of medical feedback between patients and medical professionals requires identifying who is most vulnerable to dangerous forms of feedback and what proper interventions should take place to protect those populations.

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### **From Gender Segregation to Epistemic Segregation: A Case Study of the School System in Iran, Shadi Heidarifar**

Focusing on the situation of female minor students in the Iranian school system, the paper shows that there is a bidirectional relationship between gender-based social norms, and gender-segregated education policies which exclude female minor students from schooling through a variety of mechanisms, such as textbook visuals and contents. I argue that the effects of gender segregation in education are not restricted to the policy sphere, and that a change in those policies will not necessarily make these problems disappear. In particular, I show that gender segregation in education reproduces an epistemic segregation in education that wrongs female minor students in their capacities as knowers and prevents them from exploring a positive sense of self-identification. In a society such as Iran, where highly gendered norms play out in the school system and are also further reinforced through that school system, the result is not limited to gender segregation itself but extends beyond that, to a kind of epistemic injustice that wrongs students simply through their contact with the school system.

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### **Doctor knows best? Epistemic injustice between clinicians and transgender patients, Alison Reiheld**

Epistemic injustice is especially likely to appear in any power hierarchy. This is sadly as true in health care as anywhere else, and the core hierarchy of medicine is that between the patient and the clinician. Clinicians truly are more expert than patients in many areas of health, but patients retain expertise over their own experience as well as their own medical history. When additional features of patient identity are introduced, such as gender or race or class, these can impact the epistemic hierarchy between patient and clinician. One area in which we see this today is with the way that transgender patients are treated by clinicians, professional bodies, and health care institutions. I will use testimony from my interviews with trans patients about their experiences seeking health care as a foundation for exploring how trans patients' testimony about both general health matters and those specific to gender affirming care is discounted, sometimes to disastrous effect. This is true for adult trans patients as well as trans youth. It is true for efforts to seek gender affirming care, which are subject to the enormous gatekeeping power of health care professions. And it is also true for efforts to seek general health care, unrelated to trans status. Epistemic injustice threatens basic principles of medical ethics. While this obviously includes the principle of justice, it also includes autonomy and non-maleficence ("do no harm"), sometimes ironically in the name of preventing the patient from harming themselves. However, this is paternalistic. Rather than the classic saying that "father knows best", we might reconceive epistemic injustice in this sense as a relation in which "doctor knows best." To truly pursue the ideals of ethical medicine, clinicians must struggle against the potential for epistemic injustice that is built into the clinician-patient relationship. In this whirlwind tour of these concepts, I will close with a brief hopeful discussion how a more epistemically just clinician-patient relationship can preserve each party's relevant expertise.

## Speakers



**H. Bondurant**  
Visiting Assistant Professor  
University of Richmond



**Shadi Heidarifar**  
PhD Candidate  
University of Florida



**Alison Reiheld**  
Professor  
SIU Edwardsville

## Moderator



**Valerie Soon**  
Assistant Professor of Political Science  
University of California San Diego

## Philosophy of Behavioral Welfare Economics: Paternalism, Climate Nudges, and Choice Architecture

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 3

📍 Executive Room

### Abstracts:

#### Climate Nudges, Climate Catastrophe, and Cost Benefit Analysis, C. Tyler DesRoches

Unlike ordinary nudges that are only intended to leave nudges better-off by their own subjective standards, green nudges are behavioral interventions that aim to reduce or eliminate environmentally mediated harms to a third party. Some scholars have argued that, when justifying green nudges, policymakers should investigate the full set of costs and benefits, not only the welfare of nudges (DesRoches *et al.* 2023; Sunstein and Reisch 2013).

While cost-benefit analysis may be adequate for determining whether green nudging is justified under many circumstances, this article argues that behavioral interventions designed to mitigate climate change – climate nudges – present a special case (Siipi and Koi 2022; Weber *et al.* 2023). Why? The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s latest assessment report’s high-emission socioeconomic pathways include +4°C warming in their very likely (66-100%) range by 2100. Many experts believe that this level of warming could lead to ‘climate collapse.’ Arguably, this outcome would not only be bad but infinitely bad.

This article argues that in the special case of intervening to mitigate climate change, the cost-benefit model should be supplanted with an infinite utility model. While some have argued against using infinite utility for modeling environmental decisions, I will argue that so long as one means *relative* infinite value – not absolute infinite value – then we can model the priority of preventing climate collapse with various behavioral interventions, including climate nudges (Bartha 2007; Colyvan *et al.* 2010; Bartha and DesRoches 2017; DesRoches 2019).

#### References:

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**Choice, Exit, and Paternalism, Gil Hersch**

Libertarian paternalism's discussion of choice architecture focuses on the paternalizing agent's perspective. Such a focus, however, misses the full extent to which choice is an important factor when assessing paternalism, libertarian or otherwise. Once we shift our focus from the paternalizing agent to the paternalized subject, we recognize that often the paternalized subject has a choice that the paternalizing agent has no control over—exiting the paternalizing agent's influence. That individuals can exit a paternalistic relationship does not imply that the costs of exiting are not extremely high. The challenges for exiting a paternalistic relationship can range from very easy (e.g. canceling a gym membership) to very difficult ( e.g. expatriating from a country). However, focusing on the paternalized subject's perspective makes it clear that how costly it is for them to exercise their choice and exit the paternalistic relationship matters when evaluating how problematic a paternalistic intervention is. This is something that libertarian paternalism, with its emphasis on the paternalizing agent's perspective, misses. The costlier exiting a paternalistic relationship is, the more problematic the paternalism is, *ceteris paribus*. Often, how easy an exit is depends not on the paternalizing agent, but rather on the available alternatives the paternalized subject has to their current paternalistic relationship. Consequently, one aspect of how problematic an agent's paternalistic intervention is can depend on factors beyond their control. As a result, we should shift our emphasis away from choices under the paternalizing agent's control, to choices a paternalized agent has, *all things considered*.

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### **Nudging and Meta Choice Architecture**, Angela Barnes

Cass R. Sunstein (2015) defends nudging by arguing that since choice architecture is inevitable (there must be *some* ordering, *some* defaults, etc.) objections that interventions within it unduly interfere with our choices are futile. He assumes that choice architecture, pre-intervention, is random or arbitrary from the point of view of individual welfare. This assumption is false. Sunstein and many others discussing the ethical permissibility of nudges (Bovens 2009, Hausman and Welch 2010, Nagatsu 2015, Sugden 2018, Rizzo and Whitman 2019) focus on what I call *minutiae choice architecture*: the architecture around relatively small individual choices. Cake or apple? 10 or 15% towards retirement? While there is much luck involved in the creation of our minutiae choice architecture, there is also planning and design: we can actively shape it (Rejula and Hertwig 2022). We are also, however, constrained by our *meta choice architecture*: the choice architecture in which we choose our lifestyles and communities, thus shaping our minutiae choice architecture. Our *meta* choice architecture is shaped by our nationalities, educations, and communities which jointly yield some set of available options. I will argue that we can enrich our conversations about classic objections to nudging, such as paternalism and autonomy, by distinguishing between minutiae and meta choice architecture. Other things being equal, if our meta choice architecture grants us considerable control over our minutiae choice architecture, then nudging is more objectionably paternalistic and more detrimental to our autonomy than it would be otherwise.

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#### 🗣️ Speakers



#### **Tyler DesRoches**

Associate Professor  
Arizona State University



#### **Gil Hersch**

Associate Professor  
Virginia Tech



#### **Angela Barnes**

Philosophy PhD Student  
Arizona State University

 Moderator



**Malte Dold**

Assistant Professor  
Pomona College

## Algorithmic Priorities, Law, and Policy

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 3

📍 Chairman's Room

*This session will consider a variety of approaches to understanding ethical, legal, and policy questions that arise in examining the impact of algorithms in society. The three papers each take interdisciplinary approaches to considering questions about the data attention economy, autonomous vehicles, and algorithmic fairness.*

### Abstracts:

#### **The Data-Attention Imperative, Elettra Bietti**

Today's digital technologies are transforming the quantification, allocation and monetization of human time and attention. Constrained by a variety of technical and social pressures, the average American spends more than eight hours a day consuming digital media on their computer or phone, more than a third of which is spent on social media. Social media overuse has been held responsible for the recent teenage mental health crisis and the rise in teen suicides. In the midst of the current crisis, law and policy seem unable to grapple with concerns about technology overuse, addiction, virality, social fragmentation and other technology-mediated attention disorders. It is tempting to reduce these disorders to questions of individual autonomy and to delegate them to users to solve through self-help tools or rights-based data protection regimes. Yet a better approach is needed.

This paper argues that understanding the relation between data and attention is key to better law and policy in this area. Platform business models such as Facebook, YouTube or TikTok, which I call attention platforms, are organized around a two-way imperative. This aims to increase engagement and attentional supply to produce informational insights, and to increase data capture to increase monetizable engagement and attention, all in view of making a profit. I call this dual logic the data-attention imperative. Data and attention are connected in attention platform ecosystems. Data is the product of a context. Attention is the interaction between an individual and their informational context, it is constructed through infrastructures that enable communication. Any approach to digital regulation that takes attention disorders seriously must thus focus on both data and attention as infrastructurally produced, captured and optimized. It must focus on infrastructures that enable attentional processes more aligned with human needs.

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#### **Autonomous Vehicle Algorithms, Respect for Humanity, and Saving the Greater Number, Brian Berkey**

Cases in which an agent must choose between rescuing a smaller group and a larger group have been widely debated. While many believe that the agent ought to rescue the larger group, and some others believe that it's permissible to choose to rescue the smaller group, a number of philosophers have argued that the agent ought to conduct a proportional lottery in order to determine which group to save. For example, if the smaller group contains two people, and the larger group contains five, these philosophers believe that the agent ought to run a lottery that would give those in the larger group a  $5/7$  chance of being saved, and those in the smaller group a  $2/7$  chance. Those who defend this view tend to claim that it would be unfair or disrespectful to give those in the smaller group no chance of being rescued. But they also tend to acknowledge that there are moral reasons to prefer that more people rather than fewer are rescued, all else equal. The proportional lottery view, then, is taken by many to represent a plausible middle position between the view that the agent ought always to save the greater number, and the view that there's nothing wrong with simply choosing to rescue the smaller group.

Tobey Scharding has recently suggested that the kind of reasons that are sometimes offered in defense of the proportional lottery view in traditional rescue cases also provide reasons to endorse a proportional lottery algorithm for autonomous vehicles that would determine how the vehicles behave when it's unavoidable that either those in a smaller group or those in a larger group will be killed. Specifically, she claims that a proportional lottery algorithm ought to be preferred to an alternative that would minimize the number of people killed in every case of this kind because, unlike the alternative algorithm, it is consistent with respect for the humanity of all of the people who are at risk of being killed.

In this paper, I argue that even if defenders of the proportional lottery view with respect to traditional rescue cases are correct, the reasons to favor the proportional lottery in those cases don't carry over to the relevant decisions regarding autonomous vehicle algorithms in a way that supports Scharding's "proportional risk algorithm."

This is because, while in traditional rescue cases the agent is deciding which group to save at a time when it's already determined which particular people are in which group, those who will decide which kind of algorithm to program autonomous vehicles to follow will be making their decisions prior to its being determined which people will find themselves in a smaller group in a case of the relevant kind. From their perspective, every person who might be harmed or killed by an autonomous vehicle facing a situation in which at least some will be killed are symmetrically situated, and so there can be no conflict between respect for humanity and an algorithm that saves the greatest number.

## An Epistemic Lens on Algorithmic Fairness, Elizabeth Edenberg

In recent years, the potential for algorithms to influence highly consequential social domains in unfair and unjust ways has come into sharp relief (see, e.g., Benkler et al. 2018; Buolamwini and Gebru 2018; Citron and Pasquale 2014; Jillson 2021; Muñoz et al. 2016; Pasquale 2015; Smith 2020). High-profile controversies have brought attention to the role of algorithms in criminal justice decisions (Angwin et al. 2016; Angwin and Parris, Jr. 2016), eligibility determinations for public assistance programs like Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Eubanks 2017), and prejudicial search engine results (Noble 2018; Sweeney 2013). This attention has also motivated the development of an expansive body of technical scholarship investigating algorithmic fairness (see, e.g., Chouldechova 2017; CorbettDavies et al. 2017; Dwork et al. 2011; Friedler et al. 2021; Hardt et al. 2016; Kleinberg et al. 2016; Lipton et al. 2018). A significant portion of the technical scholarship has concentrated around advancing fairness metrics for evaluating algorithms, but there has been substantially less progress made with respect to establishing connections to legal and philosophical foundations. There is also a notable gap with respect to a critical category of algorithmic harms, which scholars have denoted representational harms (Barocas et al. 2017; Crawford 2017), that is not addressed by existing technical measures of algorithmic fairness, nor legal definitions of discrimination.

In this paper, I introduce an epistemic lens for evaluating questions of algorithmic fairness. The epistemic lens directs our attention to the epistemic frameworks that shape our interpretations of the world as it is and shape the ways we envision possible futures. I use this epistemic lens for two purposes. First, I will identify a deeper level of harm not currently captured by existing notions of allocative and representational harms that are the leading categories of analysis in the computer science and STS literatures. I will argue that underlying many instances of algorithmic unfairness are instances in which algorithms operate in ways that reinforce various forms of epistemic injustice. I will show how this epistemic lens offers a theoretical foundation for expanding existing approaches to address a wider range of algorithmic harms not recognized by current antidiscrimination doctrine in law, but are nevertheless closely related to its antisubordination underpinnings. I will then apply the lens of epistemic injustice to cases of real-world algorithmic harms to demonstrate how it provides a framework for understanding what makes these problems particularly resilient, for identifying the foundational causes of representational harms, and for targeting interventions to the source of the problem. I argue that such efforts to identify the root causes of the harm will be critical to ensuring that changes to an algorithmic system effectively address the harm, rather than merely shift the same problem to new territory.

Second, I will expand the epistemic lens beyond epistemic injustice to highlight two epistemic contexts that are crucial to distinguish because they have distinct goals that suggest different potential ways of assessing and measuring algorithmic fairness. At times researchers seek to understand and describe the world as it is, revealing patterns of injustice in the operation of algorithmic systems. At other times, researchers seek to address these harms by making normative changes designed to bring about a better future. Clarity with respect to which types of questions are being asked in particular contexts will help researchers make explicit the criteria according to which they judge whether or not an algorithm is fair and design effective interventions to address algorithmic harms.

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### 🗣️ Speakers



#### **Elettra Bietti**

Assistant Professor  
Northeastern University School of Law



#### **Brian Berkey**

Associate Professor  
University of Pennsylvania



#### **Elizabeth Edenberg**

Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
Baruch College, CUNY

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### 🗣️ Moderator



#### **Luise Papcke**

Yale University

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## Institutions of Non-Voting in Democracy

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 3

📍 Imperial Room

*Democratic voting systems often permit abstention or non-voting. In representative elections citizens are usually allowed not to turn out; elected representatives also normally have a right to absent or abstain themselves from elections within their specific decision-making body. Citizens and representatives also utilize such opportunities for non-voting, quite routinely so. Yet, contemporary democratic theory has not so far developed a suitably comprehensive, nuanced, and satisfactory account of how democratic institutions should respond to, and possibly absorb, the various forms of non-voting that may occur in the different sites of a democracy's decision-making system. Some scholars argue vigorously that non-voting by citizens is so problematic that electoral turnout in representative elections should be legal obligatory. Yet, these arguments remain intensely contested, and they do not, in any event, address the case of abstention by elected representatives. Additionally, democratic theorists have paid scant attention to how democratic electoral institutions might appropriately register or absorb non-voting in the aftermath of elections, when citizens' or legislators' non-voting is a fact. So, to remedy the incomplete theorization of non-voting within democratic theory, this panel presents three papers that innovatively analyze how democracies might regulate and institutionally absorb the multiple forms of non-voting that are possible within a democracy's decision-making structure. The individual paper abstracts follow below.*

## **Abstracts:**

### **Creating absences: How elites stop democratic citizens from exercising their political power, Suzanne Dovi**

In this paper, I explore the elite techniques used for imposing absences. My focus is on how representatives for resource rich and privileged groups block the presence and influence of relatively disadvantaged groups by creating obstacles for voting, for exercising power as legislatures, and gaining leadership positions. For the purposes of this article, my focus will be on how representatives who hold institutionally privileged and personal power resist—that is, prevent, slow down, bar, curtail, and successfully challenge the power and influence of women in politics. In particular, I will examine five tactics used to constrain women qua women, what I call the five faces of misogyny. These five faces are devaluation, silencing, stereotyping, objectification, and compassion deficit. By identifying the tactics that representatives have for limiting and blocking the influence of others, it becomes clear that representatives can abuse their authority in that they obstruct voting by citizens and elected officials as such. By identifying the strategies used to block such voting, I allow us to differentiate voluntary from involuntary absences.

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### **The Keystone of Democracy? Mandatory Voting in Representative Systems, Kevin Elliott**

Should representative democracies require their citizens to vote? There has been a rich discussion of the justifiability of mandatory or compulsory voting institutions among political theorists in recent years. This article surveys this debate, weighs the merits of its arguments, and arrives at the conclusion that mandatory voting likely constitutes a sort of keystone of representative democracy, a necessary finishing touch that helps democracy fulfill its core purposes and without which it will always fall short of its promise. But this conclusion is not obvious and many prominent arguments for mandatory voting fall prey to powerful objections that either severely narrow their scope or impose unmeetable conditions on them. Nonetheless, an adequately specified and adjusted version of the core argument that mandatory voting improves the representativeness of representative democracy almost certainly goes through, at least in most imaginable empirical circumstances. Empirical circumstances often prove to be of superlative importance in assessing arguments for and against mandatory voting. For this reason, there is a need for this inquiry to be realistic and institutional, and so informed of the actual history and forms of mandatory voting regimes in the world, in ways that not all contributions to this debate have been.

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### **Proportional Sortition: Legislative Inclusion for Non-Voting Citizens, Marcus Häggrot, co-authored by Chiara Destri**

In a bid to address an undertheorized issue in institutional democratic theory, this paper describes and normatively evaluates two models for the post-electoral management or reception of citizen non-voting in general, legislative elections: the Count-and-Report Approach and Proportional Sortition. Reflecting ubiquitous democratic practices, the Count-and-Report Approach provides that non-votes in legislative elections shall be counted and publicly reported in the form of an abstention (or a participation) rate. Proportional Sortition, in contrast, makes non-votes more institutionally effective, with the model providing that the legislature shall include a share of legislators that is proportional to the aggregate rate of non-voting and whose members are selected randomly from among the non-voting part of the demos. And by the paper's normative analysis, Proportional Sortition is the most preferable model since it coheres particularly well with the regulative ideal of legislative inclusion – i.e., the idea that Parliaments should be maximally inclusive of all citizens' political viewpoints. Specifically, the paper argues that the Count-and-Report Approach in several ways hinders the legislative representation of non-voters' political views and that it hence fails to satisfy legislative inclusion. The paper further shows that legislative inclusion is an important ideal that democrats can endorse on the grounds of political equality, popular control, and epistemic reliability in decision-making, and the paper also shows that Proportional Sortition powerfully promotes legislative inclusion through two important mechanisms. It causes political parties to fear large-scale non-voting, thus inciting parties to cater purposely to the interests and viewpoints of potential non-voters, while also motivating them to turn out in elections. And Proportional Sortition also furthers legislative inclusion by placing people in the legislature who have not voted themselves and thus may act as virtual representatives of the non-voting citizenry more broadly.



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📌 Speakers



**Suzanne Dovi**  
Professor  
University of Arizona



**Kevin Elliott**  
Lecturer in Ethics, Politics, and Economics  
Yale University



**Marcus Häggrot**  
Postdoktoral forskare  
Sciences Po

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📌 Moderator



**Darrel Moellendorf**  
Professor for International Political Theory and Professor of Philosophy  
Goethe University Frankfurt

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**Resistance to Immigration Injustice**

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 3

📍 Cotton Room

## **Abstracts:**

### **Solidarity with immigrants: neither criminals nor heroes, but humans, Mélima Duarte**

In recent years, the European Union (EU) has seen a rise in what became known as the criminalization of solidarity acts in support of immigrants. Fueled by populist narratives, this trend has resulted in the targeting of individuals and organizations offering aid, shelter, transport, and other forms of assistance to those who arrive in the EU seeking refuge. The criminalization of solidarity has taken the form of anti-terrorism legislation against the facilitation of illegal immigration and since 2015, hundreds of helpers have been persecuted for human trafficking and smuggling and many humanitarian vessels have been prevented from docking in EU ports. Scholars and activists have already warned that the criminalization of solidarity has a number of negative implications for human rights and democracy within the EU. It restricts the ability of individuals and organizations to offer vital support for asylum seekers, refugees, and other vulnerable migrants, puts the lives of these migrants at risk by making their journeys even more dangerous, and prevents people from seeking asylum. Furthermore, it reinforces the erosion of the common by cultivating a culture of fear that undermines social cohesion and the trust in public institutions through the misuse of criminal law to advance a particular political agenda.

In this paper about resistance to immigration injustices, I aim at examining a more fundamental question related to the significance of breaking unjust laws for the predication of the helpers. While breaking the law might automatically constitute a crime and while risking enormous personal costs to continue delivering assistance might signal heroism, the helpers claim to be neither criminals nor heroes, but humans. This paper explores the complexities of this claim by asking what it takes for someone to become a criminal or a hero and examines why it is important for helpers to be seen as humans. At its core, the criminalization of solidarity highlights the tension between the law, morality, and justice where the law criminalizes acts that are considered morally justifiable by many individuals and organizations. The helpers who offer support to immigrants in the EU challenge this tension by claiming that their actions are humanitarian. This claim, however, raises important questions about the nature of criminality and heroism and their relationship with humanitarian help. This paper takes a critical approach to these debates and argues that the helpers are not only acting out of a sense of morality and compassion, but also out of a recognition of the interconnectedness of all human beings. It concludes by emphasizing the importance of recognizing the humanity of the helpers for understanding their choices of breaking unjust laws and defending the rights of immigrants.

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### **Religious Resistance to Anti-Migration Legislation: On Public Reason, God, and Integrity, Michael Blake**

What can political philosophy learn from the phenomenon of principled religious resistance to anti-migration law? An example of such resistance can be found in response to proposed legislation in Florida, on which transporting an undocumented resident would count as a third-degree felony - with a penalty of up to fifteen years imprisonment per migrant transported. Resistance to this law has been led by Catholic and Evangelical clergy, who have argued that the proposed law would criminalize ministering to the undocumented; the law would impose criminal penalties upon anyone transporting an undocumented migrant to a place of worship, or otherwise providing transport to an undocumented migrant in furtherance of religious duty. In response, some otherwise Conservative denominations have announced their intention to ignore this provision - to refuse to comply with the law, on the basis of that law's conflict with the basic duties of Christianity as they understand them to be.

These denominations, I will argue, demonstrate the possibility of a poorly-theorized sort of principled non-compliance with law; that non-compliance is not intended to change that law, and is grounded in sectarian rather than public forms of reasoning, and yet may nonetheless represent a form of resistance from which liberal political theory might learn. I argue, in particular, that two lessons might be drawn from this form of resistance. The first is that, when legislation offends both public and religious duty, the same reasons which led John Rawls to permit non-public reasons as supplementary basis for public discourse, might permit liberals to regard the non-public speech of religious leaders as appropriate forms of political speech; the same reasons by which Rawls defends the methods of the abolitionists, for example, might defend a coalition politics in which political liberals join forces with religious leaders so as to work together against injustice. The second is that laws demanding particular forms of relational act might sometimes become so demanding as to be contrary to the constraints of moral integrity - a conclusion I think might be true even if the law in question is not obviously unjust. Laws which require individual agents to change their relational practices towards others, that is, may stand in need of greater justification than laws mandating actions on behalf of the legal system and its agents. This latter conclusion is not unfamiliar to legal and political thought, given the history of disputes over religious liberty and freedom of speech; but the phenomenon of principled religious resistance to anti-migration law might nonetheless be a useful reminder of how widespread such concerns might be. At the very least, they might provide an additional set of moral concerns for the policy-maker concerned with both justice and stability, in that skillful lawmaking might seek to avoid those circumstances under which the moral integrity of religious believers is put at risk through compliance with law.

## Speakers



### Melina Duarte

Associate Professor of Ethics  
UiT The Arctic University of Norway



### Michael Blake

University of Washington

## Moderator



### Ezgi Sertler

Utah Valley University

## Chasing Comity: Theorizing (Ideal) Civic Relationships in a Hyper-partisan World

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 3

📍 River Room I

PPE Society Working G...

The session is hosted by the PPE Society's PaCD Working Group.

*This Working Group is for anyone working on polarization, civil discourse, or democratic insecurities. We already have people from various disciplines investigating the cognitive underpinnings of polarization, its implications for the democratic process, normative principles that may (or may not) be violated in a polarized society, and methods of reducing it and its effects. We believe we can all gain from a direct exchange of ideas with people from multiple disciplines working on these topics. We hope to encourage interdisciplinary discussion and collaboration.*

### Abstracts:

#### Civic friendship with immoral others, Shanna Slank

In March 2017, *Saturday Night Live* ran a sketch about Ivanka Trump. The sketch—an ad for Trump's fake perfume *Complicit*—mocked the idea that Trump could call herself a feminist while remaining a loyal advisor to her father Donald, who had recently been caught on tape bragging about committing sexual assault. Yes, Ivanka was hypocritical or deluded, the sketch suggested. But this—that she was complicit—was a further charge, grounded in the supposition that her avowed moral principles precluded fraternizing much less working with anyone who violated those principles. Ivanka's father was doing wrong and in remaining by his side, Ivanka was doing wrong too.

I don't much care what should be said about Ivanka in the final moral analysis, but I am very interested in the souped-up vision of what it means to live in accordance with morality that lurks underneath the accusations of and concerns about complicity. Doing right, it seems to suppose, is not merely a matter tending one's own garden. Doing right requires a vigilance against any and all wrongdoing, no matter the wrongdoer. And if you cannot stop a wrongdoer, you should at the very least, plot your garden as far away from theirs as possible. *You are the company you keep*, as the saying goes.

If this is what is required for being morally conscientious, then being morally conscientious looks to be in deep tension with my preferred vision of how citizens in a pluralistic constitutional democracy ideally should regard one another. On my view (which I won't defend here), citizens should be in *comity* with one another. Comity is not quite as robust as solidarity but not nearly as thin as *mere* toleration. As a matter of being free and equal citizens in a society deeply committed to pluralism, we owe one another a special kind of recognition, if not respect, and it is out of this recognition that we are moved to consider and communicate, cooperate and even compromise with those whose views of right and wrong we regard not just as very wrong, but as (possibly very) immoral.

Given my commitment to comity, I have to say what is mistaken about the moral vigilance that interprets much of what we do as immoral acts of complicity. I use this talk to make small headway on this task. First, I'll propose a hypothesis: At least part of what explains why worries of complicity have become increasingly prominent in particular on the political left is the mainstreaming of academic theories emphasizing the supra- and sub-personal causes of injustice. Second, I'll sketch a view about how we can take the lessons of these theories seriously while nevertheless remaining in comity with immoral others.

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#### Comity with refugees and impartiality in moral judgments, Walter Sinnott-Armstrong and Laura Soter

The population of refugees around the world is growing quickly. When refugees arrive in a host country, they need to adjust and seek comity with their new neighbors in order to thrive in their new home. Comity is difficult to achieve when the refugees feel that they are not treated fairly by citizens of the host country, such as when

they are held to different moral standards because they are refugees. These impressions can create tensions that harm both groups.

Unfortunately, citizens of the host country often react to refugees with a mixture of fear, anger, contempt, and pity toward the refugees as well as pride in their country for allowing the refugees to enter. These emotions along with citizens' assumptions about the refugees can color their moral judgments of actions that involve refugees. Our previous work has found that moral judgments of agents who are refugees are sometimes more harsh (e.g. judgments of disloyalty), sometimes less harsh (e.g. judgments of impurity), and sometimes equally harsh (e.g. judgments of causing harm). There are reasons to suspect even bigger effects when the victim of immoral actions are refugees as opposed to citizens. The Baldus study in the 1980s, by analogy, found that the race of the victim had a larger effect than the race of the defendant on who was sentenced to capital punishment.

Our contribution to the proposed panel will report results of new surveys of online participants who judge how morally wrong acts are when the agent is a citizen or a refugee and when the victim is a citizen or a refugee. We ask each participant multiple questions about a variety of actions involving physical and emotional harm as well as dishonesty and unfairness.

We will also discuss the practical importance of our findings for policies aimed at helping refugees adjust to their new society and at helping citizens feel more comity with refugees living close to their homes. How much comity these groups experience is affected by how citizens morally judge actions done by and to refugees. Understanding moral judgments about refugees can help us design more effective interventions to increase comity.

Finally, we will explore theoretical implications of our results for philosophical theories that require moral judgments to be impartial. If people apply different standards to refugees than to citizens, this discrepancy raises questions about whether these judgments should be understood as moral in nature (as opposed to non-moral) and whether intuitions about these issues are reliable and should be trusted.

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#### **How to Engage in Civil Discourse**, Andrew Jason Cohen

Increasing the number of occasions that we have serious, productive, engagement with those we disagree with would have an immediate effect: our relationships with them would be improved. This is not to say that we would get more agreement; rather, the idea is that in virtue of being willing to engage with them with honesty, humility, and forthrightness, we would allow them to know us better and we would come to know them better. We would, in short, become more connected. We are, unfortunately, not good at engaging in civil discourse.

In this talk, I propose a method for genuine engagement with others that makes use of six intuitive and historically important principles—the harm, offense, morality, society, paternalism, and benefits principles—each of which purports to indicate when interference with individual's actions is permissible. I do not defend any of the principles here; the value of the principles is in their serving to help focus us on a dispassionate search for understanding. Having the search be dispassionate reduces the chances of discussants angering each other, increasing the odds of civil engagement.

The principles provided can serve their intended purpose because people implicitly—and often unknowingly—accept one or more of them. When they have stances on controversial issues, it is likely that one or more of these principles is behind their thinking. The principles thus allow us to engage in genuine intellectual inquiry with others, pulling out the real reasons we and our interlocutors respond as we do to the topic of interest. We do not have to accept all the principles—few would. We simply must realize that people likely do accept one or more of them and then try to figure out, with them, which underlie their thinking—and ours—about the topic and why.

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#### **Speakers**



**Shanna Slank**  
Duke/UNC-Chapel Hill



**Walter Sinnott-Armstrong**  
Professor  
Duke University



**Laura Soter**  
Postdoctoral Associate  
Duke University



**Andrew Jason Cohen**  
Professor of Philosophy; PPE Director  
Georgia State University

Moderator



**Delaney Thull**

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

## Freedom and Oppression

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 3

📍 River Room II

### Abstracts:

#### **External and Internal Freedom**, Caroline Bowman

This paper develops a distinction between ‘external’ and ‘internal’ freedom, and uses this distinction to shed new light on an old argument between theorists of negative and positive freedom. According to Isaiah Berlin’s “Two Concepts of Liberty,” negative freedom is the ability to act unimpeded by the wills of others, whereas positive freedom is the presence of a capacity to be selfgoverning, which Berlin further specifies in terms of rational self-control. Berlin’s discussion implies a point that has been accepted throughout much of the subsequent literature: that ideals of positive freedom are not directly relevant to political thought because they are not constitutively *social-relational ideals*. Against this, I first develop the distinction between external and internal conceptions of freedom, a distinction that figures both explicitly and implicitly in historical and contemporary discussions of freedom and autonomy, but has received considerably less attention than the positiveneegative distinction. An external conception of freedom attempts to answer the question “how can I be free with respect to others or to my social world?” An internal conception of freedom, in contrast, understands freedom as an individual achievement. I then argue that this distinction cuts across the negative-positive distinction. This clears the way to appreciate that *external positive* conceptions of freedom are in fact constitutively social-relational ideals. I conclude by suggesting the relevance of external positive conceptions of freedom to emancipatory politics.

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#### **The Role of Positional Interests in Structural Explanations of Oppression** , César Cabezas

This paper undertakes a critical engagement with the literature on structural explanations of durable oppression (Cudd 2006, Haslanger 2016). On the standard story, structural constraints on agency explain why members of oppressed groups sometimes contribute to their own oppression, which in turn explains the durability of oppression. While sympathetic to the standard story, this paper offers a complementary explanation of durable oppression that focuses not on the *victims* of oppression, but on its *beneficiaries*. In particular, my explanation seeks to make sense of why well-meaning members of privileged groups often act (or fail to act) so as to maintain oppression. In addition, my account provides a more complete picture of the role that social structures play in the reproduction of oppression. Whereas the standard story focuses on the *constraining* power of social structures, my account also considers the *motivating* power of social structures on the agency of individuals. More specifically, I introduce the concept of *positional interests* (*viz.* interests that attaches to individuals qua occupiers of a position in a social structure) as crucial for understanding how social structures motivate those who benefit from an oppressive social structure to act (or fail to act) so as to sustain such structures. In other words, positional interests explain the tendency for oppression-maintaining action among privileged agents, and in so doing, explain the durability of oppression. In developing my account, I draw on Charles Tilly’s (1998) work on durable categorical inequality in order to explain why members of privileged groups tend to engage in oppression-sustaining practices such as opportunity hoarding. As I show, Tilly explains the prevalence of these practices among privileged agents by appealing to what I have called positional interests, *viz.* an interest to secure an advantageous position that grants them exclusionary access to scarce resources.

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#### **How Is Oppression Structural? Let Me Count the Ways**, Annette Martín

The idea that oppression is a structural phenomenon is widely accepted, but what does this claim amount to? In this paper I distinguish between four main senses in which oppression can and has been thought to be structural: (1) causal structuralism, which concerns the causal explanation oppression; (2) normative source structuralism, which is about where we locate the source of the harm of oppression; (3) effects structuralism, which concerns unjust social structures that are brought about by oppressive processes; and (4) constitutive structuralism, which is about the conditions under which some individual or collective counts as oppressed. Although different versions of these kinds of structuralism can be found in the literature, and different theorists have seized upon different ones in spelling out the structural nature of oppression, these claims have not been clearly identified or distinguished from one another. Ultimately, I suggest that each of these kinds of structuralism captures a distinct and important aspect of the nature of oppression. Distinguishing between them allows us to clarify claims and arguments surrounding the structural nature of oppression, ultimately allowing for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

## 🔊 Speakers



### Caroline Bowman

Philosophy Futures Postdoctoral Lecturer  
New York University



### César Cabezas

Assistant Professor  
Temple University



### Annette Martín

University of Illinois at Chicago

## 🔊 Moderator



### Thimo Heisenberg

Assistant Professor  
Rice University

## PPE and the Environment

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 3

📍 Terrace Room

**Papered Sess...**

### Abstracts:

#### **Negative Emissions and Excuses, Britta Clark**

How exactly should societies avoid dangerous climate change? Different scenarios for the energy transition are vigorously debated, but the vast majority of these scenarios *assume* that certain technologies will be deployed at scale in the future. One such technology is ‘carbon dioxide removal’ (CDR), which involves various techniques for removing CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere *after* it has been emitted. For some industries, CDR could be cheaper and more technologically feasible than trying to avoid emissions in the first place. Yet though CDR features prominently in almost all mainstream energy transition scenarios, the technology has yet to be proven at scale.

To many, the above dynamic is exactly how climate policy is supposed to work. When there is good evidence that a cost-saving technology will be available by a certain time, we should integrate its future use into our reasoning about what to do now. To others, this reasoning is deeply flawed. According to these critics, CDR provides an unjustified excuse for *failing* to put in place certain putatively morally required climate policies. For instance, some argue that CDR provides an unjustified excuse for failing to scale down the fossil fuel industry at the morally required speed, or likewise that the technology provides an unjustified excuse for failing to share the burdens of the energy transition fairly. The underlying dispute is this: how, if at all, does this new technology change the moral requirements of the energy transition?

In this paper, I am to both clarify and begin to answer this question. I proceed in three Sections. In Section I, I address some of the central difficulties of a wide-scale rollout of CDR. Many commentators argue that we should not rely on untested technologies because of these difficulties and the attendant risks if the technologies fail. Though this is a genuine concern, it distracts from the deeper normative dispute that I am after. In the subsequent two sections, I *assume* that a CDR rollout on a vast scale is feasible, and return to my central question: how does the (assumed) potential of the technology bear on the correct formulation of the moral requirements of climate policy, if at all? In Section II, I address the relationship between CDR and the speed of emissions reductions. I argue that the promise of CDR does not entail that CDR should be used to slow the pace of emissions reductions, as is commonly thought by mainstream climate analysts. In Section III, I address the relationship between the promise of CDR and the requirement that the burdens of the energy transition be fairly shared. I argue that developed countries investing in and developing CDR for use in developing countries does not go very far to satisfy this demand of fairness. We should be wary of claims that the promise of CDR indeed slows the morally required pace of emissions reductions or is a mechanism to discharge global fairness requirements. In many cases, this technology is indeed merely playing the role of convenient excuse.

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#### **A Defense of Reducetarianism, Joshua May and Victor Kumar**

Consuming fewer animal products tends to be healthier, mitigates the suffering of animals, eliminates threats to public health, and reduces the emission of greenhouse gasses. However, it’s difficult for many people to go vegan or even just vegetarian. One solution to these problems has recently become more popular: *reducetarianism*. Even if you can’t entirely eliminate animal products from your diet, you can reduce them (Kateman 2016). In this paper, we briefly lay out the virtues of reducetarianism and then address two major objections.

The most obvious virtue of reducetarianism is that for many people it is psychologically more feasible than going cold turkey, given the attractions of animal products and the challenges of obtaining plant-based meals. Another virtue is that reducetarianism is more likely to spread because it is socially less alienating. Reducetarians are less likely than vegetarians or vegans to appear snobby and turn others off (May & Kumar 2023).

**Absolutist Objection:** Eating animal products from factory farms is egregiously unethical, so the correct action is to eliminate such products from your diet, not to merely reduce your consumption (compare Rachels 2004). Analogously, if you discover that your favorite brand of clothing is produced by torturing puppies or cats, the correct action is stop buying any clothes from the brand, not merely to reduce your purchases (Norcross 2004; McPherson 2014; Engel 2016).

*Response:* This objection reflects an unhealthy obsession with moral purity. The point of going reducetarian (or vegetarian or vegan) is not to cleanse oneself of association with unethical industries. The point is to contribute effectively to their decline. Studies of vegetarians and vegans suggest that upwards of 84% fail and return to an omnivorous diet (Faunalytics 2014). If attempting to go completely vegetarian or vegan is likely to backfire – if you are less likely to succeed and less likely to convert family and friends – then it is a less effective strategy for reforming and ultimately eliminating harmful agricultural and eating practices (Giubilini 2017; Sparkman et al. 2021; Cameron et al. 2023).

**Structuralist Objection:** None of the foregoing points matter because personal dietary choices don't matter. What matters is changing laws and institutions surrounding animal agriculture. Becoming a reducetarian (or a vegetarian or a vegan) is tantamount to recycling plastics in your home: it has no impact (Chignell 2016).

*Response:* Systemic change does matter but so does individual change because the two are mutually reinforcing (Brownstein. Politicians are likely to regulate the agricultural industry only if there is collective concern about the problems. We illustrate by citing recent empirical work on the mutual support of individual-level and systems-level interventions on greenhouse gas emissions (Cialdini & Goldstein 2004; Sparkman & Walton 2017; Frank 2020). Moreover, individuals are morally responsible for their role in morally fraught systems (Zheng 2018), including the influence they have on others (Lawford-Smith 2015). Although most people aren't presidents of countries or companies, they do play a daily role in the agriculture food system as consumers and influencers in their social networks.

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#### Liberalism, Theodicy, and Climate Change, Benjamin McKean

Is liberalism capable of addressing climate change? A robust philosophical literature on climate justice has applied egalitarian liberal views to the question of distributive justice when it comes to the emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses. But there's good reason to doubt this conceptual framework is adequate to a

world in which the chance of avoiding catastrophic climate change seems to require a major change not just in the way the global economy distributes benefits and burdens but in the very structure of the system itself – and soon.

In this paper, I consider whether there is a deep structure within liberalism that makes it inadequate to address planetary catastrophe by considering its relationship to theodicy. Critics of liberalism from both the left and the right argue that liberalism covertly relies on religious concepts. Central among them is theodicy, the idea that God is justified in permitting the existence of evil. For left critics like Raymond Geuss, liberalism is akin to theodicy because it relies on a kind of complacency or fantasy that we live in the best of all possible worlds, one in which liberalism's premises need never come into contradiction with each other. For conservative critics like Eric Nelson, liberalism began with the argument that men are capable of saving themselves and so can be left alone to determine their own fate since God has made things such so that we can work it out ourselves. In Nelson's *The Theology of Liberalism*, he argues that this hubristic view comes into conflict with egalitarian liberalism's more Augustinian conviction that individuals do not and cannot deserve a privileged place in society, a claim he locates at the heart of contemporary convictions about social justice.

If these views are correct, liberalism is ill-suited to address catastrophic climatic change not only because of its own internal incoherence but also because its structuring by theodicy makes it incapable of squarely facing a world in which humanity is potentially destroying the conditions of its own flourishing or even its continued existence. If liberalism assumes we already have the tools we need to save ourselves, how can it respond to political and environmental developments that cast doubt on that assumption?

I argue that critics like Geuss and Nelson are right that these forms of thinking shaped by theodicy are insufficient for addressing political problems we face today. However, these critics are wrong to think that this problem is unique to liberalism. Unfortunately, theodicy pervasively shapes thinking about responses to climate change. I conclude by considering how the climate activist and scholar Andreas Malm seeks to escape liberalism in order to better address climate change by drawing from Theodor Adorno's account of progress at the end of his 2020 book *Corona, Climate, Chronic Emergency*. Malm's use of Adorno suggests the possibility of narrating values of human freedom and equality in new ways and the potential importance of drawing on non-liberal traditions of thinking about nature, including indigenous thought.

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#### 🗨️ Speakers



##### **Britta Clark**

PhD Candidate  
Harvard University



##### **Joshua May**

Professor of Philosophy (and Psychology)  
University of Alabama at Birmingham



##### **Victor Kumar**

Assistant Professor  
Boston University



##### **Benjamin McKean**

Ohio State University

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#### 🗨️ Moderator



##### **Vaughn Baltzly**

Associate Professor  
Texas State University Department of Philosophy

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## The Principle of Fairness in 2023

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 3

📍 Tower Room

### Abstracts:

#### **Thoughts, Feelings, and Debts: Disentangling Gratitude and Reciprocity**, Brookes Brown

Consider a case where somebody steps up of their own volition to provide you with a benefit— they feed your cat when you are out of town, water your garden, give you a ride to the airport. What follows from this fact? The answer seems to depend on whether we classify the action as a matter of gratitude or reciprocity. But precisely what determines the appropriate categorization and what follows from it remains somewhat mysterious. Some (Herman, 2012) take the former to apply whenever an action is done to benefit you, others take that to be characteristic of the latter (Becker, 1986). Some take the latter to involve cases done purely for self-interest



(Berger, 1975) others suggest that other-regarding motives are a necessary feature of acts that give rise to reciprocal obligations (Brown, 2020). Many take the former to require something different than the latter—both less—in that they view it as demanding a less-than complete repayment—(Berger, 1975, Card 1988) and more—in that it is said to involve a necessary expression of good-feeling—(Weiss, 1985; Fitzgerald 1998). But little has been offered in the way of detangling the relationship between these demands, or providing a grounding account that makes sense of their similarities and distinctions. As Sean McAleer notes, “a striking feature of recent philosophical writing on gratitude is the disagreement that characterizes it.” (2012). Classic debates tend to focus on debates internal to each of these moral responses—can gratitude be mandatory, does reciprocity require repayment in kind—without providing guidance as to how we should distinguish the two sorts of cases or what would justify our doing so.

My aim in this paper is to do just that, providing a more coherent and complete account of both categories. Our confused intuitions about the two, I argue stem from a misunderstanding about the moral concerns that underlie our interest reciprocity. Our reciprocal duties, I contend, are grounded not only in fairness, but also in the recognition of a kind of valuable relationship of mutual support, one where we take that fact of our mutual vulnerability to and with others seriously. Understood in this way, reciprocity shares many of the affective features with which gratitude is classically associated. Nonetheless, I contend, the two categories remain distinct. A concern for gratitude, I argue, arises precisely when people give up the reciprocal claims to which they would otherwise be entitled. It is this choice that distinguishes the two concerns and makes sense of gratitude’s distinctive demands.

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### **The Principle of Fairness, Conventionalism, and Kantian Ethics, Chris Melenovsky**

If one is committed to “Generative Conventionalism,” then one believes that contingent social practices can generate novel rights, obligations, responsibilities, values, or virtues. This version of moral conventionalism does not require one to think that all morality (or all normativity) is conventional. Instead, it holds that certain moral demands—such as property rights or promissory obligation—are practice-dependent. For example, one might accept a practice-independent moral principle that “one should follow a social rule that—if generally followed—would promote more happiness than if it were not generally followed.” If one applies this principle to a society with rules that constitute a property system and this property system promotes happiness, then we should follow the rules of the property system. We would have an obligation to respect property that is generated by the combination of moral principle with contingent social practice.

Different moral theories can offer different potential moral principles that combine with social practices in this way, but the most frequently recognized is “The Principle of Fairness.” This principle has received the most attention as a ground of political obligation, but it is often used to claim that people have reason to following the rules of beneficial social practices. If, for example, it is generally beneficial that members of society follow the rules of property, then I have reason to follow the rules as a fair contribution to that system. The Principle of Fairness thereby combines with the contingent practice to generate an obligation to respect property.

In this article, I’m concerned with three objections to using the Principle of Fairness as ground for generative conventionalism. First, there is an objection that the Principle only justifies making a fair *contribution* to beneficial social practice, it does not require that the contribution take the form of *rule-following*. If rule-following is not required, then the principle would not generate an obligation *per se*. Second, the principle faces a dilemma based on whether “accepting” the benefits is a necessary condition for being obligated. If acceptance is required, then the principle is quite severely limited in application. If acceptance is not required, then the principle can obligate us to objectionable practices. Third, the principle does not have adequate justification. As a self-standing principle, it risks seeming *ad hoc*. This is especially true as theorists offer more and more refined versions of the principle.

Against the first objection, I differentiate “adherence-dependent” practice from practice that are not “adherence-dependent.” I argue that the principle only requires rule-following when applied to adherence-dependent practices. Against the second objection, I argue that any adequate version of the principle only applies to practices that pass a moral threshold. This “moral-threshold” requirement makes an acceptance condition unnecessary. Against the third objection, I ground the Principle of Fairness in Kantian moral theory. While the intuitive link between the principle and Formula of Universal Law is obvious, I offer a more careful derivation of the principle that follows Barbara Herman’s reading of Kant.

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### **Is Fairness an Independent Moral Principle? Edward Song**

Free riding occurs when a person enjoys cooperative benefits, but fails to participate in the creation of those benefits. To explain why free riding is wrong, most theorists appeal to the principle of fairness, which suggests that free riding represents an objectionable manipulation of the expectations of participants in a cooperative scheme. Others, however, are skeptical about such a principle. These theorists pursue a reductive strategy, explaining the wrongness of free riding in terms of other normative principles—especially those concerning harm to others, fidelity to contracts or promises, or gratitude for benefits rendered. This paper argues that these three reductive strategies fail, and that fairness represents a distinct kind of normative principle that attaches to cooperative schemes.

## 🔊 Speakers



**Brookes Brown**  
Assistant Professor  
University of Toronto



**Chris Melenovsky**  
Assistant Professor  
Suffolk University



**Edward Song**  
Associate Professor  
Westmont College

## 🔊 Moderator



**Ian Cruise**  
Dartmouth College

12:15 PM

### Lunch Break

🕒 12:15 PM - 2:00 PM, Nov 3

### Silent Book Auction!

🕒 12:15 PM - 2:00 PM, Nov 3

2:00 PM

### Abortion

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 3

📍 Grand Ballroom I

[Papered Sess...](#)

#### Abstracts:

##### **Feminist Commitments and Abortion**, Christie Hartley and Ashley Lindsley-Kim

The practice of abortion is a contested and divisive ethical and political issue in the U.S. Since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe* in 2022, many states have adopted restrictive abortion bans. Georgia's ban even recognizes a fetus as a person at about 6 weeks. At the same time, in recent work on pregnancy and abortion, some feminists have defended surprising claims. For example, in "Fetuses, Orphans, and a Famous Violinist," Gina Schouten argues that, if we grant that a fetus has full moral status, then the feminist commitment that all dependents should receive care can make gestating unwanted fetuses morally obligatory. This challenges the widely held feminist position that abortion is, generally, morally permissible regardless of the moral status of a fetus (except, perhaps, in late pregnancy). To be clear, Schouten doesn't think her argument tells us if gestation really is morally obligatory in most cases of pregnancy; she makes no claims about what the actual moral status of a fetus is. Still, she urges that we can't determine the ethics of abortion without first settling that issue.

Here we argue against Schouten's claim that the feminist commitment that all dependents should receive care can make gestating unwanted fetuses morally obligatory. Central to Schouten's argument is that moral agents have a shared, social obligation to provide care for unwanted dependents. Further, she claims that shared obligations can contingently and nonvoluntarily obligate particular moral agents to provide care when they are in a unique position to do so, even when discharging the obligation is burdensome or involves significant bodily costs. We consider the nature of gestation and fetal needs, and we argue that meeting the needs of unwanted fetuses via gestation can't plausibly be viewed as a shared, social obligation. Gestation, as such, is a condition or state of the body in which various changes nonvoluntarily happen to a pregnant person and developing fetus. It is not a social practice, a social role (like, e.g., being a foster parent), or a social mechanism designed by moral agents to meet the demands of dependents. Certainly, pregnant persons, by action or omission, can affect developing fetuses, and social institutions and practices can provide support for persons who are gestating. But, gestation is not the sort of thing that can be a shared, social obligation. Further, reflection on the nature of gestation shows that, contra Schouten, gestation is simply not on a continuum with various ways of caring for dependents in terms of "bodily intrusion and intimacy." It involves unique forms of intertwinement and integration that make it categorically different from the way that the needs of dependents are met through caregiving. Respecting the interests of those who gestate requires that it be recognized as such. As a result, we argue that, even if our claim that gestation can't plausibly be viewed as a shared, social obligation fails, the risks of pregnancy and its aftermath as well as the fact that an obligation would require unwanted bodily entanglement

with another, are obligation-defeaters.

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### **Mandated Gestation and Mandated Kidney Donation, Tina Rulli**

I argue that in jurisdictions in the U.S. with anti-abortion restrictions, when a pregnant person is required to gestate and give birth when they would otherwise abort, the inseminating partner should be legally mandated to donate a kidney to save a person's life. This argument is intended as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the anti-abortion position. It is widely held that it is not permissible for liberal governments to mandate that people donate their kidneys to save lives. Although saving lives is morally valuable, people have a right to bodily autonomy against interference by the state. Yet pregnant people are compelled by the state in some jurisdictions to use their bodies to maintain and give birth to a life. Some argue that this is because they are responsible for the situation due to voluntary sexual activity. But in cases of pregnancy by consensual sex, that responsibility is shared by two people, the pregnant person and the inseminating partner. I argue for a *principle of equal burden of responsibility*, which states that when two or more parties contribute equally to a situation for which they are responsible, they should equally shoulder the burden of that responsibility. Pregnant people shoulder the bodily burden of unwanted pregnancy nearly entirely, even though they share, typically by half, the responsibility for the situation with their inseminating partners. These bodily burdens are non-fungible and non-transferable. The burden cannot be partitioned and shared between equally responsible parties. The only way to meet the equal burden principle is to ensure that the inseminating partner bear a comparable burden to save a life. I propose widely publicized mandated kidney donation as that comparable burden. People who have consensual sex in anti-abortion jurisdictions know that if they conceive a child, the pregnant partner must carry the child to term, and the inseminating partner must donate a kidney to save a life. This renders the burden of unwanted conception closer to equal. Thus, anti-abortion restrictions plus a plausible principle of equal burden supports mandated kidney donation. But as stipulated, legally mandated kidney donation is not defensible.

Thus, neither are anti-abortion restrictions. Should some people disagree that legally mandated kidney donation is not absurd enough for the *reductio ad absurdum* to succeed, then they have an argument for mandated kidney donation in jurisdictions where there is mandated gestation. The full paper will identify and respond to objections. Perhaps pregnant people have obligations to their genetically related fetuses that people with sperm do not have to strangers who need kidneys. Perhaps different reproductive capacities and contributions between parties justifies a difference in the burdens that they must bear. Perhaps the equal burden principle can be satisfied via other means—e.g. inseminating partners may have duties of financial compensation to their pregnant partners. Perhaps kidney donation is less appropriate than other forms of bodily burden (e.g. bone marrow donation, etc.). Perhaps there is something illicit about meeting the equal burden principle by *adding* burdens rather than sharing them.

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### **The Ethics of Researching Abortion Care Post-Dobbs, Dana Howard and Katherine Rivlin**

How does the ethics of research of reproductive healthcare change in a growingly dangerous political climate for pregnant people? As patients continue to experience restrictions regarding their reproductive healthcare and access to abortion, the balance between the individual risks of participation and the social benefit of the research may change. In this presentation we argue that the political context matters to the ethical permissibility of risky research. More specifically, we argue that IRBs should consider the elevated risks for pregnant people given the current political climate, and further that these considerations may justify risky research of sub-optimal medical interventions that would have not been ethically permissible in the past.

The general question that this presentation explores is the ethics of conducting research on the effectiveness and safety of sub-optimal interventions in the context of social injustice. Others have defended the ethical permissibility of researching less-than-standard of care medical and social interventions in the context of resource scarcity (e.g. the Kennedy Krieger Institute Lead Paint Study and the short course AZT trials to guard against maternal-infant transmission in LMICs). These discussions have focused on the political salience of cost effectiveness as a way to benefit the general public. In this presentation, we aim to expand this discussion in recognition that research of sub-optimal care can have social value even when barriers to access of evidence-based measures are not due to their cost, but due to other political commitments of legislators and policy-makers.

This presentation uses a case study of previous risky research to explore how contemporary standards of research integrity may prove inadequate for the challenges of abortion research post-Dobbs. Despite safety concerns and lack of evidence, several states have recently passed legislation mandating that physicians include the prospect of “abortion reversal” in their pre-abortion counseling. Prompted by this legislation and the risks it posed to pregnant patients, researchers in 2019 conducted a RCT to test the safety and efficacy of the controversial practice. The study was stopped early due to safety concerns but it was politically useful nonetheless for litigation purposes against restrictive legislation.

Despite the high risks, we argue the study was ethically permissible but not due to standard ethical accounts of research equipoise. However the study's ethical permissibility cannot be understood through standard ethical accounts of research equipoise: there was no (a) state of honest, professional disagreement regarding the effectiveness of “abortion reversal” nor (b) were the individual researchers conducting the randomized control trial genuinely uncertain as to the preferred treatment. Nonetheless, unlike the many critics of equipoise, we argue against forgoing with the concept altogether; rather the concept should be amended to account for the political claims and interests of affected communities in non-ideal circumstances.

## 📣 Speakers



### Christie Hartley

Professor  
Georgia State University



### Ashley Lindsley-Kim

Georgia State University



### Tina Rulli

Associate Professor  
University of California Davis



### Dana Howard

Assistant Professor, Center for Bioethics and Philosophy  
Ohio State University

## 📣 Moderator



### Aaron Chipp-Miller

PhD Student  
University of California, San Diego

## The Philosophy, Politics, and Economics of Zoning

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 3

📍 Grand Ballroom II

### Abstracts:

#### **The Use of Land in a Democracy,** Brian Kogelmann

The great jurist William Blackstone defined property as the “sole and despotic dominion which one man claims and exercises over the external things of the world, in total exclusion of the right of any other individual in the universe.” Perhaps this is true as a normative ideal, but it is false in practice. In many countries around the world, if you buy a plot of land in an area zoned for detached single-family homes then you cannot build on it a grocery store, tannery, bodega, gym, haberdashery, apartment complex, duplexes, or townhomes. In contrast to Blackstone’s sole and despotic dominion, what we can do with our property is often subject to zoning ordinances.

This paper offers a normative analysis of zoning from the perspective of democratic theory. In particular, I am interested in *who* should have a say in how land is used.

In the United States, land use is an entirely local matter, decided at the municipality level. As a result, there are around 15,000 different local zoning ordinances across the country (Ellickson 2022: 4). Other countries regulate land use differently. One of the main differences between the U.S. and many European countries concerns the role of the national government in regulating the use of land. As Sonia Hirt describes it: “One of the most distinctive features of the American land-use regulatory model ... is its high degree of decentralization. Land-use matters in the United States remain an intensely local matter ... more so than in other countries” (Hirt 2014: 88). This is not to say that other countries do not grant any local control, only that local control is limited and shaped by national control, something that is almost entirely absent in the U.S.

I shall argue that both approaches to land use regulation run afoul of the *all affected principle*, which says “all people who are affected by a decision have a right to participate in making that decision” (Wilson 2022: 169). Local zoning (i.e., the U.S. system) violates it because people *outside* a community can be affected by a community’s land use regulatory policy. This is because land use policy can raise housing prices (by restricting supply) such that would-be emigrants can no longer afford to move to the city. A more national approach to land use regulatory policy (i.e., the European system) also violates the all affected principle because there are many people in a country who (i) do not live in a particular city and (ii) have no interest in moving to that city. These people, according to the all affected principle, should not have a say in how the city regulates the use of land. To end, I propose a novel social choice mechanism for regulating the use of land that, I argue, satisfies the all affected principle.

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#### **The Ethics of Exclusionary Zoning,** Dan Shahar

Ecosystems and cities are complex, self-organizing systems that often defy rational control. Given their similarities, it is unsurprising some scholars have found it fruitful to cast each as a metaphor for the other, gaining

theoretical traction through analogical reasoning. For example, in *A Sand County Almanac*, Aldo Leopold forcefully motivates ecological conservation by examining the challenges confronting would-be “conquerors” who seek to impose their wills on human communities. Meanwhile, James C. Scott’s *Seeing Like a State* treats misadventures in scientific forestry as a “parable” that illuminates pathological approaches to social planning. In these and other discussions, scholars have sought to help their readers comprehend complex systems through the power of analogy.

This paper extends this tradition by exploring how the idea of ecological succession can be adapted to guide thinking about urban change. In ecology, “succession” refers to processes whereby ecosystems change predictably over time. For instance, in the aftermath of a forest fire, an area may be dominated by fast-growing weeds; these may be displaced by grasses; the grasses may give way to trees; and eventually, the land may return to a forested state. Crucially, these changes are not mere happenstance. Succession occurs in a predictable, directional manner because many ecological states create conditions in which other states are likely to emerge.

In a similar way, some urban communities display patterns of change that lend themselves to characterization as successional processes. For instance, blighted areas often become hotbeds of cultural activity that attract gentrification in turn. As with ecological succession, these changes are not mere happenstance. Cultural hotbeds tend to emerge in blighted areas because of those areas’ specific characteristics: they often are inexpensive to occupy, tolerant of externality-generating activities, less hostile toward deviancy, etc. Likewise, gentrifiers tend predictably to move into culturally vibrant areas, driving up property values and displacing the people who made those areas desirable to begin with.

Viewing these processes through the lens of ecological succession helps illuminate the dynamic and fleeting nature of certain urban conditions. It also makes vivid the challenges facing planners who wish to produce desirable states without allowing them to develop organically. Perhaps most importantly, the successional metaphor helps us grasp why certain urban conditions are difficult to maintain over time, including especially the diverse, dynamic, and culturally rich communities that plausibly represent intermediate states between blighted and gentrified conditions. If the succession analogy is apt, it may suggest a new vision for urban policy that evokes the “shifting mosaic” of habitat types many land managers now seek. Rather than chasing a chimera of sustainable vibrancy, urbanists may be wise to contemplate an alternative goal where cities contain neighborhoods in varying states of ascendancy, climax, disturbance, and decay.

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#### Urban Succession, Matt Zwolinski

This paper explores the ethical issues in what is known as “exclusionary zoning” – land-use regulations which, in effect and often by intention, restrict the development of affordable and high-density housing. Its argument is that such policies can be shown to be indefensible from a variety of moral frameworks. Zoning unjustifiably interferes with individuals’ right to control their private property, it exacerbates inequality and the marginalization of vulnerable groups, and it undermines economic efficiency and the opportunities for employment, mobility, and well-being to which that efficiency gives rise. It is true that zoning does, at least in theory, serve some morally admirable goals, such as the management of externalities and the promotion and preservation of public goods. But there are other means of achieving these goals without the high moral and economic costs of zoning. Exclusionary zoning should therefore be abolished.

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#### Speakers



##### Brian Kogelmann

Assistant Professor  
West Virginia University



##### Dan Shahar

MBA Director and Teaching Assistant Professor  
West Virginia University



##### Matt Zwolinski

Professor of Philosophy  
University of San Diego

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#### Moderator



##### Vaughn Baltzly

Associate Professor  
Texas State University Department of Philosophy

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## Creating Caring Communities

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 3

📍 Salon Room

## **Abstracts:**

### **Caring Community in Markets and Socialism, Chad Van Schoelandt**

This presentation addresses socialist criticisms of markets — specifically criticisms alleging that markets undermine relations of communal care. I begin by reviewing prominent versions of these criticisms, moving next to compare markets and socialism side-by-side through the lens of community. I consider both ideal and non-ideal theories, ensuring a comprehensive comparative framework. The conclusion is that within ideal theory markets and socialism are on a par, but within realistic non-ideal conditions markets outdo socialism in community-building.

**Key terms:** *communal care, markets, socialism, ideal theories, non-ideal theories, comparative institutional analysis*

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### **Nurturing Compassion: A Pathway to Addressing the Escalating Costs of Health Care, Chara Kokkiou**

Healthcare organizations that prioritize compassion not only benefit financially but also improve patient and caregiver satisfaction. However, the escalating costs of healthcare pose a challenge to the integration of compassion within a free market system. Louisiana faces significant healthcare cost burdens, ranking second highest in the US and experiencing a substantial increase in healthcare spending from 2016 to 2020. These rising costs adversely affect businesses, wages, and family budgets. To combat this issue in Louisiana, the Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum Employer Coalition (LHCQF), an employer-led healthcare coalition comprised of employers, providers, hospitals, and other interested parties and founded in 2022, aims to enhance healthcare value by lowering costs and improving safety, quality, and consumer experience. While the Coalition focuses on cost transparency and payment alignment, the importance of compassion remains overlooked. Compassion plays a vital role in social entrepreneurship, as a tool to decipher communal entrepreneurial intentions, discover prosocial opportunities, and offer innovative solutions. Furthermore, a caring, community-based, compassionate approach, which focuses primarily on collectiveness as opposed to individualism, can address compassion fatigue, which carries a great emotional and financial cost, leading to errors, poor-quality care, and caregiver turnover. This paper argues that embracing compassion is crucial for developing an effective healthcare model in an open society that is dedicated to providing more affordable healthcare services and facilitating far-reaching reforms to attain them.

**Key terms:** *compassion, care, community, healthcare, open society*

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### **Blackout Beavers: Care, Social Media, and Eager Beaver, Shoshana Primak and Amethyst Bias**

This paper will discuss eager beaver and social media. An eager beaver is someone who tries to solve what they perceive as a problem that negatively affects an individual or group (the “target” or “target group”) that they are neither a member of nor relevantly associated with. Eager beavers are prone to over-correcting: they spot a problem (e.g. some perceived social injustice) or solution (e.g. some possible legislation), and pounce into action. However, being an outsider makes it unlikely that the beaver will share the target individual or group’s core perspectives: perspectives that all or most group members share, or at least have a higher opportunity to share, by virtue of group membership. Core perspectives become key perspectives when they are required to identify or evaluate (i) a problem affecting a target group, or (ii) a solution for such a problem. Eager beavers go wrong when they eagerly proceed to action while lacking key perspectives. Thus, while the eager beaver may really care about helping the target group, their eagerness leads them to take action based on their own (relevantly lacking) perspectives; these actions tend to make either no or a negative difference to the target group. In this paper, we will present some cases of eager beaver that rely on social media. We will investigate how both user culture and market algorithms can encourage eager beaver. We will focus on eager beaver during “Blackout Tuesday,” the social media blackout event that followed the killing of George Floyd. We will discuss how eager beaver can be particularly harmful when it becomes widespread on social media, even when motivated by genuine care for a target or target group.

**Key terms:** *open society, perspectival diversity, social justice, social media, collective action*

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## **👤 Speakers**



### **Chad Van Schoelandt**

Director of the Murphy Institute's Center for Ethics, Associate Professor of Philosophy  
Tulane University



### **Chara Kokkiou**

Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
Tulane University



### **Amethyst Bias**


PhD Student, Instructor  
Tulane University

 Moderator



**Chen Wang**  
Tulane University

## **PPE and Ethical Veganism**

 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 3

 Executive Room

## **Abstracts:**

### **Why Your Next Catered Event Should Not Include Meat, Zachary Ferguson**

Much has been written about the ethics of eating meat. Far less has been said about the ethics of serving meat. In this paper I argue that we often shouldn't serve meat, even if it is morally permissible for individuals to purchase and eat meat. Historically, the ethical conversation surrounding meat has been limited to individual diets, meat producers, and government actors. I argue that if we stop the conversation there, then the urgent moral problems associated with industrial animal agriculture will go unsolved. Instead, we must also consider the important but overlooked role that midsized institutions play in addressing major collective problems. I focus mostly on the harms that industrial animal agriculture inflicts on humans, animals, and the environment, but the discussion bears on other global issues like climate change. Institutional choices are an underexplored avenue for driving social change—their power and influence outstrip individual actions, and they can shape behavior in modest ways that promote social goods. Here I highlight the paradigmatic case of catered events and suggest three ways that institutional actors can reduce meat consumption and shape cultural attitudes surrounding meat: large impact decisions, subtly shaping incentives, and spreading burdens out over many people.

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### **Buying Pet Food is Permissible, Despite the Harms Done to Farmed Animals, Josh Mund**

Farm animals who are killed for pet food are grievously harmed by industrial animal agriculture, and the purchase of pet food supports this harmful process. One might conclude on the basis of these facts that purchasing pet food is impermissible, even when the life or health of one's pet requires it. I distinguish between two notions of support, as it appears in the foregoing argument. Does an individual's purchase of pet food support animal agriculture in the sense that it makes a difference to the number of animals who will be created and exposed to the harms of industrial animal agriculture? Or do such purchases merely provide symbolic support? If individual purchases make a difference, then buying food for one's pet is likely impermissible, because it is impermissible to impose grievous harm on multiple other animals for the sake of one's pet. But there are strong, if not decisive, reasons for doubting that individual purchases (of pet food or of animal products intended for human consumption) have more than a minuscule chance of making such a difference. In that case, purchasing pet food supports industrial animal agriculture only in a symbolic way. There are genuine moral reasons to refrain from providing even merely symbolic support for a process that causes serious harm, as examples involving harm to human beings demonstrate. But I argue that the strength of these reasons is limited—they are outweighed by moderately strong countervailing reasons such as the protection of human health. Similarly, for pet owners whose pets genuinely require a diet of animal products to maintain life and health, the reasons in favor of buying pet food outweigh the symbolic reasons against it. I also consider whether pet food made from humanely raised animals offers an alternative to industrially produced pet food. In many cases it does, but the purchase of humane pet food faces a challenge similar to that facing the purchase of industrially produced pet food: if individual purchases make a difference, then the purchase humane pet food impermissibly causes harm to multiple other animals for the sake of one's pet. I show how the view that death is not bad for farm animals, while defensible, does not support the permissibility of buying humane pet food. I conclude that buying humane pet food is permissible only because the reasons against doing so are symbolic, and the life and health of one's pet outweigh symbolic reasons.

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### **A Binomial Model of Vegan Consumer Choice, Lucia Schwarz and Noah McCollum-Gahley**

One of the most forceful objections raised against ethical veganism in recent years is the inefficacy objection, which says that, given the nature of the meat industry and meat supply chain, no individual vegan consumer choice by itself can be expected to make a difference to the meat industry. Only if millions of consumers simultaneously reduce their meat consumption can we expect a decline in meat production. Proponents of ethical veganism, such as Alastair Norcross and Shelly Kagan, have pushed back against the inefficacy objection through an appeal to threshold effects and expected utility. While it may well take millions of consumers to reduce their meat consumption before producers scale back, once a critical threshold is reached, the industry will respond with a very large decline in production. And even though each individual consumer only has a small chance of being the "decisive consumer" that pushes the population's aggregate meat consumption below the relevant threshold, given that the benefit of being the decisive consumer would be enormous, the expected utility is large enough that we should make vegan consumer choices. However, as critics have noted, proponents of the expected utility argument have hitherto relied on an implausible model for calculating the probability of being the decisive consumer. They have assumed that this probability equals one divided by the total number of vegan purchases required to trigger a threshold effect. This assumption is mistaken because it is not guaranteed that enough people will reduce their meat consumption to trigger a threshold effect. So what is the probability of being the decisive consumer? Proponents of the inefficacy objection argue that, because it is unlikely that aggregate meat consumption will drop into the vicinity of a threshold that would trigger a decline in meat production, the individual's chance of being the decisive consumer is practically zero. In support of this argument, both Mark Budolfson and Julia Nefsky gesture at the binomial model of voting, according to which individual voters are usually highly unlikely to change the outcome of an election. But neither Budolfson nor Nefsky properly work through the model to substantiate their claims about the probability of being the decisive consumer. In this paper, we carefully adapt the binomial model of voting to the case of vegan consumer choices to get a better handle on its predictions regarding one's probability of being the decisive consumer. We find that it does not univocally support the inefficacy objection. One's chances of being the decisive consumer are comparatively large precisely when the chance is low that overall meat consumption will drop to a point where a threshold effect is triggered. Indeed, depending on how unlikely it is that a threshold effect will be triggered, the expected utility of one's vegan consumer choice could be significantly larger than Norcross and Kagan originally assumed in their development of the expected utility argument.



## Speakers



**Zach Ferguson**  
UNC Chapel Hill



**Josh Mund**  
Tulane University



**Lucia Schwarz**  
Assistant Professor  
Tulane University



**Noah McCollum-Gahley**  
N/A

## Moderator



**Louis Gularte**  
Visiting Assistant Professor  
Tulane University

## Deliberation, Competition, Assurance

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 3

📍 Chairman's Room

### Abstracts:

**Two Notes on Liberal-Democratic Stability: Factual Disagreement and Motivational Diversity**, Atticus Carnell

This paper complicates influential accounts of the stability of liberal-democratic justificatory orders. It argues that two phenomena — (1) factual disagreement and (2) motivational diversity — undermine influential arguments purporting to establish the stability of public-reason liberalism (following Rawls (1993) and Weithman (2010)) and of deliberative democracy (following Habermas (1990) and (1996)). The discussion aims to shed light on some tensions and tradeoffs in the design of stably just institutions.

Regarding (1), Rawls and other public-reason liberals place significant emphasis on the stabilizing effects of *normative* consensus or convergence. But in conditions of more basic factual disagreement, I argue, neither consensus nor convergence reliably generates stability. I disaggregate different kinds of assurance required for stability, then argue that destabilizing *factual* disagreement could arise relatively easily the well-ordered (Rawls 1993) and open (Thrasher and Vallier 2018) societies, in part because (a) public reason requirements perversely incentivize political argument at the level of facts, and (b) there are burdens of factual judgment, including that comprehensive doctrines and political competition shape our judgments of the facts.

Democratic procedures potentially help with (1), insofar as they offer a healthy forum to adjudicate not just norms but matters of fact. (2) presents a challenge for the stability of specifically deliberative democracy, arising in what I call motivational diversity. In short, I argue that the motivations required of individuals for a healthy deliberative democracy (see Gutmann and Thompson (1996)) are less compatible than scholars have realized, in such a way that would generate instability. A functional deliberative democracy requires citizens to be individually motivated and mutually assured that others will not only (a) act in a way that is substantively just, but also (b) respond appropriately to each other's normative claims (e.g., moral address), and more generally (c) deliberate with each other, (d) according to the procedural norms governing that deliberation, and (e) change their minds in light of good arguments. But (a) high substantive motivation, to act in the way one judges right, typically corresponds to low motivation to engage with others or to change one's mind, thus a citizenry with (a) relatively high substantive motivation will do poorly with (b)-(e). I discuss this and other incompatibilities among (a)-(e). To put it more concisely, what we might term *procedural* stability and *substantive* stability are plausibly at odds.

That said, I argue that a motivationally diverse order of public justification can be stable if *motivational transfer* is possible; if citizens can, through their claims, motivate others to act in the ways they are themselves motivated — thus a citizen who is well-motivated for (a) might motivate those better motivated for (b)-(e). On this picture, the role of public discourse is, pace Rawls, not for people to signal allegiance to one in a family of liberal conceptions of justice, but rather to directly motivate each other to treat each other justly. To conclude I discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this form of assurance for generating stability, and sketch some institutional-design desiderata on the basis of the more general discussion.

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### **Assurance and Political Inclusion, Andrew Hahm**

The political value of assurance is typically explicated with reference to a collective action problem arising in the provision of public goods (Sen 1967). While canonical treatments presuppose homogeneity in the collective providing the relevant good, recent debates about public reason have highlighted the distinctive structure and value of assurance for internally diverse collectives. However, accounts of public reason couch the moral value of assurance in the context of public justification for political action, and therefore tend to focus on religious pluralism in a liberal polity as the relevant form of diversity (Hadfield and Macedo 2012; Weithman 2015; Kogelmann and Stich 2016; Lister 2017). With some exceptions (Waligore 2016; Patten 2019), little sustained attention has been paid to concerns about assurance outside of this context.

This is a significant omission in light of the important role that the idea of assurance plays in contemporary and historical discourses about racial and other forms of social justice. In the United States, for example, some claim that Black Americans have no obligation to engage in residential integration without assurance that others are committed to the meaningful redress of racial injustice (Shelby 2016). It follows, then, that the state has an obligation to provide this assurance to Black citizens. Similarly, I argue in this paper, many complaints made by marginalized language communities against policies and norms which favor dominant languages can best be interpreted as demands for assurance that their inclusion in the polity will be based on equal and mutually negotiated terms.

Using the moral claims of linguistic minorities as a starting point, my paper articulates a general class of reasons to value assurance under conditions of pluralism which is distinct from those offered by public reason accounts. I argue that minority status constitutes a basis for assurance when it implicates one's ability to participate in democratic political life on equal and mutually negotiated terms at all. Non-dominant linguistic capacity is one example of the kind of marginalized minority status I have in mind, because language skills directly implicate one's ability to participate fully in political life. As a result, my account of assurance suggests a moral presumption in favor of passive multilingualism as the linguistic norm governing both social and political interactions. This is because it best expresses assurance for the inclusion of marginalized language speakers in the polity on equal and mutually negotiated terms.

More generally, the claim for assurance is particularly compelling when marginalized status coincides with historic injustice or status as a persistent minority in political decision-making, which can constitute *prima facie* evidence of political exclusion. However, I argue that even in the realm of ideal theory, marginalized status constitutes rational grounds for suspicion that political inclusion itself, not merely justification, will be established on an inegalitarian basis. In these contexts, there is additional reason for assurance in a continuing commitment, on the part of the rest of the polity, to engage in collective political life on democratic terms.

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### **Competitive Co-authorship, Jocelyn Wilson**

Can political losers, dissenters, and persistent minorities co-author the laws and policies to which they are subject? Contemporary democratic theory suggests not. Despite a renewed interest in autonomy-grounded defenses of democracy (Viehoff, 2014; Wilson, 2019; Lovett and Zuehl, 2022; Shiffrin, 2021), contemporary accounts provide little comfort to those who find themselves on the losing side of laws and policies. Either they dismiss the importance of actual co-authorship, and thereby dodge the question (Wilson, Viehoff), or else they argue that democratic procedures facilitate autonomy-realizing co-authorship only when individuals share intentions (Lovett and Zuehl) or communicate a shared message (Shiffrin). Thus, contemporary accounts suggest that autonomy-realizing co-authorship occurs only against a backdrop of agreement. Political losers, dissenters, and persistent minorities are out of luck, with the significant consequence that their autonomy-based interests in co-authorship are left in the lurch.

The idea that co-authorship requires agreement is deeply troubling. It significantly restricts who can be autonomous under democratic rule. Moreover, the view undercuts a long-standing, persuasive liberal understanding of autonomy as both requiring authorship over one's life and being inextricably connected to the existence and maintenance of public disagreement. As an alternative, I develop an account of how political losers, dissenters, and persistent minorities can have a hand in co-authorship through public contestatory deliberation and dissent. I call this competitive co-authorship.

The mechanics of competitive co-authorship are relatively simple. Imagine we are listening in on a lively political disagreement between two individuals. As each participant responds to her opponent's clarificatory requests, concerns, or outright objections, each participant necessarily crafts the public presentation of her idea in accordance with her opponent's demands. In this way, the content that we, as observers, take in from the spectacle is forged by the intertwined and mutually responsive intentions, actions, and goals of the participants. The substantive ideas arising from the exchange are competitively co-authored insofar as they ultimately depend on this complex fusing of efforts between participants. Put differently, by publicly placing deliberative demands on one's discursive competitor, one forces her to present her idea in response to these demands. Neither the potential declaration of a deliberative "winner" and "loser" nor the fact that the individuals may disagree with one another post-deliberation affects this occurrence of co-authorship.

But how can we competitively co-author law and policy? First, public forums must facilitate inclusive, diverse, and robust deliberation and dissent regarding the proper content and force of laws and policies. This includes enabling forceful denial of law's authority through disruptive expression and civil disobedience. Second, legislative and judicial branches must be responsive to this public discourse. Legislatures must incorporate and respond to competitively co-authored public ideas in crafting new laws. And even judicial interpretation, which most see as paradigmatically unsuitable for influence by public debate, must respond to contestatory deliberation

over the content and authority of existing law for autonomy-realizing co-authorship to occur. Through this institutional structure, political losers and winners alike facilitate autonomy-realizing co-authorship for all.

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#### Speakers



**Atticus Carnell**  
Princeton University



**Andrew Hahn**  
PhD Candidate  
Princeton University



**Jo Layman-Wilson**  
Princeton


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#### Moderator



**Joseph Heath**  
Professor  
University of Toronto

### **PPE and Technology**

 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 3

 Imperial Room

[Papered Sess...](#)

## Abstracts:

### **Algorithmic Opacity and Particular Reasons**, Samuel Dishaw

Black box machine learning models are now used to make a number of decisions that directly impact people's lives. These models are black boxes in the sense that, if a particular individual wants to know why the model gave a particular decision in their case (e.g., the denial of a bank loan), no reasons for the decision can be given. The rules that the algorithm has created are too complex. The reasons for its decisions are opaque.

What, if anything, is wrong with the use of such opaque decision-making systems? One recent suggestion is that the use of opaque decision systems is objectionable because it is incompatible with the ideal of public reason. In the first part of this talk, I argue that the ideal of public reason does not, in fact, provide a basis for legislating against opaque decision-making systems. On the contrary, we can justify such opaque systems using the very norms of public reason. In the second part of this talk, I introduce a framework which does provide grounds against the use of opaque decision-making systems: the framework of directed moral duties. This framework succeeds where the public reason ideal fell short, by explaining why the general reliability of a decision-making system is no justificatory substitute for particular reasons.

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### **Click-Gap, Paternalism, and Tech Giants' Relationships with their Users**, J.L.A. Donohue

The spread of misinformation and fake news raises important problems for our society and for our democracy. From the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol to vaccine hesitancy, from suppressing voter turnout to peddling conspiracy theories, we know that these problems are real and need to be taken seriously. While misinformation is not a new problem for democracy, it can spread more quickly and easily because of new media's design and popularity. Given these problems, it is encouraging that some technology companies are taking steps to reduce the spread of misinformation and fake news on the platforms they manage.

Despite this seemingly positive development, some scholars have criticized some interventions designed to combat the spread of misinformation and fake news as paternalistic. For example, a 2019 Facebook intervention called Click-Gap aimed to reduce the amount of low-quality content (including fake news and misinformation) that users see on their NewsFeed. Click-Gap has been criticized as an instance of epistemic paternalism because it was adopted (1) with the goal of improving the epistemic status of its users and (2) irrespective of what the company believed the wishes of its users to be. If interventions like Click-Gap are problematic because paternalistic, those of us interested in the ethics of technology would face a dilemma—either endorse technology companies treating their users paternalistically or endorse their failing to act to combat the spread of misinformation and fake news on their platforms. Both options seem to me to be problematic. While paternalism may sometimes be permissible, I think we should be very hesitant to endorse a paternalistic relationship between technology companies and their users. The relationship does not seem to bear the right sort of structure to one in which paternalism might be appropriate, if it ever is.

The second option seems, if anything worse: surely technology companies should not stand by and change nothing about their platforms despite the spread of misinformation and fake news in those spaces. In this paper, I argue that Click-Gap and interventions like it are not paternalistic, contrary to the conclusion of other scholars. Further, I will argue that the focus on paternalism itself is actually a red herring here. While not just any intervention or strategy that purports to reduce fake news and misinformation is permissible, we should want technology companies to take user well-being seriously and be able to take that well-being as a direct reason for action. Their doing so isn't paternalistic nor even morally problematic, and it shouldn't be criticized as such.

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### **Artificial intelligence and responsibility gaps in question**, Luís Lóia

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#### Speakers



#### **Samuel Dishaw**

Teaching Assistant Professor  
UNC Chapel Hill



#### **Jenna Donohue**

Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
University of Arkansas



#### **Luís Lóia**

Assistant Professor  
Portuguese Catholic University

Moderator



**Joshua Paschal**  
Indiana University

## Collective Self-Determination

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 3

📍 Cotton Room

### Abstracts:

#### **Federalist Collective Self-Determination**, Travis Quigley

This paper argues that conventional theories of collective self-determination, which orient themselves at the level of nation or state, fail, but that local collective self-determination on a federalist model may succeed.

Contemporary theorists of collective self-determination include (non-exhaustively) Anna Stilz, Arthur Applbaum, and Andrew Lister. The most obvious historical antecedent is Rousseau, and perhaps also Plato. The theoretical move that interests me is a *scaling up* strategy, which begins with a characterization of small groups, and then extends that characterization to large political groups. Salient examples of small groups include the family, members of a musical band, teammates in sports, partnerships of various kinds, and so on. Two crucial characteristics of small groups, when they seem intuitively to be collectively self-determining, are that membership is suitably voluntary, and that members in some sense endorse the actions of the collective. Obviously both of these characteristics require clarification, but it seems equally obvious that one who is forced to participate in a group entirely against their will, or one who systematically disavows the acts of the group, is not meaningfully a self-determining member.

The first, critical task of the paper is to argue that large political groups are not relevantly similar to small self-determining groups, because they do not have the relevant traits: large states are coercive rather than voluntary, and, given facts about diversity, many people have little reason to endorse the acts in which they are politically implicated.

The second, constructive task of the paper is to argue that a suitable form of federalism, as an intervention in idealized institutional design, *could* facilitate the formation of collectively self-determining groups at the local (but not the national) level. The institutional criterion that must be satisfied is that all citizens must have substantive access to *exit options* within the federation, across a diverse range of localities. I intuitively model this criterion with two key constitutional features: a Universal Basic Income which ensures the material capacity for internal mobility, and a permissive constitutional structure which allows localities to pursue a wide variety of ways of life.

I argue that such a scheme could satisfy plausible conditions for collective self-determination. I attempt to show this parsimoniously by testing the conception against Michael Bratman's demanding account of the conditions of shared intentionality. In short, Bratman argues that shared intentions require a recursive complex of intentions to act together: *I* intend that *we* take action X, *and* that you hold the reciprocal form of that intention, and that we know this about each other, and so on. If the idealized institutional form of federalism ensures that all members of a local community are *freely* members, know that all other members are also suitably free, and act to preserve those circumstances via participation in the overall federal project, then localities are plausibly collectively self-determining wholes.

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#### **Collective Self-Determination, Revolution, and Reason for Intervention**, Elizabeth Levinson

The transformative and violent nature of political revolutions makes them a challenging case for political philosophy and just war theory. On the one hand, in the case of justified revolution, a collective's claim to self-determination seems to be a source of reasons against intervention where the collective would not welcome it. On the other, the severe humanitarian costs of revolution provide compelling reason for third parties to intervene. Contemporary just war theorists working in the dominant revisionist paradigm hold that the latter reasons defeat the former. Jeff McMahan, Christopher Wellman, and Andrew Altman argue that once a state is deprived of legitimacy, the humanitarian costs of revolution weigh decisively in favor of intervention, while Allen Buchanan argues that the value of collective self-determination itself weighs in favor of intervention.

Arguing from a compelling, minimal account of collective self-determination, Massimo Renzo has challenged this prevailing just war orthodoxy concerning revolutionary intervention. He identifies a plausible minimal standard of collective self-determination—namely, that in order for collective self-determination to obtain, members of a collective must interact in a way that mixes their individual agencies. He demonstrates that even in conditions of a justified revolution, this interactional standard offers a compelling reason that weighs against an otherwise justified intervention. So long as the members of the collective that wish to refuse intervention are not responsible for the injustice that makes revolution justified, and so long as they do not refuse on the basis of trivial reasons, then they retain their right to refuse intervention by third parties on the basis of collective self-determination.

This paper argues that Renzo's interactional account neglects an additional minimal standard of collective self-determination, what I call reason attributability. According to this standard, for an individual to enjoy the good of collective self-determination (to some degree) with respect to the collective of which they are a member, some of that individual's reasons must feature as reasons in the decision-making of the collective. That is to say that the reason attributability view of collective self-determination requires that the collective make decisions in part on the basis of some reasons held by individual members of that collective. To satisfy reason attributability, those reasons must also be given appropriate weight; as Renzo recognizes, appeal to trivial reasons is not a suitable ground for a collective refusal of intervention. However, reasons in favor of revolutionary intervention will be reasons that correspond to the protection of basic human rights. These are exceptionally demanding moral reasons, such that appropriately taking them into account will ultimately defeat any reasons against intervention. Therefore, in the case of justified revolution, intervention will generally be justified on grounds of collective self-determination.

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### **Against Collective Autonomy, Anthony Taylor**

Personal autonomy is a prized value in political philosophy. It is a value that individuals realize when they are—so the well-worn metaphor goes—the author of the story of their life, exercising control over its shape and direction. And though there is disagreement about the best way to specify the value of personal autonomy, most agree that it is threatened when our lives are to a significant degree the product of external or alien forces.

Is there a collective analog of the value of personal autonomy, capable of doing a similar kind of explanatory work in political philosophy? As members of groups, we may exercise a degree of control over the collective conditions under which we together live. And when a group gains a greater degree of control over these collective conditions, say because it has acquired independent statehood, it is natural to say that it has thereby become more collectively autonomous. In recent work it has been argued that the value of collective autonomy can explain why states have a right to territorial jurisdiction. It has also been suggested that the value of collective autonomy can do significant explanatory work in cases where territorial sovereignty is implicated. For example, it has been suggested that it can explain why states may sometimes go to war in defence of their purely territorial interests, why there is an asymmetry between the conditions for the permissibility of revolution and intervention, and why colonialism is a distinctive kind of wrong.

This paper argues, on the contrary, that the value of collective autonomy is unable to explain why states have rights to territorial jurisdiction, or to do significant explanatory work in these further cases where territorial sovereignty is implicated. My argument begins with the challenge that in all of these cases collective autonomy threatens to offer an explanation that is too close to the phenomena it aims to explain. The paper then considers a number of ways in which the value collective autonomy might be specified to avoid this challenge. First, it might be specified by appeal the interest individuals have in making choices together with others. Second, it might be specified by appeal to the interest individuals have in their political institutions corresponding with their judgments about how they ought to be ruled. Third, it might be specified by appeal to the good that is achieved when citizens' joint intentions are made manifest in state policy. I argue that each of these ways of specifying the value of collective autonomy is vulnerable to serious objections. The first route is unable to explain why we ought to privilege the interest in making choices together in a political unit in particular. The second route cannot give a well-motivated account of who has these correspondence interests and why. And the third route, though may be able to tell us something about the value of democratic procedures, it is unable to explain deontic notions like jurisdictional rights over territory.

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#### **🗣️ Speakers**



#### **Travis Quigley**

PhD Candidate  
University of Arizona



#### **Elizabeth Levinson**

PhD Student  
University of Arizona



#### **Anthony Taylor**

Fribourg

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#### **🗣️ Moderator**



#### **Cara Nine**

UNR

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## **Don't Speak! On Deterred Speech**

## Abstracts:

### **Accounting for Chilled Speech in an Intellectually Humble Free Speech Jurisprudence, Mark Satta**

Legally permissible restrictions on speech sometimes risk suppressing more than just the restricted speech by deterring potential speakers from engaging in related, lawful speech. When this happens, the suppressed lawful speech is said to have been “chilled.”

Normally, any chilling of speech is considered undesirable. However, some reflection reveals that not all chilling of speech is equally undesirable. For example, a defamation law might deter a newspaper editor from publishing a well-founded account of presidential corruption, for fear that some of the claims might turn out to be false. That same defamation law might also deter a radio commentator from airing vitriolic opinions rooted in misogyny about the same president. If the defamation law only regulates false statements of fact made with knowledge of falsity or reckless disregard for truth, neither the newspaper editor’s nor the radio commentator’s speech would be restricted. Thus, both cases would be chilled speech. Still, it seems that the deterrence of the newspaper editor’s speech is worse than the radio commentator’s.

The above assessment involves making a judgement about the speech’s *value*. Good free speech jurisprudence must sometimes allow governmental actors to make or enforce free speech law based on value judgements about speech. But it must permit this sparingly. For example, on the one hand, defamation law rests on a permissible value judgement that false statements harming people’s reputations are of little or no value. On the other hand, an important part of U.S. free speech jurisprudence is “viewpoint neutrality,” which generally bans government from regulating speech based on the viewpoint espoused. This prevents judges and legislators from using their judgments about the value of viewpoints when creating or assessing speech regulations.

I argue that we should strive for an intellectually humble free speech jurisprudence and that the higher-order questions about when judgments concerning the value (or truth) of speech can be employed in determining if speech can be regulated is a crucial part of such jurisprudence. Intellectually humble free speech jurisprudence happens not only at the individual level, but also at the structural level. One of the primary structural questions concerns which value and truth judgments judges and legislators can use when regulating speech.

I also argue that these structural concerns raise important questions about how the risks of chilled speech should be accounted for. These include the following, which will be addressed in the presentation:

- Should legislators or judges treat the risk of chilling some kinds of speech as weightier considerations against regulation than others?
- If so, could this help justify different tiers of protection for different kinds of speech, as, for example, the greater protection that “political speech” receives over “commercial speech” in the U.S.? (The idea here is that intellectual humility might require extra care in not chilling political speech.)
- Is it ever permissible for the government to actively aim at chilling speech which it could not outright restrict based on assessments of the chilled speech’s lack of value?

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### **Coerced Complicity and the Epistemology of Bald-Faced Propaganda, Lauren Leydon-Hardy**

According to many prominent accounts of propaganda it is distinguished as a political communication strategy in that it is essentially manipulative<sup>[1]</sup>, where manipulation is understood as the clandestine cultivation of undue influence.<sup>[2]</sup> Theorists of propaganda also mark a distinction between persuasive and what we might call “bald-faced” propaganda. Persuasive propaganda is sneaky and deceptive, whereas bald-faced propaganda is bold, brazen, often literally incredible. Compare, for example, Bush’s claims about the end of the Iraq war in the now-infamous Mission Accomplished speech, versus Assad’s claim to have been re-elected in 2021 with 95.1% of the vote. In the first instance, the Bush administration’s goal was to elicit sincere belief about the state of the US invasion in Iraq. But for a Syrian population who either couldn’t vote, or who voted at voting stations policed by regime-friendly armed forces, the goal of Assad’s claim is not plausibly to elicit belief. Instead, we understand this kind of bald-faced propaganda as a *flex*. Consider: Assad probably doesn’t expect Syrians to *believe* that he was re-elected in a free and fair landslide election, but he surely expects them to know what to say, if they’re asked. One way of carving up the distinction, then, is that persuasive propaganda polices the mind, while bald-faced propaganda polices the mouth. Persuasive propaganda tells us what to believe, bald-faced propaganda tells us what we can (and cannot) say.

Many of our most ready-to-mind examples of propaganda are of the bald-faced variety (e.g., the sloganeering of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*’s Ministry of Truth: War is Peace! Freedom is Slavery!), but on the manipulation account of propaganda, bald-faced propaganda cannot *be* propaganda. After all, there is nothing clandestine, or even subtle, about bald-faced propaganda. You might take this to be a reductio of the manipulation account.<sup>[3]</sup> Or, you might argue that bald-faced propaganda is propaganda in name, alone. True propaganda, the persuasive sort, is odious precisely because it functions through the bypassing of audience-side rational faculties, eliciting belief undetected. Bald-faced propaganda (such as it is) relies on audience-side rational faculties in order to coercively intimidate and achieve compliance. Two such functionally distinct communications strategies needn’t be theorized as having any underlying unity: they might just be different things.

I argue that this is a mistake. In the same way that talking can be epistemically generative, prohibitions on speech, of precisely the kind that bald-faced propaganda issues, can be epistemically corrosive. When we cannot speak to

each other, we cannot think for ourselves. Both bald-faced and persuasive propaganda are thus apt to hijack our rational competencies. And propaganda, in general, is a communication strategy designed to drain its audience of its ability to think in the language of political possibility. And, thereby, to make its audience rationally, coercively complicit in the erosion of its own epistemic agency. It is therefore a strategy for *epistemic infringement*.<sup>[4]</sup>

- <sup>[1]</sup> Ross (2002), Marlin (2002), Stanley (2015), Benkler, Faris, and Roberts (2018)
- <sup>[2]</sup> Nozick (1969), Wood (2014), Coons & Weber (2014), Susser, Roessler, Nissenbaum (2019)
- <sup>[3]</sup> Hyska (2022)
- <sup>[4]</sup> Leydon-Hardy (2021)

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### Epistemic Trespassing Through the Looking Glass, Joshua DiPaolo

Epistemic trespassing occurs when someone behaves as an expert in a domain where they are not an expert. Think of the YouTuber with no background in climate science telling his audience there is no evidence for anthropogenic global warming. While this phenomenon has recently been studied by philosophers, a nearby hitherto unanalyzed phenomenon deserves philosophical attention. It's the mirror-image of epistemic trespassing. *Epistemic ceding* occurs, roughly, when someone *fails* to behave as an expert in a domain where they are, indeed, an expert. Sticking with the "land metaphor": epistemic trespassers enter someone else's turf; epistemic ceders retreat, leaving their intellectual territory unoccupied. This talk introduces the notion of epistemic ceding and analyzes its causes and problematic consequences.

Consider three examples of epistemic ceding. First, imagine a former gang member with years of experience engaging in gang related graffiti who is asked to speak as an expert witness in a trial on this topic. Ashamed of her past, she refuses. Second, imagine a progressive intellectual with expertise on the challenges boys and men face in contemporary society who is invited to write a book explaining these challenges to the public. Not wanting to appear anti-feminist, he declines. Finally, imagine a native speaker of African-American English who is asked to share his linguistic knowledge with his mostly White classmates. Having been told his whole life by his teachers that he "speaks wrong" and therefore not realizing African-American English is a genuine language, he withdraws, thinking there is no knowledge for him to share. In each example, someone has expertise in a domain – gang graffiti, sociology, language – but they opt out of sharing their expert knowledge with an audience. These are (real-life) examples of epistemic ceding.

These examples represent three different causes of epistemic ceding. Respectively, the speaker cedes (1) because they expect to suffer costs associated with the source of their expertise—*source costs*; (2) because they expect to suffer costs for asserting the content of their expertise—*expertise costs*; and (3) because they believe (or relatedly expect their audience to believe) their domain of expertise is not, in fact, a domain of expertise—*expertise contestation*. When there is stigma associated with the source or content of one's expertise or when dominant groups contest domains of expertise, we can expect epistemic ceding to occur.

There are undesirable epistemic and political consequences of epistemic ceding. First, when epistemic ceding occurs, someone with knowledge does not share it. This is especially problematic when scaled up. *Wholesale* epistemic ceding – *no one* with the knowledge shares it – leads to collective gaps in knowledge. Systematically *skewed* epistemic ceding – e.g., only experts of one political bent share knowledge – may produce knowledge (or its interpretation) that is biased. Second, if people systematically cede due to expertise contestation, then the domain of expertise may remain contested and dominant ideologies may *remain* unquestioned. Finally, epistemic ceding is often an enabling condition for epistemic trespassing. Leaving intellectual territory unoccupied makes it easy for non-experts to trespass.

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#### 👤 Speakers



##### Mark Satta

Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
Wayne State University



##### Lauren Leydon-Hardy

Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
Amherst College



##### Joshua DiPaolo

Associate Professor  
California State University Fullerton

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#### 👤 Moderator



##### Amy Flowerree

Assistant Professor  
Texas Tech University



## Evaluative Conflicts and Context Dependence in Rational Choice Theory

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 3

📍 River Room II

### Abstracts:

#### **What Are We Talking About When We Are Talking About Hard Choices?** Akshath Jitendrenath

What are we talking about when we are talking about hard choices? This paper distinguishes between three answers to this question with the objective of showing that only one of these answers can be sustained. The first answer, articulated forcefully by scholars like, L.A. Paul and Ruth Chang, posit that a hard choice is a situation that shows us that rational choice theory is conceptually ill-equipped to study practical reasoning in general, and hard choices in particular. The entire paradigm of rational choice theory should, therefore, be jettisoned or substantially revised. A second answer can be found in the work of Amartya Sen and Isaac Levi, who argue that what we are talking about when we are talking about hard choices is this: (i) a hard choice is a situation where an agent cannot optimize, or go for the best, because they hold an incomplete ranking of alternatives; yet (ii) these situations do not present the discipline of practical reasoning with any great cause for concern because much weaker choice sets—weaker, that is, from the set of optimal elements—can be invoked for action guidance in these situations. After showing that both of these answers cannot be sustained, this paper proceeds to specify and defend a third understanding of hard choices which is this. Hard choices are situations where an agent's given reasons for action will fail to determine what, all things considered, they ought to do. It concludes by specifying the relationship between this understanding of hard choices on the one hand, and moral and epistemic dilemmas on the other. Two claims are defended. First, it is argued that moral dilemmas are situations where an agent's moral reasons for action fail to determine what they ought to do. This makes moral dilemmas possible the most important class of hard choices. Second, an epistemic dilemma is a situation in which an agent's reasons for belief—as opposed to action—fail to determine what they ought to believe. Which makes epistemic dilemmas not necessarily related to hard choices.

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#### **Distinctively Hard Choices: Creating Reasons by The Act of Choice** , Annalisa Costella

Choices such as those of one's career or whether to have a family are, often, a tall order. Under one family of accounts, individuals lack conclusive 'standard' reasons for choosing in these cases. Under another, individuals have reason to pick. Each family of accounts faces a challenge. Accounts of the first type need to explain how an individual should deliberate when she does not have a conclusive reason, what a non-standard reason is, and why it is appropriate for choosing. Call this the *deliberative challenge*. Accounts of the second type need to explain why picking in the face of distinctively hard choices does not hamper one's agency. Indeed, many choices that shape a person's identity are distinctively hard. Explaining how one ought to choose in these occasions by reducing the decision-making process to a random choice seems to degrade the individual to a wanton. A theory should thus be able to vindicate the idea that picking when faced with choices that may shape one's identity does not undermine a person's agency. Call this the *arbitrariness challenge*. I argue that current accounts cannot accommodate these challenges. As a remedy, I propose an account that draws on Chang's idea that individuals can create reasons. Contrary to her, I do not rely on the dubious assumption that one creates reasons by willing them. I argue, instead, that reason creation is located in the very act of choice.

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#### **Incompleteness, iterated choice and preservation of rationality** , Anders Herlitz

There are many reasons to accept that evaluative standards might be incomplete, i.e., fail to determinately rank all options. It is well-known that acceptance of incompleteness of this kind actualizes dynamic choice problems (McClennen 1990). If A and B cannot be ranked, A+ and B cannot be ranked, and A+ is better than A, and if an agent faces a sequence of choices, standard, myopic decision rules that say that maximal alternatives are permissible entail that it is permissible to choose B over A+ in an initial choice situation with only those options and also permissible to change to A in a subsequent choice situation where only B and A are available. It is permissible to form a sequence of choice that leads to an option, A, that is worse than an option that was available to the agent, A+. Similar problems arise when multiple agents make choices with the same evaluative standard.

This paper first argues that existing solutions to this problem are all problematic. The "sophisticated chooser" that relies on backward induction (Rabinowicz 1995) rules out options that should not be ruled out by fetishizing formal decision rules. The "resolute chooser" that relies on forming forward-looking plans (McClennen 1990) acts against their own interests.

The paper suggests that one might be able to accept incompleteness and avoid dynamic choice problems in a better way. If one accepts that incompleteness actualizes a need for a commitment of sorts, one can pose constraints on this reason that ensures that one avoids the formation of a sequence of choice that leads to an option that is not maximal. This proposal does not fetishize formal decision rules, does not ask of agents to act against their own interests, and it works well also for cases that involve a plurality of decision makers.

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### 🔊 Speakers



**Akshath Jitendranath**  
Postdoc  
Paris School of Economics



**Annalisa Costella**  
Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam



**Anders Herlitz**  
Institute for Futures Studies and Lund University

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### 🔊 Moderator



**Nadia Ruiz**  
Stanford

## Limits of Liberal Democracies

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 3

📍 Terrace Room

## **Abstracts:**

### **Public Reason and the Limits of Diversity, Laura Siscoe**

The New Diversity Theory (NDT) represents a novel approach to public reason liberalism, recently attracting quite a bit of attention as an alternative to the traditional, Rawlsian public reason paradigm. One of the NDT's distinctive features is its emphasis on the potential advantages enjoyed by diverse societies over more homogeneous ones. Proponents of the NDT make a number of claims about the societal benefits fostered by conditions of diversity, with a particular focus on the potential for epistemic benefits. In this paper, I complicate the relationship between societal diversity and epistemic benefits. I achieve this by highlighting a number of pernicious epistemic phenomena that tend to arise in diverse contexts, arguing that the only feasible way around these epistemic pitfalls is through widespread convergence on certain intellectual virtues. However, in embracing the necessity of these intellectual virtues, the scope of the NDT's claims about the advantages of diverse populations is limited in both severe and interesting ways. I then extrapolate from this conclusion certain features of the NDT that deserve further attention and development in order for it to constitute a maximally attractive alternative to its Rawlsian counterpart.

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### **A Principal-Agent Model for International Governance, Corey R. Horn**

The Mekong River, which runs from the Tibetan Plateau in China to the South China Sea, is the largest river in Asia, feeding roughly six Southeast Asian countries on its journey. In the 1990s, China began dam construction on the river and has since built approximately a dozen additional dams. Downstream countries, like Cambodia, have seen decreased water flow that has affected not only their freshwater supplies but also their economy – Cambodia's economy relies on its fishing industry, and many reports have shown that Cambodia's catch records have decreased by 80% (Silvers 2020).

China's neighbors have little recourse against the dam construction, limiting their water supplies. After all, the dams are constructed within China's territory and using Chinese resources. Resource disputes plague the international state of nature. Many small states are left to the mercy of the world's hegemony when resource disputes occur. China has routinely rejected requests from neighbors to change their dam projects or release more water downstream.

International appeals are largely ineffective since China is a permanent member of the United Nations (U.N.) Security Council, which requires unanimous consent to take action. However, international intervention may be effective if the basic structures of the international system are reconceived.

This paper argues that reconceiving international governance through a principal-agent lens provides a viable path forward for inter-state dispute litigation. International resource disputes suffer from the same problems individual disputes suffered in their original state of nature. There is no independent judge to rule in matters of disputes with the power of final judicial authority. The principal-agent model is one possible solution to international governance where current models – namely the U.N. – fail. Originally put forward in economics, the principal-agent model discusses contractual relationships between a party seeking services (the principal) and a party providing services (the agent). As Carmen Pavel (2015, 33) notes, this model was adopted by political scientists in the 1980s to describe the relationships between Congress as the principal and bureaucratic agencies as agents. Various bureaucratic agencies contract with Congress to fulfill specific functions while Congress retains oversight and final authority over the contracted matters.

I argue that the principal-agent model can be extended to include contractual relationships between individual states and international organizations with the purpose of addressing inter-state conflicts. On this principal-agent international model, states would contract with international organizations, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC), whose function would be to serve as an international adjudicator between disputing states. I will introduce the principal-agent model and its use in political theory (1). I will then offer an account of international governance on a principal-agent model and how such a mode handles inter-state disputes. I will also address a common objection to the principal-agent model: what compels the agents to account and take seriously the principal's interests (2)? Finally, I will discuss the current U.N. structure, its failings, and why the principal-agent model is better equipped to handle inter-state disputes (3). I will conclude with upshots of the principal-agent model for international governance.

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## **Speakers**



**Laura Siscoe**

PhD Student  
USC



**Corey R. Horn**

Visiting Scholar  
Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization

Moderator



**Matt Myers**  
Tulane University

## Justice and Injustice

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 3

📍 Tower Room

Papered Sess...

### Abstracts:

#### **Stigma, Justice, and Personal Relationships, Shiyong Li**

The right to freedom of association seems to imply that we have unlimited moral freedom in choosing who we want to be friends with, and what kind of social interactions we would like to have with others. However, individuals' preferences and behavior in the realm of personal relationships and interactions are influenced by various social norms sustaining stigmas, which place people lower in hierarchies of desirability and worthiness for these relationships. Many people have the intuition that preferences and behaviors shaped by social stigmas can be morally problematic, say, stigmas against certain races, sexual minorities, people with certain physical or mental diseases, and people who do not conform to mainstream standards of beauty. But this is less obvious when it comes to individual preferences and behaviors within personal interactions and relationships. In this paper, I contribute to our understanding of this contested and ignored issue by arguing that some social norms sustaining various kinds of stigmatization which shape individuals' personal relationships and interactions are unjust. I provide an account of unjust social norms sustaining stigmas using widely shared insights from theories of distributive justice. I also argue that individuals have a general moral obligation to combat unjust social norms, which can generate a *pro tanto* duty to resist the influence of unjust stigmas on one's own personal relationships and social interactions – regardless of one's view on the subject matter of justice. The obligations partly stem from individuals' most important natural duty to support and further just arrangements, which I argue should be understood broadly to include social norms. In the end, I reply to objections and discuss concrete ways to discharge the general duty. The moral duties that I argue for do not stop at refraining from demeaning people or treating them as morally inferior. We have a duty to reflect on our own preferences and desires when we have a seemingly simple and innate feeling that someone is unattractive or undesirable in personal relationships. We have a duty to educate ourselves about the unjust norms and hierarchies that may underlie those feelings and a duty to examine whether our preferences and desires are influenced by unjust norms and to resist the influences when they are. We also have a duty to contribute to the dismantling of the norms. Although we do not have a moral duty to maintain personal relationships with any *particular* individual, we have a duty to place ourselves in situations and environments that are conducive to relationships with the unjustly stigmatized.

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#### **The Goals and Limits of Structural Injustice Theory, Hochan (Sonny) Kim**

Structural injustice refers to the ways in which social structures constrain social groups in ways that generate significant harms or unjustifiable inequalities for their members. A political theory of structural injustice must satisfy two goals: (1) the diagnostic goal, and (2) the action-guiding goal. The diagnostic goal requires structural injustice theorists to engage in sociological analysis, an analysis of how social structures operate such that they leave agents vulnerable to harms and/or subordinate them to others. The action-guiding goal requires structural injustice theorists to offer practical guidance to moral agents seeking to remedy existing structural injustices, which means identifying effective sites of intervention where agents can act together to change the social structures that produce social injustice.

I argue that structural injustice theory confronts a classic and significant problem of sociological analysis, namely the structure-agency problem. The problem manifests as a dilemma. As it turns out, it is surprisingly difficult to do sociological analysis that jointly satisfies the diagnostic and the action-guiding goals, a difficulty that is increasingly apparent in the recent literature on structural injustice. There, we see that the analysis that provides the most comprehensive diagnosis of the social structures that produce injustice, namely that they are parts of broader social systems, fails to generate an actionable remedy (Horn One); meanwhile, the analysis that is the most action-guiding, namely that these social structures are reproduced by and thus dependent on the social practices of ordinary agents, fails to apprehend the more complex causes and mechanisms of structural injustice (Horn Two). These failures, I suggest, reflect deeper problems in the ontological assumptions behind the respective social theories that ground these analyses, namely systems theory and practice theory.

I argue that addressing this dilemma requires structural injustice theorists to take a different approach to the sociological analysis of structural injustice, or equivalently, to how they use social theory. Structural injustice theory can avoid the dilemma of choosing between its diagnostic and action-guiding goals by abandoning its grand theoretic ambitions and adopting instead what I call middle-range problem-solving, an approach that I argue is usefully exemplified by recent work from Elizabeth Anderson and, on the sociology side, Charles Tilly. This approach curtails some of the ambitions of structural injustice theory, but it also enables structural injustice theory to avoid the worst of the dilemma, allowing for sociological analysis of particular structural injustices that is both diagnostic and action-guiding.

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## What Is Distributive Justice?, Owen Clifton

Theories of distributive justice are typically addressed to the following four questions. The first is about “the currency” of distributive justice: what is a just distribution a distribution *of*? Liberties? Opportunities? Capabilities? Welfare? The second is about “the criterion” of distributive justice: *when* is a distribution of the relevant “stuffs” (e.g., opportunities) just? When none have less than others through no fault of their own? When the very worst off have more than they’d have in any feasible alternative? The third is about “the scope” of distributive justice: *whose* “stuffs” are included in the distribution to which that criterion applies? Economic cooperators? Legal co-citizens? Everyone who will ever live? The fourth is about “the site” of distributive justice: who or what is *responsible* for effecting just distributions? The state? Public officials? Private individuals?

In this paper, I make explicit a fifth, more *conceptual* – or if you like: *metaphysical* – question, which theories of justice often address only implicitly: what does it *mean* to say a distribution is “just”? Or, what *is it* for a distribution to be just? E.g., is it for the distribution to be *intrinsically good* (or *not bad*)? Is it for the distribution to be a product of respect for (certain of) people’s *rights*? Is it for the distribution to conform to certain criteria determined in the context of some hypothetical deliberation? Moreover, I show different answers to this question – that is, different *analyses* of “distributive justice”, or different accounts of justice *qua a property of distributions* – lurk behind different answers to the four familiar questions outlined above. This is significant not least because certain analyses, once made explicit, seem much less plausible than others: one can argue against a position regarding the currency, scope, criterion, or site of distributive justice by pointing to the analysis that backs it. I conclude by sketching some such arguments, and by considering how the analyses of distributive justice outlined inform our thinking about the property of justice that John Rawls famously described as “the first virtue of social institutions”.

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### 🗣️ Speakers



**Shiying Li**  
PhD Student  
University of Wisconsin-Madison



**Hochan Kim**  
Princeton University



**Owen Clifton**  
PhD Candidate, Philosophy  
Queen's University

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### 🗣️ Moderator



**Nunzio Ali**  
Postdoctoral Research Fellow  
University of Catania

3:30 PM

### Break

🕒 3:30 PM - 3:45 PM, Nov 3

3:45 PM

### Free Speech

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 3

📍 Grand Ballroom I

[Papered Sess...](#)

### Abstracts:

#### Self-censorship, Gideon Elford

In recent years political discourse pertaining to freedom of speech has become increasingly focused on sources antagonistic to speech of a non-state character. Whether in the form of social media bans, online mobs, employment loss, university no-platforming and much else besides, the scope for societal suppression of speech has received a growing level of attention. In this regard, the meaning, character and existence of so-called ‘cancel culture’ has increasingly proved a focal point of cultural and political contestation. Among the chief ills of a culture which is said to be hostile towards certain speech – perhaps its defining feature – is its potential to foster an ever-widening degree of ‘self-censorship’. Not only has ‘self-censorship’ emerged as a common reference point in that regard, a number of recent studies have explicitly identified it as a salient and growing threat to

speech, often in connection with academic freedom. The real damage wrought by the infliction of social penalties on unpopular speech is not felt by those who suffer the punishment themselves, it is said, but by way of the fear instilled in those for whom such consequences serve as a warning; spreading a reluctance to speak in the face of the risk of inviting the same such sanction on themselves.

Although the term ‘self-censorship’ occupies a relatively central place in our vocabulary regarding the constellation of issues connected with freedom of speech, a clear and settled definition is conspicuous by its absence, and there is relatively little extended philosophical analysis of the concept. And yet, a critical appraisal of the various claims concerning the rise in self-censorship, and reasons to regret it, crucially depend on having a clear and defensible account of the concept itself. In the paper I propose to sharpen our understanding by articulating the contours of the concept of self-censorship and defending a particular conception.

I contend that the concept of self-censorship is a broad one, covering, in principle, all cases in which a person constrains their own speech. Within that broad conceptual framework, however, different conceptions of self-censorship constitute more or less compelling ways of capturing a normatively significant form of non-speech. I argue for a conception of self-censorship under which individuals ‘self-censor’ when, in refraining from speech, they acquiesce to others’ judgments concerning the views one ought to hold or express, where to ‘acquiesce’ involves conforming with another’s judgment about what one ought to say or believe in spite of the fact that one does not in fact agree with that judgment or one does not accept the authority of their status as judge. I explain the characteristically morally troubling character of self-censorship, thus understood, in terms of its close association with intolerant expressive contexts that exclude others from a community of mutual interlocutors; giving rise to a form of silence that involves a retreat from authentic disclosure and that frustrates engagement with others on terms of sincerity.

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### **Autonomy, Authority, and the Legal Regulation of Fake News**, James (JP) Messina

On Kant’s telling, the enlightenment’s motto is to “have courage to make use of your *own* understanding” (E 8:35). His essay on enlightenment, like his other works, conveys the impression that each person must learn to use her reason independently, even in domains where she is not expert:

It is so comfortable to be a minor! If I have a book that understands for me, a spiritual advisor who has a conscience for me, a doctor who decides upon a regimen for me, and so forth, I need not trouble myself at all. I need not think, if only I can pay; others will readily undertake the irksome business for me” (ibid.)

On the Kantian analysis, autonomous equals ought to rely on their own understanding and need not be protected from the ways in which others’ bad speech can corrupt that understanding. Prohibiting fake news and misinformation is an affront to Kantian autonomy, so understood.

But consider an alternative view of autonomy, which we might call the Rousseauian view. On this view, to be autonomous is to act according to your rational interests. If you have an interest in welfare and would fare worse by choosing for yourself, paternalistic policies that take some options off the table do not merely make you better off: they make you more autonomous. Here, autonomy is chiefly about the content of your deep will. Whether you better realize your deepest aims when left alone or with the aid of others or through their forcing your hand is just an empirical question.

As Étienne Brown points out, this view is perhaps uniquely able to account for the respects in which laws against fraud and false advertising enhance rather than compromise autonomy (Brown 2023). Likewise, the interest-based view is able to provide a compelling justification for the legal prohibition of fake news. To wit, if persons would act contrary to their interests if exposed to fake news, then laws that block such news help people act more autonomously.

This paper argues that Brown’s autonomy-based justification for laws prohibiting fake news is subject to a dilemma. The account either overgenerates or else treats as threats to autonomy only misinformation deployed with the intent to deceive. The dilemma’s first horn justifies more intervention than an account grounded in autonomy plausibly tolerates. Its second is ad hoc. We should, I argue, reject the Rousseauian notion of autonomy that generates the dilemma in favor of the Kantian notion. Moreover, unless autonomy is taken to be the only value relevant to the question, accepting Kantianism about autonomy does not mandate rejecting legal prohibitions of fake news a priori. A pluralist account, particularly one that admits the importance of harm reduction, can rightly recognize tradeoffs between values. This is as it should be: The hard questions regarding the legal prohibition of fake news involve precisely such tradeoffs: between autonomy and harm-prevention (on the one hand) and between real-world legislation’s costs and its potential benefits (on the other).

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### **Competition Over Ideas vs. The Marketplace of Ideas**, Shai Agmon

The market and the media are inseparable, or so it seems, at least when it comes to contemporary liberal democracies. The dissemination and production of political information, as well as public discussion on political affairs, occur in many countries via and within mass media markets. Furthermore, in recent decades there has been ‘a convergence toward’ the market-dominated model in most liberal democracies. So even countries where the market in political media is not yet dominant are seemingly on their way to full marketisation of the media.

The market and the media are inseparable not only in practice but also in normative theory. For more than 100 years, the dominant and developed normative account concerning what *should* be the institutional design of the press has been the ‘marketplace of ideas’. In brief, the idea is that open, uncensored, unregulated, fierce competition over ideas amongst individuals and media outlets in the market is the best way to achieve the main sought-after institutional functions of the media.

Against this apparently neat normative picture, I argue that for it to live up to its normative appeal, the marketplace of ideas should not, in fact, be fully marketised. My argument is comprised of three parts. First, I argue that arguments that appeal to the benefits of a marketplace of ideas fail to distinguish between two different ways in which ideas are designed to compete: *parallel competition* over ideas, and *friction competition* over ideas. Subsequently, I show that the marketplace of ideas is compatible only with parallel competition, and thus to secure the social benefits of friction competition, competition over ideas cannot take place exclusively within a market.

Second, I show that although parallel competition over ideas is compatible with the market to an extent, it does not live up to some of its normative promises when fully marketised. That is, since profit-driven and preference-based media rarely promote the discovery of the truth, and although the media is independent of the state, it can lose its independence to players and interest groups within the market.

In the final step of the argument, I shift from focusing on the marketplace of ideas as an ideal institutional design to the actual market in mass political media. According to the ideal story, in a marketplace of ideas, there is literally a *market in ideas*. People sell their ideas, and the audience buys the idea that is most appealing to them. In contrast, the actual market in mass political media is, by and large, an advertising-based market of *media platforms*. Under such a model, people watch cable TV news or read a newspaper but do not buy an idea per se. They buy products from a platform that is associated with particular views, cultures, or values. Thus, my argument is that as long as one supports the normative appeal of the marketplace of ideas, the marketplace of platforms should function in a way that complements it. And to do so, contemporary markets in media platforms should be radically reformed.

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#### 🗨️ Speakers



**Gideon Elford**  
University of Oxford



**Jp Messina**  
Assistant Professor  
Purdue University



**Shai Agmon**  
Rank-Manning Junior Research Fellow, New College  
University of Oxford

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#### 🗨️ Moderator



**Joseph Porter**  
DePauw University

## Navigating Consent: Ethical and Political Considerations

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 3

📍 Grand Ballroom II

### Abstracts:

#### Consent Under Duress, Tom Dougherty

In contemporary sexual ethics, consent has a central role: its presence is crucial for sex to be morally acceptable. But consent can be rendered meaningless by duress such as coercion. Aiming to account for how duress debilitates consent, the traditional view distinguishes two categories of consensual and non-consensual sex, with the latter constituting serious sexual misconduct. On this view, if coercion reaches a threshold of severity, then the sex is non-consensual.

As an alternative to the traditional view, I defend a view that is expansive and scalar. My view is expansive in the respect that it allows that consent can be undermined by all types of wrongful coercion. (Indeed, I allow that consent can be undermined by other types of duress besides coercion, including duress that comes from sources such as natural causes and social norms and duress that is merely apparent to the consent-giver with no objective basis in reality.) My view is scalar in the respect that it acknowledges that many of the relevant moral phenomena come in degrees and that these degrees are morally significant. There are two dimensions of scalarity that are particularly important. First, there are gradations in the gravity of misconduct that occurs because someone's consent is undermined by duress. Second, when duress undermines consent, the severity of the duress can explain the degree to which it is wrongful to act on the consent. The expansive and scalar parts of my view work in tandem: each makes the other more plausible.

To the extent that we expand the class of what constitutes misconduct, we need resources with which to draw

moral distinctions within this heterogeneous class. By providing these resources, the scalar approach supplements the expansive approach. And when we make room for the idea that consent can be undermined in minor ways, with the result that certain actions are wrongful, we need to expand our view of what constitutes misconduct to include these actions.

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#### **Mistreating Consent, Elise Woodard**

Consent plays an important role in our lives. Clearly, using someone's body or property without their consent is typically *pro tanto* wrong. However, there are various ways in which consent can be defective or non-ideal. In this paper, I focus on an under-explored way in which consent can be defective, namely in virtue of being moot. In cases of *moot* consent, an agent A consents to B  $\phi$ ing, but if A hadn't consented, B would have  $\phi$ 'd anyway. (Consider: Audrey consents to have sex with Brice, but if she hadn't consented, he would have had sex with her anyway.) These cases are disturbing, but it is difficult to explain why while preserving morally relevant distinctions. In this paper, I attempt to diagnose what's troubling about cases of moot consent and what harms or wrongs agents like Audrey incur. On my view, moot consent is still valid consent, but the consent-receiver wrongs the agent by mistreating the consent. This is because the consent fails to play a proper role in their practical deliberation and reasons for action.

Literature in social science and popular feminist writing suggest that moot consent to sex is pervasive yet under-theorized. For example, Nicola Gavey (2005) enumerates cases where women consent to sex as a strategic way to avoid rape. Similarly, Reina Gattuso (2015) describes scenarios where a woman consents to sex—including sex that she wants to have—yet her inner voice fears that if she said no, “it wouldn't count, because we don't count.” Both Gavey and Gattuso suggests that such cases lie on a continuum with sexual assault, despite being consensual.

Few philosophical accounts of consent have done justice to these insights. Existing accounts either deny that such cases are genuinely consensual—at risk of treating all nonconsensual sex on par—or merely tell us that these women's sexual partners are *blameworthy*, thereby overlooking the harms suffered by women who give moot consent. Both accounts are unsatisfying: they fail to preserve morally relevant distinctions across a range of cases. In addition, the former obscures our interest in exercising normative powers even in non-ideal circumstances. By articulating how moot consent is *valid* yet *defective*, my proposal improves on both accounts and yields further practical and theoretical insights. First, it underscores that we don't just care about the presence of consent, but also about the role it plays in others' reasoning. Second, it exposes a site of social injustice, which should trouble moral and feminist philosophers alike. If society is structured such that women cannot be confident that acts of consent actually make a difference to whether they suffer sexual assault or rape, then consent cannot do all of the normative work that we want it to do.

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#### **Consent and Relationships, Quinn White**

When is putative consent invalidated by ignorance, deception, coercion, or incompetence? And what is the scope of validly given consent? While these questions are sometimes discussed together, much recent work in philosophy has treated these topics piecemeal—often to great effect. In this paper, however, I argue that validity conditions and the scope of consent admit of a unified treatment by appealing to the constitutive norms of relationships with those to whom we give and from whom we receive permission.

This may be a familiar thought: many of the obligations and permissions we have vis-à-vis others are constitutive of the relationships we have with them. Part of what it is to be a friend, a partner, a teacher, etc., is to be allowed to do certain things and to be obligated to do others. To illustrate, part of what defines the role of a teacher is the power to permit students to turn in their assignments late; part of what defines a committed, trusting relationship is the ease with which consent to intimacy is given. In Hohfeldian terms, the claims and privileges we have against others partially define our relationships to them. I argue here that we should extend this idea to encompass normative powers: our powers of permission-giving—and, more generally, of binding ourselves to others—are constitutive of the relationships in which we stand.

Importantly, the precise shape of these permission-giving powers relevant to both the validity and scope of consent can vary from relationship to relationship. Consider, for instance, what information is necessary for valid consent. This differs considerably depending on whether we are focused on a patient consenting to a medical procedure by her doctor, a prospective home buyer and seller haggling over a sale price, or long-term romantic intimates exploring new forms of intimacy. Part of what *makes* these relationships what they are (for better and for worse) are the terms by which they allow their participants to consent.

A similar point holds with respect to questions about consent's scope. What an expression like “make yourself at home” permits is highly context sensitive. On my proposal, the context is in large part found in the constitutive powers of the relationship at play. That “make yourself at home” permits so much for a friend, yet relatively little for a work colleague quickly stopping by one's apartment, is part of what makes those relationships what they are. It is harder (i.e., one must be more explicit) to add such permissions to a professional relationship; that is part of what makes it professional. That more is permitted in the context of this friendship than in that is part of what makes the former more intimate. To see the powers of consent as among the constitutive elements of a relationship is able to do justice to the context-sensitivity of validity conditions and scope of consent vis a principled, unified account of consent.



## 🗣️ Speakers



### Thomas Dougherty

Professor of Philosophy  
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill



### Elise Woodard

Lecturer  
King's College London



### Quinn White

Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
Harvard University

## 🗣️ Moderator



### Michael Hannon

Associate Professor of Philosophy  
University of Nottingham

## Reinterpreting Lockean Rights: From Property to Toleration

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 3

📍 Salon Room

### Abstracts:

#### **Causation, Costs, and the Doctrine of First Possession: *Reconstructing the Original Interpretation of Locke's Theory of Original Acquisition*, Chris Boom**

Today, John Locke is typically said to have advanced an alternative labor theory of original acquisition to the *first possession theory* of his main contemporary and influence, Samuel Pufendorf. Yet the first published commentary on Locke's account took what he said about labor as instead defending an even stronger version of the doctrine of first possession than Pufendorf embraced.<sup>1</sup>

Though Locke broke from Pufendorf on this early reading too, that break was just with his view that a first possession constitutes a valid appropriation merely when people have agreed to let it do so. Rather, Locke's aim was to show that no such agreement is needed to justify the doctrine of first possession, for the labor involved in a first possession gives rise to a valid appropriation even in the absence of any agreement. What's more, though noting the connection Locke drew between labor and *pain*, that commentary made no reference to the concept of *mixing* labor save for paraphrasing his statement that labor adds something to objects more than nature does.

Meanwhile, the entirety of what Locke said about original acquisition in the *Two Treatises* is far easier to reconcile with this early interpretation than the contemporary one. Most importantly, the early interpretation clearly explains why Locke's references to labor-mixing were more precisely references to the labor-mixing inherent in *removing something from a common state*, as this is readily interpreted as Locke's gloss on the concept of a first possession. Similarly, whereas Locke's claim that gathering acorns involves labor giving rise to an original acquisition sits uneasily with the contemporary reading, it makes perfect sense on this early interpretation given that Pufendorf himself anticipated it with his statement that "Acorns [are] his that took the pains of getting them."<sup>2</sup>

In turn, appreciation of the somewhat archaic ways Locke elsewhere used "labour," "mixed," and related terms in his account of original acquisition justifies this interpretation's deflationary understanding of labor-mixing. For those uses indicate that, in asserting that people mix labor with objects by removing them from a common state, Locke was likely just referencing the fact that a first possessor causes an object he or she takes to be in different states than it would've been in but-for his or her actions.

Likewise, consideration of Locke's other works also clarifies the meaning and importance of pain within his account. For they show that he used that term broadly enough to encompass any disutility, including opportunity costs. And when one takes objects from a first possessor rather than effecting first possession of like objects, one benefits from the first possessor's pain at least in that one avoids incurring the opportunity costs first possessors incurred in causing the objects to be in the current, already-possessed states in which one takes them.

#### References:

<sup>1</sup> Jean Barbeyrac, ed. & trans., *Of the Law of Nature and Nations* by Samuel Pufendorf. London: 1717, IV.IV.IV n. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, IV.IV.XIII.

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**Subjective-Objective Confusion in the Left Right Libertarian Debate**, Karl Widerquist

Since John Locke declared that labor accounts for 99% of the value of land and its products, the relative contributions of labor and natural resources to finished products (including real estate) has played a central role in the debate over distributive justice. Left-libertarians, such as Thomas Paine, Henry George, and Hillel Steiner, typically argue that natural resources contribute a large share of production and that that share should be redistributed to everyone. Right-libertarians, proprietarians, and classical liberals often counter by arguing that natural resources contribute little to the value of finished products to support the conclusions that the value contributed by raw natural resources is too small to bother with and that efforts to redistribute it are really efforts to redistribute value generated by entrepreneurs or past owners. This aspect of the debate raises what is supposedly an empirical question: what are the relative values contributed by various factors of production? This presentation argues that no conception of “value” can do the work both sides in this debate call on it to do. To argue along these lines, both sides would need a conception of value that is both ethically relevant and objectively measurable. This presentation argues that whenever multiple factors contribute to production, any ethically relevant sense of the value contributed by each factor is purely subjective, purely in the eye of the beholder. Empirical measures of “value” cannot resolve this debate. Any arguments based on the supposedly large or small value of various factors of production are not objectively meaningful.

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### **Locke, Toleration, and the Politics of Conscience** , Dan Layman

John Locke is famous as an architect of liberalism’s commitment to religious toleration. But how, exactly, does his defense of religious toleration work? Locke explains in *A Second Letter Concerning Toleration* (1690) that his case for toleration comprises several distinct “beams” rather than single pillar. Somewhat less charitably, one might describe Locke’s mature defense of religious toleration as a chaotic mess; as Richard Vernon has noted, there are at least twelve distinct (but unlabeled) arguments in the first *Letter* alone (Vernon 1997), not to mention the four sprawling and acerbic *Letters* that followed. Moreover, to the extent that scholars have identified a master argument in Locke’s toleration texts, they have usually fixed on what Casson (2022) aptly calls the “belief argument”: force cannot alter belief, so religious coercion is necessarily pointless (cf. Waldron 1987). This argument was shaky from the start, and, by most accounts, Proast demolished it in his first reply. Did Locke offer another argument that is both unambiguously central to his toleration project and at least plausibly a success?

I believe that he did. This argument, which we may call the *Punishment Argument*, is disarmingly simple:

1. Coercing religious dissenters is punishment.
2. No magistrate may punish someone unless she has done wrong.
3. Religious dissent is not wrong.
4. Therefore, no magistrate may coerce religious dissenters.

Although the first two premises require (and receive) some argument from Locke, the principal burden for Locke (and interest for us) lies with the third premise. Indeed, it seemed to many of Locke’s opponents that religious dissent *is* wrong on the grounds that (a) Anglican Christianity is true, (b) available evidence suffices for strong assurance (if not certainty) that Anglican Christianity is true, and (c) it is wrong to reject truths for which reasonably strong assurance is available. The Punishment Argument does not contest either the truth or the epistemic credentials of Anglican Christianity, and it does not deny that it is (usually) wrong to reject truths for which reasonably strong assurance is available. Rather, it turns on the moral authority of conscience: Locke holds that it is never wrong to refuse religious performance that one judges to be wrong, even when that performance is in fact right and even when one ought to know that it is right. This is because insincere religious performance constitutes hypocrisy, which Locke presents as a sin against God that is far more serious than failing to worship God correctly due to epistemic error. Since we have such a stringent duty against hypocrisy, it is not wrong to refrain from engaging in hypocrisy, even in the face of culpable epistemic error. Indeed, Locke argues in the *Essay on Toleration* (1667) that individuals should accept civil penalties up to and including death before betraying their conscience. Locke’s argument for toleration, then, depends less on the causal structure of belief than on the importance—indeed, the sacredness—of conscience.

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### 🔊 Speakers



#### **Chris Boom**

Executive Director  
Equal Freedom Institute



#### **Karl Widerquist**

Professor  
Georgetown University-Qatar



#### **Daniel Layman**

Associate Professor of Philosophy  
Davidson College

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🗨️ Moderator



**Eric Claeys**  
Professor of Law  
George Mason University

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**Exploitation as Domination: What Makes Capitalism Unjust by Nicholas Vrousalis**

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 3

📍 Executive Room

Author Meets Cr...

**Abstract:**

Vrousalis' main aim in this book is to answer two questions: what makes exploitation unjust, and whether capitalism is inherently exploitative. On Vrousalis' view, to exploit is to prosper from the servitude of others. Domination is thus a necessary and sufficient condition for exploitation, and this kind of domination is inextricable from capitalism, which is ergo an unjust social system. This account serves as a structuralist view of exploitation, and as such, challenges the transactional accounts that have been predominant in contemporary philosophical thinking about exploitation, which focus on the harm, impaired consent, or contractual unfairness between parties to an arrangement. For Vrousalis, these concerns do not properly account for the injustice that constitutes exploitation, which, he argues, is more fundamentally about who serves whom and *why*. Exploitation, Vrousalis says, is a "dividend of servitude." This kind of servitude, he argues, is what makes everything from slavery to serfdom to patriarchy fundamentally unjust, along with their social iterations found in sex work, commercial surrogacy, precarious labour, sweatshops, and organ sales.

Vrousalis' account of exploitation is novel and serves as a timely and helpful counterpoint to contemporary debates among liberal political philosophers who have tended to focus narrowly on understanding and cashing out the best interpretation of consent impairment and transactional unfairness in exploitative arrangements. But normative exploitation debates around how much (or perhaps how minimally) to understand the requirements of fairness in market transactions (whether it is by appeal to some hypothetical market price, a non-worseness claim, parity across contracts of relevantly similar kinds, etc.) have arguably stalled, or at least staled. It was high time for a new theory of exploitation and one that challenges not just the answers that liberal political philosophers have been giving to the question of how best to identify unfair outcomes, but one that challenges this very line of inquiry as inadequate to the moral and political problems presented by organ sales, sex work, sweatshop labour, and the like.

This panel will consist of commentators who defend quite different accounts of exploitation from one another, and from the author. They are important contributors to ongoing debates about exploitation who will offer insightful and challenging commentaries, with which the author is keen to engage. This book, and thereby this AMC panel, will be of significant interest to anyone at PPE concerned with exploitation, commodification, global justice, gender justice, the liberal limits of markets, and the limits of liberal conceptions of justice more generally.

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🗨️ Speaker, Author



**Nicholas Vrousalis**  
Associate Professor  
Erasmus University Rotterdam / Harvard University

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🗨️ Speakers



**Ruth Sample**  
University of New Hampshire



**Thomas Christiano**  
University of Arizona

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🗨️ Moderator



**Vida Panitch**  
Carleton University

## Legitimate Opposition, by Alexander Kirshner

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 3

📍 Chairman's Room

Author Meets Cr...

### Abstracts:

Legitimate opposition is a practice and feature of political systems. When present, opponents of the **political** status quo can seek and make changes to the current government or policy via a regularized form of political competition that is respected by both winners and the losers. Alexander Kirshner's *Legitimate Opposition* (Yale University Press, 2022) is the first sustained study of this concept since the Cold War. This is a timely work, as legitimate opposition is under attack across the globe, from the United States to Turkey to Brazil, with populists and autocrats routinely threatening to ignore unwanted election results and doing all that they can to reduce the effectiveness or presence of their opponents.

Kirshner's book not only revives a critical object of study in democratic theory at an opportune moment, but also puts forward a conceptualization of legitimate opposition that departs from and challenges what has long been the orthodox view of the subject. According to this view, legitimate opposition is fundamentally linked to democracy in two ways: its origins lay in the invention of political parties and modern democracy more generally in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and its value stems from the value of democracy. To be worried about threats to political opposition is to worry about democracy's decline. Kirshner rejects both claims. He reconstructs legitimate opposition's history, tracing its origins to ancient Greece and Rome and recasting the 18th century moment as the mere birth of organized partisan opposition. And he sharply separates democracy's value, based in equality, from the value of legitimate opposition, which he sees as tied to political agency. Kirshner thus liberates legitimate opposition from ideal democratic theorizing, allowing political philosophers and theorists to grasp the worth of an often-imperfect political practice present in the messy and inegalitarian political systems of the real world. Along the way, Kirshner draws from and contributes to a variety of active debates within democratic theory, including but not limited to discussions of partisanship, lotocracy, republicanism, and populism.

The 2023 PPE Society Annual Meeting is a perfect venue for critical engagement with this book. Its core arguments and their implications connect to several of the topic categories listed in the call, including 'Democracy, Trust, and Liberalism,' 'Liberty and Equality,' and 'Power and Politics.' The panel puts Kirshner in dialogue with two scholars whose work in democratic theory intersects with *Legitimate Opposition* in exciting and fruitful ways. One works on the elite theory of democracy, which reduces democracy to legitimate opposition. The other works on democratic legitimacy, institutional design, and voting. The resulting conversation will be of interest to a broad range of PPE scholars.

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#### 🗣️ Speaker, Author



**Alexander Kirshner**

Duke University

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#### 🗣️ Speakers



**Jeffrey Lenowitz**

Associate Professor of Politics  
Brandeis University



**Natasha Piano**

UCLA

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#### 🗣️ Moderator



**Emma Saunders-Hastings**

Ohio State University

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### Voting

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 3

📍 Imperial Room

## **Abstracts:**

### **Voting to Change the Outcome in Real Life**, Yoav Isaacs, co-authored by Jeffrey Russell

Proponents of the efficacy of voting often argue that the probability of casting the decisive vote in an election, though low, is not so minuscule as to be negligible. If an election matters a lot, a small probability of making the difference could be worth quite a bit. Against this, proponents of the inefficacy of voting have argued that the idea of a decisive vote is unrealistic. Close elections are liable to lead to recounts and litigation, and the decisive votes will be cast by judges, not by ordinary citizens. They argue that these dynamics demonstrate the inefficacy of an individual vote.

We agree that the classical models used to argue for the efficacy of voting are unrealistic. We disagree, however, that more realistic models demonstrate the inefficacy of voting. Our argument proceeds in two steps. First, we note that substantial differences in vote count are generally determinative---if someone gets a lot more votes, they almost certainly win. Second, we note that, given the uncertainty about what the vote count will be, the expected efficacy of a single vote must be close to the average efficacy of many votes. We show that given normal credences about a normal election, the efficacy of a vote is not negligible. We end by presenting some mathematical results about what sorts of credences the proponent of inefficacy is committed to.

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### **A Minimal Standard of Democratic Competence**, Daniel Stephens and Alexandra Oprea

Numerous discussions within democratic theory, including discussions of the epistemic value of democracy, discussions of what a minimally adequate civic education looks like, and discussions of the proper distribution of the franchise, each make use of some conception of democratic competence. However, outside of the piecemeal attempts within these various literatures, there has not yet been a direct attempt to present and defend a minimal standard for democratic competence that might serve as a useful baseline across these different conversations. In light of this, we propose the following minimal standard for democratic competence for an individual voter:

A voter is considered **democratically competent** with respect to a given election provided that the voter (1) knows how to vote for the candidates or policies that, if chosen, would not predictably bring about the end of that electoral democracy (*epistemic competence*) and (2) intends to vote in such a way (*democratic commitment*).

Our paper proceeds in five sections. Section 2 discusses the existing normative and empirical literature on competence and makes the case that democratic theorists need a minimalist, realist, ecumenical, and applicable standard of democratic competence that can help guide discussions about voting rights, civic education, and electoral reforms. Section 3 then articulates and defends the standard above. Section 4 extends the standard from individuals to collectives. Section 5 describes some of the ways in which one might apply the relevant standard across different debates, including the three identified above: voting rights, civic education, electoral reforms. Finally, section 6 concludes.

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### **Estimating the Badness of Diffuse Harms**, Zach Barnett

Some recent work in moral philosophy discusses 'diffuse' harms/benefits—acts that harm/help a large number of stakeholders a little bit each. Polluting, eating meat, and voting all belong to this category. Now consider the following three assertions.

- Making 200 people wait an extra ten seconds each is about as bad as making one person wait for thirty minutes.
- Extending ten million headaches by a millisecond each is about as bad as giving someone a two-hour headache.
- Stealing a nickel from each of twenty thousand people is about as bad as stealing \$1000 from one person.

Within moral philosophy, few would endorse claims like these. They seem to employ an unsophisticated form of 'mathematics' that only the crudest of utilitarians would endorse. But as we'll see, each of these estimates can be argued for very forcefully, from incredibly weak premises, which virtually everyone does and should accept.

## 🗣️ Speakers



### Yoaav Isaacs

Associate Professor  
Baylor University



### Daniel Stephens

University at Buffalo



### Alexandra Oprea

Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
University at Buffalo



### Zach Barnett

University of Notre Dame

## 🗣️ Moderator



### Hrishikesh Joshi

Arizona

## Threats to Freedom

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 3

📍 Cotton Room

[Papered Sess...](#)

### Abstracts:

#### **Techno-economic change as danger to republican freedom** , Lucas Fuchs

The introduction of new technologies in the form of products, services, as well as production, distribution and advertisement methods into the market has posed great challenges to modern societies since the start of the industrial revolution. In this paper, I wish to analyse this change as a source of danger for republican freedom.

The connection between technical progress, social relations and political processes has already been drawn by Marx's theory of history, but evolutionary economists and transition scholars have sharpened the concept of a dominant economic structure. Perez (2002) coined the concept of "techno-economic paradigms", the common sense for the social and economic usage of new technical advances (for example, the mass production of consumer goods in the post-war era). The "socio-technical regime" (Geels & Schot 2007) similarly captures the cognitive routines of actors in research, technology, markets, industry and politics and which may be challenged and transformed by developments in niches. Both concepts show the enormous societal implications of techno-economic change, which does not appear unexpectedly or as a one-off event, but rather as a recurring, inherent phenomenon of dynamic market economies. The problems that concrete technologies or practices pose to our societies (digital media for democracy, fossil fuels for sustainability, automation for social justice) are merely the most recent examples for threats to the peace and survival of our societies.

Republican theories (Pettit 1997) define freedom as non-domination, that is the independence from arbitrary power and interference. A paradigmatic example for this freedom is the (hypothetical) colonial city that revolts and becomes freer after independence — even if the new city government issues more laws and rules than the previous imperial power. After all, the laws are now made by the city itself and not from the colonial masters who could pass laws and raise taxes arbitrarily. I argue that techno-economic change — especially if not steered by social and political forces — can be understood as similarly arbitrary domination and thus a fundamental danger to republican freedom. Without the social and political shaping, it is arbitrary which technological niches manage to outcompete and thus transform or replace the dominant regime and how it affects the lives of individuals and societies. Such a replacement or transformation poses a significant interference in the institutions that structure the options for individuals, political decision makers and societies.

While there is no actor that can be identified as dominating and limiting such freedom; such domination can nevertheless be understood as structural (in a similar way to feminist accounts of domination).

This analysis shows that an outline of the political institutions of republican political theory must go beyond a merely rights-based conception. The need to shape techno-economic change politically implies the need for public sector organisations which participate not only in the advancement of technical and economic frontiers (through investment, research, innovation projects, missions or challenge prizes), but also in the embedding into social and public purposes (through welfare policies, infrastructure projects, laws and regulations, procurement,

tax or social policy).

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### **A Free Market Solution to Discrimination, Jovy Chan**

Earlier this year, the publisher Puffin decided to edit some of Roald Dahl's famous children's books. This includes removing words considered offensive like 'fat', 'ugly' and 'crazy'; it also includes counterbalancing statements that might be considered discriminatory. For example, in *The Witches*, Dahl describes how the witches wear wigs to hide the fact that they are bald. The new edition now adds the following line: "There are plenty of other reasons why women might wear wigs and there is certainly nothing wrong with that." The edits sparked controversy. On the one hand, people are mindful that we need to curb the spread of harmful stereotypes; on the other, there is the problem of censorship and the need to protect writers' freedom of expression. I do not see this as an either/or situation. In the paper, I will argue that we can ensure the writer's liberty whilst at the same time reduce discrimination. The way to do this is just that we will have to approach the problem in a different way. We shouldn't be asking whether an individual story or a single author is promoting equality. Instead, we should take a broader perspective and ask whether the *market* of children's books is promoting equality.

The problem noted above is in no way a new problem. People have long been criticizing how, for example, superhero movies only ever show a straight white male as the hero, whereas the villain always belongs to a racial minority. The solution to this is not to require every single movie to feature a group of superheroes of all gender, all races, all sexual orientations etc. The solution is instead to have *other* movies that feature a non-typical superhero that counterbalances the one dominating the market. The problem is thus how a certain kind of representation *monopolizes* the market, that the consumers are not given a choice. The Free Market Approach that I will propose therefore recast the problem in a different way. To determine whether a product or service is promoting discrimination or equality, we look at the market as a whole, and not just at the features and contents of the individual product. Two key issues will have to be addressed in using this approach: (1) How do we set the 'boundary' of this market in which equality has to be achieved – are we looking at all children's books or all books, or all creative media? (2) The 'market' refers to here is not the typical one. We will need to define what a 'healthy market' means in this context.

This approach to equality has a potentially wide application in other areas of consumer equality. Specifically, this could contribute to the discussion on the right to refuse service on discriminatory grounds (e.g. whether a Christian service provider could refuse service based on sexual orientation) and the discussion on the role of social media companies in promoting equality (e.g. banning users based on different political views).

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### **Preserving Freedom in Times of Urgency, Kevin Leportier**

Freedom is sometimes thought of as a kind of luxury. As we have seen with the imposition of lockdowns during the recent pandemics, when a global disaster requires a massive and rapid collective response, it may be no longer desirable to let people choose whether or not to contribute to the response. But advocates of coercive measures still have to confront people complaining that this is liberticide. Traditional cost-benefit analysis cannot address this concern, since the welfarist framework they adopt has nothing to say about freedom. We may want to say that a temporary loss of freedom is more than compensated by the benefits (in terms of freedom) of having avoided a disaster. But how do we measure intertemporal freedom? Alternatively, Nozick (1974) would insist that what matters is that freedom is preserved and that it can only be preserved by voluntary transactions. This leads to the conclusion that coercion never preserves freedom. However, Nozick hinted that coercion may be justified in the case of what he calls a 'catastrophic moral horror'. I propose to explore this line of reasoning by relaxing the conditions under which, for libertarians, freedom is preserved.

To do so, I rely on Sen's distinction between freedom as control and indirect freedom (Sen 1982). Libertarians usually think of freedom in terms of control over one's sphere or legitimate interests. But as noted by Sen, we may also want to talk about freedom when someone is not in control of the decisions she makes about herself. Take the case of someone bleeding and unconscious, in desperate need of a blood transfusion. When caregivers perform the blood transfusion, they are preserving her freedom, according to Sen, if she would have chosen to receive the transfusion in the circumstance — if she were conscious. We thus can preserve someone's indirect freedom by simulating her counterfactual choices.

In the paper, I make the case that forcing people to contribute to the response to a global disaster may preserve their indirect freedom. The collective response to a global disaster is a public good, but, as Sen also notes, individuals do not have control over its production if they act independently from each other. However, it could well be just up to them to produce the public good (e.g. to end the epidemics by self-isolating) if they coordinated in a clever way, so as to avoid the assurance problem and the free rider problem. What Tabarrok (1996) calls a dominance assurance contract is a device that does exactly that. But in a time of urgency (such as the start of an epidemic) when such a contract is not available, the state may force people to contribute, on the crucial condition that they would have accepted it as part of the contract, if it had been freely offered to them. In times of urgency, the state is entitled to make citizens pay the exact price, in terms of freedom, that they would have been willing to pay in a favourable hypothetical situation.

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### 🚩 Speakers



**Lukas Fuchs**

Postdoctoral Researcher  
Eindhoven University of Technology



**Jovy Chan**

University of Toronto



**Kevin Leportier**

University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

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### 🚩 Moderator



**Raja Halwani**

Professor of Philosophy  
School of the Art Institute of Chicago

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## Justice and the Goals of Education

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 3

📍 River Room I



## **Abstracts:**

**Your Home Is Not a School: The Inconsistency of Homeschooling as a Political Practice** , Sonia Pavel and Jeffrey Cynamon

Homeschooling is on the rise. Contemporary political and philosophical debates are filled with defenses of homeschooling from liberal, conservative, and even radical perspectives. Setting aside questions about the morality of individual choices to homeschool one's children, in this paper we argue that homeschooling as a political practice is unjustified as well as unjustifiable from within any major contemporary political theory. Drawing on the extensive empirical literature on the harms of homeschooling to children, parents, as well as society as a whole, we build a case against the institution of the 'home school' on the basis of liberal, communitarian/conservative, and democratic conceptions of education. Whether education should aim at the cultivation of children's autonomy and the protection of their rights, the development of their capacity to lead good, flourishing lives, or their formation as members of particular cultural or political communities, none of these goals can be reliably achieved through homeschooling. We argue that this is not simply a result of the non-ideal social, political, or economic circumstances under which homeschooling is currently practiced, but evidence of the inadequacy of homeschooling for the modern political project of education.

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**Pronouns, Dignity, and Academic Freedom: How Inclusive Classrooms Advance the University's Epistemic Mission**, Afton Greco

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives in higher education have received a bad rap as of late. This is unsurprising, given the latest string of highly publicized administrative blunders in response to apparent tensions between the inclusion of minority students and the academic freedom of the faculty. These events have led some scholars to conclude that academic freedom is inevitably at odds with DEI efforts to ensure that minority students feel safe and supported on campus. These events have also deepened a rift between two competing conceptions of the aims and purposes of higher education. In the traditionalist camp are those who defend the university's narrow epistemic mission, and reject any mission creep that goes beyond the production and transmission of knowledge. Traditionalists tend to be the most vocal critics of DEI initiatives in higher education, because they view these initiatives as direct affronts to the culture of free inquiry that universities are obligated to foster. In the non-traditionalist camp are those who defend a broader conception of the university's mission, and hold that additional moral or civic aims should be included among the university's legitimate purposes. Accordingly, non-traditionalists view academic freedom as just one of many institutional commitments that must be weighed and sometimes overridden for the sake of the university's broader purposes (such as social justice or effective citizenship).

In this paper, I motivate the traditionalist No Conflict position. More specifically, I argue that (1) even for traditionalists, the conflict between academic freedom and DEI is illusory, and (2) fostering inclusive learning environments is perhaps the single most effective action that universities can take to further their epistemic missions. To keep within the traditionalist framework, I give purely epistemic (as opposed to moral or civic) arguments for these two theses. As the title of this paper suggests, I use the treatment of gender identity in the classroom as the central case for showing how fostering inclusive classrooms enables the university to fully realize the epistemic benefits of a diverse student body. If these arguments are successful, then traditionalists have strong instrumental reasons to implement inclusive classroom practices.

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**April 2020-May 2020: The Short-Lived Right to Literacy in the U.S. and What We Owe Our Children as Knowers**, Maya Alkateb-Chami

In this paper, I discuss the significance of a right to basic literacy in a literate society, particularly in light of a historic U.S. federal court ruling and its cancellation during the chaotic spring of 2020. Amidst concerns over school closures, learning setbacks, and the unfolding COVID-19 crisis, the court ruling declared access to literacy a fundamental right. Assuming a monolingual context and drawing upon Fricker's (2007) framework of epistemic injustice, I argue that a right to basic literacy is crucial to safeguard children's future enjoyment of speech rights, countering testimonial injustice, and access to knowledge and the ability to contribute to it, reducing hermeneutical injustice. Furthermore, I contend that such a right is critical for their effective participation in politics and economic life, as well as for the protection of their human dignity, all linked to potential secondary epistemic harms. Beyond the individual level, I examine how divergent investments in basic literacy among different groups can problematically shape their epistemic advantages or disadvantages relative to one another. Finally, I explore the essential components of basic literacy necessary to achieve these goals and emphasize the importance of articulating them for the guidance of courts, legislators, and advocates inspired by the 2020 ruling.

### Speakers



**Sonia Maria Pavel**

PhD Candidate  
MIT



**Jeremy Cynamon**

University of Georgia



**Afton Greco**

PhD Candidate, Philosophy  
University of Pennsylvania

### Moderator



**Sahar Heydari Fard**

Assistant Professor  
The Ohio State University

## Mobilizing Hope: Climate Change and Global Poverty, by Darrel Moellendorf

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 3

📍 River Room II

Author Meets Cr...

The book *Mobilizing Hope: Climate Change and Global Poverty* takes up several issues relevant to PPE, including the priority of attention to poverty in climate change mitigation and adaptation policies, responsibility for climate change mitigation, intergenerational justice, international solidarity in climate change policies, the debate between Green Growth and Degrowth in climate politics, research into geo-engineering, the nature of hopeful climate politics, and the politics of mass mobilization. The author is a Philosopher working in a Political Science Department and the commentators include an Economist with broad interdisciplinary interests and a Law professor cum Philosopher.

### Speaker, Author



**Darrel Moellendorf**

Professor for International Political Theory and Professor of Philosophy  
Goethe University Frankfurt

### Speakers



**Sanjay Reddy**

Professor  
The New School



**Thomas Crocker**

Professor of Law  
University of South Carolina School of Law

### Moderator



**Marcus Häggrot**

Postdoktoral forskare  
Sciences Po

## Liberalism, Libertarianism, & Moderatism

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 3

📍 Terrace Room

*The session is hosted by the PPE Society's PaCD Working Group.*

*This Working Group is for anyone working on polarization, civil discourse, or democratic insecurities. We already have people from various disciplines investigating the cognitive underpinnings of polarization, its implications for the democratic process, normative principles that may (or may not) be violated in a polarized society, and methods of reducing it and its effects. We believe we can all gain from a direct exchange of ideas with people from multiple disciplines working on these topics. We hope to encourage interdisciplinary discussion and collaboration.*

## **Abstracts:**

### **Moderation in Democratic Party Politics: How Liberal Parties Should Compromise** , Fabian Wendt

Political Moderation can be understood in different ways: It can be understood as a substantive political position (centrism), it can be identified with an attitude of epistemic humility toward one's political beliefs, or it can be conceived as a willingness to accept compromises regarding one's political views. I focus on the latter, and in particular on the compromises required in democratic party politics.

The question how political parties ought to navigate compromises in democratic party politics has hardly been tackled in normative political theory. I explore this question from the specific perspective of (classical) liberal political parties. My focus is on parties in Western European countries with proportional representation and multi-party systems like Denmark, Germany, or the Netherlands, where liberal parties have often taken an active role in coalition governments.

I argue that, other things equal, one should prefer compromises that have a lesser impact on the party's integrity. A compromise's impact on a party's integrity depends on two factors. First, it depends on how large or small the concessions are, what distance is between the compromise position and a "pure" liberal agenda. I call this the distance dimension of a compromise's threat to integrity. But a party's integrity can also be affected in a second way: A party's integrity is also affected when a compromise forces the party to advocate or make policy with a rationale that is at odds with liberalism. I call this the rationale dimension of a compromise's threat to integrity.

Considering these two dimensions, I argue that, other things equal, liberal parties should prefer external compromises (compromises with other parties) to internal compromises (compromises within the party), because the former leave the party in control over its identity. And, other things equal, it should prefer compromises in a centrist direction over compromises in (right- wing) populist or clientelist directions, not necessarily because they tend to be at a smaller distance, but because they change the rationale behind policy-making.

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### **Moderation and the Cartography of Justice** , Lauren Hall

Political and social moderation have a somewhat mixed reputation, at times associated with unprincipled compromise or even laziness. In this paper I provide a more robust defense of moderation, one that is not only represents a principled position, but which is supported by the evidence of how humans actually live in real communities. Using the works of Amartya Sen and David Schmidtz as a jumping off point, I provide a defense of political and social moderation both in terms of its practical effects, but also in terms of the principles it supports. As part of this analysis, I look at the way moderation emerges from communities solving problems as they go (as with the common law tradition), using Schmidtz's conceptualization of justice as a map. I then relate this bottom-up approach to the work of other thinkers like Elinor Ostrom and Jane Jacobs and discuss how thinking about justice as a map supports a pluralistic and politically moderate approach to political and social conflict, one that takes into account tradeoffs, complexity, and the needs of individual humans embedded in a social landscape. Such a conceptualization of moderation can also provide scholars with a toolkit for how to think about the human social landscape and gradualist pathways toward reform.

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### **Is Libertarianism Moderate?** Andrew Cohen

Libertarianism is not usually thought of as a centrist ideological or political view. Indeed, libertarians are often seen as—and are—somewhat extremist. Nonetheless, there is something about libertarianism—at least as it exists in the academy—that makes it reasonable to say it is moderate and even centrist. The reason for this is three-fold. First, within academic circles, libertarians are a distinct minority and as such, tend to look for, find, and spend time with organizations that are not within universities and many of these tend to attract more conservatives than libertarians. That means that we are again in a minority in those groups. We thus find ourselves in a minority on one side in our home institutions and a different minority in these academic-adjacent groups. We thus walk a path between (what seem to us) as two extreme views. Secondly, while libertarians have always been on the "extreme left" with regard to some issues—for example, same sex marriage—we have also always been on the "extreme right" with regard to other issues—for example, property rights. Hence, again, we seem to walk a path between two extremes. Putting this second point better, because we take extreme views about particular issues that the broader political community tends to separate into either "left" or "right," we seem to them to straddle the aisle—and that can appear to make us moderate or centrist for the simple reason that we have something in common with each side. Finally, because we tend to follow the arguments or evidence where they lead, we are not only willing to accept extreme positions about particular issues but are also willing to accept genuinely moderate positions about other particular issues. For example, asked if we should "defund" the police, I gather most academic libertarians would insist that we need evidence to determine what would best protect liberty. Likely, reducing police powers would be good; likely, eliminating police entirely would not. Similarly, its likely that reducing punishments can be good but unlikely that eliminating them entirely would be good. (Admittedly, it would be odd if anyone only ever had extreme positions—there are simply too many topics of political interest to think extreme

positions for all of them are the most plausible.) I conclude that libertarianism is centrist or moderate in a certain way. It is not centrist or moderate about all or even many issues, but the willingness of libertarians to accept extreme positions that seem to others not to be all clustered on a single side of the ideological spectrum and the same willingness to accept a centrist position about some issues, leaves us being de facto centrist or moderate between two camps that seem committed to accepting what their “side” says about all issues even when those positions involve contradictory or paradoxical commitments.

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#### 🔊 Speakers



**Fabian Wendt**

Assistant Professor of Political Science and core faculty member of the Kellogg Center for Philosophy, Politics, and Economics  
Virginia Tech



**Lauren Hall**

RIT



**Andrew Jason Cohen**

Professor of Philosophy; PPE Director  
Georgia State University

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#### 🔊 Moderator



**Aeon Skoble**

Professor of Philosophy  
Bridgewater State University

### Methods in PPE

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 3

📍 Tower Room

## Abstracts:

### **On the Concept of Preferences in Economics**, Scott Ashworth, co-authored by Ethan Bueno de Mesquita

There is a long-running debate over the correct interpretation of preferences in economics. Are they genuine mental entities, or is the theory to be interpreted behavioristically? This debate was reinvigorated by Gul and Pessendorfer's "Mindless Economics", which argued for the behavioristic interpretation in the context of behavioral economics.

We argue that mentalism gives the better construal of economics practice. We do so in two steps.

First, we defang the strongest argument for anti-mentalism—Guala's multiple realizability argument. To do so, we draw a distinction between the interpretation of preferences in abstract choice theory and the interpretation of preferences in economics. The multiple realizability argument succeeds against mentalism as a unifying interpretation of preferences in abstract choice theory, but fails when applied to economics in particular.

Second, we argue directly for mentalism as the best unifying interpretation of preferences in economics, highlighting a prominent contemporary literature in applied behavioral welfare analysis.

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### **Conceptual Consequences of Empirical Methods**, Kirun Sankaran

Political philosophers like to talk about power. Traditional philosophy and political theory conceptions of power fall into two broad camps. First, some thinkers—for example, Steve Lukes and Philip Pettit—conceive of it as a binary relation between agents—at base, power is something one agent wields or exercises over another. Another broad camp, mostly associated with Foucault, sees power as fundamentally acting on agents, but not fundamentally a property of their actions or capacities. Foucault and his followers conceive of power as fundamentally impersonal.

I want to argue that these sorts of debates operate at far too high a level of abstraction, and that how we conceptualize power depends in part on our background causal theory of how the world works. I'm going to do this by examining two cases that don't fit well with either the agent-agent model of power or the diffuse Foucauldian one. One is Cosimo di Medici's consolidation of control over Florentine politics in the fifteenth century. Another is an institutional innovation in Genoa in the thirteenth century called the "podesta," an outsider employed by the city to rule and (more importantly) keep the peace among the city's two major factions, who had engaged in a devastating civil war before the podesta's introduction. Each of these cases presents a puzzle for thinking about power. Neither of them is explicable in terms of a relationship between the ostensibly powerful party and particular other agents. But both clearly (and necessarily) involve agency—they're not just the diffuse operations of some abstract mystery called "power". Medici's power consisted in large part of a skill for coalition management, and the *composition* of that political coalition. The ability of the podesta to maintain stable rule in Genoa depended in large part on the structure of the office, and its ability to preserve the balance of power. And, importantly, our ability to make sense of both these cases depends on particular methods—community detection algorithms, and basic game theory, respectively. I thus conclude that empirical—and not just formal—methods can aid in conceptual exploration.

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### **Costly Updating and the Logic of Political Cognition in Popular Assemblies**, Benjamin Ogden, co-authored by Jacob Roundtree

We develop a formal model of costly updating that captures factors identified by psychologists that bias an agent's cognitive calculus in the direction of closure and away from epistemic sophistication. We then apply this model to popular assemblies, one of the primary institutional systems through which modern states attempt to collectively solve their complex social problems. We find that this institutional structure strongly biases the cognitive calculus of legislators in favor of closure and against epistemic sophistication, tending to encourage hasty, dogmatic, and conformist reasoning. We use the model to inform suggestions about how to incentivize and facilitate rigorous, open-minded, and innovative information processing.

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## 👤 Speakers



**Scott Ashworth**  
University of Chicago



**Kirun Sankaran**  
Dartmouth College



**Benjamin Ogden**  
Assistant Professor  
Texas A&M University

Moderator



**David Wiens**

Associate Professor of Political Science; Faculty Affiliate in Philosophy  
University of California, San Diego

5:15 PM

## PPE Summer School - Poster Session

🕒 5:15 PM - 6:15 PM, Nov 3

📍 Foyer 1

Poster Sess...

### **Just Employment: Flexible Work and Women's Participation in the Labor Market as Social Equals**, Begum Icelliler

In this paper, I argue that increased support for temporal and spatial flexibility in employment is counterproductive for gender justice because flexibility undermines some of the key paths towards women's political participation and collective self-determination. Women exercising their liberal freedom – freedom of contract and of occupation – today constrains the political options and collective interests of women in the future. Flexibility seeks to expand women's economic options by making paid labor outside the home and unpaid labor inside the home more compatible. However, this presents a trade-off, as increased flexibility limits women's political options by isolating them in the home and eroding the material basis of their participation in the labor market as equals. While flexibility suits some women's present material and social conditions better, I show that increased flexibility can set back women's political participation by weakening the associational basis of collective action and eroding the political will around demands like universal pre-K and generous parental leave. This suggests that contrary to liberal and mainstream discourse, we should be skeptical of what flexible employment can do for women and cognizant of the political trade-offs involved. While liberal societies should not eliminate temporally and spatially flexible contracts altogether, justice requires that the negative and predictable consequences of flexibility for women's democratic equality be averted. I hold that the equal sharing of flexible work between men and women is the ideal in employment, and liberal societies should take towards facilitating the equal sharing of flexible employment between men and women in different households.

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### **What Determines Deforestation? Modeling Incentives for Environmental Protection in the Amazon Region**, Jean Vilbert

Extant research has found conflictive evidence on the effectiveness of the main institutional tools to protect forests — Protected Areas, Indigenous Territories, collective and individual property rights. This discrepancy may arise from the fact that much of the existing literature focuses on spatial assessments, with limited attention given to understanding the motivations behind deforestation. To bridge this gap, I employ a simple model that delineates four distinct incentive frameworks (*green*, *immediatist*, *green but greedy*, and *rent-seeking*) which predict how individuals might respond differently to policing interventions.

To empirically test the existence of these patterns of behavior, I utilize data from the Amazon region gathered through a systematic literature review using machine learning techniques. The Amazon rainforest, situated in South America, is the largest continuous forest in the world. Since the 1960s, there has been increasing public and policy concern on protecting the region, given its critical role in preserving ecosystem services and storing terrestrial carbon stocks. However, the forest faces significant challenges, in particular high rates of suppression and degradation of vegetation and loss of biodiversity resulting from activities such as logging, illegal fishing, hunting, and animal trafficking. This gives rise to the question of why individuals deplete the forest despite its crucial importance and what approach would be best to counteract this behavior.

I found that the effectiveness of policy-design in environmental protection hinges on acknowledging that different groups respond distinctly to institutions. This suggests policymakers and stakeholders ought to design multi-faceted approaches that integrate local knowledge and customized interventions aligned with the motivations of existent incentive frameworks. By adopting more targeted approaches, protective measures in the Amazon and elsewhere will be more effective, recognizing the heterogeneity among the groups operating in the area.

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### **Slavery, Causation, and Exploitation**, Evan Behrle

The “New History of Capitalism” (e.g., Beckert 2013, Baptist 2014) has resurrected claims about slavery that economic historians thought they had laid to rest: that slavery was important for cotton production in the United States, and that cotton production was important for American prosperity in the nineteenth century (see Engerman 2017; Hilt 2017; Olmstead and Rhode 2018; and Wright 2022).

But these historians and economic historians are to some extent talking past one another, and seeing why has an important implication for theorizing about economic exploitation. The historians can be interpreted as making claims about the *causal* importance of slavery, the economic historians about

its *counterfactual* importance. Eric Hilt, one of the economic historians party to this debate, denies this distinction (2017: 529). But the orthodoxy among contemporary metaphysicians is that counterfactual dependence is not necessary for causation (cf. Northcott 2021). To illustrate, a case of what philosophers call *early preemption*: if Suzy and Billy are taking turns throwing rocks at a bottle, and Suzy hits it right before Billy would have, had she not thrown, then she causes the bottle to shatter without making any difference to its shattering.

This banal fact sets the stage for a theory of economic exploitation that appeals to the traditional idea of reward according to contribution and yet is radically egalitarian. In short, while high-wage workers in free markets for labor may be harder to *replace*, replaceability is not what matters for causal contribution in cases of preemption. Low-wage workers taken together will likely be causally responsible for a much larger portion of output than the sum of their marginal revenue products suggests, in just this sense: if they stopped working, *and if they were not replaced*, the economy would grind to a halt.

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#### **What Democracy Requires of Democratic Education, Carter Delegal and Blake Harris**

It seems intuitive that many of the problems modern democracies face could be addressed by better educating the public for democratic participation. After all, many think that democracy requires or, at least, functions well with a sufficiently educated populace. But it is not obvious what such an education should look like; that is, it is unclear what democracy minimally requires of democratic education. For this reason, it is difficult to evaluate existing proposals for democratic education (like those from Dewey 1916; Gutmann 1999; Anderson 2007; Satz 2007; and Kitcher 2021). To do so, we need a standard of what democracy minimally requires of democratic education to help determine whether a proposal for democratic education or an existing education system is sufficient. We seek to address this difficulty by arguing for a broad criterion outlining what democracy requires for democratic education. It is a broad criterion because, as we argue, what democracy requires of democratic education depends on what goods we think democracy uniquely produces or is justified by. Our criterion states that democratic education should minimally 1) seek to (and often successfully) instill knowledge, dispositions, and/or abilities in citizens that, by virtue of these citizens possessing them or sufficiently utilizing them, promote the good(s) that make democratic societies equally justified to or more justified than other plausible political orders (e.g., epistocracy). It should also 2) achieve 1) in a way that allows for the good(s) to be produced in the society (e.g., by not using resources required by other necessary democratic institutions). We then show that there are several upshots of this criterion, including its ability to answer difficult questions about whether democracy requires a certain minimal standard of education and/or an equal distribution of which.

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#### **Agency Slack in International Principal-Agent Relations, Corey R. Horn**

A common concern in principal-agent relationships is agency slack. A principal-agent relationship refers to a contractual or legal relationship where one party, the principal, delegates authority or decision-making powers to another party, the agent, to act on their behalf. Agency slack occurs when agents act independently from their principal's interests. There are two primary forms of slack agents can engage in: shirking, where agents minimize their exerted efforts on a project, and slippage, where agents move away from the principal's interests and toward their own. In this paper, I discuss agency slack in international relations between states as principals and international bodies – such as NGOs – as agents. I further consider relevant incentives for international bodies to minimize agency slack when engaging in inter-state conflict resolution. Contract incentives, market factors, and internal organization mechanisms lend themselves as systems of check against slack. If agency slack can be minimized in state-international body relations, then a more reliable system of conflict adjudication at the inter-state level can emerge. Reliable adjudication at this level would have rippling effects on other areas of international cooperation – such as human rights, climate policy, and the development of a formal international rule of law – because defectors and rule breakers would be held accountable. Further, if agency slack can be minimized, principal-agent models offer an alternative to international governance that leaves some space for state sovereignty while subjecting international actions to oversight.

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#### **Sino-Indian Geopolitical Consequences in Nepal, Ashruta Acharya**

Nepal's emergence as a country and its consequent history is largely shaped by influences from India and China. In this paper, we argue that compared to bilateral tensions between two countries, the play out of Sino-Indian geopolitics in Nepal has detrimental effects on Nepal's economy. While classic geopolitical tensions emerged from the ideological polarity, modern struggles for regional hegemony have replaced older tensions. The direct consequence of modern geopolitics played out in a third country is the volatility in financing and capital investments. We model the game theoretic behaviors of the three neighboring countries and answer why such inimical equilibrium exists in Nepal using the lens of political economy. China and India are some of the major investors and aid providers in Nepal's infrastructural sector including hydroelectricity, transportation, communication, and education. Our findings imply that the geopolitics costs Nepal significant economic losses in major sectors, yet politically, leaders have more to gain by catalyzing the Sino-Indian geopolitics even further.

🚩 Speakers



**Begum Icelliler**  
PhD Candidate  
UNC Chapel Hill



**Jean Vilbert**  
PhD Student  
Harvard University



**Evan Behrle**  
New York University



**Carter Delegal**  
Philosophy Instructor  
Georgia State University



**Blake Harris**  
PhD Student (Philosophy)  
University of Virginia



**Corey R. Horn**  
Visiting Scholar  
Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization



**Ashruta Acharya**  
George Mason University

**Sat, Nov 04, 2023**

8:00 AM

**Registration Open**

🕒 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Nov 4

**Coffee and Conversation**

🕒 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM, Nov 4

9:00 AM

**The Role of Genealogy in Moral and Political Philosophy**

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 4

📍 Grand Ballroom I



## **Abstracts:**

### **Are Truthfulness and Justice Reflectively Stable?** Michael Hannon

We humans live by high-minded ideals, such as justice and truthfulness. These are familiar philosophical notions, but we rarely think of these ideas in terms of their point or practical function. In this paper, I argue that we should think of our conceptual practices as tools serving practical needs. I then explore whether these practices are ‘reflectively stable.’ For example, Hume (1896) claims that we can remain committed to justice while recognizing the instrumental function of this practice; Williams (2002) makes a similar claim about the practice of truthfulness. More recently, Matthieu Queloz (2021) has generalized these claims, arguing that the awareness of the function of a practice is fully compatible with it—and may even encourage—confident engagement in the practice. On these views, our commitment to practices and ideals is *reflectively stable*.

I aim to cast doubt on this optimistic conclusion. I argue that once we come to understand (e.g. via pragmatic genealogy) our practices such as justice and truthfulness in instrumental terms, we cannot be fully rationally committed to them. Hence, we face a predicament. On the one hand, we should aim for truthful self-understanding of our ideas and institutions. On the other hand, our commitment to these very ideas and institutions might not survive truthful scrutiny. We often cannot highlight the instrumental function of a practice without undermining our rational commitment to it. More specifically, reflective stability is not rational for practices that are self-effacingly functional. A practice is *self-effacingly functional* when we must come to understand the practice in *non-functional* terms in order for it to be functional. Insofar as we must come to value justice and truthfulness for intrinsic (rather than instrumental) reasons, bringing their instrumental value into view should undermine our commitment to them.

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### **Genealogical Explanations and Social Change,** Livia von Samson

Genealogies are narratives describing how our representations – beliefs, values, concepts – »came about, or could have come about, or might be imagined to have come about« (Williams 2002). It has recently been argued that backward-looking genealogies may guide forward-looking change (Srinivasan 2019; Queloz 2021). This claim is significantly stronger than two predominant claims about genealogy. First, it is often argued that genealogical inquiry showcases the contingent origins and development of our representations which dismantles their seeming inevitability. Second, it is argued that genealogical inquiry may render hidden functions of our representations visible, so that they may, in a second step, be normatively assessed. Stronger claims about the practical significance of genealogy seem to confuse the explanatory and the normative: Why should the answer to the question of how our representations developed tell us anything about how we should intervene in them? Genealogy, it is thought, may advance the understanding of representations, but is only preparatory, not constitutive, of normative assessment or practical change. Against this backdrop, this paper outlines three ways in which genealogies, notwithstanding their retrospective and diagnostic nature, have something to say on the question of how to intervene in our representational practices: by a) giving us a sense of possibility, b) empowering us as present agents, and c) problematizing the status quo.

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### **Against “Problematization” Accounts of Genealogical Critique,** Alexander Prescott-Couch

This talk considers so-called “problematization” accounts of genealogical critique. Philosophers have often worried philosophical genealogies commit the “genetic fallacy,” the ostensible fallacy of inferring an evaluative conclusion from historical premises. In response, some have argued that genealogy facilitates critique by “problematizing” some phenomenon rather than evaluating it (Foucault 1978; Koopman 2013). For example, Raymond Geuss’s (2001) genealogy of liberal thought and institutions might not aim to show that liberalism is mistaken or unjust but rather to “problematize” liberalism.

The notion of “problematization” has been understood in a number of distinct ways. Rather than figuring in moral arguments, for instance, it is claimed, genealogical histories may reveal that something is “dangerous,” bring into focus some unrecognized issue, show the historical conditions of the possibility of something, or achieve some non-cognitive practical effect. I argue that none of these ways of addressing the worries raised by the genetic fallacy succeed. However, I then argue, these worries are less serious than often supposed and those in the genealogical tradition would be better served by facing up to their evaluative arguments rather than trying to avoid evaluation. This does not show that there are no difficulties associated with genealogical arguments, but it does indicate that these difficulties take a different form than defenders of problematization accounts suppose. Rather than trying to sidestep evaluation, genealogists should more carefully consider the evidential role of history in the evaluative arguments they are making.

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🔊 Speakers



**Michael Hannon**  
Associate Professor of Philosophy  
University of Nottingham



**Livia von Samson**  
Humbolt University / MIT



**Alexander Prescott-Couch**  
Associate Professor  
University of Oxford

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🔊 Moderator



**Elise Woodard**  
Lecturer  
King's College London

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**Formal Approaches to Deliberative Democracy and Aggregative Democracy**

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 4

📍 Grand Ballroom II

## **Abstracts:**

### **(The Impossibility of) Deliberation-Consistent Social Choice**, Hun Chung

There is now a growing consensus among democratic theorists that we should incorporate both ‘democratic deliberation’ and ‘aggregative voting’ into our democratic processes, where democratic deliberation precedes aggregating people’s votes. But how should the two democratic mechanisms of deliberation and voting interact? The question we wish to ask in this paper is which social choice rules are consistent with successful deliberation once it has occurred. For this purpose, we introduce a new axiom, which we call “Non-Negative Response toward Democratic Deliberation (NNRD).” The basic idea is that if some individuals change their preferences toward other individuals’ preferences through successful deliberation, then the social choice rule should not make everybody who has successfully persuaded others through reasoned deliberation worse-off than what they would have achieved without deliberation. We prove an impossibility theorem that shows that there exists no aggregation rule that can simultaneously satisfy (NNRD) along with other mild axioms that reflect deliberative democracy’s core commitment to unanimous consensus and political equality. We offer potential escape routes: however, it is shown that each escape route can succeed only by compromising some core value of deliberative democracy.

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### **The IIA axiom in models of deliberative democracy**, Sean Ingham

In an idealized model of deliberative democracy, collective decisions reflect not merely citizens' preferences or judgments, but also their reasons for holding those attitudes. To capture this requirement, a model of deliberative collective decision-making must incorporate a revised version of Arrow's independence of irrelevant alternatives axiom. On the one hand, if one holds fixed individuals' pairwise rankings of two alternatives, as well as the reasons underlying those rankings, the collective ranking ought to remain the same. On the other, even holding fixed individuals' pairwise rankings, the collective ranking ought to be allowed to change if the reasons underlying those rankings change to a sufficient extent. Combining both thoughts, the desired requirement is, roughly put, that the collective ranking of two alternatives be independent of everything except individuals' judgments about those two alternatives and their reasons for holding those judgments. Arrowian aggregation rules like the Borda count violate this requirement in one way ("false positives"), while others, like majority rule, violate it in another ("false negatives").

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### **The Power of Majorities under the Borda Rule**, Susumu Cato

There are numerous democratic decision-making methods. In this study, we try to show that the Borda rule is "special" among them. As is well-known, the Borda rule belongs to the class of scoring rules that are collective decision methods in which the alternatives on each individual's ranking are weighted ascending from the top. The difference in the weights of adjacent alternatives is perfectly equal under the Borda rule. That is, the Borda rule is a scoring rule with a specific weighting assignment. To compare scoring rules or, more generally, democratic decision-making methods, we focus on the formal structures of the winning coalitions. Roughly speaking, winning coalitions represent "majorities" under each method. We identify the theoretically possible finest structure of winning coalitions for the first step. We next demonstrate that the Borda rule is equipped with the finest structure among all plausible democratic decision-making methods. Moreover, among scoring rules, the Borda rule is the only one with the finest structure of winning coalitions that is theoretically achievable. This means that the Borda rule effectively reflects majorities' opinions/interests. Finally, we suggest that the Borda rule is very close to the plurality rule than it appears at first glance.

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## **🗣️ Speakers**



### **Hun Chung**

Associate Professor, Faculty of Political Science & Economics  
Waseda University



### **Sean Ingham**

University of California - San Diego



### **Susumu Cato**

Associate Professor  
University of Tokyo

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## **🗣️ Moderator**



### **John Patty**

Professor of Political Science and Quantitative Theory & Methods  
Emory University

## PPE and Children's Rights

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 4

📍 Salon Room

### Abstracts:

#### **Children and Sweatshops**, Jessica Flanigan

I argue that public officials in developing countries should not enforce policies that prohibit child labor. Officials should enforce policies that prohibit child abuse and child endangerment. But not all child labor involves abuse or endangerment. In these cases, children should be permitted to earn an income.

I begin in section 1 with a broad overview of child labor policy in developing contexts. There, I argue that public officials often adopt and enforce policies that aim to protect children from child labor without consulting the children who are subject to these policies. Child labor unions and workers organizations often oppose child labor reforms on the grounds that they further limit children's options and make children even more vulnerable to abuse, early marriage, and sexual exploitation.

In section 2, I show that the consequentialist case against sweatshop prohibition also applies to child workers for three reasons. First, even if children are not reliably the best judges of their interests, they are generally in a better position to know if work advances their interests than public officials. Second, well-meaning bans on child labor often backfire and endanger children further. And third, children are also harmed by being subject to a prohibitive policy that further deprives them of making decisions about their lives.

In section 3, I consider the objection that children are non-autonomous, so they cannot consent to work. In response, I argue that even if children cannot consent to work, it doesn't follow that employers ought to be prohibited from hiring children. If this were true, then the fact that children also cannot consent to schooling would imply that educators should be prohibited from teaching children. If someone lacks the capacity or the entitlement to decide for themselves, then people should make decisions on their behalf. This may involve either promoting their long-term interests or treating them in ways that they would subsequently consent to. And some forms of child labor will promote children's long-term interests more than their available alternatives would and it is plausible that they will subsequently endorse the decision to work.

I consider objections to my argument in section 4. First, one may object to the consequentialist arguments I present. To the extent that permitting child labor does not advance children's interests, I grant that the reasons in favor of permitting it are much weaker and a prohibitive approach is in principle justified in some cases. However, many consequentialist arguments against child labor are misguided because they emphasize the harmful effects of child labor but do not account for the harmful effects of prohibition. Second, one may object that child labor is wrong because very poor children are unable to collectively coordinate for higher wages. If true, this argument would not weigh in favor of a prohibition on child labor, it would justify a legal but regulated market. Third, one may object that employers violate children's rights to an education and health when they employ them. And fourth, I consider the objection that it is wrong for parents to ask their young children to work. Section 5 concludes.

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#### **Clarifying the Nature of Children's Associational Rights**, Connor Kianpour

Consider the following three cases:

*Third-Party Prevention*: Alex has a young child, Quinn. Alex actively prevents Quinn from ever interacting with other adults.

*Third-Party Severance*: Alex and Cameron are adults who have been dating for 3 years. Alex has a young child, Quinn, from a previous relationship. Alex and Cameron break up. Alex forbids Quinn from seeing Cameron ever again.

*First-Party Severance*: Alex and Cameron are adults who have been dating for 3 years. Alex has a young child, Quinn, from a previous relationship. Alex and Cameron break up. Cameron refuses to ever see Quinn again.

In the literature on children's rights, people have made arguments that give us good reason to believe that Alex acts wrongly in *Third-Party Prevention* and in *Third-Party Severance*. Regarding *Third-Party Prevention*, Anca Gheaus (2011) has argued that the parents of children are not morally permitted to exclude their children from effective nonparental care. And regarding *Third-Party Severance*, James Dwyer (2006) and Connor Kianpour (2023) have argued that children have interests weighty enough in maintaining certain relationships with nonparental caregivers that impose on their parents a duty not to prevent them from continuing to associate with these caregivers.

I think that the contributions that have been made to the children's rights literature which give us good reason to arrive at considered moral judgments about *Third-Party Prevention* and *Third-Party Severance* likewise give us good reason to think that Cameron acts wrongly in *First-Party Severance*. However, nobody has made an argument of this kind in the children's rights literature to date. More precisely, I will argue that upon entering an association with a child in which their association with the child is crucial to that child's well-being, nonparental caregivers are presumptively obligated to continue associating with that child at least until the child has the moral authority to permissibly exit associations with her caregivers.

First, I will lay out the arguments that have been given that support the claim that Alex acts wrongly in both

*Third-Party Prevention* as well as *Third-Party Severance*. It seems that these arguments are either *welfarist* or *autonomy-promoting* in nature. Then, I will argue that welfarist and autonomy-promoting considerations likewise support the judgment that Cameron acts wrongly in *First-Party Severance*, at least when the case is appropriately specified. After, I will respond to the objection that claiming Cameron acts wrongly in *First-Party Severance* greatly circumscribes Cameron's associational rights, and in particular her right to exit undesirable associations, and that this is a troublesome implication of my view. There are many extant associations in which the right to exit does not entail a right to *costless* exit, and adult-child associations are merely one such kind of association. Before concluding, I explain what my foregoing arguments tells us about the distinctive character of children's associational rights, and what this might mean for child welfare policy. And finally, I conclude.

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### **The Principle of Pooh: Utopia and the Emancipatory Possibilities of Children's Literature** , Martha Pitre

Works of children's fiction, rich with varied depictions of ideal worlds and transformative possibilities, are rarely considered within the tradition of utopian political thought. Why is this, and why does it matter? To answer this question, the paper examines Ernst Bloch's *The Principle of Hope* (1954) alongside A.A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926) and *The House at Pooh Corner* (1928). The paper aims to demonstrate that recognizing children's literature as part of the utopian tradition necessitates reconceptualizing the child as an equal subject.

Children tend to be represented as passive, uncritical, and dependent figures upon whom the ideas of their caretakers and society are inscribed. They are defined by their relationship to adults and their institutions, and are not often considered for their own sake. In Bloch's account, children are full of a sense of hope and expectation that drives transformation. The wish-contents of a child's imagination, the drive to picture and play utopia, connects children with an uninhibited, anticipatory kind of utopian consciousness.

At the same time, Bloch is concerned with recovering moments of "concrete" utopia in cultural objects and forms. For Bloch, the function of the children's fairytale oscillates between two seemingly contradictory poles. There is a sense that Bloch understands fairytales as Marx and Engles do: as compensatory vehicles of abstract fantasy. At the same time, Bloch celebrates the "forgotten spirit of fairytale" (Bloch, 13) which expresses a utopian desire that is more concrete and anticipatory.

The argument unfolds in three parts. In Part I, I deconstruct Bloch's conceptualization of the child subject and the time of childhood, highlighting potential problems with his highly idealized treatment. In Part II, I defend the classification of Milne's *Pooh* stories as works of utopian literature, drawing on the three evaluative dimensions proposed by Ruth Levitas (1990): content, form and function.

The third section focuses more narrowly on how Milne's *Pooh* works figure within the Blochian framework, arguing that the works reveal moments of concrete utopia by: (1) breaking down the "contents of fear" (Bloch, 5); (2) providing "open space [for] its object which is to be realized and which realizes itself forward" (Bloch, 156); and (3) exploring the abstract principles for human flourishing. Given that Bloch's notion of concrete utopia depends on a connection between what is imagined and the Real-Possible, I argue that this interpretation ultimately requires that the child subject is regarded as a *competent interpreter* of the Real-Possible.

The central aim of this analysis is to reclaim the figure of the child from the periphery of utopian thought. While children have been integral to the functioning of literary utopias, it is crucial to recognize them as more than mere symbols of future potential. Children are complete and complex social beings with capacities for imagination and problem-solving. By reconsidering works of children's fiction as concretely utopian, this study calls for a recentering of the child as an equal subject in the realm of utopian political discourse.

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#### Speakers



#### **Jessica Flanigan**

Richard L. Morrill Chair in Ethics and Democratic Values  
University of Richmond



#### **Connor Kianpour**

University of Colorado Boulder



#### **Martha Pitre**

Research Assistant  
McGill University

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#### Moderator



#### **Christie Hartley**

Professor  
Georgia State University

## **The Epistemology of Radicalization**

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 4

📍 Executive Room

\*Given current events in the Middle East the panel will explore the radicalization potential of the Israel Hamas war as well as delve into the ethical and political considerations of a potential ceasefire.

## **Abstracts:**

### **Veiled Threats: Women and Radicalization, Mia Bloom**

Radicalized women in violent extremist and terrorist groups are assumed to lack agency. The ways in which the media present their motivations is almost always framed as a reaction to some negative event or the result of male influence. Furthermore, as many assumptions as there are regarding women's involvement in violent extremism, there are still more inaccuracies about women in Jihadi groups. This is because many of the women involved are veiled, and their agency is removed from the discussion. While some scholars have acknowledged women's activities in *jihad*, they denude them of political motive and rationale — primarily portraying the women (still) as victims — manipulated, drugged, or coerced in a variety of ways. For these scholars, women's involvement in terrorism can only be interpreted as peripheral and secondary to men. The paper shows that existing assumptions regarding male dominance are mistaken, that women influence men rather than the other way around. In some cases, evidence emerged only months or years after a terrorist attack suggesting that women were the source of the radical beliefs rather than the men. The paper compares women in Jihadi groups with women militants in other radicalized groups. The paper will explore the scope of women recruited either coercively, or those who joined willingly.

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### **The Spectrum of Women's Hate Agency, Tracy Llanera**

While patriarchal hate and terror groups assign subordinative and domestic roles to women, contemporary research shows the women typically participate as political agents in Islamic fundamentalist and white supremacist movements. This situation raises complex issues about agency and political accountability. In debates on gender, extremism, and terrorism, for example, women are described either as merely having a "façade of agency" (Lahoud 2018) or as exercising "active agency" (Termeer & Duyvesteyn 2022). Both approaches are problematic: the former insinuates that women, encumbered by their oppressed status, are less blameworthy than men even if they follow the same directives; the latter, meanwhile, sidesteps the impact of hierarchical patriarchal dynamics, making men and women equal in terms of liability and blame.

We need a more nuanced conception of women's agency in patriarchal hate and terror groups. In this paper, I develop a philosophical account of "women's hate agency," focusing on its substantive character, enabling conditions, and legal and political accountability. In the first part, I discuss why hate serves as the primary and substantive emotion driving the agency of extremist women, particularly in Islamic fundamentalist and white supremacist movements. Membership in these groups encourages the adoption of an extremist epistemological mindset to fuel and increase this affect of hate. Second, I detail the three enabling conditions of women's hate agency: first, it is inspired by a resentment-fostering narrative perpetuated by their terrorist or hate group; second, the group licenses women to defy gender norms for expedient political action; and third, the group calls on women to perform special duties that bring them fame, praise, honor, and prestige as women. Finally, in assessing legal and political accountability in contexts where women's hate agency is exercised, I consider the roles of radicalization, ideology, cultural subordination, expression, and psychosocial vulnerability.

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### **Reason, Self-Trust, and the Ethical Costs of Deradicalization, Joshua DiPaolo**

According to a rationalistic conception of deradicalization, convincing extremists to repudiate their extremist ideologies is a matter of giving them reasons — in the form of arguments, evidence, or counternarratives — to change their views. Motivated by the thought that rather than being passively drawn into extremism, individuals are often convinced of the truth of extremist ideologies by arguments and narratives, this conception views endorsement of extremist ideologies as an expression of intellectual agency. Proponents of this conception of deradicalization therefore claim that deradicalization efforts will succeed only if they engage with the substance of the ideologies that sustain individuals' attraction to extremism. In short, reasons, arguments, and narratives got extremists into this mess, so the same should get them out.

Rationalistic conceptions of deradicalization are fine as far as they go. Deradicalization efforts should take extremists seriously as epistemic agents. However, this paper explains why no matter how rational the causes of an extremist's radicalization, reason will be predictably inadequate on its own as a means to deradicalization. For even when individuals do adopt extremist ideologies through an unfettered exercise of reason, other psychological and emotional mechanisms may sustain their continued attachment to extremism, preventing rationalistic attempts at deradicalization from being rationally compelling. Many extremist groups instill selective self-doubt in their members, making them untrusting of their own judgments that contradict their ideology. Furthermore, extremist groups offer individuals more than a compelling worldview; they also offer value and meaning in the form of relationships, community, and a sense of identity. Consequently, deradicalization requires extremists to sacrifice elements essential to a good life.

In this paper, I explain the intellectual barriers these factors pose to deradicalization efforts and I attempt to characterize what deradicalization efforts must aim for if they are to have lasting or large-scale success.

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📣 **Speakers**



**Mia Bloom**  
GSU



**Tracy Llanera**  
Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
University of Connecticut



**Joshua DiPaolo**  
Associate Professor  
California State University Fullerton

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📣 **Moderator**



**Molly O'Rourke-Friel**  
Applied Epistemology Project, UNC Chapel Hill

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**Polycentric Problem Solving**

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 4

📍 Chairman's Room



## **Abstracts:**

### **A Polycentric Solution to the Stability Problem, Pablo Paniagua Prieto**

One of the perennial questions of political theory is how to stabilize a just regime. The importance of this question has been heightened with the emergence of the Weberian state that monopolizes the power of legitimate coercion and anchors society under a single structure of governance. The Weberian state has given us liberal democracy; and fascist and communist totalitarianisms. The stakes couldn't be higher in ensuring its power is used justly. We argue that trying to stabilize a single, centralized regime is not effective risk-management; it is putting all the proverbial eggs in one basket. If the unitary governance center fails to be just, so does the whole system. We advocate a polycentric solution to the stability problem. A polycentric democracy is characterized by plural and overlapping centers of governance. If one governance center is corrupted, the damage is contained and does not spread to the rest of the system. This renders polycentric democracy more robust in the face of changing circumstances than a monocentric one, just as a variegated ecology is more robust than a monoculture.

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### **Experimenting with Freedom: Interstitial Transformation in a Complex Society, Otto Lehto and Kaveh Pourvand**

A distinguished liberal tradition argues against projects of systemic transformation on grounds of our limited knowledge and advocates open societies with maximal scope for experimental learning. This tradition extends from Mill, Popper and Hayek in the past to scholars such as Ryan Muldoon and Gerald Gaus today. However, there is an open question as to the relevance of this tradition in societal and cultural contexts where liberal institutions do not prevail or are infeasible in the near-to-medium term. How can we promote social learning and experimentation under the "non-ideal" circumstances of closed or authoritarian societies? In this paper, we draw upon and refine Erik Olin Wright's notion of "interstitial learning" to answer this question. We argue that even the most authoritarian societies will contain spaces for dissent and experimentation. Our account explains how evolutionary and polycentric learning can occur in real-world contexts that fall short of ideal epistemic institutions.

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### **Polycentric Peace, Nathan Goodman**

Peace is commonly viewed in social theory as a necessary task for the state. Within public economics and welfare economics, peace is classified as a pure public good, and many therefore argue that it requires state provision. Following Hobbes, many conclude that a centralized state is necessary to secure internal peace and prevent a "war of all against all." Is there a pathway to minimizing destructive conflicts, thereby promoting peace, without undue reliance upon state-centric mechanisms? This paper responds in the affirmative and, in so doing, presents a framework of "polycentric peace." Drawing upon the works of Elinor Ostrom, Kenneth and Elise Boulding, and other scholars engaged with the prospects for liberal peace, the polycentric peace framework identifies the indispensable, and often every day, roles by individuals and non-state groups in resolving conflicts and creating pathways for peaceful relationships. Promotion of peace through settings as diverse as civic associations, markets, and religious orders will be highlighted. An intriguing feature of polycentric peace is that conflict is recognized as an ineradicable feature of human existence. From this standpoint, development of informal norms and formal institutions are deemed necessary to channel conflict toward social coordination and economic productivity. Emphasizing the micro and meso levels of human interactivity, polycentric peace underlines the discovery of, and learning about, peacebuilding processes relevant to circumstances of time, place, and context. Polycentric interpretation of peace processes is also seen as a viable and, under some circumstances, superior, alternative to centralized, state-sponsored efforts to marshal peace.

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## **🔊 Speakers**



### **Pablo Paniagua**

Director of Master's Program PPE  
Universidad del Desarrollo / King's College London



### **Otto Lehto**

Postdoctoral Research Fellow  
New York University



### **Kaveh Pourvand**

Postdoctoral Research Associate  
University of Arizona



### **Nathan Goodman**

Senior Fellow  
Mercatus Center at George Mason University

 Moderator



**Cade Mataya**

University of Louisiana - Lafayette

## Rethinking the Administrative State

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 4

📍 Imperial Room

### Abstracts:

**The Disconnected Dialogue between Public Policy and Normative Political Theory on Policy Instruments,**  
Cristian Pérez Muñoz

Policy tools or instruments are often defined as a recognizable approach through which collective action is organized to tackle a public issue (Salamon, 2002, p. 19). In other words, they refer to specific components within policy design that prompt individuals or targets to engage in actions they would not otherwise undertake, intending to change behavior to address public problems or achieve policy objectives (Schneider and Ingram, 1997, p. 93). As methods employed by governments to achieve desired outcomes, policy instruments have been extensively discussed and evaluated in the context of public policy and administration debates. These debates covered not only the identification, categorization, and description of individual instruments and their interaction in policy mixes but also the behavioral assumptions and their normative implications (e.g., Howlett 2019; Capano and Howlett 2020).

However, there is a significant lack of dialogue between public policy scholars specializing in policy tools and normative political theorists exploring the justifications behind those tools. Notably, there is a distinct absence of engagement, discussion, and even citations of the work on policy instruments between these two fields. In essence, there is limited cross-pollination of ideas, with theorists often overlooking policy scholars' contributions and policy scholars failing to engage with the works of theorists.

This paper argues that the disconnection between these two scholarly literature addressing the same subject generates two main problems. First, the lack of interaction limits the perspective on policy instruments leading to a reduced and limited understanding of the use and justification behind different tools. This, for example, is particularly visible in the study of policy mixes and the interactions of other instruments during different phases of the policy process. Policy decisions should be based on empirical evidence and normative considerations. However, when normative or technical inputs are ignored, policy analysis may be incomplete or lack satisfactory normative justifications. This can result in policies that are ineffective or do not adequately address societal values and principles. Finally, the disconnect between these two academic fields may reduce the relevance and impact of scholarly work on real policy challenges. Failure to incorporate normative justifications or practical considerations of policy tools can compromise the effectiveness and applicability of policy recommendations. Integrating both approaches is crucial for a comprehensive justification and understanding of policy tools.

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**Responsive Bureaucracy and Good Government,** Daniel Engster

Liberal-democratic theorists have long argued that good governance involves subordinating the public administration to the laws and rules of democratically elected officials. Since bureaucrats are not for the most part elected to office, their subordination to the laws and rules of elected officials is considered essential for maintaining their accountability and responsiveness to the people. To achieve this subservience, liberal-democratic theorists have often embraced a hierarchical, compliance model of bureaucratic responsibility. Under this model, bureaucrats are supposed to implement laws and rules impersonally without regard to circumstances or persons in a rule-bound, non-discretionary, instrumental way.

Public administration scholars and, more recently, political theorists have criticized the compliance model for misdescribing the role that public administrators actually play in modern liberal-democratic states. Most bureaucrats enjoy a great deal of discretion in interpreting laws and rules and deciding whether or not they apply to particular cases. In response, administrative and political theorists have outlined other models for subjecting the bureaucracy to popular control, most notably, regime values theory and participatory bureaucracy.

This article extends the critique of the compliance model and offers a fourth model of good government for the liberal-democratic administrative state: responsive bureaucracy. The compliance model is not just descriptively inaccurate, by my account, but inconsistent with core principles of liberal-democratic theory. It undermines the rule of law and invites street-level domination of citizens. Regime values theory and participatory bureaucracy partially address the problems with the compliance model by making administrative policy implementation more accountable and responsive to the people, but both are insufficient because they leave citizens subject to the implementation of general laws without sufficient control over the process. The particular control that the state now exercises over individuals through the public administration requires new modes of particular citizen control over the public administration to mitigate the threat of domination.

The theory of responsive bureaucracy answers this challenge. Responsive bureaucracy retains elements of the compliance, regime values, and participatory theories of bureaucratic responsibility but recognizes an important

role for public administrators in applying general laws and rules to the circumstances and needs of individuals in sensitive, responsive ways. By recognizing this independent mediating role for the public administration, responsive bureaucracy asserts a clearer separation between the legislature and the bureaucracy and thus provides a better model for maintaining the rule of law. By giving individuals some say-so over how the laws are applied to them, it also allows them to avoid domination in their daily encounters with the state. Responsive bureaucracy ultimately closes the circle on state accountability and responsiveness. Through elections, citizens retain general control over the general laws of the state, but through responsive bureaucracy, they also retain some particular control over how the laws are applied to them in particular. Responsive bureaucracy represents, in this respect, a key component of good government in liberal-democratic states.

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### **The Administrative State as a Self-Governing System**, Mario Juarez-Garcia

In a democracy, we tend to think about the administrative state as a group of individuals who must do whatever the law tells them to do. A Principal-Agent relationship lies then at the basis of the administrative state. Principal-agent models depict dynamic simple groups: public servants (a set of rational agents) must strictly comply with the law, which represents public interests (the principal's mandate). Bureaucrats must hence eliminate any personal decision, interest, or consideration when enforcing the law. When they use their power with discretion, they are corrupt.

Recently, some political theorists have challenged this foundational model of the administrative state arguing that the discretion of street-level bureaucrats can lead to some important benefits in liberal democracies. Joseph Heath, for example, holds that the unconstrained expertise of bureaucrats can promote efficiency. Daniel Engster argues that a certain degree of discretion would allow public servants to be more responsive to particular circumstances in which the law is applied.

This paper builds on these insights and aims to rethink the administrative state within the framework of complexity theory. I put forward the advantages of reconceiving administrative states as self-governing systems, which are characterized by the feedback mechanisms that allow a governing unit to collect information from the interactions of other parts of the system. For the administrative state, this means that the discretion of street-level bureaucrats might create information about the desirability of the laws. If street-level bureaucrats tend to enforce law X, it means that such law X is well received in society; conversely, if bureaucrats systematically avoid enforcing law Y (regardless of the reason), it might mean that law Y is not an adequate law for that society. If this is the case, some degree of discretion must be allowed to street-level bureaucrats and feedback mechanisms must be created to send the information about the desirability of the laws from the level of the street to the level of lawmakers (the governing unit). Put simply, the discretion of street-level bureaucrats might become information for better legislation if we reimagine the administrative state as a self-governing system.

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#### Speakers



**Cristian Perez**  
University of Florida



**Dan Engster**  
The Elizabeth D. Rockwell Center on Ethics and Leadership, University of Houston



**Mario Juarez-Garcia**  
Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Political Economy  
Tulane University

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#### Moderator



**Matt Myers**  
Tulane University

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## **Value, Division, and Fragmentation in Property Theory**

 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 4

 Cotton Room

## Abstracts:

### **Subdividing Property Rights, Eric Claeys**

Assume that a person demonstrates eligibility for a natural right in a resource, by using it productively, and by communicating clearly claims to possess it, subject to sufficiency-based concerns. The paper, based on a chapter from my forthcoming book, [TITLE REMOVED FOR BLIND REVIEW] (Cambridge University Press, 2024) claims: (1) Those foundations justify recognizing property rights less sweeping than ownership, derivative of ownership rights, such as leases, present estates, future interests, servitudes and security interests, and ownership rights subject to encumbrances for servitudes and security interests. (2) But the foundations justify limits on the rights, to secure the rights of third parties, and the claim-communication requirement and sufficiency proviso justify the main limits. The discussion of this claim will illustrate the *numerus clausus* principle and the Rule Against Perpetuities (which instantiates an anti-fragmentation policy). And finally, (3) the natural rights justify correlative rights and responsibilities between the people who get lesser interests in the same owned resource.

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### **A Value Based Theory of Intellectual Property Rights, Adam Mossoff**

This paper presents an Objectivist theory of property and intellectual property rights as based in the values conceived and produced by the rational mind. The theory is more radical than existing libertarian theories of both property and intellectual property, as it diverges from the conventional wisdom today among many libertarians that property rights arise from the need to resolve disputes over scarce resources. It also diverges from Lockean accounts of property insofar as this assumes there is some value in raw materials, even if *de minimus* compared to the value contributed by 'mixing labor'. Instead, by emphasizing that values are solely conceived and created by a rational individual producing these values for a flourishing life, this theory of property and intellectual property is an individualist justificatory theory, which grounds moral values in human nature and as serving a flourishing life.

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### **The Value of Charitable Uses, Adam MacLeod**

Charitable use of property is morally valuable. Property law reflects this by privileging charitable uses, affording them special protections not extended to other uses. Charitable uses are also supererogatory insofar as property law entails no duty to give one's property away. This reflects an insight about the value of charitable action, that it is morally valuable to the extent that it is not obligated or coerced but rather freely chosen. The moral value and fragility of charitable use gives to private law sound reasons to protect and immunize liberties of charitable use.

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#### **Speakers**



#### **Eric Claeys**

Professor of Law  
George Mason University



#### **Adam Mossoff**

Professor of Law  
Antonin Scalia Law School, George Mason University



#### **Adam MacLeod**

St Mary's University

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#### **Moderator**



#### **Matt Zwolinski**

Professor of Philosophy  
University of San Diego

## **PPE and Gender**

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 4

📍 River Room I

**Papered Sess...**

## **Abstracts:**

### **Gender Differences in Competitiveness: The Role of Social Incentives** , Mary Rigdon

The provision of social incentives in the workplace, where performance benefits a charitable cause, has been frequently used in modern organizations. In this paper, we quantify the impact of social incentives on performance under two incentive schemes: piece rate and a winner-take-all tournament. We introduce social incentives by informing individuals that 50% of their performance earnings will be donated to a charity of their own choice. Our findings indicate that, in the presence of social incentives, women increase their performance by approximately 23% and 27% in the piece rate and tournament payment schemes, respectively. These effects are sizable and significant. Despite the fact that women also become more confident when social incentives are used, their willingness to compete is not affected due to their general lack of willingness to take financial risks.

**Key words:** social incentives, task performance, piece rate, tournament, competitiveness, gender differences

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### **Just Employment: Flexible Work and Women's Participation in the Labor Market as Social Equals** , Begum Icelliler

In this paper, I argue that increased support for temporal and spatial flexibility in employment is counterproductive for gender justice because flexibility undermines some of the key paths towards women's political participation and collective self-determination. Women exercising their liberal freedom – freedom of contract and of occupation – today constrains the political options and collective interests of women in the future. Flexibility seeks to expand women's economic options by making paid labor outside the home and unpaid labor inside the home more compatible. However, this presents a trade-off, as increased flexibility limits women's political options by isolating them in the home and eroding the material basis of their participation in the labor market as equals. While flexibility suits some women's present material and social conditions better, I show that increased flexibility can set back women's political participation by weakening the associational basis of collective action and eroding the political will around demands like universal pre-K and generous parental leave. This suggests that, contrary to liberal discourse, we should be skeptical of what flexible employment can do for women and cognizant of the political trade-offs involved. While liberal societies should not eliminate temporally and spatially flexible contracts altogether, justice requires that the negative and predictable consequences of flexibility for women's democratic equality be averted. I hold that the equal sharing of flexible work between men and women is the ideal in employment, and liberal societies should use gender equity nudges to facilitate the equal sharing of flexible employment between men and women in different households.

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### **Speech Acts Speak Louder Than Words: Gender Ascriptions & Discursive Injustice**, S.P. Leeds

My aim in this paper is to develop an account of the *harm* of discursive injustice, which Quill Kukla defines as injustice that “occurs when our loss of control over our speech comes from our inability to mobilize conventions in the standard way, resulting in a failure of agency *that tracks and enhances social disadvantage*” (2014, 455, emphasis added). Following Kukla and Mark Lance,<sup>[1]</sup> I adopt a pragmatic approach to speech act theory, according to which social uptake is *constitutive*, meaning that the uptake a speech act receives from a speaker's audience partially determines (1) what type of speech act it is, and (2) which normative statuses it institutes, regardless of the speaker's intention, entitlement, or adherence to standard conventions. Discursive injustice<sup>[2]</sup> arises when this loss of control over one's speech is due to their membership in some disadvantaged social group, and this pragmatic breakdown of discursive agency exacerbates the disenfranchisement and discrimination members of this group already face.<sup>[3]</sup>

My argument proceeds through an analysis of gender ascriptions as exercitive speech acts, employing the example of ‘coming out’ as transgender to demonstrate the damage discursive injustice can inflict. In considering the case of ‘coming out,’ I introduce a potential objection to pragmatic accounts of social uptake and discursive injustice, concerning certain problematic implications that seem to follow from such accounts about which normative statuses are actually attributed to a person in virtue of their gender identity and by whom. Yet, ultimately, I argue that this objection—although it stems from a serious, critical concern about discursive agency—does not point to a problem with pragmatic accounts, but rather, to a central feature of certain speech acts, which helps to identify the damage discursive injustice inflicts and to explain why members of disadvantaged social groups are especially vulnerable to it.

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[1] See esp. (Kukla 2000; 2014; Kukla and Lance 2009; 2022)

[2] In their paper, “Performative Force, Convention, and Discursive Injustice,” Quill Kukla defines as injustice that “occurs when our loss of control over our speech comes from our inability to mobilize conventions in the standard way, resulting in a failure of agency that tracks and enhances social disadvantage” (2014, 455).

[3] Importantly, like Miranda Fricker's concept of epistemic injustice (2007), Kukla's concept of discursive injustice is a kind of injustice that is faced specifically by members of already disadvantaged social groups.

## 📌 Speakers



### **Mary Rigdon**

Associate Professor, Political Economy and Moral Science  
Center for the Philosophy of Freedom, University of Arizona



### **Begum Icelliler**

PhD Candidate  
UNC Chapel Hill



### **S.P. Leeds**

PhD Student, Managing Editor of the Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal (KIEJ)  
Georgetown University

## 📌 Moderator



### **Nikki Ernst**

Graduate Student  
University of Pittsburgh

## **Democratic Theory**

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 4

📍 River Room II

**Papered Sess...**

## Abstracts:

### **Minimising Strategic Voting via Lottery**, Edmund Handby

The theoretical and empirical study of electoral systems has demonstrated how strategic voting is an inherent flaw in various systems. Recent studies have further illustrated which demographics are more likely to vote strategically, and their conclusions' normative implications. The prevalence of strategic voting has, in turn, resulted in a number of proposals for addressing it. These include either balancing the potential dangers of strategic voting with the benefits of susceptible electoral systems, or wholesale electoral reform.

In this paper, I assess whether electoral lotteries can address the prevalence of strategic voting. I do so by first examining lotteries proposed at the district level, as well as the concept of 'random dictatorship'. I then propose a hypothetical electoral system lottery. This lottery involves randomly selecting the system at each electoral cycle, with voters only being made aware of the chosen system after their votes have been cast. Such a lottery will all but eliminate strategic voting. I argue, however, that the lottery is flawed in other ways, as it has issues of transparency, fairness, and complexity.

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### **Madisonian Lottocracy**, Sung Jun Han

Electoral representative democracy has been criticized for problems such as voter ignorance and captured representatives. Many solutions to these problems have been suggested, and lottocracy is one of them. Lottocracy replaces the legislative body of electoral representatives with a legislative body of randomly selected ordinary citizens. The decisions made by the lottocratic participants are the result of their internal deliberations, and therefore, are considered to be epistemically better than those of ordinary citizens. Moreover, since the participants of a lottocratic body are ordinary citizens themselves, they are expected to serve the interests of ordinary citizens, making lottocracy a way to preserve the core ideals of democracy while improving the epistemic quality of democratic decisions. However, some have criticized lottocracy for not being a true democracy.

This paper aims to address these criticisms of lottocracy by proposing another model of lottocracy called Madisonian lottocracy, whose main lottocratic function lies in filtration rather than legislation or recommendation. Critics such as Cristina Lafont argue that lottocracy is not self-governing because citizens should blindly defer to not their collective decisions but a subset of the people's decisions. In response, I will present that Madisonian lottocracy preserves the epistemic benefits of lottocracy while incorporating democratic elements. Similar to Alexander Guerrero's *Single-Issue Lottery-selected Legislature* (SILL), Madisonian lottocracy is structured in a lottocratic manner. However, instead of implementing a policy directly, it filters the best policy options to be presented for a popular election, wherein people of the relevant jurisdiction choose one of the filtered options. The option with the majority vote will then be legislated. In this way, the internal deliberation in Madisonian lottocracy provides epistemic advantages, and the ultimate decision-making power remains with the people, ensuring that the principle of self-government is not compromised.

Madisonian lottocracy aims to nudge citizens to make epistemically good decisions by limiting their options to those that are deemed epistemically good by the lottocratic participants who are not an elite subset of the population but ordinary citizens like those who will vote for a policy option during a popular election. In this way, some problems of electoral representative democracy, such as voter ignorance and mass media manipulation, can be circumvented as citizens are constrained to make an epistemically good decision. Voters who do not have sufficient knowledge for making a good decision in a popular election will end up making epistemically good decisions because their range of choices is limited to be epistemically good options as a result of internal deliberation of a lottocratic body. Similarly, the effect of mass media manipulation in elections can be mitigated because, no matter how manipulated voters are, the option with a majority vote will be epistemically good. Thus, Madisonian lottocracy epistemically *contains* popular elections through the internal deliberation of ordinary citizens preserving the democratic ideal of rule by the people and improving the epistemic quality of democratic decisions.

In this way, Madisonian lottocracy positions itself as a middle ground between participatory democracy and lottocracy by preserving the advantages of participation and lottocratic decision-making.

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### 🗨️ Speakers



#### **Edmund Handby**

Postdoctoral Associate  
Duke University



#### **Sung Jun Han**

Ph.D candidate  
Vanderbilt University

 Moderator



**Joseph Porter**  
DePauw University

## Education in the Liberal Society

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 4

📍 Terrace Room

### Abstracts:

#### **Democracy and Science Education**, Libby Southgate

If citizens do not have the requisite knowledge to vote well on issues (or to select representatives to do so on their behalf) then this will have very bad practical consequences. Policies and laws will be badly chosen. Economic, social, and environmental disaster will ensue. Call this the ‘epistemic challenge’ to democracy.

Dewey observed that the epistemic challenge to democracy is deepened by the fact that in the modern era many public policies depend on highly specialized knowledge or research, spread across many domains of inquiry. It would be impossible to teach the general public (or anyone) everything they would need to vote well. In response, Dewey advocates for general science education. The ideal, he thinks, would be to achieve a division of labour: scientists have the skills/knowledge to discover the facts, and the public have the skills/knowledge to base their choices upon those facts.

More recently, this Deweyan picture has come under pressure. Several studies have indicated that, for partisans, the more general science education one has, the more polarized one’s beliefs tend to be over politically controversial issues (Kahan 2015, 2016a/b, 2017). Partisans with better science education are likely (and able) to selectively credit the scientific evidence that supports their side of the aisle and discount the opposition. So, teaching citizens to base their decisions on scientific evidence can backfire for democracy under conditions of polarization (Schrag 2018, Hannon 2022).

I argue that this situation amounts to a new version of the epistemic challenge. The problem isn’t just that citizens do not have the requisite knowledge to vote well, it’s that (for polarized issues) background social epistemic forces prevent them from gaining this knowledge *even* if they have many of the basic skills and dispositions to do so.

In response to this *kind* of worry, some have suggested engaging in ‘debiasing’ education: education to remove the background social biases that result in motivated reasoning (Schrag 2018, Hannon 2022). Others have suggested teaching controversial material in ways that do not trigger social biases (Kahan 2015, 2016a/b). I critique this approach from a (broadly) feminist perspective and suggest an alternative approach. The problem with debiasing et al is that it assumes that such a thing is possible and desirable. Neither is true. We are inextricably bound up in our social positions and perspectives. Knowledge is discovered and taken up by persons with social identities. This can both block us from gaining knowledge (as in polarization) and give us access to knowledge (e.g., what it’s like to be marginalized or give birth). Objectivity involves putting both the knower and the knowledge under scrutiny.

I argue that this implies that the educational solution isn’t teaching science in abstraction from social embeddedness but teaching science *in the light of* social embeddedness. Specifically, I argue that, if we’re aiming (with Dewey) to ensure the public have the skills/knowledge to base their choices upon scientific fact, we ought to teach citizens how to navigate their social epistemic landscape (teach social epistemology alongside conventional science).

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#### **Permissible Action in Higher Education Reform**, Stephanie Hoffmann

Higher education is often the target of justice reforms, whether this be through teaching for justice or reforms of college admissions (for example, less emphasis on standardized tests and elimination of legacy admissions) and funding (for example, more money being allocated to need-based funding). In this paper, I will explore permissible actions with regard to reform in higher education. I will first motivate the standard picture in education. According to the standard picture, higher education should be a tool for social mobility, and thus, we have reason to endorse several actions which would reform higher education – that is, make it a better tool for social mobility.

David O’Brien (2021) argues that a standard Rawlsian political liberal is *not* permitted in making these justice reforms. That is, there are constraints on our intervening actions when it comes to certain institutions, including higher education institutions. Gina Schouten (2021), working from the framework of a political liberal, argues that we are permitted to make some reforms in higher education, specifically we may have one reason to permit egalitarian consciousness-raising, by appealing to our status as fair and equal citizens. However, Schouten leaves it open whether we should, all things considered, implement this teaching reform. In this paper, I aim to clarify the types of reasons that should go into policies that seek to establish more social mobility, and thus, more just policies, in higher education, including both external decisions, such as college admissions and funding decisions,



as well as internal decisions, such as whether one should teach in an “egalitarian consciousness-raising” way.

Then, I aim to clarify a tension between making the sorts of changes that might plausibly reform higher education to better accommodate social mobility, and constraints on action grounded in values not related to justice in higher education. I argue that some of the reforms which accompany the standard picture are *not* permissible, but this is not for Rawlsian political liberal reasons. Rather, there are other morally relevant constraints restricting the sphere of permissible influence on education, most importantly autonomy, and these may pull us in the opposite direction of common reforms. I conclude by offering a few relevant considerations in the decisions to move forward with these reforms, and some ways to adjudicate among competing values in higher education.

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### **A Politically Liberal Case for Progressive Reforms to Higher Education, Hannah Widmaier**

Access to higher education in the United States is highly unequal in a way that privileges wealthy students. This unequal distribution of opportunity for higher education and social mobility looks like a serious injustice, and perhaps one that the state should take steps to remedy.

The state could go some way toward improving access to higher education for socioeconomically disadvantaged student by coercively imposing certain progressive reforms on college and universities – e.g., by prohibiting legacy admissions and requiring colleges and universities to replace merit-based financial aid with need-based financial aid. But David O’Brien recently made a strong case that such state-imposed reforms to higher education are impermissible according to a broadly Rawlsian, politically liberal standard of permissible state intervention on major social institutions.[1]

In response to O’Brien, I argue that political liberalism (PL) does in fact support the progressive reforms, at least in a society like ours with significant socioeconomic inequality and in which higher education functions as a bottleneck to attaining many socially valuable jobs (e.g., teaching, social work and counseling, medicine, and journalism). But the PL justification for progressive reforms to higher education that I offer does not appeal to egalitarian principles of distributive justice, such as equalizing opportunity for social mobility and helping the disadvantaged. Rather, it appeals to the state’s legitimate interest in ensuring that citizens receive the specialized knowledge and skills needed to make certain kinds of labor contributions that are required for a modern democratic society like ours to function. This justification’s disconnect from egalitarian principles is important because it makes the justification faithful to a key commitment of PL that O’Brien’s account draws out: PL is committed to respecting the reasonable activities and aims of private individuals and certain major social institutions, to a significant extent, even when those aims diverge from or frustrate the aims of distributive justice. It is therefore illegitimate for the state to override the reasonable activities of certain institutions in order to promote distributive justice. So, my task is to give a justification for the reforms that is not fundamentally based on principles of distributive justice and that meaningfully preserves PL’s commitment to respecting a social institution’s own aims and activities.

I argue that PL favors interventions that help an institution better serve its politically essential function(s) without significantly impeding people’s pursuits of their reasonable life plans. On this interpretation, PL supports certain state-imposed progressive reforms on higher education insofar as these reforms help higher education better serve its politically essential function of training citizens for certain kinds of socially necessary labor. I aim to show political liberals that they can support these reforms without abandoning their commitment to a strict justificatory standard for legitimate state intervention, and I aim to reduce skepticism of PL among those who were already committed to the reforms but have doubted PL’s potential to justify them.

[1] David O’Brien, “How Far Can Political Liberalism Support Reforms in Higher Education?” *Social Theory and Practice* 48 (2022): 715 – 746.

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#### **Speakers**



**Libby Southgate**  
Northwestern University



**Stephanie Hoffmann**  
PhD Candidate  
University of Wisconsin-Madison



**Hannah Widmaier**  
University of California, Los Angeles

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#### **Moderator**



**Emma Prendergast**  
Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
Utah Tech University

## New Work in Egalitarianism

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, Nov 4

📍 Tower Room

*This session brings together new work on the ideal of equality from three different traditions of thought in political philosophy—namely, the broadly social- or relational- egalitarian tradition, the broadly left-libertarian tradition, and the broadly luck-egalitarian tradition. The session also aims to bring together discussion of foundational normative issues in egalitarian thought and discussion of the practical application of egalitarian theories in our social and political life. Titles and abstracts for the three papers follow overleaf.*

### Abstracts:

#### **Victim-Blaming as a Practice of Inequality**, Cynthia Stark

Though victim-blaming is familiar, common, and wrongful, neither theorists of blame nor political theorists have devoted much attention to it. My paper attempts to redress this omission, focusing on the blame of rape victims. First, I briefly situate that practice within a cluster of practices that, I claim, deliver misplaced blame, including gaslighting, tone-policing and scapegoating. I understand these practices as both supported by unjust status inequalities or differences and as instruments for reproducing those inequalities or differences. So, for instance, the practice of blaming rape victims both depends upon and perpetuates the idea that women are morally responsible for men's sexual feelings.

Second, (a) I isolate the general alleged rationale for blaming rape victims, which is that they are seen as having contributed to in some way to their victimization, and (b) I distinguish various types of rape victim blaming, delineated by the ways in which the victim is seen to have contributed. For instance, sometimes the victim is seen as having contributed by having wronged the perpetrator, whereas in other cases she is seen as having contributed by (merely) exercising bad judgement.

Third, I explain my theoretical framework for understanding victim-blaming, which is that it functions by invoking distorted blaming norms that are deceptively similar to correct blaming norms. Here I outline some of the relevant correct blaming norms, namely those concerning acceptable excuses and exemptions from blame.

Fourth, I apply that framework to what I call *provocation* cases, in which the victim is seen as provoking her rape and hence as *culpable* for it (as opposed to, say, *deserving* it). Her alleged culpability, I maintain, rests in her having failed to fulfill her alleged obligation to refrain from sexually arousing the perpetrator, which obligation is founded upon—among other assumptions—the following distorted blaming norm (that both reflects and perpetuates unjust status inequality or difference): men, but not women, who are sexually aroused lack the capacity for morally responsible agency and hence are exempted, when in that condition, from moral responsibility.

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#### **Incas, Aliens, and Anarchists**, Jesse Spafford

Egalitarianism has a levelling down problem: if inequality is unjust, then we must reduce everyone's level of advantage to match that of the worst-off person. This problem is most acute when it takes the form of the Incas and Aliens Problem introduced by Shlomi Segall in his *Why Inequality Matters* (2016, OUP). In the Incas case, *H* is an Inca who lives a very poor and meager life given her lack of access to modern technology. Here, egalitarianism seems to imply that a contemporary agent *P* has a duty to forego modern conveniences such that she does not end up living a better life than *H*. Similarly, in the Aliens case, *A* lives on an unreachable planet and lives an unhappy life due to poor climatic conditions. Again, egalitarianism seems to imply that an Earthling *P* must lower the quality of her own life so as to avoid generating any inequality between her and *A*. Such conclusions do seem to be a *reductio* against the egalitarian position.

This paper argues that the Incas and Aliens Problem can be solved by appealing to Jesse Spafford's recently proposed *social anarchist* position. According to Spafford, people start out with egalitarian *distributive claims* over all things. Specifically, each person has a claim against anyone leaving her worse off absent some sanctionable choice on her part. These claims can then be superseded by the establishment of private property rights via acts of initial appropriation—i.e., when resources are appropriated, all non-appropriators are stripped of their distributive claims (as well as their permissions to use the appropriated resources). However, Spafford contends that such appropriation succeeds only if it satisfies a very stringent Lockean proviso that maintains that appropriation succeeds only if no one would be left worse off by compliance with the established property rights and any subsequent waiving of those rights. He notes that practically no acts of appropriation meet this standard and, thus, concludes that there is practically no private property.

In this paper, I observe that Spafford assumes that property rights are rights *in rem*—i.e., appropriation is assumed to establish rights against all existent and future persons. However, this paper argues that property should be unbundled such that one can establish property rights against some people but not others. It then argues that, once property is relativized in this way, it follows that people can establish property rights against both Incas and Aliens, as initial appropriation vis-à-vis these persons satisfies Spafford's very stringent proviso. Thus, we are able to strip these temporally and spatially distant persons of their distributive claims that would otherwise oblige us to level down. In this way, the modified social-anarchist position can sidestep the Incas and Aliens variant of the levelling down objection.

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#### **Luck Egalitarianism, Equality of Opportunity, and Levelling Down**, David O'Brien

According to *luck egalitarianism*, it is unjust or unfair if some are worse off than others through no responsible

choice of their own (cp Larry Temkin, *Inequality* (1993, OUP)). Critics of luck egalitarianism have pointed to its entailment that there's sometimes a reason to level down (i.e., to make some worse off and no one better off) even when a welfare inequality has an apparently morally innocent origin. In this paper, however, I show that such levelling-down criticisms cannot consistently be pressed against luck egalitarianism by those who accept *any* plausible substantive equal-opportunity principle. Any such equal-opportunity principle, I show, also entails that there's sometimes a reason to level down. The upshot is that, if a view's rational acceptability depends on whether it can ever favor levelling down, then the choice between egalitarian and non-egalitarian views is starker than is typically assumed.

I begin by observing that luck egalitarianism can be formulated as a particularly demanding substantive equal-opportunity principle. This principle condemns inequalities in opportunity for welfare whether their source is people's unchosen social background or their unchosen natural endowments. The cases that typically underwrite levelling-down criticisms of luck egalitarianism are driven by differences in people's natural endowments, which differentially affect people's opportunities for welfare. To take a stock example: suppose Mozart can enjoy private hedonic experiences because of his natural musical talents, whereas Salieri cannot, and one can either level down (by preventing Mozart from developing, or exercising, those talents) or not. The luck-egalitarian equal-opportunity principle entails—implausibly, according to critics, given the apparently morally innocent origin of this inequality—that there's a reason to level down in such a case.

Strikingly, however, many critics of luck egalitarianism endorse *restricted* substantive equal-opportunity principles. Such a principle condemns inequalities in opportunity for welfare *only* when their source is people's unchosen social backgrounds (not people's differing natural endowments). But restricting the *scope* of egalitarian concern in this way will immunize egalitarianism from levelling-down criticisms only if, unlike differing natural endowments, it's impossible for differing social backgrounds to differentially affect people's opportunities for welfare. I introduce some cases to show that, although it's atypical, it's not *impossible* for differing social backgrounds to differentially affect people's opportunities for welfare. That shows that any plausible substantive equal-opportunity principle entails—exactly what the luck-egalitarian equal-opportunity also entails—that there's sometimes a reason to level down.

I conclude by considering objections, focusing in particular on the objection that people have morally significant interests in not being worse off than others in virtue of their social background (but *not* in virtue of their natural endowments), on the grounds that such inequalities would be stigmatizing. I reply that while the objector's claim may be plausible in the more typical real-world cases in which people's disadvantage can be traced to their social background, the objector's claim is *either* not sustainable in the atypical cases in which social background itself is what differentially affects people's opportunity for welfare *or*, if sustainable, would also rescue luck egalitarianism from levelling-down criticisms.

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#### 🗣️ Speakers



##### **Cynthia (Cindy) Stark**

Professor  
University of Utah



##### **Jesse Spafford**

Lecturer  
The Victoria University of Wellington



##### **David O'Brien**

Assistant Professor  
Tulane University

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#### 🗣️ Moderator



##### **Chris Melenovsky**

Assistant Professor  
Suffolk University

10:30 AM

#### **Break**

🕒 10:30 AM - 10:45 AM, Nov 4

10:45 AM

#### **Formal and Computational Methods in PPE**

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 4

📍 Grand Ballroom I

## **Abstracts:**

### **Simulation and Social Change**, Sahar Haydari-Fard

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the interconnectedness of individuals, ideas, and institutions in society. Network theory offers a powerful framework for understanding and analyzing these complex interdependencies, providing valuable insights into the dynamics of social systems. But these interdependencies generate a heightened level of complexity that its navigation requires more than what our philosophical intuitions can offer. Thus a growing body of literature relies on various computational methods to test and guide our philosophical and moral intuitions whenever necessary. In this talk, I will use such computational methods to think about collective action, social movements, and social change. I explain the distinctive feature of these methods in modeling the relationship between various social entities at different levels, such as individuals, norms, cultures, institutions, and organizations. I will also discuss the potential for these models to bridge the gap between theoretical inquiries and practical endeavors aimed at fostering social progress. I will conclude that the emphasis on network theory facilitates a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics at play in social systems, empowering individuals and organizations to navigate and shape the interconnected world in which they operate.

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### **Using Python to Analyze Election Systems**, Myraeka d'Leeuwen

Arrow's impossibility theorem states that it is impossible to have a ranked election system which satisfies all desiderata of democratic systems. Some of these desiderata include monotonicity, unrestricted domain, independence of irrelevant alternatives, or Pareto efficiency. Axiomatic social choice theory has also presented theorists with puzzles such as the Condorcet paradox, which showed that even if individual voters have transitive preference orderings, their collective preference could be intransitive. Despite these being prevalent concerns with deciding between and managing electoral systems, there is a dearth of information about how often Arrow's impossibility theorem and the Condorcet paradox are relevant to elections, and especially how often they are relevant to different systems. An election system that fails on some desiderata does not always fail on these desiderata. When weighing between systems which are all bound to fail occasionally, the question of how often they fail and under which conditions they are most likely to fail is critical. I discuss how computational methods provide a tool to analyze individual elections as well as electoral systems more broadly on their satisfaction of electoral desiderata. I introduce a tool written in Python which allows for ranked or pairwise preferences to be run on numerous voting systems to mock elections and which ascertains for a given election which criteria are satisfied or violated. It may show that for a given set of preferences, one election system resulted in a cycle or a non-Pareto efficient candidate was elected, while another system did not result in any violations using these preferences orderings. In order for this tool to be maximally effective for comparing election systems, there will need to be more research on how to obtain large amounts of realistic voter preferences. While these preferences could be generated with software, there would need to be some work done to ensure that the distribution of voter preferences resembles real elections. In areas where ranked election systems are currently used, such as Australia, governments often do not publish enough data to use these preferences to estimate the incidence of election failures. However, this tool can also be used to increase the availability of real, or at least realistic, data about how often elections may fail. It can be used to turn preferences expressed in one type of election, such as a ranked choice election, into preferences on a different election system, such as Borda count. This tool provides current researchers with a simple means to assess whether elections have satisfied democratic criteria and how using different electoral systems affects these criteria or affects the winners of elections. It could also provide future scholars with the capacity to quickly run analyses on real world elections to ascertain the prevalence of violations, a crucial factor in weighing whether governments should change their electoral systems.

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### **Values as Vectors**, Daniel Muñoz

Often, two things seem to be tied in value, even though slightly improving one would not make it better overall. How can we model this "insensitivity to sweetening?" A leading answer is that overall values, rather than being like precise numbers, must be imprecise. Drawing on results from decision theory and social choice theory, I show that imprecise values are neither necessary nor sufficient for modeling sweetening. The crucial factor is not precision but dimensionality. I propose instead to start the analysis of sweetening cases from a view of values as many-dimensional vectors. The result is a fresh and flexible framework for the stranger side of ethics—as well as some morals about transitivity and an elegant definition of parity.

## 🗣️ Speakers



**Sahar Heydari Fard**  
Assistant Professor  
The Ohio State University



**Myraeka d'Leeuwen**  
PhD Student  
UNC-Chapel Hill



**Daniel Muñoz**  
Assistant Professor  
UNC Chapel Hill

## 🗣️ Moderator



**Kirun Sankaran**  
Dartmouth College

## The Ethical Limits of Academic Inquiry

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 4

📍 Grand Ballroom II

PPE Society Working G..

## **Abstracts:**

### **In Defense of ‘Harmful’ and ‘Dangerous’ Inquiry in Philosophy,** Eric Sampson and Rebecca Tuvel

Recently, some philosophers have argued that we should somehow censor those expressing “harmful” or “dangerous” views in philosophy (e.g., retract their articles, subject their articles to something like IRB review, prevent them from speaking on campus). Recent examples in academic philosophy include calls to censor those expressing views about what it means to be a woman (Byrne, Stock, Lawford-Smith), voluntary eugenics (Singer, Savulescu, Anomaly), active euthanasia for severely disabled infants (Singer), the relation between race and IQ (Cofnas), the possibility of transracialism (Tuvel), consensual sex with children (Kershnar), and the view that homosexuality is a kind of disability (Swinburne).

In this paper, we defend a general, and fairly permissive, theory about the ethical limits of academic inquiry. We call it the “institutional model”. On our view, academic inquiry is an institution complete with roles and role-players designed to achieve the institution’s legitimate goal. Academic philosophy’s legitimate goal is finding the truth and its role-players (philosophers) play their role by presenting what are, in their view, the best arguments, theories, and objections they can think of—even if the content is de re morally heinous.

We draw parallels with a wide range of other institutions where similar conclusions are far less controversial: the adversarial legal system, TSA, entertainment (e.g., acting, stand-up comedy), and markets. In each case, the relevant institution has a legitimate goal and, in pursuit of that goal, role-players are morally permitted to act in ways that they would not be permitted to act outside the institutional context. For example, defense attorneys are morally permitted to defend their clients no matter what as they play their role in a system aimed at justice. TSA agents are permitted to perform random searches on passengers without grounds for suspicion as they play their role in a system aimed at security. Actors portraying villains are permitted to utter their (ordinarily) morally heinous lines as they play their role in a system aimed at entertainment. And business owners are permitted to put their rivals out of business (throwing rival workers into unemployment) as they play their role in a system aimed at economic efficiency.

There are limits, however. Defense attorneys aren’t permitted to say anything to defend their clients, TSA agents aren’t permitted to search anyone for any reason, and so on. In each case, we argue, the limits of permissible activity are drawn by reference to the institution’s legitimate goal and the role player’s place in pursuing it. Same in academic philosophy.

One interesting implication of the institutional model, we argue, is that every controversial view mentioned above should be welcomed with open arms in academic spaces. Along the way, we consider a host of objections, including the claim that academic philosophy has other legitimate goals (e.g., justice, liberation) that support relatively heavy censorship; that censorship serves the aim of truth-seeking better than more permissive policies; and that the harms threatening marginalized groups are too great, or too imminent, to permit open inquiry about certain philosophical questions.

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### **Academic Freedom and ‘Non-Platforming’,** Raja Halwani

Discussions of academic freedom and freedom of expression tend to focus on goals: one side argues that our goal is the search for the truth and that this goal should be mostly unfettered; another side argues that some goals should not be pursued if doing so is, in some sense to be cashed in, morally prohibitive or if a community of learners decides that the goal is out of bounds. My focus in this paper is on the issue of the means to the goal. Specifically, I reject certain arguments to the effect that some scholars’ work need not be consulted in doing research. Two such arguments are that the scholar in question has no “expertise” in the field and that the scholar is abhorrent, so we have no obligation to “platform” them or, more strongly, we have a moral obligation to not platform them. I begin by giving three instances of these arguments. I then dismiss the argument from so-called lack of expertise. I then argue that we have professional and moral obligations of reading and citing, within the usual limits (which I explain), the work of scholars with whom we not only intellectually disagree, but whose views we find repulsive on various levels. I also argue that if one’s moral commitments tug at one so strongly that one does not want to engage the work of a scholar on a particular topic, then one has the option of not writing on that topic. Thus, if we are to be good scholars and truth seekers, we do not have the academic freedom to ignore the work of those scholars with whose work we disagree or find politically unacceptable.

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### **Academic Inquiry and Open-Mindedness,** Jack Kwong

Are certain views so controversial that they fall outside the scope of academic inquiry? One way to tackle this question is to frame it as an issue about open-mindedness and its role within academic inquiry: Should scholars be open or closed off to repugnant, offensive and harmful views? In this paper, I argue that the literature on open-mindedness and its status as an intellectual and moral virtue has important insights to offer. In particular, I show that (1) the dangers sometimes associated with the exercise of open-mindedness, such as being misled or deceived, can be mitigated in the academic setting; (2) there is a division of epistemic labor in which academics, as opposed to non-experts, have a responsibility to consider and assess controversial views; (3) scholars can engage in open-minded debate even if they hold convictions with respect to their positions; (4) genuine open-mindedness has the resources to safeguard against reckless and ‘playful’ inquiries, and to ensure that its exercise is motivated on proper grounds, such as the pursuit of truth and understanding, and a concern for the right and the good. These considerations, I contend, offer preliminary support for the view that scholars ought to be open to the examination and assessment of controversial views. The paper will conclude with some further remarks about the appropriate conditions for being open-minded with respect to academic inquiries involving controversial views.

## 🔊 Speakers



**Eric Sampson**  
Assistant Professor  
Purdue University



**Rebecca Tuvel**  
Associate professor  
Rhodes College



**Raja Halwani**  
Professor of Philosophy  
School of the Art Institute of Chicago



**Jack M. C. Kwong**  
Professor  
Appalachian State University

## 🔊 Moderator



**Lucia Schwarz**  
Assistant Professor  
Tulane University

## If You're So Smart, Why Aren't You At This Panel? Themes from the Philosophy of G.A. Cohen

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 4

📍 Salon Room

### Abstracts:

#### **In Search of Lost Times: Conservatism, Anachronism, and the Value of Things Past**, Simone Gubler

G.A. Cohen gives an account of a conservative who is identified by their loyalty to existing particular valuable things. They will seek to preserve these things because they are *existing particular valuable things*, even though it means “not making things in general as valuable as they could be made to be”. Where efforts at preservation fail, they will “lament” their loss.

Cohen’s conservatism can be conceived as an indexical attitude – things of value that we have *now* should be protected. If a valued object is replaced, then the conservative has reason to switch their allegiances to the replacement (assuming that it too is valuable).

Now, perhaps switching one’s allegiances to whatever is given, and simply lamenting things lost, makes sense where items are lost forever. But the persistence conditions for things like policies, practices, laws, and institutions, are arguably different to those of physical artifacts and human beings. And while it is likely true that, once destroyed, pencil erasers and Napoleon are forever gone, certain sorts of political and social entities – like laws, policies, practices, and institutions – can both cease to obtain at a time *and* plausibly have prospects of revival or restoration. So there’s something amiss, rationally speaking, if, where a law, policy, practice, or institution ceases to obtain, the conservative simply capitulates to the valuation of a new status quo, while lamenting a *reversible* loss.

This paper is about the social conservative who feels themselves gripped by a common attitude of valuation to things present and recently past. They aspire not only to maintain the *status quo*, but also, in some cases, to revive the *status quo ante*; and to them, the Cohen-conservative’s affections (on the quick account given above) seem implausibly brittle. I argue that the attitudes of such a social conservative can be accommodated, without too much violence, by a modified version of Cohen’s account. But doing so poses some conceptual problems. I focus on one problem in particular: that of resolving the issue of *when* or *how* the specific sort of value to which the conservative is attuned will cease to obtain. Is it conservative to seek a Georgian revival in architecture, the reconstruction of a park on an empty site where a park once stood fifty years ago, or the reintroduction of Olde English to the school curriculum? What relation must a past object or practice bear to the present, in order for the conservative to have reason to seek its revival? I offer suggestions about how we might draw a principled line between social conservatism as I reimagine it and a distinct attitude to value: *anachronism*.

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## Contesting the Common Good: School Desegregation and the Boston School Bus Drivers Union, Philip Yaure

The past decade has seen the proliferation of American public and service sector union contract campaigns organized around a commitment to 'bargain for the common good.' Bargaining for the common good is a strategic orientation that envisions union contracts as vehicles for directly and explicitly advancing the interests of the communities in which a particular workplace is embedded. For instance, the Chicago Teachers Union, in its 2012 and 2019 campaigns, cast its contract as a struggle for "the schools Chicago students deserve," fighting for reduced class sizes and increased nursing staff and social services for students. One crucial assumption built into bargaining for the common good is that unions spearhead struggles for interests that community members by and large already recognize as their own: union-community coalitions are built around constellations of interests that they already share. In this paper, I argue that we find in the history of the American labor movement an even more militant sibling of bargaining for the common good. This militant sibling sees unions as political agents with the power to contest and reforge what a community understands as its common good. In particular, I examine to the role of the Boston School Bus Drivers Union in the fight to desegregate the city's schools in the 1970s. Drawing on extensive archival materials, including hundreds of pages of personal organizing notes by one of the union's lead organizers, Gene Bruskin, I show how the union leveraged its integral role in the city's busing policies in an effort to reorganize the city's working class around a collective commitment to integration and racial justice. Through this struggle, Boston's school bus drivers developed a theoretical framework that cast the common good not as a precondition for coalitional politics, but as a site of contestation in which new coalitions are built through redefinition of a community's common good.

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**If You're an Egalitarian, How Come Your Significant Other is So Rich?** Marcos Picchio, co-authored by Madeline Brighthouse Glueck

G.A. Cohen (2000) famously argues that rich egalitarians have an obligation to donate their excess income and wealth. In this article, we review empirical literature on social assortative mating as a way of revisiting themes in G.A. Cohen's similarly titled classic. Instead of focusing on personal income and wealth redistribution, as Cohen (2000) does, we examine whether rich egalitarians have a duty to disrupt patterns of social assortative mating by forming a family with someone of lower socioeconomic status (SES). Like Cohen's original article, we offer no definite conclusions when it comes to personal conduct. We tentatively conclude that rich egalitarians are not under an obligation to form a family with someone of lower SES, not due to lack of philosophical justification, but rather due to the practical considerations, such as empirical literature suggesting that such families are unlikely to be stable. Though we offer no definite conclusions with respect to personal conduct, our main goal in pursuing this line of inquiry is to call attention to a phenomenon well-known to social scientists, but routinely overlooked by philosophers with egalitarian commitments. Our larger contribution is that assortative mating is a social phenomenon that has important implications for debates in social and political philosophy, and as such deserves more scrutiny from anyone with egalitarian commitments.

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### 🗣️ Speakers



**Simone Gubler**

Assistant Professor  
UNC Chapel Hill



**Philip Yaure**

Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
Virginia Tech



**Marcos Picchio**

Postdoctoral Fellow  
National Institutes of Health

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### 🗣️ Moderator



**Delaney Thull**

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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## The Political Philosophy of Universities

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 4

📍 Executive Room



## **Abstracts:**

### **"Open Bargaining" at the University: Spectacle or Principle, Ege Yumusak**

U.S. universities have increasingly become sites of political action due in large part to the rising wave of unionization in the student employee population. Student workers' efforts to seek union recognition often involve strike actions because university administrations choose to first and foremost prevent a union effort. In addition to student workers, other academic workers, such as contingent faculty or tenure-track faculty, are also taking strike action to win recognition or negotiate better successor contracts. Strikes are highly coordinated and intensive collective actions that often require investment from professional staffers of international labor unions. As such, these efforts put academics in contact with labor organizers. In this talk, I'll be focusing on two sides of a consciousness-raising exercise that takes place in the context of academic labor due to these interactions. On the one hand, I'll suggest that academics are learning from labor organizers skills and knowledge regarding the university as a political institution. In previous work, I've characterized this form of consciousness-raising as fostering place-consciousness. I extend this work here by considering what staging a labor struggle, with academic workers acting as agents of change, teaches trade unions. I present two competing conceptions of "open bargaining", that is labor negotiations that take place with rank-and-file workers in the bargaining room, first, as a traditional tactic in labor, and second, as a popular tactic in academic labor. By analyzing recent exercises in open bargaining, I point out that the difference between these two conceptions has created contestation due to their potential practical incompatibility and discuss whether these conceptions are intrinsically incompatible.

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### **Democratizing the University from a Standpoint of Political Economy , Ben Laurence**

While having a mission to educate and produce knowledge, universities from a standpoint of political economy are many other things, including real estate empires, employers of vast labor forces, powerful players in local politics, even dispensers of law and order through privatized police forces. Often questions about democratization of these institutions emphasize their educational missions, dwelling on the erosion of faculty governance based in the professional independence of knowers and educators, and their replacement by a growing non-academic administrative class. This vision of university democracy has come under tremendous pressure from the spread of contingent academic labor and the growth of administrations, but we should acknowledge that it is, and always was, a limited perspective. A helpful reorientation might take a labor-first view of the university, considering the educational mission through the lens of various classes of academic workers. In this context, a politics of democratization can be pursued through solidarity of different classes of academic workers with one another, and with non-academic workers excluded altogether from structures of faculty governance.

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### **Universities as Sites of Collective Action Problems , Daniel Weinstock**

It is at least arguable that modern political philosophy received its principal impetus through the discovery by Hobbes of collective action problems, and of the difficulties that human agents experience in trying to avoid them. It is therefore somewhat ironic that contemporary political philosophers have not turned their attention to the collective action problems that afflict the institutions in which they lead their professional lives, namely, universities. In this paper I will illustrate the claim by describing and pointing to potential modes of resolution of a persistent collective action problem in universities, sometimes referred to via the imperative to "publish or perish", but which takes the form of the collective action problem known as "race to the bottom". The argument will be that the incentive structure that obtains in universities leads to a collectively sub-optimal result in which scholars are incentivized to publish greater amounts of research, and to do so at ever earlier stages in their careers, with the result that the overall quality of research has diminished, while the quantity has increased to the point where it is no longer possible for scholars to read all the scholarly output relevant to their areas of research, with the result that the conditions for the kind of collective conversation that makes philosophical (and other scholarly) progress possible no longer obtain. As is the case for collective action problems generally, this result is both easily observable, without there being an incentive for any one agent within the university to act to resolve it. Having modelled the problem in game theoretical terms, I will propose paths of solution that involve modifying the structure of reward and sanction within which both scholars find themselves

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## **Speakers**



**Ege Yumusak**  
Lecturer/Postdoctoral Fellow  
Columbia University



**Ben Laurence**  
University of Chicago




**Daniel Weinstock**  
McGill

 **Moderator**



**Luís Lóia**  
Assistant Professor  
Portuguese Catholic University

## **PPE and Public Policy**

 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 4

 Chairman's Room

**Papered Sess...**

## **Abstracts:**

### **Uncertainty Mapping for Public Policy, Harits Hasra**

Policymakers don't know what wellbeing is. This observation is no knock on their competence or knowledge. Rather, no extant theory of wellbeing is sufficiently immune from significant problems such that it warrants being treated as the right account of wellbeing. In other words, because of our theoretical uncertainty about wellbeing, policymakers don't know what wellbeing is.

Consequently, policymakers can't be certain that the policies they pursue will enhance wellbeing. What then should they do? They don't have the luxury of waiting for the theoretical dust to settle; of waiting to see what views come out on top. They can't wait for some brilliant scholar to devastatingly refute desire-satisfactionism and objective-list theories, such that it becomes clear hedonism is the right account of wellbeing. Given the seeming intractability of these theoretical debates, they may end up waiting forever.

Policymakers also ought not treat an extant substantive theory of wellbeing as the right theory of wellbeing. Put differently, they ought not assume away our theoretical uncertainty about wellbeing. Presumably, the most plausible (kind of) wellbeing theory to treat as the right one would be one of the "Big Three" theories of wellbeing: hedonism, desire-satisfactionism, and objective-list. None of the Big Three, however, are sufficiently immune to problems such that they warrant being treated as the right account of wellbeing.

Given that policymakers cannot wait for the theoretical uncertainty to resolve itself or assume it away, one might think they ought not place any deliberative weight on wellbeing. That is, they ought to decide between policy options entirely on other bases (e.g., justice, fairness, cost-effectiveness).

I argue, however, that policymakers in fact ought not do so. Avoiding theoretical uncertainty in this way is sometimes incoherent or impossible, as many policies explicitly *aim* at improving the wellbeing of some target population, either exclusively or as part of a mixed bag of aims. Furthermore, policymakers would be remiss to discount wellbeing when a policy is unanimously favored or disfavored by all plausible theories of wellbeing. More fundamentally, I argue that even policies that do not explicitly aim at improving wellbeing ought to take wellbeing, at the very least, as *one* relevant consideration among others.

I then lay out existing proposals that instead provide principled means for policymakers to evade theoretical uncertainty about wellbeing: Daniel Hausman & Michael McPherson's evidential view, Gil Hersch's intermediate account of wellbeing, and Daniel Haybron and Valerie Tiberius' pragmatic subjectivism.

Finally, I sketch an alternative approach that *integrates* our theoretical uncertainty about wellbeing instead of evading it – what I call the Uncertainty Mapping Approach. To do so, I localize extant work on moral decision-making under conditions of moral uncertainty by William MacAskill, Krister Bykvist, and Toby Ord. I contend that this approach ought to be taken seriously by policymakers, though its overall desirability depends on theoretical considerations beyond the scope of this paper.

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### **The Currency of Distributive Justice in Real-World Policy Discussions, Nicholas Dias**

Many political theorists stress that distributive justice ought to guide how democracies evaluate public policies. Yet, political behaviorists disagree about whether most ordinary Americans have coherent beliefs about public policy, let alone beliefs rooted in notions of distributive justice. Instead, partisan teammanship seems to organize ordinary Americans' policy preferences—if these preferences are organized at all. Likewise, scholars of the U.S. Congress worry that Congresspeople's decisions are increasingly driven by partisan teammanship.

How frequently are distributive justice principles invoked in real-world discussions of public policy, relative to partisanship? To answer this question, I collected the entire Reddit archive for 2015–2022 and the Congressional Record for the 114th–117th Congresses. From these databases, I extract thousands of discussions of particular policies by searching for the titles of all legislation considered by the 114th–117th Congresses. Next, I fine-tune a DistilBERT classifier that accurately identifies whether a sentence invokes any of three distributive justice principles: need, equality, and deservingness. Finally, I apply this classifier to my entire database of policy discussions between Redditors and Congresspeople.

I find that both Redditors and Congresspeople frequently invoke all three distributive justice principles in real-world policy discussions. Indeed, all three principles are appealed to as or more frequently than partisanship. Moreover, invocations of distributive justice are not confined to one policy domain: Redditors and Congresspeople broadly invoke distributive justice when discussing policies from many domains. These results show that distributive justice principles have real-world currency and challenge the dominance of partisan teammanship. In addition, they suggest that ordinary citizens' policy preferences may be more coherent than previously suggested.

## Speakers



**Harits Hasra**

PhD Student  
Arizona State University



**Nicholas Dias**

PhD Candidate  
University of Pennsylvania

## Moderator



**Gil Hersch**

Associate Professor  
Virginia Tech

## Sharing Territory, by Cara Nine

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 4

📍 Imperial Room

**Author Meets Cr...**

This panel is on a new book engaging important themes in political philosophy, and also connected to economics (resources). It discusses political boundaries, resource rights, and shared political power. The panelists come from different perspectives in philosophy, including liberalism and natural law theory (Cara Nine), critical theory and the environment (Omar Dahbour), and group agency theory (Eliot Litalien).

In *Sharing Territories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), Cara Nine develops a territorial rights theory to embrace the real-world circumstances of territorial overlap. Nine defends a river model of framing territorial rights theory. On a river model groups, are assumed to be interdependent and to overlap geographically with other group. On her view, territorial rights include a variety of nested and overlapping geographical areas. Nine argues for the establishment of foundational territories around geographical areas like rivers. Usually lower-scale political entities, foundational territories connect diverse groups of people through their necessary connections with fresh water and other physical resources. Examples of foundational territories include not only river catchment areas but also urban areas, drawn around residents who hold obligations to collectively manage their surroundings. As foundational territories overlap the territories of other political units, Nine frames a theory of nested and shared territorial rights, and argues for insightful changes to the allocation of resource rights between political groups and individuals.

## Speakers



**Cara Nine**

UNR



**Eliot Litalien**

Researcher and Coordinator  
Universite de Montréal / Centre de recherche en éthique (CRÉ)



**Omar Dahbour**

Hunter College, CUNY

## Moderator



**Colleen Murphy**

Roger and Stephany Joslin Professor of Law  
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

## Religion in Liberal Democracy

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 4

## Abstracts:

### **Religious Discrimination and the Value of Voluntary Associations,** Brian Hutler

In a recent line of cases, the U.S. Supreme Court has held that the constitutional protection against religious discrimination requires the government to offer the same financial support to religious schools that it offers to secular private schools. Most notably, in *Carson v. Makin*, the Court struck down a Maine law that subsidized private school tuition for students in school districts that lacked public secondary schools, but only if they attended “nonsectarian” (i.e., secular) private schools. The state argued that only secular private schools offered a “rough equivalent” to the public education that the state was obligated to provide. The Court held, however, that the state must provide the same subsidies to attend religious schools that it provides for secular private schools, even in districts where students lack access to public schools.

I will argue that the Court’s decisions in these cases employed a mistaken view of the relationship between the government and religion. These decisions assumed that the government must remain strictly neutral with respect to religion, and there is no permissible basis for favoring secular organizations over religious organizations. I will argue, however, that the government does have a legitimate reason for favoring secular organizations in some contexts. In particular, the government has an important obligation to ensure that everyone has access to secular alternatives to religious education. As such, the government may be justified in subsidizing secular schools but not religious schools if its purpose is to ensure that everyone has access to secular education.

The significance of these cases is not limited to education. The government’s obligation to provide secular alternatives to religious schools is part of its broader obligation to ensure that religious organizations are voluntary associations. Secular providers of important social services—such as education, healthcare, and dispute resolution—are necessary to ensure that no one is forced to utilize a religious provider of these services. Secular service providers create a social safety net, helping to ensure that an individual’s participation in a religious organization is voluntary, not compulsory. In this respect, secular alternatives to religious service providers are a benefit that the government provides to its citizens, both religious and nonreligious, because they contribute to building a society in which religious participation can be pursued, not as a result of coercion or practical necessity, but as an authentic personal choice.

This paper also provides an alternative way to understand the relationship between the government and religious organizations in a liberal society. The government should not endorse or disparage any particular religious group, and likewise it should not endorse or disparage secularism as a way of life or a set of beliefs. But the government is not required to remain strictly neutral with respect to religion. Instead, the government should foster a society in which religious participation and affiliation is possible but not compulsory. The constitutional protections for religious freedom, on this interpretation, are best understood as an expression of the value of voluntary associations in a liberal society.

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### **Reviving the Endorsement Test: Equal Citizenship, Religious Power, and Social Meaning,** David Golemboski

For a few decades, the US Supreme Court regularly evaluated government acts involving religion by asking whether they conveyed an endorsement of religion. The current Supreme Court has expressly rejected that “endorsement test” as a principle for applying the Establishment Clause, though various versions of non-endorsement principles remain favored by some contemporary liberal theorists (e.g., Bardon 2022, Laborde 2017, Nussbaum 2008) as a corollary of a liberal principle of equal respect for citizens. In this paper, I advance a novel argument for reviving the endorsement test as a guiding principle for Establishment Clause law. The value of non-endorsement, I argue, is not merely that it prevents government from expressing unequal respect for its citizens, but that it protects government from being used to amplify the private efforts of religious groups to define privileged vs. non-privileged groups or identities. In making this case, I draw on Robert Wuthnow’s recent book, *Religion’s Power*, to show that the power to define and assign status to identities is one of religion’s constitutive social functions. Government non-endorsement of religion, then, is a means of safeguarding political equality against incursions by private religious power. Non-endorsement is not only about avoiding government partiality – it is also about providing an egalitarian counterweight to the inegalitarian tendencies of religion. Since the status-defining function of religion is not merely a matter of material conditions, but also implicates symbolic dynamics of recognition and representation, application of the Establishment Clause must also be attuned to the symbolic or expressive “social meanings” of government acts. The endorsement test correctly orients judges to these considerations, in contrast to other predominant approaches to Establishment endorsed by current justices on the Supreme Court.

I conclude by making a counter-intuitive observation: that while the current Supreme Court has said it “long ago abandoned” the endorsement test, some major recent Establishment Clause cases have in fact relied importantly on evaluations of the expressive meanings of government acts. But I argue that these approaches have been often neglectful of the ways that background dynamics of religious power inform those meanings. An approach to the Establishment Clause that takes the guarantee of equal citizenship seriously will proscribe government expression of partiality toward religion not merely as a matter of fidelity to liberal principle, but as a way of asserting the political value of equality as a counter to religious forces that would reject it.

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📌 Speakers



**Brian Hutler**

Assistant Professor Of Philosophy  
Temple University



**David Golemboski**

Associate Professor, Government  
Augustana University

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📌 Moderator



**Joseph Porter**

DePauw University

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**Democracy, Knowledge and Justification**

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 4

📍 River Room I

## Abstracts:

**Complex justifications for complex institutions** , Alex Kirshner, co-authored by Jeff Spinner-Halev

Should normative arguments about complex institutions be parsimonious or complex? When it comes to theoretical arguments, it is common to believe parsimony is almost always preferable. We argue that when it comes to democracy, we have reasons to prefer complexity. We show why it makes sense to develop complex arguments for democracy, arguments with plural grounds or foundations (though not too many!).

Our argument turns on the virtue of robustness—a robust argument remains credible notwithstanding the introduction of additional considerations. We show why a complex argument is more likely to retain its force when we consider the range of conditions in which democratic regimes exist. A justification of democracy that applies to a very narrow set of circumstances will not elucidate the value of the practice in many or most of the situations. In that sense, a narrow justification will not be, in an important sense, a justification of democracy at all. We also show why complex arguments are more likely to retain their force when we consider countervailing considerations—i.e. reasons not to value democracy. In the course of our analysis, we treat several potential objections to our account—focusing on whether democracy has an essence, on the analytical difficulties raised by complexity, on the possibility that various grounds for democracy might be in conflict and on the possibility that various grounds might not be independent. Finally, we draw out the broader implications of our analysis. While our focus is democracy, there is little reason to doubt that our analysis has implications for other complex institutions as well

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**Paper 2: TBA!**

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**The Inevitability of Political Ignorance and Myopia—and what to do about it**, Jeffrey Lenowitz and Kevin Elliott

It is widely observed that democratic citizens are politically ignorant, lacking the knowledge about political issues, actors, institutions, and processes needed to vote or otherwise participate in politics responsibly. Detractors often highlight this ignorance to critique democracy and elevate its alternatives. In doing so, they suggest that democrats need to believe that it could be otherwise: that citizens could learn enough about politics to participate responsibly. In this paper, we take a fresh look at the problem of political ignorance by rejecting this inference. We acknowledge that the alternative of citizens, or anyone, being fully informed is not available because the universe of possibly relevant information for making political decisions is so unfathomably huge that no one could master it all. Voters therefore always decide myopically, paying attention to only a subset of the total body of information relevant to the decision of how to vote and ignoring the rest. However, rather than take myopic attention and decision making among citizens as a reason to abandon democracy, we emphasize its universality and inevitability and investigate what kinds of myopia are permissible for democratic citizens.

We present this argument in two parts. First, we introduce the criticisms of democracy based on ignorance and myopia and show how they implicitly treat fully informed voters as an ideal. We then demonstrate that knowledge is downstream of attention, such that the assumed ideal is a voter who can pay attention to everything, which we show is impossible, particularly in present times. We conclude that all voters—as well as elites—will necessarily be ignorant and myopic decision makers, meaning that criticisms of democracy based on ignorance or myopia, and the idea that alternative systems of rule might escape this feature, are fundamentally misdirected and mistaken. We then turn to the implications of this argument for democratic ethics. When we assume that citizens have reasons to participate in politics, the real question for democratic ethics is: what kinds of myopic attention or decision making are permissible for citizens? We explore good and bad reasons for how citizens might shape their inevitable myopia through the selective concentration of their attention and develop criteria which help identify issues that merit one's attention and emphasis in one's practical reasoning.

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### 🔊 Speakers



**Alexander Kirshner**

Duke University



**Jeffrey Lenowitz**

Associate Professor of Politics  
Brandeis University



**Kevin Elliott**

Lecturer in Ethics, Politics, and Economics  
Yale University

Moderator



Jeremy Cynamon  
University of Georgia

## Kant's Theory of Labour, by Jordan Pascoe

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 4

📍 River Room II

Author Meets Cr...

This panel examines Jordan Pascoe's new book, *Kant's Theory of Labour* (Cambridge University Press, 2022). Pascoe develops an innovative analysis of theory of labour, and in doing so, it develops the first explicitly intersectional analysis of Kant's political philosophy, revealing how Kant's arguments about gender/domestic labour and race/enslaved labour co-constitute one another, and explicitly examining the position of women labourers, and of women of color, in Kant's philosophical and anthropological thinking.

By tracing the deep linkages between Kant's accounts of slavery/domestic labour and sex/marriage, Pascoe shows that there are resources *within* Kant for developing intersectional analyses capable of attending to both the deeply structural patterns of inequality in his practical philosophy and the invisibility of women of colour within Kantian scholarship on race and gender. This approach makes clear that Kant's account of labour is consistent and continuous with his anthropological, geographical, and historical accounts of race and gender, providing a systemic and institutional justification for the dependency of both women and non-whites embedded in his philosophy of right. Pascoe argues that this framework has important implications both for feminist scholarship on Kant, as well as for analyses of his arguments about race, colonialism, and slavery.

*Kant's Theory of Labor* first develops an account of Kant's understanding of labor, as it is developed in his mature political philosophy. Kant developed a distinctive account of the structural differences between wage labor and domestic labor that are generally ignored in 18th and 19th century political and economic thought. By attending to the distinctive features of domestic labour in Kant's analysis, and its role as a key feature of the just state, Pascoe identifies patterns of institutionalized intersectional inequality within Kant's political thought and positions Kant as a key resource in attending to the history of intersectional political economy.

To do this, *Kant's Theory of Labour* presents the first treatment of Kant's "trichotomy" argument, and his defence of the innovative nature of the "right to a person akin to the right to a thing" in both the drafts for the *Doctrine of Right* and in the published *Appendix*. It includes analyses of his early reflections and lectures on these questions, drawing on both the recently translated Cambridge edition of his *Lectures and Drafts on Political Philosophy*, as well as on some previously untranslated notes on the domestic sphere (which have been provided to me by Frederick Rauscher). As Pascoe shows, these previously untranslated notes reveal key links between Kant's arguments about sex and his arguments about slavery, and these links provide a starting point for developing an intersectional methodologies for Kant scholarship. They also reveal the critical role that labour and the organization of work plays in Kant's conception of the state, and in his much-debated account of citizenship.

The author develops a distinctive account of Kant as a labour theorist, drawing on both Kant's political philosophy, which attends to shifts in labor patterns at the end of the 18th century in ways that have been largely ignored, and on his anthropological writings, where attendance to his theorization of labor clarifies the ways that gender is *always* raced on Kant's account, so that the development of "proper" womanhood through the development of the domestic sphere, is explicitly an achievement of whiteness. By examining the structure of labour in Kant, and exploring why Kant took this structure of labour to be a central feature of his political work, I argue that Kant's careful delineation of labour patterns in the late Enlightenment shed light on the structural invisibility of caregiving, reproductive, and exploited labour in a nascent modern liberalism in ways that make Kant relevant to contemporary debates within feminist, intersectional, Black radical, Afropessimist, Marxist, and decolonial philosophy.

In his political writings, Kant insists that the inequalities of the domestic sphere pose no difficulty to his theory of equal citizenship, since these domestic labours can simply be "outsourced." Pascoe mines the gendered, classed, and raced assumptions at the root of Kant's defense of outsourcing, demonstrating that Kant's account of equal citizenship is predicated on intersectional patterns of economic dependency and precarity we now recognize as the care chain. This analysis is especially trenchant in the context of a pandemic in which the absence of adequate juridical frameworks for conceptualizing domestic and caregiving labour has become readily apparent, the line between "essential" and exploitative labour has blurred, and these conceptual gaps have shaped starkly gendered and raced impacts.



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📌 Speakers



**Jordan Pascoe**

Professor, Philosophy  
Manhattan College



**Elvira Basevich**

Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
University of California, Davis



**Maria Mejia**

Elon University

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📌 Moderator



**Olga Lenczewska**

UNC Wilmington

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**Institutions, Organizations, and Development**

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 4

📍 Terrace Room

## **Abstracts:**

### **Organizations not Atoms: Rules, Organizations, and Long-Term Development, John Wallis**

For the first time in human history, societies began to experience sustained long term economic growth and development as well as sustained democratic political development in the late 19th century. While there is wide recognition of the co-development of “democracy and capitalism,” and there are many attempts to explain co-development, few actually connect political and economic development to a common root cause. The key institutional changes that occurred in the mid-19th century can best be understood in terms of a theory of society, based on rules and organizations. A few societies moved towards “impersonal rules” – rules that treat everyone the same. This both transformed their economies by raising both the productivity and heterogeneity of their organizations, and induced changes in their political systems that led to more durable, long-lived political parties and stable competitive elections. The ideas are illustrated with the development, or failure to develop, stable democracies in the early 20th century.

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### **From “Me” to “We”: Liberal Ideology, Heresthetics, and the Historical Development of Open Access Orders, William Clark**

North, Wallis, and Weingast (2009) tell a compelling story about the way a shift from political and economic relationships based on personal privilege to impersonal rules played a crucial role in the development of what they call “open access orders” characterized by limited government, peace, and prosperity. Less clear is why and how transitions from “natural states” to open access orders occur when and where they do. This paper will explore the utility of Riker’s (1982, 1986) concept of heresthetics (the act of “structuring the world so you can win”) in developing such an explanation. Specifically, it is argued that liberalism’s focus on the rights of individuals provided important raw material to be used by (relatively) marginalized groups (beginning with the British gentry) to argue for (what would become) an ever-increasing extension of rights. Individuals argue for monopoly rights whenever feasible, but reluctantly agree to include others in their claims by the necessity of coalition building. Commitments to the norms and values of open access systems may be important to the maintenance of such systems, but are unlikely to explain departures from natural states. Rather, open access orders, therefore, arise as the unintended consequence of incremental arguments for inclusion.

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### **Democracy as egalitarian competition among social groups, Samuel Bagg**

This paper presents an ideal of democracy as egalitarian competition among social groups. Like other democratic ideals, its ultimate aim -- as explored at greater length in a forthcoming book (*The Dispersion of Power*, OUP) -- is to provide normative standards for evaluating and reforming democracy. Rather than deriving these standards from an idealized account of collective decision-making, however, I proceed by generalizing from historical and empirical findings about which practices most reliably protect broadly shared public interests over the long run. Drawing on the account of open-access orders developed by North, Wallis, and Weingast (2009), for instance, I argue that competition among organized groups lies at the core of political and economic life, and that this competition most reliably promotes broadly public purposes when it remains peaceful and takes place on a roughly level playing field, such that no group is able to monopolize rents. Against these and other scholars who make similar observations, however, I insist that impartial liberal institutions are insufficient, on their own, to sustain the benefits of open-access orders. For the very same reason that impartiality is often required, rather -- namely, in order to sustain a sort of egalitarian competition that protects broad public interests over the long term -- certain radical forms of *corrective partiality* may also be required in certain contexts.

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## **🗨 Speakers**



**John Wallis**  
Professor  
University of Maryland



**William Clark**  
Texas A&M



**Samuel Bagg**  
Assistant Professor of Political Science  
University of South Carolina

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## **🗨 Moderator**



**Brian Kogelmann**  
Assistant Professor  
West Virginia University

## Political Epistemology

🕒 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM, Nov 4

📍 Tower Room

Papered Sess...

### Abstracts:

#### **An Essay in Defense of Epistemic Proceduralism, Joshua Kassner**

In the wake of tightly contested political campaigns, elections, and referenda, we are told that we ought to respect the outcome. This is thought to be especially true for those whose preferred candidate or policy has lost. But why? Provided that the respect thought to be owed is moral in nature rather than prudential, the answers given are nearly always grounded in some understanding of the legitimacy of the decision-making process that was used to reach the choice or decision. More to the point, the claim is often that we ought to respect the outcome because it was arrived at through a democratic decisionmaking process. But this merely begs the question, what is it about democratic decision-making processes (and possibly procedures) that render their outcomes legitimate, and thus deserving of our respect? At present, the answers to this question tend to fall into two categories. On the one hand, there are those that ground such claims to legitimacy in the process itself. On the other hand, some argue that democracies tend to produce better outcomes, that democracies produce more epistemically justifiable outcomes. The former are based on the contention that under the circumstances of politics, the procedure institutionalizes certain foundational political values. The latter ground legitimacy in the quality of the outcomes produced and is thus outcome dependent. I contend that neither are satisfying accounts of political legitimacy. Instead, I argue that political legitimacy depends on the use of a democratic decision-making process that – at least minimally – satisfies certain epistemic conditions. Namely, the process – understood holistically – must respect factual accuracy and theoretic rationality and should be limited to appropriately political questions. This is a proceduralist account because the epistemic conditions are tied to the sorts of reasons considered in the deliberations leading to the use of a decision-making procedure, but it is not a pure procedural account, and when such epistemic conditions are satisfied it is likely to lead to better outcomes. In short it is a form of epistemic proceduralism.

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#### **Partisan Epistemology in an Unequal Party System, Justin Pottle**

A wide range of empirical research identifies how runaway partisanship corrupts our ability to identify reliable sources and cultivate accurate beliefs. But where most democratic theorists see partisanship as teetering on irrationality, recent epistemologists hold even responsible knowers are justified in viewing political allies as more credible than their rivals. This paper pushes back on both pessimistic and optimistic accounts of epistemic partisanship, arguing their focus on individuals' judgment neglects the role parties themselves play in shaping our epistemic relations and the attendant moral risks. I show how partisan competition generates structural patterns of mutual familiarity and ignorance that make epistemic partisanship reasonable from the standpoint of individuals. However, when parties become organized along lines of social identity, I argue even reasonable partisan bias can mask and exacerbate the epistemic marginalization of disadvantaged members of party coalitions. Addressing these harms requires egalitarian structural reforms to make party politics safe for partisanship.

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#### **Epistemic Injustice in Liberal Democracies, Steven Scalet**

What types of justifications establish the legitimate use of political power? On one view political power is legitimate only if persons subject to those powers are treated with respect. Not everyone can reasonably accept justifications based on metaphysical conceptions, so relying on those conceptions would be disrespectful to reasonable people in pluralistic societies. Thus, the only kind of political justifications that can create legitimacy must develop freestanding conception of values, legitimacy, justice, etc. On another view (mine), respecting coerced individuals requires that they receive a complete justification for that coercion. Freestanding liberalism is committed to partial justifications for state coercion. Thus, freestanding liberalism does not respect coerced individuals. If we accept both arguments, then the conclusion creates a bind: complete justifications will disrespect citizens by forcing claims that not everyone could reasonably accept. But incomplete justifications will also disrespect coerced citizens. Therefore, the state use of coercive power is not possible without disrespecting *someone* – either those who consent or those who are coerced. This conclusion may challenge the very possibility of a politically legitimate state. I call this conclusion “liberalism’s bind.” Whether or not the argument undermines political legitimacy, these arguments seems to establish that at least some citizens of a state are bound to experience epistemic injustice as a result of state action. In this talk I will assess this argument and propose solutions.

## 🔊 Speakers



### Joshua Kassner

Professor of Philosophy, Research Fellows Director (Hoffberger Center for Ethical Engagement )  
University of Baltimore / Hoffberger Center for Ethical Engagement



### Justin Pottle

Assistant Professor of Political Science  
Loyola University Chicago



### Steven Scalet

Professor  
The University of Baltimore (USM)

## 🔊 Moderator



### Vaughn Baltzly

Associate Professor  
Texas State University Department of Philosophy

12:15 PM

## Lunch Break

🕒 12:15 PM - 2:00 PM, Nov 4

2:00 PM

## Effective Altruism: Critiques, Concerns, Calls for Reform

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 4

📍 Grand Ballroom I

*Each of the following presentation raises a critique or concern for the effective altruist movement. The first presentation argues that longtermist principles may be applicable to group agents but not individuals and calls for greater attention to group agency in the effective altruist movement. The second presentation presents a friendly critique arguing that the movement is a political institution subject to principles of justice, not just altruism. The third presentation analyses moral burn-out, an obstacle faced by many members of the effective altruist movement.*

### Abstracts:

#### **Group Morality and Longtermism, Nikhil Venkatesh**

In recent years, many effective altruists have explored and come to endorse ‘longtermism’, which holds that we ought to be particularly concerned with ensuring that the far future goes well (Greaves and MacAskill 2021; Beckstead 2013; MacAskill 2022). Although one could in principle endorse longtermism without endorsing utilitarianism, the arguments given for longtermism tend to be utilitarian in spirit. Roughly speaking, the longtermist argument runs thus: we want to maximise utility; the far future is very big, and so has the potential to include very large amounts of utility or disutility; therefore, ensuring that the far future goes well is a good way of maximising utility. As long as we can ensure that the far future goes well, then, we should.

In this paper, I argue that in evaluating the longtermist argument, attention must be paid to who the ‘we’ in question is. A ‘generalised utilitarianism’ (Postow 1977) applies the duty to maximise utility to both groups and individuals. Longtermism may be true for large groups (such as societies) but not for individuals. Groups have more capacity to affect the far future than individuals.

In their influential paper, Greaves and MacAskill suggest that if a society can do something that affects the far future by X, with Y resources, then individuals can have the effect X/n with Y/n resources (2021, 16). This ‘linearity assumption’, they claim, is equally true for interventions aimed at short-term and long-term utility, so that if longtermism is true for societies it is true for individuals. I argue that this is false.

Firstly, many longtermist interventions have a high minimum effective scale, so that individual action has very low chance of making a difference unless other individuals cooperate. Secondly, many of the actions individuals can perform are such that, if they don’t do them, someone else will (and if they do do them, someone else won’t) – especially over the long run. This limits one individual’s effects on the far future, but since societies may persist through time, they are less vulnerable to being ‘pre-empted’ in this manner. Thirdly, as Greaves and MacAskill themselves note, even if the linearity assumption holds, the nature of the numbers makes longtermism for individuals more vulnerable than longtermism for societies to the charge of ‘fanaticism’ (2021, 26).

Thus, I think longtermism is more likely to be true for groups than for individuals. Thinking of groups as important moral agents has implications for other effective altruist concerns. Firstly, some proponents of group morality believe that individual members of groups have moral obligations to participate in their groups doing the right thing (Collins 2019). (Act-utilitarians will resist this (Dietz 2016).) Secondly, once we are considering how a society, or movement, or humanity itself would maximise utility, radical socio-economic reform becomes

more tractable.

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### **But is it Altruism?,** Francisco Calderón Ossa and Ariana Peruzzi

The methods of the effective altruist movement have often been the subject of critique. But perhaps it's time to ask a different question, not "is this effective?," but "is it altruism?" In this essay, we make the case that the effective altruism movement is best understood as a political institution, and as such, is subject to principles of justice, not merely ethical principles of altruism. This argument has two steps. First, we draw on the work of Elizabeth Ashford to make the case that many effective altruist causes are primarily matters of justice (Ashford 2018). Projects that seek to bring infrastructure to third world countries, or to transform global economic and political institutions, are projects that seek to change the basic structures that distribute the main benefits and burdens of social life, what Rawlsians think of as the primary subject of justice (Rawls 1971). By leading non-governmental institutions that seek to set global development priorities, and remodel background institutional arrangements, effective altruists stray into the domain of justice. Second, we draw on the literature on nonelectoral representation, to argue that the effective altruist social movement is best understood as an emergent political institution, and not a collection of altruistic individuals discharging ethical obligations (Pettit 2000, Mansbridge 2009, Kuyper 2016, Martinez 2021.) As a political institution, the effective altruist movement is embedded in a larger system of political representation and decision-making, and ought to be evaluated as such.

On these grounds, we contend that the effective altruist movement is best understood as a political institution, and thus, subject to the relevant principles of justice. This matters in ways effective altruists have yet to fully appreciate. We raise several distinct concerns for the effective altruist movement. First, there is the matter of priorities. A movement concerned with arranging the basic structure to promote wellbeing should be more attentive to the ways in which corporations and political elites in the Global North contribute to global poverty and extreme inequality. Second, transformations of the basic structure require higher standards of justification than discrete acts of altruism. If I am drowning in a pond and you are trying to save me, I cannot make demands on the manner in which you save me. But societies which are subject to external development policy have a claim to institutions that are transparent, accountable to those subjected, intelligible in the eyes of those subjected, and justifiable by appeal to the interests of those subjected. Finally, we raise epistemic concerns. The effective altruism movement has not done enough to institutionalize mechanisms that allow the global poor to give input on the interventions they will be subject to.

Having raised these concerns, we conclude that the leaders of the effective altruist movement would do better to pursue a liberationist model of transformative justice, a model in which the global elite and the global poor work together, mutually, to envision and pursue more just institutions.

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### **Fear and Self-Loathing In Effective Altruism: Difficulty and Demandingness,** Malte Hendrickx

Effective Altruists typically subscribe to a strong duty of impartial beneficence. Famously, strong duties of impartial beneficence are highly demanding. For some aspiring Effective Altruists, these demands lead to a form of moral burnout. This often takes the form of being unable to make simple purchases (a coffee to-go) or decisions (play a video-game) without experiencing pangs of guilt or shame from realizing their time and money should be spent in a way that promotes the most good, rather than on leisurely activities.

The psychological consequences of moral demandingness are often invoked by philosophers who discuss demandingness objections, i.e. cases in which a moral theory demands too much of its followers. Rarely are these psychological consequences analyzed on real-world examples, however, rather than imaginary agents in thought experiments. Effective Altruists thus are an interesting case study to analyze the real-world psychological consequences of moral demandingness. I introduce a second set of case studies from nursery science, in which moral burnout has been extensively observed and discussed. I thereby introduce real-life cases that have been largely ignored by philosophers.

I argue that orthodox accounts of demandingness do not fit well with real-life examples of moral burnout from demandingness. Orthodox accounts explain demandingness in terms of the well-being cost imposed upon the agent. Yet while real-life cases of moral burnout often are miserable, they typically report such misery as being a secondary consequence of being unable to initiate and sustain simple decisions or actions, which are "crowded out" by moral concern.

I propose an alternative account of demandingness in terms of difficulty, building upon work by McElwee (2022) and Chappell (2019). Pace McElwee and Chappell, however, I argue that difficulty is not best understood in terms of an expenditure of a limited resources such as willpower - a concept that has been rebuffed by psychologists as empirically dubious. Rather, I argue that difficulty is best explained in terms of demands placed upon one's capacity for executive processing, i.e. the psychological mechanism that initiates and sustains goal-directed, controlled behavior. I argue that this account of difficulty is empirically plausible in virtue of resting upon decades of strong, converging evidence for the role of executive processing in learning, effort and task reliability.

I apply this novel account of difficulty as executive demand to demandingness, and to cases of moral burnout seen in Effective Altruists. For my account, demandingness arises from demands placed upon an agent's ability to freely initiate, sustain and control their actions in ways they would have done had they not subscribed to the moral theories' demands. This makes sense of self-reported data on moral burnout cases. I relate this view to the concept of agential integrity as discussed by Williams (1979). I end by discussing how cost to wellbeing and demands upon one's agency can be dissociated.

Section 1 introduces the phenomenon of demandingness. Section 2 reviews three accounts of demandingness that have been proposed so far: cost accounts, difficulty accounts, and hybrid accounts. Section 3 shows that difficulty and hybrid accounts rest on an empirically flawed analysis of difficulty, and presents an empirically informed alternative. Section 4 applies this alternative to hybrid accounts, arguing that hybrid accounts mistakenly double-count the demandingness of difficult actions along incommensurate dimensions. This leaves us with two accounts of demandingness: cost accounts and difficulty accounts. Section 5 develops a novel difficulty account of demandingness as executive demand, and argues that it uniquely captures the connection between demandingness objections and agential integrity.

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### 🗨️ Speakers



**Nikhil Venkatesh**

LSE Fellow  
London School of Economics and Political Science



**Francisco Calderón**

Graduate student  
University of Michigan



**Ariana Peruzzi**

Graduate Student Instructor  
University of Michigan



**Malte Hendrickx**

Graduate Student  
University of Michigan

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### 🗨️ Moderator



**Eduardo Martinez**

University of Cincinnati

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## Claims, Consequences, and Risk

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 4

📍 Grand Ballroom II

### Abstracts:

#### **Person-Affecting Consequentialism and Claims**, Matthew Adler

Narrow person-affecting principles stipulate that the moral ranking of a pair of outcomes is constrained by the pattern of individuals' well-being gains and losses, as follows. The narrow all-things-considered person-affecting principle states: one outcome is not morally better than a second unless better for at least one person. The narrow in-a-respect person-affecting principle states: one outcome is not morally better than a second in any respect unless better for at least one person.

These principles have been much discussed, and much criticized, in the philosophical literature. In the variable-population context (different individuals exist in the two outcomes under comparison), the narrow all-things-considered person-affecting principle has wildly counterintuitive implications—if, as is commonly assumed, the well-being of an existing person cannot be compared with their nonexistence. In the fixed-population context, the narrow in-a-respect person-affecting principle has been decried by Larry Temkin, who labels it “the Slogan” and argues that it ignores the value of equality. More surprisingly, that principle is rejected even by some prioritarrians.

This paper seeks to bring clarity to the debate about the principles, by studying the underlying axiology that warrants them. A narrow person-affecting axiology (NPA axiology) is such that individuals' well-being gains and losses are the fundamental pro tanto moral factors determining the moral ranking of outcomes. NPA axiology is precisified via a specific model of how losses and gains determine moral betterness: the *claims-across-outcomes* model. A claim is a relation between a given individual and a pair of outcomes, with different possible valences: if an individual is better off in outcome  $x$  than  $y$ , they have a claim in favor of  $x$  over  $y$ ; if they are equally well off, they have a null claim; if they are incomparably well off, they have an incomparable claim. Non-null claims also have a strength—determined both by the individual's well-being and, potentially, by non-well-being features of them (desert).

NPA axiology without well-being comparisons to nonexistence is a nonstarter. Instead, this paper studies NPA

axiology on the premise (defended by Gustaf Arrhenius, Nils Holtug, and Wlodek Rabinowicz) that such comparisons are possible. With this premise in hand, and using the claims-across-outcomes model, the paper argues that NPA axiology yields an outcome ranking that: satisfies the Pareto principles (Strong Pareto and Pareto Indifference); is equity- regarding, in the sense of satisfying the Pigou-Dalton principle; is neutral to desert (it turns out that allowing desert to influence claim strength produces serious difficulties); and leads to the Repugnant Conclusion.

In short, NPA axiology is Paretian, equity-regarding, desert-neutral, and repugnant. Those who reject the Repugnant Conclusion, or insist that desert considerations should figure in the outcome ranking, will reject this axiology. On the other hand, it has the singular virtue of providing a unified justification for efficiency (the Pareto principles) and equity (the Pigou- Dalton principle). NPA axiology deserves a serious second look.

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### **Equal Chances versus Equal Outcomes: When are Lotteries Fair and Justified?** , Michael Otsuka

The case for distribution by lottery is often illustrated with scenarios involving a life-saving good which cannot effectively be provided to everyone whose life is in peril. Suppose, for example, that a life-saving medicine that the state provides is in short supply. There is enough to cure only one of a number who are afflicted by a fatal disease. At least so long as we assume that their circumstances are equal, it strikes many as intuitive that those charged with the allocation of this resource ought to hold a lottery that provides each with the highest possible equal chance of being saved. But why?

Here is a plausible answer. Anyone who needs this drug has a legitimate claim to it. Since these individuals are in equal need of this drug, and since the state should treat its citizens as equals, it follows that each has an equal claim to this resource. Since the life-saving resource is indivisible, it cannot go to more than one person. All would be equally well off if the life-saving resource went to nobody. But this is true only insofar as all would be equally badly off because dead. One can, however, distribute something of greater value to each than the certainty of an imminent death: namely a chance of living. It is better for each if this chance is higher rather than lower. Hence it appears that one should satisfy their equal claims by giving each the highest equal chance of living. This would strike many as a fair and reasonable means of treating people as equals.

In a challenge to such a case for the distribution by lot in such cases, some have argued that the chance of receiving the good at issue is lacking in value or otherwise insignificant or irrelevant in comparison with actually receiving this good. It has been suggested, for example, that chances are irrelevant since their contribution to a person's well-being pales in significance in comparison with the actual receipt of the good that is distributed by lot.

In the first two sections of this paper, I answer this, and related, challenges to the relevance and significance of chances. As I argue in Section I, the greater significance of receiving all of an undivided good does not necessarily distinguish chances of the whole good from an outcome involving divided portions of this good. I argue in Section II that it mislocates the value of lottery chances to assume that they must contribute, in themselves, to a person's well-being. Rather their significance primarily resides in their instrumental value in delivering goods of independent value. In Section III, I provide an account of when distribution by lot is perfectly fair in spite of the inevitability of an unequal outcome among equal claimants. In Section IV, I show how this account departs from Rawls's account of the justice as fairness of unequal outcomes.

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### **Partial Aggregation and Risk,** Anders Herlitz

A recently much-discussed type of distributive theory suggests that when distributing scarce goods, one should evaluate options by looking at partially aggregated claims (see, e.g., Voorhoeve 2014; Steuwer 2021; Hausman 2023). These theories are not anti-aggregationist such that they reject all aggregations of people's interests, but they are also not accepting aggregations of all interests. They say that only relevant claims should be aggregated, typically those claims that are similar enough in significance or strength. The theories generate some intuitively appealing results in that they manage to say both that it is wrong to forego one person's very large claim (e.g., saving their life) in order to satisfy many people's small claims (e.g., curing their headaches), and that it is wrong to prioritize one person's large claim (e.g., restoring their eyesight to a perfect level) if one can instead satisfy many people's almost as large claims (e.g., restoring their eyesight to a near-perfect level). This paper looks at a challenge for those who endorse partial aggregation: how to determine if claims should be aggregated under risk.

How should partial aggregation deal with situations involving small chances of large benefits? Building on a recent argument by Dan Hausman, the following seems true: there ought to be a number of beneficiaries who have claims on a 1% chance of having their lives saved that is large enough to make it better to prioritize them than to save an identified individual from certain death (Hausman 2023). After all, if there were no such number, saving one "identified" life would be infinitely better than saving a vast, vast number of statistical lives, which seems wrong. However, partial aggregation views have difficulties establishing the verdict that sometimes, saving more lives through prioritizing claims to small chances of large benefits is better than saving a life.

The paper suggests that there is a way of making partial aggregation generate the correct result in these cases: look at *expected value* when establishing what claim is strongest for the purpose of ruling out certain claims, but to look at *possible value* when evaluating claims for relevance. It works as follows: in a set of claims,  $C$ , a claim,  $c$ , is relevant if and only if the highest possible value for the individual who owns  $c$  is close enough or greater than the highest expected value for the individual who owns the claim with greatest expected value for an individual. When determining which claims are relevant, one first identifies the claim with the greatest expected value for an individual, then uses this as a benchmark against which other claims are measured. When evaluated for irrelevance, what matters is how possible values compare to the expected value of the benchmark.

The paper also raises some questions concerning the independent plausibility of this specific version of partial aggregation: Does this way of treating claims express respect for different individuals? Can this version of partial aggregation be distinguished from fully aggregative views?

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#### Speakers



**Matthew Adler**  
Duke University



**Michael Otsuka**  
Professor  
Rutgers Dept of Philosophy



**Anders Herlitz**  
Institute for Futures Studies and Lund University


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#### Moderator



**Hun Chung**  
Associate Professor, Faculty of Political Science & Economics  
Waseda University

### **Purchasing Power from the Market: UBI and its Alternatives to Promote Freedom**

 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 4

 Salon Room



*This set of three papers collectively draws on multiple disciplinary perspectives to analyze normative implications of policy options in market societies that can facilitate noncommercial livelihoods of individuals and communities. Each paper takes up the promise and limitations of a universal basic income (UBI), analyzes alternative policies to or justifications for UBI, and then advances the discourse by addressing an important component that has been overlooked or undeveloped in the literature to date.*

## **Abstracts:**

### **Reimagining Basic Income: A Decolonial Approach to Empower Indigenous Communities,** Gloria Sánchez-Cuevas

Basic Income (BI) is increasingly praised as a potential solution to diverse socio-economic issues, including gender inequality, health inequities, and technological job displacement. Yet, its relevance to empowering Indigenous populations remains largely underexplored.

Indigenous communities in Canada confront many challenges rooted in historical injustices and perpetuated by present-day systemic biases. These include heightened experiences of gender-based violence and poverty, political marginalization, stark health disparities, environmental crises threatening traditional ways of life, and job displacement reshaping the employment landscape. These intersecting challenges demand innovative solutions.

BI, typically envisioned within a colonial framework, emphasizes participation in market transactions through cash transfers. However, I propose to pivot this narrative towards a decolonial understanding of BI, portraying it as an instrument of empowerment for Indigenous communities. BI could equip Indigenous peoples with the income security needed to navigate and even counteract oppression. This financial independence can not only ameliorate conditions of poverty but also empower individuals to (re)define their own social participation—whether that manifests in community contributions or entrepreneurial initiatives. Practical implications and considerations are central to this discussion, including how the implementation of BI might interact with existing policy tools and its potential to support Indigenous communities, weighing both its advantages and potential shortcomings.

I argue that there is a transformative potential of BI when viewed through a decolonized lens. The main objective of this paper is to disrupt traditional assumptions surrounding BI and provoke a paradigm shift, emphasizing its capacity to serve as a powerful agent of substantial and positive change within Indigenous communities. In doing so, I aim to reveal BI's potential to be more than a cash transfer, but a lever of holistic development and empowerment and set the stage for a path toward genuine reconciliation with Indigenous communities.

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### **Justifying Exclusions: Non-universal Basic Income in U.S. Local Welfare Policy,** Anna Marion

The swift rise and fall of the 2021 Child Tax Credit expansion demonstrated that durable, universalistic welfare at the national level remains politically intractable in the United States. Arguments for a universal basic income (UBI) and similar universalistic social protection schemes include guaranteeing a right to security in basic needs, providing economic suffrage in a market society, defraying the impacts of brute bad luck, and promoting freedom for individuals to pursue their chosen life courses. While universalistic federal welfare policy is constrained by political will, localities are constrained by their ability to levy taxes or harness resources to fund cash (re)distribution. Thus, local governments in the business of doling out cash must make eligibility rules, implicating questions of priority setting and generating debates on deservingness for public benefits. The goal of this paper is to evaluate the extent to which rights and privileges associated with UBI may be advanced by the eligibility policy of local, non-universal cash transfers. I use two current local welfare policies in the U.S. to ground the analysis: longstanding General Assistance (GA) programs and newly popular guaranteed income (GI) experiments. GA is the tattered, bottommost level of the social safety net, operating solely on the dime and at the discretion of state and local governments and serving mostly individuals ineligible for or awaiting determination on federal benefits. Publicly funded GI experiments are supported by the influx of federal pandemic relief dollars and are generally structured as means-tested lotteries for a time-limited benefit, plus varying additional conditions.

Both GA and experimental GI depart substantially from the universal and unconditional criteria widely defended as ideal for achieving the goals of UBI, with important distinctions between the two approaches. GA-type welfare supports residents whose lives end up incompatible with subsistence in a market society, with each state or locality determining whether and how benefits are distributed based on disability, employability, substance use, or other criteria commonly associated with either chance or choice. GI-type welfare promotes choice more broadly for individuals functioning within a market society but is only available by slim chance. GA has several apparent advantages over GI experiments in achieving the empirical goals of basic income, including: (1) GA serves people likely to be seen as 'undeserving' (e.g., working age adults not currently working or raising kids), (2) surviving GA programs have been negotiated and authorized by state legislatures of both major political parties, and (3) the entitlement structure of GA programs promotes security at the individual and community level. Perhaps in a future state with a universalistic child benefit – the nearest policy to UBI on the U.S. political agenda – there will be fewer people who spend any part of their lifespan on the margins of this highly developed market society. But for now, and for a long time to come, a complex, conditional cash transfer policy operating on the margins can, at least in theory, better advance important goals of UBI than policies that more closely resemble UBI on the face.

## 🔊 Speakers



### Gloria Sanchez-Cuevas

Ph.D. Candidate (Ethics & Public Affairs)  
Carleton University



### Anna Marion

PhD Student  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

## 🔊 Moderator



### Sally Moore

Ph.D. Student  
The Ohio State University

## PPE and Criminal Justice

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 4

📍 Executive Room

Papered Sess...

### Abstracts:

#### **We Don't Need to Justify Criminal Punishment**, Brandon Hogan

Philosophers of law have long assumed that any system of state-sponsored punishment should operate according to a single theory of justification. Philosophers have offered theories of punishment based in deterrence, retributivism, social contract, moral education, moral communication, and restorative justice, to name a few. But perfect justice requires that the state responds to criminal acts in a context-sensitive manner. While retributive punishment may be justified in some instances, the state rightly punishes to deter in others. Indeed, some criminal offenders should undergo a process of restorative justice, while some should be pardoned. Thus, any system of punishment that operates according to a single theory of justification is inconsistent with perfect justice. The state should aim to achieve perfect justice. Therefore, a system of state-sponsored punishment should not operate according to a single theory of justification. The state should justify individual acts of punishment, but not the system itself.

In this paper, I defend the above argument and respond to several objections to my conclusion. For instance, my conclusion seems to violate the principle that like cases should be treated alike. Further, it seems that a system of punishment that is highly context sensitive is subject to corruption and abuse, especially in a state that is plagued by systemic racism. These objections can be met. Briefly, the state does not need a single justification of punishment to adhere to the principle that like cases should be treated alike. In fact, the absence of such a justification allows the state to better adhere to the principle. Moreover, any system of punishment is subject to corruption and abuse. A system that rejects an overarching justification is at least in a better position to achieve perfect justice. If we take my arguments seriously, we can start down the path of developing a system of punishment that is more just and better fits our real-world intuitions about punishment.

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#### **Defund, Unbundle, Abolish? Ethics of Policing in a Non-Ideal World**, Lauren Lyons

Police violence and incompetence in the United States and elsewhere has led to a tragic and avoidable loss of life and led many of us to doubt the legitimacy of policing institutions. This paper intervenes in ongoing conversations about what morality demands we do about this. There has been a promising uptick in philosophical debates about policing in the wake of the ongoing Black Lives Matter movement. Some solutions proposed in philosophy include expanding police training and education (Zimring 2017), providing reparations to victims of police violence (Page 2019), changing informal norms and departmental culture (Monaghan 2021), expanding criminal statutes to hold police accountable (B. Jones 2022), instating departmental policy reforms (Zimring 2021), and broadening police participation in harm-reduction strategies (Monaghan 2021b).

In this paper, I argue that these solutions do not go far enough in addressing the structural issues that underwrite police culture and conduct. Beyond reforms internal to policing, we ought to reimagine the present institutional allocation of responsibilities and reallocate powers and resources away from police and towards other community organizations and public institutions that are not tied to the criminal-legal system. This idea, which I'll call the *unbundling proposal*, reflects a central component of the controversial demands to defund and eventually abolish the police. On one hand, defund—charitably considered—is best framed as “defund, refund,” with activists calling for cutting police funding *and* reallocating it to other non-police institutions that will reduce social strain, prevent harm upstream, and respond to disruptive behavior when it inevitably occurs. Thus unbundling represents the best version of the defund the police demand. On the other hand, police abolitionists call for the gradual dissolution of policing institutions view unbundling, which gradually reduces the size, scope, and power of

policing, as a the path towards abolition; thus, unbundling is defended by abolitionists too.

I begin in §1 by giving a schema of the problems with our policing regimes that warrant moral consideration. These include widespread police violence and unjustified use of force, racially biased policing, and inappropriate responses to mental health, addiction, and other social problems— all of which compromise public trust and thus threaten the legitimacy of policing institutions. I then draw on interdisciplinary critical work on policing and abolitionist theory to give a detailed account of one version of the *unbundling proposal* in §2, identifying the specific dimensions of policing that ought to be unbundled and reallocated. As a baseline, I discuss how police currently fulfill a motley bundle of roles, from enforcing parking laws to responding to disputes between neighbors to investigating violent crimes. I argue that we should disentangle these responsibilities and reduce the size and scope of policing as the unbundling proposal demands.

In §3, I give three arguments supporting this. The first, *the argument from minimally violent capacities*, claims that we should reduce police responsibilities because public institutions ought to have violent capacities only as a last resort; non-violent, non-coercive responses to social problems should be the default. The second, *the expertise argument*, claims that the social peacekeeper role is epistemically over-demanding, and that higher quality expertise— central to fostering appropriate responses— is associated with more narrow-roles. Thus unbundling ought to be preferred on epistemic grounds.

The third argument, *the argument from latent functions*, bakes in non-ideal considerations about how police function in inequalitarian societies. I appeal to how police function, now and throughout their history, so as to subjugate members of racial minorities and other marginalized groups, also suppressing resistance to the existing unjust social order. I claim that this latent function urgently demands a radical solution, and to the extent to which eliminating the function is impossible through incremental reforms, unbundling offers an appealing response.

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### **On the (Unnecessary) Thesis of Forfeiture, Cristian Rettig**

The forfeiture thesis (henceforth, FT) is posed as an independent thesis in moral philosophy according to which agents forfeit (or lose) rights if they perform certain act- types (e.g. Boonin 2008; Goldman 1979; Lippke 2001; Locke 1980 [1689]; Martin 1993; Morris 1991; Simmons 1991; Thomson 1990; Renzo 2017; Rodin 2014; Ross 1930; Wellman 2012; 2017; Winston 2002). According to many, FT has a crucial role in the justification of legal punishment, which, as widely accepted, involves the intentional imposition of hard treatment on others – e.g. imprisonment.<sup>1</sup> The reason is that we all have a (moral) right not to be subjected to hard treatment; only if this right is forfeited, is it morally permissible to punish an agent. Goldman summarises this standard view by suggesting that ‘[i]f we are to justify punishment of particular wrongdoers or lawbreakers, that is, if we are to show why they cannot legitimately complain of injustice done to them by the imposition of punishment, we must argue that they have forfeited those rights of which we are depriving them’ (1979, 43).<sup>2</sup>

Contrary to this main tendency in the philosophical literature, I argue that FT is an unnecessary idea to justify punishment – we can simply dismiss it without any substantive loss. Echoing some (not all) aspects of the so-called ‘specificatationist’ approach to rights (Oberdiek 2008; Shaffer-Landau 1995), the reason is that we may replace FT with an exception clause in the very content of the right not to be subjected to hard treatment:  $\phi$  has no right not to be subjected to hard treatment *simpliciter*, but a right not to be subjected to hard treatment *unless*  $\phi$  performs an act-type ‘p’ – e.g. murdering an innocent person. This alternative has substantive advantages over accepting FT as an independent thesis to justify punishment, and, therefore, they cannot be reduced to the same idea. For example, as I will show in this paper, it offers a more straightforward justification of punishment than invoking FT if we assume the classic Hohfeldian analysis of rights.

I proceed as follows. I begin by analysing FT in detail. I then unpack my argument summarised above. After that, I address three possible objections to my proposal. The first is that my proposal presupposes FT because the claim ‘ $\phi$  has a claim-right not to be subjected to hard treatment unless...’ is true only if FT is true. I argue that this objection fails. From the fact that  $\phi$ ’s right is justified on the basis of an argument that grounds its exception clause, it does not follow that we need to invoke FT as an independent premise. For example, echoing some aspects of Morris’ classic paper on legal punishment (1991), I show that we may justify  $\phi$ ’s right on the basis of a contractarian argument which makes FT unnecessary. The second objection is based on Renzo (2017). According to him, FT is problematic but it has two important roles in philosophical discussions on punishment: FT has a heuristic function, and works as an intermediate conclusion in the justification of punishment. If Renzo is correct, the objection claims, my argument is too quick because it does not take into account these roles. I argue that this possible objection misses the key point of my analysis. The roles Renzo assigns to FT depend upon the very existence of FT, but I am arguing that we can simply dismiss FT (for a better alternative) without any substantive loss. Finally, the third objection claims that there are two standard problems that can be extended from FT to my proposal: the so-called problems of duration and vigilantism. I reply that these standard critiques are weak because we should not understand my proposal (or FT) as an isolated piece of the moral universe, but rather as a part of a wider ethical theory that may avoid those problems.

<sup>1</sup> For classic examples that assume this definition, see: Feinberg (1994) and Hart (2008). For recent examples, see: Boonin (2008) and Wellman (2012).

<sup>2</sup> Morris’ account (1991) is another example of this standard view. Even though Quinn (1993) criticises FT, he notes the force of this argument. Howard (2017) suggests that ‘any (...) justification of punishment must include an explanation of why the criminal offender has forfeited her right against the penal treatment’ (52). Boonin (2008) criticises punishment, but he notes that this classic argument is quite plausible.

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## 🗣️ Speakers



**Brandon Hogan**  
Associate Professor  
Howard University



**Lauren Lyons**  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey



**Cristian Rettig**  
Adolfo Ibáñez University

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## 🗣️ Moderator



**Jean Vilbert**  
PhD Student  
Harvard University

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## Political Obligation

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 4

📍 Chairman's Room

### Abstracts:

**From asymmetry to equal vulnerability: fair play beyond the acceptance requirement,** Brookes Brown

Traditional advocates of fair play hold that obligations of fairness are generated by the *bare receipt of costly benefits*. On this account, A owes a duty of fair play to B so long as A has benefited from B's labor. Critics disagree. Famously, non-voluntarists like A. John Simmons hold that obligations arise when, and only when, the recipients of benefits *accept* the relevant goods. As Simmons writes, "To have accepted a benefit in the right sense, I must have wanted that benefit when I received it, or have made some effort to get the benefit, or at least not have attempted to avoid getting it" (Simmons 105). Frustratingly, much of this debate has been conducted via a kind of "war of intuitions" with both advocates and opponents of fair play presenting competing cases said to indicate that concerns of fairness either do—or do not—arise in the absence of acceptance.

In this paper, I seek a pathway through this stalled debate by doing what both advocates and critics of fair play have long avoided: grounding the duty in a broader ethical account. Implicit in the acceptance requirement is, I show, an important more foundational ethical concern: one ought not *take advantage* of others. Advocates of acceptance are right to view this principle as the animating complaint that underlies our moral interest in fair play. Where they go wrong is in adopting an unduly narrow account of the conditions that qualify as taking such advantage. On the classic acceptance condition, what matters is the acceptance of *particular goods*— safety, clean water, and suchlike. Beneficiaries acquire obligations only when they have the right pro-attitudes towards the specific goods that they receive. But this, I show, is a mistake.

Our interest in fair play is not, I argue, fundamentally an interest in any particular benefit with which we might be provided. Instead, it reflects a broader interest in others having their eye out for ways that they are able to advance our interests in moments where other mechanisms like consent or contract are poorly suited to helping us achieve our aims. We wrongly take advantage when we wish others to undertake such costly free-lance do-gooding on our behalf, and would want our own such efforts to be repaid, but do not wish to do the same for others. That we have the right attitudes towards these efforts can generate duties of fairness even in cases where we lack pro-attitudes towards the particular goods that we actually receive.

This approach, I show, provides a deeper explanation for the existence of duties of fair play in a way that better captures and explains the intuitions that motivate both advocates and critics. In doing so, it permits a much more expansive account of fair play than advocates have recognized, one that frees the claim from the artificial and ultimately unjustified limitations that advocates have relied on to try to escape cases posed by critics.

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#### **A Practice Theory for Political Obligation, Sam Koreman**

Answering Waldron's call for "*political* political theory", in this paper, I articulate and defend a practice theory methodology for analyzing political obligation. Theorizing about our moral obligation to obey the law often begins from nowhere, drawing obligations to obey specific laws from general principles of morality. While there are strengths to this approach, there are also problems with it: for example, critics of consent argue that consent, while it could ground obligation, cannot do so in reality as existing institutions do not allow for acts of non-consent to be respected.

Practice theorizing provides tools to assess *when* and *how* principles of political morality become embedded in institutions and legible to us as citizens. Analyzing the practice of law—its form, principle, and implementation—allows us to view political obligation both more precisely and holistically. By this, I mean that we can analyze political practices to, first, determine their underlying legal, normative, and political principles and, second, how to perform an action that satisfies these principles to the greatest extent possible. These principles can come apart and conflict with one another. In this discussion, I identify a practice theory methodology for political obligation's greatest benefit: as it better emphasizes the relational components of political obligation, it can provide tools to critically engage with the demands of citizenship.

As part of a larger project, a practice methodology allows for novel breakthroughs in that include the following: conceiving of political obligation as necessarily involving citizen discretion; integrating jurisdiction as a primary concern for political obligation; and identifying potential conflicts between an individual's role as a citizen and some additional role as a member of the state (for example, as a street-level bureaucrat like a police officer or public-school teacher.)

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#### **Respect for Law, Harrison Frye**

Do we have a duty to obey the law just because it is law? The dominant position among political theorists and philosophers today is no. In this paper, I ask a different, but related, question: Do we have a duty to respect the law just because it is law? I argue yes. The paper's argument advances two theses in support of this larger claim: one negative and one positive. The negative thesis is that respect for law does not require obedience, and thus it makes sense to speak of respect for law as distinct from obedience to law. The negative thesis leads into my positive thesis. The positive thesis is that respect for law involves a deliberative duty. Specifically, the duty to respect the law is the duty to give weight to the law in one's practical deliberations. I support the negative thesis on two fronts. First, I argue that ordinary language gives us a *prima facie* reason to disaggregate respect from obedience. For example, it makes perfect sense to talk of how a child disrespects the authority of her teacher by making a show of obeying his commands (think here also of excessive deference as a form of insult and contempt). Second, I argue against more philosophical attempts to link respect and obedience by Joseph Raz and Philip Soper. This negative thesis helps give shape to the positive thesis. If the kind of respect in question does not involve the expression of esteem nor deference, what does it involve? I argue that respect for law involves what Stephen Darwall calls *recognition respect*. Specifically, respect for law involves giving weight to the law in one's practical deliberations. With the content of the duty to respect the law at hand, I turn to the question of what grounds such a duty. Following a suggestion by F. A. Hayek, I hold that law provides important information. Law acts as a sort of choreography, coordinating the behavior of multiple actors. Insofar as law acts as a coordinating device, it helps us engage in behavior with others in such a way as to avoid risks of harm and allow us to treat each other in accordance with the dictates of justice. I conclude by suggesting that the duty to respect the law is compatible with philosophical anarchism. In this way, the duty to respect the law helps support the claim that philosophical anarchism does not collapse into political anarchism.

## 🗣️ Speakers



**Brookes Brown**  
Assistant Professor  
University of Toronto



**Sam Koreman**  
PhD Candidate  
University of Virginia



**Harrison Frye**  
Assistant Professor  
University of Georgia

## 🗣️ Moderator



**Alexander Motchoulski**  
University of Virginia

## Harmful Speech and Counter-speech: Strategies for Political Discourse

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 4

📍 Imperial Room

### Abstracts:

#### **Covert Counter-speech: a strategy for opposing covert linguistic harms, Zach Thornton**

Speech can denigrate, subordinate, and dehumanize. For instance, hate speech attacks an individual's dignity in virtue of their membership within a social group and subordinating speech unjustly ranks individuals as inferior and legitimates discriminatory behavior.<sup>1</sup> Such speech is often targeted towards women, people of color, LGBT individuals, and people with disabilities, and it is profoundly morally wrong.

One way to counter such speech is with speech of our own. Rae Langton (2018) has argued that speaking up can directly prevent some of the harms of hate speech and subordinating speech by preventing the ranking they presuppose from going into effect.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, speaking up can make victims feel supported, perpetrators feel opposed, and can inspire others to speak up as well. These perlocutionary effects can go some way to reducing the harm produced by evil speech.

We ought to speak up when we can. However, speaking up can sometimes be dangerous and counterproductive. Sometimes speaking up risks being met with violence. And even when there are no physical risks, speaking up can risk social, economic, or political harms. Moreover, speaking up is sometimes counterproductive. It may bring more attention to the speech one aims to counter, or incite backlash that ultimately helps the cause one is opposing. Effectively speaking up requires one to navigate these risks.

In this paper, I will argue that we can avoid many of these issues using a kind of speaking up that I call *covert counter-speech* which works by activating latent positive attitudes in one's audience without their awareness. I will argue that covert counter-speech is particularly effective against certain kinds of harmful speech, namely, covert dogwhistles.<sup>3</sup> To make this argument, I will present two problems that Langton's (2018) overt counter-speech faces when used against covert dogwhistles that covert counter-speech avoids.

If I am right, covert counter-speech has an important role to play in political discourse. It would allow us to challenge harmful speech in a less risky, and potentially more effective way. Importantly, it does have limitations, in particular, the fact that it is covert limits the perlocutionary effects of providing support and inspiration. Nonetheless, its benefits would make it a key tool in opposition to unjust speech.

<sup>1</sup> Ishani Maitra (2012) "Subordinating Speech", In Mary Kate McGowan, Ishani Maitra (eds.), *Speech and Harm: Controversies Over Free Speech*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 94-120.

<sup>2</sup> Rae Langton (2018) "Blocking as Counter Speech", In Daniel Fogal, Daniel W. Harris, and Matt Moss (eds.), *New Work on Speech Acts*. Online: Oxford University Press: 144 – 161.

<sup>3</sup> Jennifer Saul (2018) "Dogwhistles, Political Manipulation, and Philosophy of Language," In Daniel Fogal, Daniel W. Harris, and Matt Moss (eds.), *New Work on Speech Acts*. Online: Oxford University Press.

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#### **Group Counterspeech, DeeAnn Spicer**

We know that sometimes doing things together is more effective than doing it alone. If I want to move a piano, I'll be more likely to succeed in my goals— getting it moved, in a reasonable amount of time, without getting injured—if I have some help. I could try doing it myself. I could inch it across the house over the span of an

hour. I could exert myself to the point of exhaustion and injury. I could get it across the room, but inflict damage on my floors or my piano in the process. Or, I could ask a few people to help and get the job done in a few minutes. In this talk, I will be looking at when some kinds of speech, namely *counterspeech*, is more effective when done in a group.

Words can do damage. Telling an impressionable young person, “You’ll never amount to anything!” can make them feel terrible, cause them to believe the falsehood that they have no potential, result in them acting as if they have no potential and making decisions based on that belief, and could make other people in the conversation feel like it’s okay to act as if the denunciation were true. Fortunately, words have just as much power to counteract some of this potential damage; such words are often called *counterspeech*.

It’s important to note, for our purposes, that not everyone is able to wield *counterspeech* with equal effectiveness. In the example above, suppose it’s a parent saying to their child “You’ll never amount to anything!” If a younger sibling pipes up saying “That’s not true!” they may not succeed in mitigating any of the harm. They may even become a target themselves. The likelihood of this failure is in large part because of the power dynamic between parent and child. The socially sanctioned authority and power that comes with the role of *parent* plays out in the particular conversation so that the younger sibling’s words don’t have the same influence as the parent’s. Unlike the younger sibling, who isn’t successful in *counterspeaking* in a specific scenario because of a particular relationship, I am concerned with speakers who are systematically less likely to be able to successfully counteract harmful speech with *counterspeech* because they are members of marginalized groups (subsequently referred to as *marginalized speakers*).

In this talk, I will argue that *group counterspeech* is one tool that marginalized speakers can use to increase their ability to achieve some of the goals of *counterspeech*. In particular, *group counterspeech* can be more successful at affecting the immediate conversation and the broader public conversation because the group gains *discourse power*. Using Schmid’s 4 account of groups speaking for themselves, I will argue that groups can engage in *counterspeech*. Then, using a protest as an example, I will demonstrate some of the ways that group *counterspeech* can work both in affecting a particular conversation and the public discourse. Lastly, I will go over some advantages of group *counterspeech*, particularly for marginalized speakers.

4 Hans Bernhard Schmid (2020) “Groups speaking for themselves: Articulating first-person plural authority,” In *Language and Communication*, 70. Online: Elsevier Ltd: 38-45

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### **Discursive Resistance in a Non-Ideal World**, Nikki Ernst and Deborah Mühlebach

The 21st century has seen a surge in political philosophy of language: Between slurs and dogwhistles, between subordinating speech acts and genocidal language games, philosophers of language have increasingly concerned themselves with the hateful and coercive, the dehumanizing and deadly. Our principal project in this paper is to spell out a methodological upshot of this political turn. That is, we illustrate how received conceptual toolkits from philosophy of language may fail to make contact with our non-ideal world. Such failures of contact are not merely a matter of descriptive or explanatory inadequacy, however: As we go on to argue, we philosophers may alienate ourselves from the political import of our target phenomena when we fail to engage them from a stance of *discursive resistance*.

To situate our intervention, we set out from Beaver and Stanley’s (2019) recent call for a ‘non-ideal philosophy of language’. On our picture, to idealize discursive phenomena is to abstract away from any social categories or power relations that crucially shape the phenomena in question. The danger of idealization is twofold: For one, we may deprive ourselves of methods for adequately describing or explaining our target phenomena. And for two, the very methodological ambitions of description or explanation – as opposed to *resistance* – may misconstrue the relation we ourselves ought to take up toward them. That is, drawing on Alice Crary’s (2018) critique of a ‘neutral conception of reason’, we call out the failure to inhabit a *normatively non-neutral perspective* when such a perspective is called for.

At this juncture, we develop our picture of discursive resistance, beginning with the sorts of discursive phenomena that call for resistance in the first place. To this point, we draw a distinction between speech acts that merely violate dominant conversational norms, on one hand, and discursive practices that enact oppressive social structures, on the other hand. From here, we delineate strategies for discursive resistance at *three levels of organization*: (1) On the interpersonal level, we consider individual acts of counter-speech, the disruption of social scripts, and the challenge of speaking up in the face of social hierarchies. (2) On the legal level, we consider anti-discrimination guidelines as well as their limits. (3) And finally, on the level of social movements, we consider collective efforts of reclamation, semantic contestation, and the establishment of discursive counter-culture.

Finally, we conclude by situating the business of the political philosopher of language at each of these three levels of organization. In the process, we articulate a vision of political philosophy of language as a *political way of doing* philosophy of language.

## 🗣️ Speakers



### Zach Thornton

Ph.D. Candidate  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



### DeeAnn Spicer

Graduate Student  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



### Nikki Ernst

Graduate Student  
University of Pittsburgh

## 🗣️ Moderator



### A.G. Holdier

Doctoral Academy Fellow & PhD Candidate  
The University of Arkansas

## PPE and Work

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 4

📍 Cotton Room

**Papered Sess...**

### Abstracts:

#### **What exactly is the freedom problem of work?** Iddan Sonsino

Many hold the belief that work, as appearing around us in advanced economies, compromises freedom. But when analyzed carefully, this claim raises a number of theoretical difficulties and puzzles. In what sense can this intuition be true? What exactly does it mean, that the worker is unfree? This paper tries to systematically examine this question and provide a novel answer to it. In its first part, I articulate three possible answers to this question that the literature can be seen as offering – a republican answer, a negative freedom answer, and a positive freedom answer. I claim that these answers are unsatisfactory, for either analytic shortcomings or empirical inaccuracies. In particular, I claim these answers tend to not reliably describe work as existing today in developed economies – they rely on a largely anachronistic understanding of the economic terrain. In the second part, I try to offer a more satisfying articulation of the freedom problem of work, one that builds on sensibilities captured by past answers but that is able to better accommodate current trends in the labour market. I present an *argument from conformity pressures*, developing the idea that the structure of work in advanced economies is inconsistent with our freedom intuitions for the fact that market environments are environments that attempt to maximize the diversion of people from their own plans and projects. In market environments, governments enact an elaborate institutional scheme that aspires to make it as easy as possible for economic agents to push people away from their personal projects into “higher value” economic positions. I claim that such a design conflicts with various ways in which we understand freedom. My articulation can present a freedom problem of work “for the 21st century” – even when certain phenomena that played a central part in past thought about freedom and work decline in their salience, like the necessity of taking a demanding job for physical survival, the way we design our labour institutions still poses an interesting, significant freedom problem. In the last part of the paper, I take a look at possible remedies that can be offered for this diagnosis – if the freedom problem of work is one of weighty conformity pressures, what does this mean for forming a productive economy that is more conducive to freedom? I discuss the possibility of somewhat curbing markets in order to allow people more room to pursue their own projects and personal inclinations, and present three other more moderate “imaginaries” for enhancing individual autonomy inside markets: the embrace of a mentality of a “gift economy”, the attempt to make work more dispersed and dynamic (“adventure capitalism”), and the introduction of certain modifications to our understanding of equality of opportunity.

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#### **Relational Egalitarianism and Workplace Democracy,** Aaron Chipp-Miller

Parallel case arguments for workplace democracy hold that the same kind of considerations that justify a democratic state justify a democratic workplace. In this paper, I present and defend a relational egalitarian version of this argument. The goal is to establish a conditional conclusion, that *if* our relational commitments require democratic state governance, then they require democratic firm governance as well. In pursuit of this aim, I first explicate a relational egalitarian argument for state democracy. This argument takes for granted that relations of unequal power are intrinsically morally suspect, and holds that democracy is required because it is the system of



government which both places citizens on equal footing, and lessens power asymmetries between citizens and state actors. Next, I develop the negative case for state/firm parallelism. Here I argue that purported differences between the state and the firm – like, for example, exit options – are insufficient to undermine the analogy. If a presumptive aversion to severely asymmetrical relations of power grounds our state-level democratic commitments, then these differences will not stop the argument from carrying through to the firm case. Lastly, I make a positive case for firm/state parallelism, evaluating a consideration which is conspicuously shared between the two institutions, that of involuntariness. I argue for two conclusions. First, that this shared feature does significant work in explaining why democracy is particularly important in these contexts; the argument I am making does not, then, straightforwardly imply global institutional democratization. Second, that the worker/firm relation *is* in fact significantly involuntary. This is so because workers lack sufficiently good alternatives to this relationship.

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### **Beyond Contract Unions – Better Understanding the Diverse Union Landscape,** Alex Wolf-Root

Across the US, workers are joining together as their labor union to fight and win meaningful change in their working conditions. In many cases, from private sector Google workers in the Alphabet Workers Union to public higher education workers across job classifications in United Campus Workers unions, these workers are fighting and winning despite lacking both a majority of workers as union members and collective bargaining. Unfortunately, contemporary literature about unions and labor conditions rarely engages with such unions, and so potentially misses out on important investigations.

This project offers a novel framework for understanding and evaluating unions that captures not only more standardly recognized collective bargaining unions but also correctly captures other sorts of unions without contracts or majorities.

I suggest four characteristics relevant to some persisting entity being a union:

1. Democratic worker control
2. Aims at improving workplace conditions
3. Engages in collective action
4. Independence

Each of these characteristics can obtain more or less, but must obtain sufficiently for the entity to be a union. Each characteristic also then gives us an important dimension of evaluation for unions as unions.

First, as captured by the popular refrain that “workers are the union,” unions are composed of and democratically controlled by the workers. But structures can be more or less democratic, and members can more or less engage even when there are plenty of places to do so. Likely no actual union is fully democratic, but we can still evaluate unions as better or worse on this score. That said, there are differing understandings of, and motivations for, union democracy, and so how we evaluate this dimension is itself an issue for further discussion.

Second, unions have the goal of improving workplace conditions. Unions can have other goals as well, but a focus on improving workplace conditions – understood broadly to include not only wages and benefits but also things like physical infrastructure, the types of products made, behavioral policies, etc. – needs to be a primary part. Unions should not only be evaluated for their successes but also for their aims being more or less fitting as a union.

Third, unions engage in collective action. Collective actions can vary significantly, but even a democratic entity that acts only through transferring money (e.g. political donations), statements from a board, individual negotiations by an elected leader, and other methods where one or few act is no union. Unions that only minimally mobilize collectively and more focus on lobbying or writing statements are acting less as unions than those that engage in a higher relative amount of collective action.

Fourth, unions are independent. They must formally be separate from the administration of the job – faculty senates, advisory boards, etc. are no unions. We can also evaluate how independent they are in practice; the term “company union” exemplifies this concern. Additionally, we can evaluate how independent unions are from outside entities, be they political parties or, perhaps, national unions.

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### Speakers



**Iddan Sonsino**  
University of Toronto



**Aaron Chipp-Miller**  
PhD Student  
University of California, San Diego



**Alex Wolf-Root**  
Senior Lecturer  
The Ohio State University

Moderator



**Benjamin McKean**  
Ohio State University

## Reassessing Meritocracy: Talent, Effort and Just Distributions in Education and Beyond

2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 4

River Room I

*In recent years, meritocracy as a principal of equal opportunity has been subject to fierce attack. While its prominence in political and popular discourse is as strong as ever, the philosophical literature offers increasingly thorough critiques of the ideal, demonstrating how it fails to secure meaningful opportunity, obfuscates structural injustice, and undermines solidarity, among other harms (Markovitz 2019, McNamee & Miller 2013, Mijis 2021, Sandel 2020, Taussig 2021, Wooldridge 2021). And while many critics focus on the failure of modern societies to live up to the meritocratic ideal, some address the shortcomings of the ideal itself (Mijis 2021, Sandel 2020). Education is a core institution of the meritocracy, designed to enable individuals to overcome environmental disadvantage and develop their talents so that they are equipped to succeed in a meritocratic society. Philosophers have also debated whether education itself – resources, opportunities and outcomes – should be allocated according to merit, namely talent and effort. As a result, the debates surrounding meritocracy and the discussion of educational justice are inherently interrelated.*

*This panel aims to contribute to the debate concerning meritocracy by offering an in depth, nuanced examination of merit and its two components: talent and effort. All three presentations aim to make progress regarding the key questions: how should merit be understood and does it provide justification for inequality in education and beyond. The first presentation, argues that while merit is inherently arbitrary, it nevertheless, serves a compelling purpose in guiding the allocation of certain educational opportunities. Given the shortcomings of meritocracy, however, the presentation puts forward alternative approaches to educational allocation that focus on opportunity pluralism. The second presentation, analyzes the concept of talent, detailing its hybrid and multifaceted nature. The presentation argues that discussing talents through the exclusive framework of 'moral arbitrariness' is critically flawed as it undermines the mutual-advantage conception of equal educational opportunities. The third presentation, tackles the second component of merit, namely effort. The presentation details three main justifications for allowing effort-based inequality in education and beyond, and challenges all three, concluding that although often considered the epitome of a morally relevant criterion, effort does not provide a robust justification for inequality.*

### Abstracts:

#### **Opportunity Pluralism in Education: Reassessing Standards of "Merit,"** Winston Thompson

This presentation explores the intricate relationship between meritocracy and just distributions in educational contexts, delving into the complexities of the very concept of "merit" as a standard for allocating and accessing educational opportunities. Thompson argues that while the notion of merit is inherently arbitrary (as has been argued in various distributive contexts), it nevertheless serves a compelling purpose in guiding the allocation of certain educational opportunities. Additionally, the presentation highlights alternative approaches to educational allocation, drawing inspiration from ongoing work on "opportunity pluralism" as a structural response to the shortcomings of the *status quo* approach to meritocracy.

Firstly, the presentation contends that the invocation of "merit" as a criterion for accessing educational opportunities is, fundamentally, morally arbitrary. Merit is often defined by a narrow set of criteria, such as test scores or grades, which fail to capture the diverse talents, skills, and potential of individuals (and assert the legitimacy of disparate outcomes). This narrow definition restricts some forms of access to education and perpetuates systemic inequalities. By questioning the objectivity and fairness of merit as a standard, this presentation challenges its assumed legitimacy in educational settings.

Secondly, despite acknowledging the morally arbitrary nature of merit, the presentation recognizes the pragmatic value of the concept in guiding the allocation of certain educational opportunities. Merit-based systems, flawed as they may be, provide a practical framework for assessing candidates and distributing educational resources. Thompson argues that these frameworks have endured, in part, because they identify individuals who have demonstrated particular abilities or accomplishments, allowing for targeted support and fostering development within specific educational projects.

Thirdly, the presentation highlights the existence of alternative methods for allocating educational opportunities that may be (equally or more) desirable. Drawing inspiration from ongoing work on "opportunity pluralism", these alternatives recognize the importance of multiple avenues towards educational experiences, aiming to create a more inclusive educational system less marked by the morally arbitrariness of traditional accounts of "merit". By broadening the range of criteria used for selection, such as personal attributes, individual aspirations, and non-traditional skills, these approaches provide a more comprehensive and equitable evaluation of possible students.

In conclusion, this presentation critically examines the concept of meritocracy in relation to education. It acknowledges the moral arbitrariness of the standard of "merit," yet recognizes its practical utility in certain contexts. Moreover, it advocates for the exploration of alternative approaches, such as opportunity pluralism, to enhance the fairness and inclusivity of distributions of educational resources. By questioning and reevaluating the notions of merit and its alternatives, we can strive towards a more just and equitable education system that nurtures and values the diverse talents and potential of a broader range of individuals.

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#### **Rewarding Effort in a Meritocracy,** Nethanel Lipshitz, co-authored by Tammy Harel Ben Shahar

The belief that effort should be socially rewarded is a tenet of various philosophical traditions, spanning

liberalism, Marxism, and luck egalitarianism. Meritocratic theories of equal opportunity consider effort as one of the two criteria (alongside talent) for distributing opportunities and rewards.

The literature has discussed the criterion of talent quite extensively, pointing out that individuals cannot be held responsible for their talents, and more recently, that talent is flexible and mutable, questioning its ability to serve as a fixed criterion for fair allocation. In other words, many (although definitely not all) egalitarians maintain that differences of talent are morally arbitrary and so do not justify unequal rewards.

The second criterion, namely effort, is often considered the epitome of a morally justified criterion for distribution. As such, it has not received as much scholarly attention. This article aims to fill the gap by identifying and challenging three main arguments that justify rewarding effort in education and beyond. Consequently, we argue that effort is often a weaker justification for inequality than philosophers often assume.

The first two arguments rely on the following key claims. (1) It is fair to allocate rewards and opportunities according to effort because people *choose* to invest effort; and relatedly, (2) allocating rewards and opportunities according to effort has beneficial consequences because it incentivizes hard work.

We argue, however, that the connection between effort and choice is extremely complicated. Central aspects of effort appear to be as morally arbitrary as talent. This is not just because, as Rawls observed, the general ability to exercise effort might itself be part of the natural lottery. More specifically, effort is often facilitated by a supportive environment, and the motivation to exercise it often depends on prospects of success and past successes. But people (and children in particular) often do not control their environment, and prospects of success as well as past successes often depend on talent, which, many assume, is morally arbitrary. And where children are concerned, responsibility is further reduced. Establishing that choice is limited also weakens the incentives justification, because there is no point in incentivizing people to do something they have little control over.

(3) Effort involves burdens, and it is fair to compensate people for their burdens.

In response to this justification we discern two types of effort, only one of which can be characterized as a burden. Some efforts are pleasurable: being totally immersed in a challenging but interesting task, people report pleasure and other positive emotions such as meaningfulness, fulfillment, satisfaction. This has been characterized as “flow” (Haybron 2008). In other cases, effort can be burdensome, a never ending drudgery, only instrumentally valuable at best. This justification entails rewarding only the second kind of effort. This distinction also suggests that we could view effort as something that should, itself, be fairly distributed. In other words, people should be provided with opportunities to experience flow, and should not be forced to bear more than their fair share of burden-effort. This has consequence for providing extra instruction for underachievers, for example, given that it might increase their burden-effort.

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#### 🗨️ Speakers



##### **Winston Thompson**

Associate Professor of Educational Studies; Associate Professor of Philosophy (by courtesy)  
The Ohio State University



##### **Nethanel Lipshitz**

Penn State College of Medicine

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#### 🗨️ Moderator



##### **Lucia Schwarz**

Assistant Professor  
Tulane University

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## **Resistance and Its Alternatives: imperfect Resistance, Refusal, and the Politics of Victimhood**

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 4

## **Abstracts:**

### **Non-Normative Behavior and the Virtue of Rebelliousness, Tamara Fakhoury**

For many people subjected to systemic injustice, life under oppression involves participating in what philosophers have called “non-normative behavior,” or behavior that fails to comply with oppressive norms. Current discussions of the value of such actions tend to emphasize the benefits they can have for other victims of oppression. I argue that while benefiting others is a noble goal, there are victims for whom such altruistic reasons do not apply. For all that, non-normative behavior may still be ethically worthwhile. I highlight another source of value for such actions, stemming from victims’ personal projects and relationships. Finally, I argue that ethical discussions of non-normative behavior, both its personal value and its value for others, suggest that having a disposition to engage in non-normative actions - a trait which I call *rebelliousness* (a mean state between obsequiousness and impudence) - is a virtue under oppressive conditions.

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### **From Resistance to Refusal, Sarah Clark Miller**

One prominent theme in contemporary political philosophy concerns forms of resistance to oppression, with particular attention paid to the question of whether victims have a duty to resist their oppression (Hay 2011, Silvermint 2013, Vasanthakumar 2018). This paper enters such contemporary conversations to analyze a related, yet undertheorized, concept: refusal. Refusal is often understood as a specific form or subvariety of resistance. In contrast to this position, I argue that while correctly associated with resistance, refusal is a distinctive political concept. In order to distinguish resistance and refusal, I explore points of similarity and contrast between the two. As is the case with resistance, refusal happens in ways both internal and external (Vasanthakumar 2020). Agents who refuse conditions of oppression and injustice can do so internally by denying the epistemic significance of subjugating beliefs, as well as externally through actions that repudiate the significance of dominant logics and standards. Yet the aims of the two concepts diverge significantly: refusal’s aim is not “to undermine and change oppressive normative structures” (Medina 2013, 3), but rather the wholesale rejection of unjust political practices, norms, and institutions. The point, however, is never rejection as such. While refusal accomplishes a rejection of political injustices, it does so in the service of new political imaginings of a yet-to-exist world. Refusal is thus ultimately an exercise in world- building (Honig 2021). And in the end, the reasons to refuse oppression are not the same as the reasons to resist oppression (Fakhoury 2021). Finally, I consider whether victims have a duty to refuse their oppression, thereby depicting refusal’s alternative relationship with political obligation.

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### **Can the Politics of Victimhood be Constructive?, Jihyun Jeong**

The politics of victimhood is often considered counterproductive. In this paper, I aim to challenge a specific concern about the politics of victimhood—that it is self-defeating for victims of oppression, especially for their resistance. I suggest that we understand victimhood differently to retrieve victimhood’s positive political potential for the victims. Victimhood is often understood as a marker of vulnerability. It is also often associated with a lack of action, agency, and power. While victims are treated as if they are the only ones who are vulnerable and their victimhood is inconsistent with action, agency, and power, non-victims are often thought of to be irrelevant to vulnerability or a lack of action, agency, or power. I argue that our attitude toward victimhood should not be decided based on this bifurcation between victims and non-victims. Instead, I argue that we should understand the concept of victimhood as an unfair distribution of vulnerability, which is premised on that everyone, not only the victims, is vulnerable.

To articulate this concept of victimhood, I turn to the scholarship on vulnerability led by feminist thinkers (Butler 2004, 2009, 2016; Cole 2016; Mackenzie, Rogers, Dodds 2016; Gilson 2016, 2018, 2021). According to the scholarship, vulnerability is an “ontological condition of humanity” (Rogers, Mackenzie, and Dodds 2012, 19). The scholarship also sheds light on the neglected aspect of vulnerability: as a condition of human life, vulnerability is not necessarily negative but is also a source of positivity such as capacity, agency, and autonomy. Based on this nuanced understanding of vulnerability, I, at the same time, focus on what Alyson Cole (2016) and many others pointed out—that while ontological vulnerability is shared by everyone, vulnerability is experienced in vastly different ways by different people, which is deeply informed by the power structure. With this in mind, I argue that victimhood comes from the victim’s noticing that experiences of vulnerability are unfairly distributed, which makes her experience vulnerability in harmful ways. In this paper, I elaborate on the concept in detail.

This concept of victimhood necessitates a reconsideration of the common negative attitude toward victimhood. Based on this concept, claiming victimhood does not mean avoiding action, agency, and power. It does not mean claiming one’s vulnerability while denying others’ vulnerability, as in the bifurcation between victims and non-victims. Instead, in claiming their victimhood, victims point to the unfair distribution of vulnerability. This conceptual approach is helpful for paying necessary attention to complex and diverse aspects of and changing conditions of the distribution, rather than overly relying on the tenuous conceptual dichotomy between victims and non-victims. This nuanced understanding of victimhood can enable constructive conversations about and responses to victimhood, including victims’ resistance. By embracing their victimhood and demanding others’ proper engagement with their claims, victims can resist their oppression more effectively, rather than defeating their own purpose.

## 🗣️ Speakers



### **Tamara Fakhoury**

Assistant Professor  
University of Minnesota - Twin Cities



### **Sarah Miller**

Associate Professor of Philosophy  
Pennsylvania State University



### **Jihyun Jeong**

Duke University

## 🗣️ Moderator



### **Ashwini Vasanthakumar**

Associate Professor and Queen's National Scholar in Legal & Political Philosophy  
Faculty of Law, Queen's University

## **PPE, Bioethics, and Public Health**

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 4

📍 Terrace Room

### **Abstracts:**

#### **The Case for Animal Offsets, Jessica Flanigan**

An animal offset is a donation to an organization that effectively advocates for animal welfare. These organizations may encourage people to reduce their consumption of animal products, advocate for better conditions for animals in factory farms, develop new food technology such as plant-based meat or lab-grown meat, or promote other environmental causes that benefit animals and humans in a way that is similar to the benefits of vegetarianism or veganism. I argue that purchasing animal offsets is at least as praiseworthy as refraining from eating animals, and that it may be morally better than eating animals.

My argument begins with the premise that considerations of animal welfare, human welfare, animal rights, or moral worth inform the permissibility and praiseworthiness of vegetarianism and veganism (§1). I then show that animal offsets are at least as good at promoting animal and human welfare as vegetarianism and veganism (§2). So welfarist proponents of vegetarianism and veganism should encourage people to purchase animal offsets and praise those who do as much as they encourage and praise vegetarianism and veganism, if not more so (§3). Some people argue that people should be vegetarians or vegans because factory farming violates animals' rights against being mistreated or wrongfully killed by humans. While offsets may effectively address welfarist arguments for vegetarianism and veganism, people cannot offset one rights violation by preventing others rights-violations (§4). On the other hand, if this view were correct, then vegetarians and vegans would also be guilty of offsetting some animal rights violations for the sake of preventing other animal rights violations because the clearing of land or agriculture violates wild animals' rights to life and their rights to a natural habitat. So, if this non-welfarist justification for vegetarianism and veganism were to rule out the permissibility of offsets, it would also rule out the permissibility of most vegetarian and vegan diets as well (§5). I therefore conclude that offsetting is at least as morally good as vegetarianism or veganism, and that animal ethics advocates should, all else equal, encourage people to purchase animal offsets (§6). To close, I address why people may prefer vegetarianism or veganism over offsetting, and I offer a debunking explanation for this preference (§7).

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#### **A Liberal Argument Against Mandatory Calorie Labels, Connor Kianpour**

In the United States, it's widely assumed that it's permissible, if not obligatory, for the state to compel food producers to post calorie labels on their food products. In this paper, I develop a series of arguments, some of which are more radical and some of which are less, aimed at challenging this assumption.

First, I argue that to compel food producers to post calorie labels on their food products is a form of compelled speech that is morally unjustifiable. The reason for this is that when the state compels food producers to post calorie labels on their food products, it violates a commitment to liberal neutrality. A preoccupation with the disclosure of caloric information is emblematic of an ideological intervention that the state is making, and has been making, in the lives of food consumers. Encouraging food consumers to be preoccupied with the caloric content of food amounts to discouraging food consumers from shaping their own relationships with food, which I will argue is impermissible for the state to do.

Second, I argue that if one is not convinced by my arguments about liberal neutrality, there are still problems with compelling food producers to post calorie labels on their food products. Arguments in defense of mandatory

calorie labeling also support a caloric information disclosure regime in which food producers are required to make caloric information about their food products publicly available, perhaps by contributing to a public access federal database that collects caloric information about food products, rather than by specifically posting calorie labels on food products. Moreover, there are important cases in which making caloric information known to individuals might discourage them from making choices that promote their health: cases involving people with certain restrictive eating disorders, and cases involving fat individuals regardless of whether or not they struggle with a binge eating disorder. If this is true, then we have a powerful reason to prefer the database model of caloric information disclosure to the labeling model of caloric information disclosure. The database model allows those with restrictive eating disorders and those who are fat to make choices that promote their health, whereas the labeling model would hinder those with restrictive eating disorders and those who are fat from making choices that promote their health.

Third, I argue that disclosure of caloric information is not necessary for consumers to give informed consent when purchasing food products. This means that for those who think the disclosure of caloric information is necessary only to empower consumers to give informed consent when purchasing food products, there would be no grounds for supporting either the database model or labeling model of caloric information disclosure. My hope is to show at the very least that mandatory calorie labeling practices are not only unnecessary for the state to engage in, but that the state's doing so is also positively bad. Hopefully, though, I will convince you of the stronger claim that mandatory calorie labeling practices are unjust.

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### **Does AI In Medicine and Public Health Compromise Informed Consent?** Sam Director

Recently, there has been a large push for the use of artificial intelligence in medical settings. The promise of AI in medicine and public health is huge, but the moral costs are insufficiently theorized. AI may revolutionize both clinical medicine and public health in a way that saves many lives. For example, if we can use AI to develop systems for organ allocation or vaccine distribution, this may cut out some (deadly) human inefficiencies currently present in those systems. In clinical medicine, AI is likely to be more reliable at diagnosing than licensed doctors. While this is all very promising, it must not be done in a way that tramples on patient autonomy. If AI is used in medicine, it poses a substantial problem for informed consent. Informed consent has to be, well, informed. But, given the black box problem, doctors are often unable to give the patient an explanation of why the AI made a particular diagnosis and treatment recommendation. Or, if AI is used to distribute organs in the most efficient way, those who don't get an organ are owed an explanation, but they cannot always be given one. Given this, the patient cannot make an informed decision and thus cannot consent. I want to argue that we can have both a commitment to informed consent and the benefits of using AI in clinical and public health settings. I'm tempted to say that the solution is explainable AI. If it were truly the case that all AI could be sufficiently explainable in clinical terms that could be intelligible to both doctors and patients, this would clearly be the best system. But, explainability may come at the cost of high performance and accuracy in AI. If that is the case (that explainability comes at the cost of worse patient outcomes) patients themselves have a reason to prefer black box models over explainable models. So, where does informed consent fit? I plan to defend the view that we can get the benefits of medical AI while maintaining a commitment to informed consent if we allow for a kind of meta-consent. By this, I mean a kind of consent where patients may not be informed about the first-order details of how the AI reached its diagnosis but are informed of second-order information about the reliability of the AI. Similar things happen routinely in clinical practice. Patients often don't ask, nor would they always understand, the doctor's reasoning toward their diagnosis/treatment. But, so long as they are informed about the doctor's reliability, then it seems like they are sufficiently informed to give valid consent. Importantly, the view I defend here is compatible with continuing to prioritize research into explainable AI. All I mean to defend is that informed consent and black box AI are compatible, but this is consistent with informed consent being better achieved by explainable AI.

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#### **Speakers**



#### **Jessica Flanigan**

Richard L. Morrill Chair in Ethics and Democratic Values  
University of Richmond



#### **Connor Kianpour**

University of Colorado Boulder



#### **Sam Director**

Assistant Professor  
Florida Atlantic University

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#### **Moderator**



#### **Martha Pitre**

Research Assistant  
McGill University

## Cooperation and Social Justice, by Joseph Heath

🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Nov 4

📍 Tower Room

**Author Meets Cr...**

Joseph Heath's new book, *Cooperation and Social Justice*, is a collection of six essays on a range of topics central to PPE, including the morality of profit, the feasibility of socialism, open borders, and racial inequality in the US, among others.

What makes Heath's book so suitable for the PPE Society Meeng, though, is his methodology. Rather than engage in abstract arm-chair theorizing, Heath thoroughly engages with the social sciences, recognizing that it is not fruitful to think about social justice without also thinking carefully about the institutional arrangements through which it may (or may not) be realized. As such, Heath's book is an insightful mix of political philosophy, political science, and economics.

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### 🗣️ Speakers



#### Joseph Heath

Professor  
University of Toronto



#### Valerie Soon

Assistant Professor of Political Science  
University of California San Diego

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### 🗣️ Moderator



#### Douglas MacKay

Associate Professor  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

3:30 PM

### Break

🕒 3:30 PM - 3:45 PM, Nov 4

3:45 PM

## Public Reason, Cheap Talk and Costly Signals

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 4

📍 Grand Ballroom I

### Abstracts:

#### **Rawls, Welfare State Capitalism and Publicly Justifiable Inequalities**, Andrew Koppelman

Perhaps the central idea in John Rawls's political philosophy, which came to the fore in his later work, is that of justifiability by the public use of reason. Rawls famously argued that social and economic inequalities are justifiable by public reason only if they satisfy the demands of reciprocity. His theory therefore offers a powerful framework for judging the astounding levels of inequality that modern capitalism has engendered.

Public reason, Rawls says, draws on political values and principles, as well as on common sense and on the findings of science -- including social science -- where these are not controversial. Unfortunately, Rawls is not a good guide to the implications of his own framework, because his response to inequality is not informed by economic findings which are uncontroversial. Indeed, it is ill-informed about how the economy operates today.

Rawls believed capitalism (with or without a welfare state) is inherently unjust. The only economic systems that he thought could be justified by public reason were either democratic socialism or property-owning democracy. But Rawls built these claims on a description of contemporary American capitalism that is almost completely false, and a remarkably optimistic account of the alternatives. The proper application of public reason to the American economy shows that Rawls's liberalism actually entails a vigorous free market, with concomitant inequalities, backed up by an equally vigorous welfare state -- one far more generous than the United States has now. It also highlights aspects of present America that not only fail the test of public justifiability but are genuinely intolerable.

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#### **Public Reason, Signaling Games and the Costs of Talk**, Paul Weithman

Public reasoning -- understood, in the Rawlsian way, as appeal to a common conception of justice and to a shared

set of political values -- can serve many purposes. According to one line of thought that has become influential in the literature, citizens who engage in public reasoning assure one another of their commitment to justice.

Citizens need such assurance if a just society is to be stably or enduringly so. But some critics have argued that public reasoning as described above is not up to the task. Talk can be cheap, these critics say, and the appeal to shared public reasons to show one's commitment to justice is cheap talk. Cheap talk cannot solve assurance problems. And so the way to provide one's fellow citizens assurance of one's commitment to justice is not to show that one's favored outcomes are supported by considerations whose reason-giving force is the object of citizens' consensus. It is, these critics contend, to show them that citizens can converge on those outcomes for reasons drawn from different moral and religious views. In short, the convergence view of public reason, championed by Gaus and his students, better solves the cheap talk problem than the consensus view championed by Rawls and his.

This essay has several aims.

First, those who think that appeal to shared public reasons can provide assurance and those who press the cheap talk objection have an assumption in common. Members of both parties generally assume that the practice of public reasoning is proposed as part of the solution to a game-theoretic situation called an "assurance game". One aim of this paper is to show that the game in which public reason functions is better conceived of as a different kind of game-theoretic situation called a "signaling game".

Second, a well-ordered society as Rawls originally conceived it is a society in which everyone accepts, and knows that everyone else accepts, the same conception of justice. As the practice of public reasoning was described above, it fits naturally with this idea of a well-ordered society.

For according to that description, citizens' use of public reason enables them to assure one another of their commitment to that one conception. A second aim of this paper is to show how the function assigned to public reason, and the set-up of the game in which it functions, have to be altered once we recognize the likelihood of reasonable pluralism about justice and change the conception of a well-ordered society accordingly.

Finally, I argue that with these changes in place, the assurance problem may be much less pressing and that even if it remains pressing, the convergence view does not have the advantages over the consensus view that its proponents claim for it. While the essay proceeds within a broadly Rawlsian framework, it is not an exercise in Rawls exegesis. It is an attempt to show how a Rawlsian view of stability can be worked out for a society characterized by pluralism about justice.

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#### **New Directions in Costly Signal Politics, Brian Kogelmann**

John Rawls introduced political philosophers to the *assurance problem*. Though citizens might genuinely want to act justly, no one wants to do so *unilaterally*. This incentive structure opens the possibility of citizens acting unjustly—even if they most prefer mutual adherence to justice—to avoid being a sucker. Some argue that *public reasoning* resolves this dilemma (Weithman 2010; 2015). If Alice adheres to public reason in her discourse with Betty, then Betty will be assured that Alice wishes to act justly, so she will act justly as well. In response, some have pointed out this solution will not work, because adhering to public reason is *cheap talk* (i.e., too easy for unjust types to fake).

In response, Kogelmann and Stich (2016) argue the assurance problem can be resolved with *costly signals*. If there are signals easy for just types but hard for unjust types to send, then just types can assure others that they wish to act justly by sending such signals. Kogelmann and Stich argue reasoning by conjecture fulfills this.

The current paper applies Kogelmann and Stich's idea of costly signaling as a preference-revelation mechanism to a new domain: political selection. Citizens want to select politicians who will act justly in office. However, there are reasons for unjust types to run for election. It is not always easy to differentiate between just and unjust candidates. Costly signaling theory can resolve this dilemma. If there are signals just candidates can send that unjust candidates cannot, then we can identify just candidates.

Are there any activities meeting this description? I consider three. The first proposal says arduous public service should be made a requirement for holding office (Bell 2015; Bai 2020). For instance, to be eligible to hold office, one must do volunteer work in an impoverished area for many years. The thought is that only just types are willing to do unpleasant work in the service of others with little compensation. The problem with this proposal, I argue, is that once this kind of difficult charitable work is made a requirement of holding office, *it is no longer poorly compensated*, for it now comes with a big prize (i.e., the potential to hold office). So, unjust types will be able to send the signal.

An old idea says we find good politicians by *not* compensating them. If holding office is not compensated, only just types will be able to bring themselves to do this work, for there is nothing to motivate unjust types to serve. I think this proposal does much to filter out unjust types, but at an unacceptable cost: it *also* filters out those who are not wealthy. I end by proposing and defending a variation of this old idea: after serving a short amount of time in office, politicians are offered a substantial amount of money to resign and disqualify themselves from holding office in the future. Passing up this offer is costly, something only just types will be able to do.



## 🗣️ Speakers



### Andrew Koppelman

John Paul Stevens Professor of Law  
Northwestern University



### Brian Kogelmann

Assistant Professor  
West Virginia University



### Paul Weithman

Professor of Philosophy  
University of Notre Dame

## 🗣️ Moderator



### Colleen Murphy

Roger and Stephany Joslin Professor of Law  
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

## Social Anarchism and the Rejection of Moral Tyranny, by Jesse Spafford

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 4

📍 Grand Ballroom II

Author Meets Cr...

### Abstract:

This is an author-meets-critics panel for Jesse Spafford's *Social Anarchism & the Rejection of Moral Tyranny*, forthcoming with Cambridge University Press.

The book will be of interest to those interested in the philosophy and political economy of socialism, libertarianism, and anarchism, along with debates surrounding distributive justice (especially egalitarianism), rights theory, and political authority. It is unique as a book-length defense of social anarchism (i.e. non-market anarchism) within analytic political philosophy.

### **Blurb:**

“Outside of philosophy departments, most self-identified anarchists are social anarchists who reject both the legitimacy of the state and private property. By contrast, most anarchist philosophers are of the pro-market variety. As a result, a philosopher has yet to write an analytic defense of social anarchism. This book fills this gap in the literature by arguing that social anarchism is a coherent philosophical position that follows from a more basic, plausible principle that constrains which moral theories are acceptable. In the process of defending social anarchism, the monograph stakes out a number of bold and original positions (e.g., that people own themselves and nothing else) while providing novel solutions to some of classic problems of political philosophy (e.g., luck egalitarianism’s problem of stakes). It thus, strikes a balance between providing an overarching, unified political theory while also advancing many of the more fine-grained debates that occupy political philosophers and those interested in political economy more generally.”

Given the book's perspective, the panel is organized to have both a libertarian critic and a socialist critic. Because the book raises or develops many interesting issues at the intersection of politics, philosophy, and economics, this panel would fit well on the PPE program.

## 🗣️ Speaker, Author



### Jesse Spafford

Lecturer  
The Victoria University of Wellington

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### 🔊 Speakers



**Nikhil Venkatesh**

LSE Fellow  
London School of Economics and Political Science



**Jason Byas**

University of Michigan (Ann Arbor)

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### 🔊 Moderator



**Nathan Goodman**

Senior Fellow  
Mercatus Center at George Mason University

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## A Political Economy of Behavioral Public Policy, by Adam Oliver

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 4

📍 Salon Room

**Author Meets Cr...**

In his 2023 book, Adam Oliver proposes a political economy framework within which various types of behavioral public policies can be evaluated. The still dominant normative approach in behavioral public policy postulates paternalistic interventions such as nudges or sin taxes to help increase consumers' welfare by exploiting or bypassing their decision biases. Oliver contrasts this framework with an alternative perspective that sits within the liberal philosophical and economic tradition of David Hume, John Stuart Mill, and Friedrich Hayek. Rather than imposing a welfarist normative benchmark for behaviorally informed policies, Oliver's framework proposes that policy makers provide an environment that is conducive to each person's own conception of a flourishing life and their natural instincts for reciprocity and mutually beneficial exchanges. He argues for a framework whereby those who impose no substantive harms on others ought to be free of manipulative or coercive interference.

Yet, Oliver's book is not merely critical of contemporary behavioral public policies. He argues for the use of 'budes', i.e., regulatory interventions that aim to reduce behaviorally informed harms or foster behaviorally induced forgone benefits. The book is essentially a PPE treatise: It combines a critical analysis of contemporary welfare economic theory with philosophical reflections on the value of autonomy and the discussion of political instruments to foster the latter. The book is thorough in its critique of the nudging approach, but it raises new questions for PPE scholars. For instance, what are the epistemic hurdles of 'budes'? Where does 'normal' marketing end and behaviorally informed manipulation begin? How can Oliver's liberal framework adjudicate between citizens' interests in autonomy and welfare? In this AUTHOR MEETS CRITICS session, we aim to discuss these and other PPE-type questions that emerge after reading this formidable book.

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### 🔊 Speaker, Author



**Adam Oliver**

LSE

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### 🔊 Speakers



**Otto Lehto**

Postdoctoral Research Fellow  
New York University



**Malte Dold**

Assistant Professor  
Pomona College

Moderator



**Tyler DesRoches**

Associate Professor  
Arizona State University

## Ethics and the Far Future

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 4

📍 Executive Room

### Abstracts:

#### **Accounting for future populations in health research,** Leah Pierson

The research we fund today will improve the health of people who will live tomorrow. However, the size, nature, and distribution of the health benefits that flow out of research are contingent upon how research priorities are set. While health policymakers in other domains often rely on cost-effectiveness analysis to allocate limited health resources, such approaches cannot readily be used in the case of health research. Instead, many research funders aim to allocate research resources in accordance with disease burden. In this talk, I will defend research funders' practice of setting priorities in accordance with disease burden, but argue that funders should aim to align research funding with future—rather than present—disease burden.

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#### **Mistakes in the moral mathematics of existential risk,** David Thorstad

*Longtermists* argue that positively influencing the far future is a key moral priority of our time. Often, longtermists argue, we should influence the future by aiming to reduce levels of existential risk: risks of catastrophes involving “the premature extinction of Earth-originating intelligent life or the permanent and drastic destruction of its potential for desirable future development” (Bostrom 2013).

Many authors assign strikingly high value to existential risk mitigation efforts. For example, Nick Bostrom holds that even if humanity never leaves Earth, a reduction of just one-millionth of one percent in the risk of existential catastrophe would be as good as saving a hundred million lives with certainty today (Bostrom 2013), and Hilary Greaves and William MacAskill (forthcoming) estimate that early asteroid-detection efforts saved lives at an expected cost of fourteen cents each. If these numbers are correct, then there may well be a robust case for existential risk mitigation across a range of axiological and deontic theories.

In this paper, I argue that many leading models of existential risk mitigation systematically ignore morally relevant considerations in determining the value of existential risk mitigation. This has two effects: first, debates about the value of existential risk mitigation are mislocated, because many of the most important parameters are neither modeled nor discussed. Second, the value of existential risk mitigation is inflated by many orders of magnitude, unfairly advantaging the longtermist.

The first mistake is focusing on the *cumulative risk* that a catastrophe will occur at least once over a long stretch of time (such as a billion years), rather than the *per-unit risk* that a catastrophe will occur in a single unit of time (such as a century). For example, Bostrom's claim that a reduction of just one-millionth of one percent in the risk of existential catastrophe would be as good as saving a hundred million lives with certainty today holds only if we are concerned with cumulative risk reduction. However, bringing about the desired cumulative risk reduction would be no small feat: on many views, it would require reducing per-century risk by 4-5 orders of magnitude, a far cry from a millionth of one percent.

The second mistake is ignoring *background risk*, risks of existential catastrophe not affected by the present intervention. Building on work by Thorstad (forthcoming), I show that incorporating background risk tends to systematically reduce the value of existential risk mitigation, often by many orders of magnitude.

The third mistake is *neglecting population dynamics*. Many estimates incorrectly focus on the question of how many humans a region of space could in principle hold, but neglect the demographic question of how human populations evolve given their technological capabilities. Building on work by Spears and Geruso (forthcoming), I show how incorporating even the most optimistic demographic theories shaves many orders of magnitude off the estimated value of existential risk reduction by reducing the expected number of future human lives.

I conclude by drawing philosophical implications from this discussion and lessons for future study.

References:

Bostrom, Nick, “Existential risk prevention as a global priority,” *Global Policy* 4 (2013): 15-31.

Greaves, Hilary and MacAskill, William, “The case for strong longtermism,” forthcoming in Barrett, Greaves and Thorstad (eds.), *Essays on longtermism* (Oxford University Press).

Thorstad, David, “High risk, low reward: A challenge to the astronomical value of existential risk mitigation,” forthcoming in *Philosophy and Public Affairs*.

Spears, Dean and Geruso, Mike, “With a whimper: Depopulation and longtermism,” forthcoming in Barrett, Greaves and Thorstad (eds.), *Essays on longtermism* (Oxford University Press).

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## The precautionary principle, risk, and policymaking, Timothy Williamson

The Precautionary Principle (or at least, one prominent version of it) tells us that we should adopt stringent measures to minimize risks of catastrophic harms. While such precautionary reasoning captures a plausible moral intuition, it is notoriously challenging to spell the principle out in a way that is action-guiding and that yields consistently plausible verdicts. Recently, some have argued that a non-standard decision theory, Risk-Weighted Expected Utility Theory (REU), vindicates the core of the Precautionary Principle (e.g., Bargiacchi 2003, Quiggin 2005, Buchak 2019). I argue that this approach is misguided: REU fails to capture the guiding intuition behind the Precautionary Principle, which is that (possibilities of) *serious harms* carry distinctive normative weight. Indeed, REU recommends precautionary reasoning in a range of situations where such reasoning is uncalled for. I then show that a recently defended alternative to REU, Weighted Linear Utility Theory (defended by Chew 1983 and Bottomley & Williamson Forthcoming), does a better job of vindicating the Precautionary Principle. I conclude by sketching some possible ways of understanding the relationship between decision-making tools aimed at policymakers and the formal decision-theoretic models often discussed by philosophers.

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### Speakers



**Leah Pierson**

Harvard



**David Thorstad**

Assistant Professor  
Vanderbilt



**Timothy Williamson**

Junior Research Fellow  
University of Oxford

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### Moderator



**Owen Clifton**

PhD Candidate, Philosophy  
Queen's University

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## Health Justice: Basic Income, Inequality, and Genetic Enhancement

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 4

📍 Chairman's Room

### Abstracts:

#### A Health Justice Argument for Basic Income, Vida Panitch and Michael Kessler

At the start of the Pandemic, over 100 countries immediately instituted some form of emergency cash benefit for their citizens, to protect them against the devastation of sudden job loss, rent hikes, and business failure, and to enable them to stay home from work while sick in an effort to stem transmission. For two years, millions of citizens depended on these payments to survive the crisis, both figuratively and literally. Although the majority of these programs have now been discontinued or scaled back, the fact that they were put in place as an emergency form of social protection demonstrated what proponents of both health justice and basic income may have long suspected: that basic income is a crucial feature of a just health system.

Myriad arguments for basic income are by now well-rehearsed. That consensus exists among libertarian, republican, feminist, communitarian, efficientarian, ecological, and post-productivist defenders of basic income is a marvel, even when we take account of the fact that these proponents do not always have the same policies in mind. Their arguments, if institutionalized, would vary considerably across two dimensions: their level (how high the income would have to be to satisfy the relevant conception of justice) and their breadth (how many existing and in-kind social programs the income would replace rather than complement). What I want to argue is that a health justice argument for basic income is missing from this arsenal of existing defenses, but shouldn't be, as demonstrated by the widespread support for cash benefits as a response to the health crisis. And I want to sketch what a health justice case for basic income should look like both normatively, and practically, in terms of its level and breadth.

What would a health justice argument for BI look like? Drawing lessons from the pandemic, it would need to attend to three considerations: 1. Public health care is necessary but not sufficient for health justice; 2. Cash is a crucial social determinant of health, 3. Emergency benefits are inadequate. Most of the people who died from Covid (below the age of 80) were from marginalized social groups, many of whom were working on the front line and suffering from underlying (largely preventable) medical conditions, despite having access to the same

medical care as their fellow citizens (at least in Canada, where I write this). Cash offers citizens the chance to leave dangerous and precarious jobs, but it also provides access to healthy food, better housing, and lower stress – other key social determinants of health. But for cash to have these impacts its provision must be unconditional and ongoing. The emergency measures were too late to address the underlying inequities that largely determined who died and who did not. I will conclude by arguing that a basic income that responds to the demands of health justice need not be overly high, provided its breadth remains narrow; that is, as long as it is introduced as an addendum to rather than a replacement for existing social protection and health care programs.

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### **What's So Special About Health Inequalities?** Chad Horne

Many theorists urge that we should be less tolerant of inequalities in health than we are of other kinds of inequality, such as inequality of income. For some, the view that health inequality is “special” in this way is supposed to follow from the intrinsic value of health, but others offer more substantive grounds for seeing health inequality as special. Health is thought to make a uniquely strong contribution to overall well-being, and so health inequalities have great disvalue for anyone who cares about equality overall. As well, health inequalities between social groups (such as health inequalities according to race or socio-economic class) seem to be obviously socially caused and so amenable to social control. Such inequalities between groups seem to be unchosen, too, and thus it seems unfair that individuals should be worse off because of them.

This paper offers some grounds for skepticism regarding the specialness of health inequalities. For one thing, a closer look at the causes of intergroup inequalities in health shows that these inequalities are often the result of behavioral differences; thus, the luck-egalitarian intuition, according to which unchosen inequalities are unfair and should be redressed, does not apply in many cases. Moreover, even when intergroup inequalities are due to social causes, it is not necessarily true that such inequalities can be ameliorated through direct social intervention; not everything that is socially caused will be subject to social control in the requisite sense. Finally, although it is true that health makes a strong contribution to overall well-being, I will argue that this instrumental reason for caring about equality in health does not in fact support the thesis that health inequality is special, at least not as that thesis is usually intended.

Although there are reasons to be skeptical about the specialness of health inequality from a philosophical point of view, there may be legitimate practical reasons why policymakers treat health inequalities differently from other kinds of inequalities. Many goods related to health have the characteristics of public goods, and thus require collective provision by the state or by various NGO's; thus, the focus on health equity may be justified in practice, as a consequence of the relatively high level of public involvement in the provision of health-related goods compared to other components of well-being.

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### **Against Enhancement? Health Justice and the Prevalence Principle in Human Genome Editing,** Douglas MacKay and Rebecca Walker

National and international agencies and organizations are currently considering which ethical principles should inform the governance and use of somatic and heritable human genome editing. Genome editing has the potential to significantly reduce human suffering through the removal or alteration of genes known to cause or increase the risk of serious disease and disability. However, it also raises the possibility of enhancement which may exacerbate existing inequalities in health and opportunity. A central question for policymakers, therefore, is whether there should be regulations governing the types of variants to which problematic genes may be converted. If genome editing is used to edit variants known to contribute to Alzheimer's disease, for example, should the problematic variants be converted to common variants which offer average protection against the disease? Or should they be converted to rare variants which offer exceptional protection? Relatedly, should it be permissible for parents to convert the genes of embryos to ones associated with what they deem to be desirable traits, including intelligence and athletic ability?

An emerging answer to this question is what we shall call the prevalence principle. According to this principle, somatic and heritable genome editing should only be permitted if it involves the conversion of variants to ones that are prevalent in the population. The aim of this principle is to prevent genome editing involving the enhancement of people's health- or non-health related traits. Proponents defend it by appealing to John Rawls's theory of justice, arguing that it follows from two familiar Rawlsian principles of justice: fair equality of opportunity, the idea that people should not be advantaged or disadvantaged in a social competition by morally arbitrary features, and the difference principle, the idea that inequalities are permissible only if they are socially useful.

In this paper, we critically evaluate the claim that the prevalence principle offers a just way forward for the governance of somatic and heritable genome editing technologies. We begin by introducing and motivating the prevalence principle. We then investigate whether fair equality of opportunity and the difference principle provide a justification for it. We argue that they do not, instead implying a different approach to genome editing governance. We then turn to alternative theories of health justice, namely, luck egalitarianism and Norman Daniels's fair equality of opportunity account, which offer stronger support for the prevalence principle, but which are subject to the leveling down objection. We conclude that the prevalence principle is not defensible and explore the potential for a relational egalitarian view of health justice to offer a defensible path forward for the governance of genome editing.

## 📣 Speakers



**Vida Panitch**  
Carleton University



**Michael Kessler**  
University of Toronto



**Chad Horne**  
Assistant Professor of Instruction  
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## 📣 Moderator



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## Consciousness-raising: From Theory to Practice

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 4

📍 Imperial Room

### Abstracts:

#### **On consciousness-raising and what it achieves: The epistemic significance of a standpoint,** Genae Matthews

Standpoint epistemology first emerged out of the Marxist critical theory tradition as means of pursuing ideology critique (e.g., Marx and Engels 1846, Lukács 1971, Geuss 1981, Celikates 2006, 2011, 2018, Haslanger 2021). Central to the Marxist critical tradition is the question of from where to critique capitalist ideology. Given that we are each embedded within capitalist society via participating in the social practices, scripts and structures which perpetuate its ideologies, critique of capitalist ideologies must occur from within. Put differently, we cannot stand outside of the practices, scripts, and structures into which we are socialized and so capitalist ideology critique, if possible at all, must happen from inside the very social apparatuses which those ideologies sustain.

However, there are certain places within those social apparatuses from which we nevertheless have a hope of performing ideology critique. In particular, Marx and Engels (1846) and Luckás (1971) argue that the proletariat, who experience capitalist state apparatuses via being exploited by them, are uniquely situated to become aware of the workings of those state apparatuses and thereby uniquely situated to critique the ideologies that sustain them. Crucially, the claim is not that the members of the proletariat are *automatically* aware of the state apparatuses and capitalist ideologies just by being exploited by them, but rather that their exploited social status uniquely situates them to *become* so aware via collectively achieving a *standpoint*; very roughly, an epistemic position from which they can understand the ‘true nature’ of the exploitation to which they are subject.

Standpoint epistemologists have historically identified consciousness-raising – roughly, the practice of coming together in groups, identifying common experiences, and developing a critical perspective on those experiences – as the means by which collectives achieve standpoints. And, they take consciousness-raising to distinguish the achievement of a standpoint from both epistemic achievements already accounted for by ‘traditional’ epistemological frameworks (e.g., forming a cluster of evidentially well-founded collective beliefs) and from other non-epistemic achievements that just so happen to have epistemic effects (e.g., becoming a professional chef). However, much more ink has been spilled about what consciousness-raising might achieve (i.e., some kind of epistemic advantage) than about how it works in the first place (though Haslanger 2021 is a notable exception).

This paper aims to fill that gap by providing an account of a ‘standpoint’ that clearly distinguishes standpoints from both ‘traditional’ epistemic and nearby non-epistemic achievements. To do so, I first distinguish consciousness-raising from mere evidence-gathering on the grounds that the former achieves a change in

‘outlook’ while the latter (usually) only achieves a change in individual attitudes.

In the second part of the paper, I draw on Flores (2021) to characterize a standpoint as a kind of epistemic style – i.e., a way of interacting with evidence that expresses uniform epistemic values, preferences, goals, and interests. In doing so, I show how that while standpoints are overtly political epistemic styles – retaining their critical theory roots insofar as they are committed to critiquing epistemic practices with the aim of achieving social justice – that they are so does not threaten their rationality.

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### **Codesign and Consciousness-raising: A study of Colombian women gold miners,** Yong Xin Hui

Liberatory social movements succeed when subordinated groups challenge and materially change normalized injustices inflicted upon their group. Their success depends on individual agents collaborating in service of their group’s ends at great personal expense. Theorists of social change have grappled with how and why members from these subordinated groups become compelled to become agents of such “curious,” “strange” and “amazing” (per Foucault) collective change given the immense personal risks and costs of resistance.

Scholars<sup>1</sup> largely agree that this motivation to act for collective liberation is driven by the subordinated group’s “oppositional consciousness,” a mental state that empowers and prepares group members to collectively resist. Inductive analyses of various historical movements show what constitutes fertile ground for the development of this oppositional consciousness.

Movements benefit from “free spaces”:<sup>2</sup> unsupervised time and space for sharing experiences, developing collective identity, and reinterpreting their stories into directed narratives of injustice. In addition, conscious creativity helps group members collectively synthesize new symbols, solutions and schemas, and combine emotional and rational faculties to develop oppositional consciousness.<sup>2</sup>

We argue that the practice of collective design (co-design) crucially drives the development of free spaces and conscious creativity, thus providing fertile ground to the growth of oppositional consciousness needed for sociopolitical empowerment. We combine insights from design thinkers and philosophers to argue for establishing a new practice of collective design among subordinated groups. As a new practice, it enables the community to both discover and create value, as well as both imagine and bring about new schemas of justice.<sup>3</sup>

To inform our argument, we rely on our fieldwork with women in Colombia in artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM). As mostly informal workers in a dangerous and male-dominated industry, they face myriad injustices such as economic coercion, sexual violence and cartelization, which have been ignored or normalized by authorities. Through training around 20 women on co-design frameworks, we sowed the seeds of a practice of creative expression, problem identification, and solution generation. We show that, as the women have continued training and establishing design practices in their own communities, they have developed an oppositional consciousness, as evidenced by their forming a 300-strong union of solidarity with other female ASGM miners in Colombia, identifying the interconnected injustices they face, and calling for concrete, integrated strategies for securing justice and better conditions for their community.

1 E.g. Jane J. Mansbridge and Aldon D. Morris, eds., *Oppositional Consciousness: The Subjective Roots of Social Protest* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

2 Hans Joas, *The Creativity of Action*, trans. Jeremy Gaines and Paul Keast, 1st edition (Chicago, Ill: University Of Chicago Press, 1997).

3 Re: Design thinkers, see Arturo Escobar, *Designs for the Pluriverse: Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds*, *New Ecologies for the Twenty-First Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018); Ezio Manzini, *Design, When Everybody Designs: An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation*, 2015, <https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/9873.001.0001>. On the philosophy side, see Sally Haslanger, “Cognition as a Social Skill,” *Australasian Philosophical Review* 3, no. 1 (January 2, 2019): 5–25, <https://doi.org/10.1080/24740500.2019.1705229>.

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### **Radical Truth for Radical Action: Consciousness-Raising and Paternalism,** Alex Bryant

At the First National Women’s Liberation Conference (1968), Kathie Sarachild proposed a formalization of a then common feminist practice of “consciousness-raising”: to bring together women (from both within and without of the radical feminist movement) to share the hardship of their, and to cultivate recognition of these experiences as experiences of patriarchal oppression—to identify personal experiences as group-based instantiations of a common, politically salient phenomenon. In this period, consciousness-raising meetings were conceived as “both a method for arriving at the truth” about women’s lives—to arrive at a more accurate description of women’s experiences—and “as a means for action and organizing [...] to get to the most radical truths about the situation of women in order to take radical action” (Sarachild 147-148). On Sarachild’s influential accounting of the political aims of the practice, then, consciousness-raising meetings were a matter of disclosive politics. Recognition of the truth of the matter about one’s situation in the home, for example, was itself a valuable fruit; such recognition could also provide the evidential basis for arguments in favour of a political program to disrupt patriarchal domination. By the late 1980’s, “raising one’s consciousness” regarding the facts of patriarchal oppression was a basic political practice within feminist political organizing, and became a basic political tactic.

Effective as such tactics have been for advancing the political and economic position of women, the tradition mobilizes a conception of the development of feminist consciousness as the development of an epistemically superior vantage on the world—from the more-accurate perception of the state of the world (and one’s own experiences) to a political program which aims at improving that world. Tempting as such a move is, two foundational questions arise for feminist political activism which builds upon the disclosive insight of mid-century consciousness-raising programs. First, what grounds such an epistemic advantage might have; and, given those grounds, the permissibility of bringing about “raised-consciousness” in those who do not already have the

cognitive-epistemic state constitutive of that “consciousness.” On one accounting (discussed elsewhere in this panel), the advantage which accrues to those with “raised consciousness” may merely be that of a standpoint. That accounting, however, does not yet provide a straightforward way out of the second question of epistemic and political paternalism. This paper, then, both identifies and then proposes some (early) avenues out of the problem of paternalism for the disclosive politics that arise from the consciousness-raising tradition, one epistemic and one political. The motivating case for this discussion will be the Canadian feminist legal organization LEAF (the Women’s Legal Education and Action Fund), whose early work on Canadian constitutional case law explicitly employed both consciousness- raising tactics (through work with judges) and pressed the epistemic advantage thesis I describe above by developing the rationale for the recognition of women’s individual testimony as evidence of group-based experience before the courts (Razack 1991).

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#### Speakers



**Genae Matthews**

UNC



**Xin Hui Yong**

MIT



**Alex Bryant**

PhD Student  
University of British Columbia

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#### Moderator



**A.G. Holdier**

Doctoral Academy Fellow & PhD Candidate  
The University of Arkansas

### **Personal Action, Political Action**

 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 4

 Cotton Room



*Many of us find ourselves in the following situation: we recognize that we are situated within unjust systems, and we want to find ways of undermining rather than reinforcing those systems with our actions – but we don't know how. After all, systems of injustice are huge and complex, and individual action virtually never has any meaningful effect on them. But at the same time, systems won't change by themselves, so surely there must be something we should be doing. The three papers in this session help us to think about the place of our actions as individuals within contexts of structural injustice. The first paper explains the conceptual problem and proposes an effective way of thinking about political action from individuals. The second paper outlines the role that fear plays in the maintenance of oppression, and shows how individuals can – and must – resist fearfulness. The last paper makes the case to white parents that talking to their children about racial injustice from an early age is a necessary part of being a good citizen in a racially unjust society.*

## **Abstracts:**

### **Fear and the Maintenance of Oppression, Barrett Emerick**

This paper explores the complicated interplay between oppressive institutions, the ideologies that maintain them, and the social groups they help to construct. That interplay is thoroughly riddled by fear. For instance, the traditional, Western gender binary as an institution is grounded in the sexist ideology that says that women should both be afraid of sexual violence and should rely on men to protect them. Such ideologies play out in pieces of media (from superhero movies to police procedurals to true crime podcasts) which helps to shore up parts of the social imaginary that says that women are vulnerable and men are both heroes and villains, there to both attack and save them. Such gendered scripts have the downstream effect of training people (by way of fear) to live in to those identities, which thereby helps to justify and maintain the ideology itself. That same pattern plays out in multiple domains: white supremacy, nationalism, homophobia, transphobia, and retributive justice. In each domain fear is born from the background ideology, made concrete in social institutions, and helps to train individual people who populate them in one identity or another, which then helps to perpetuate and maintain those ideologies. After exploring this interplay and illustrating it in each of those domains, I argue that resisting fear (and helping others to do so) is one important method by which we can work for justice.

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### **Why Talking to Our Children About Injustice Cannot Wait, Rosa Terlazzo**

Many white parents put off talking to their children about racial injustice. In this paper, I offer three arguments against doing so: that fairness requires them not to wait; that if they wait, their children will be unable to fulfill their short-term moral duties; and that if they wait, their children will have greater difficulty fulfilling their long-term moral duties.

I begin the argument from fairness by noting that Black parents cannot wait to talk to their children about racial injustice because protecting their children from racial injustice requires knowledge of that injustice. I argue that white parents' duty not to wait is triggered by the fact that these conversations in Black families are both required *and* costly: it is 1) painful to recognize the reality of structural racism, and 2) additionally painful to recognize that you are its target. It is unfair for white parents to choose to shield their children from the first kind of pain, when Black parents are forced to expose their children to both kinds. While waiting is not clearly prohibited by the fair play principle itself, I argue that it violates the underlying value of reciprocity, which prohibits making an exception of oneself or unfairly accepting benefits for oneself that are not available to one's fellows.

Next, I argue that knowledge of racial injustice will be required to ensure that white children can fulfill three kinds of moral duties in the short term: the duty to refrain from causing harm, the duty to refrain from exposing others to harm, and the duty to stand up to unjust harm. First, I show that even young children reinforce racial stereotypes and bully and exclude others for racialized reasons, and that recognizing these stereotypes and broader racist structures is required to help children to understand the wrongness and severity of these actions. Second, I show that white children may engage in certain kinds of behavior (like playing with toy guns in public) without reasonable fear of consequences while their Black peers cannot. I argue that white children ignorant of this difference risk unknowingly exposing their Black peers to unjust harm. Third, I show several ways in which white children might effectively protest racist harms or support Black peers in their wake, and argue that knowledge of racial injustice is required for them to know both when they are called on to do so and what the moral importance of doing so is.

Finally, I argue against talking initially about justice and later incorporating knowledge of injustice. First, I use the philosophical literature on nonideal theory to show that this strategy risks leaving white children both under-equipped to sufficiently understand injustice, and under-motivated to recognize cases of injustice that require costly action. Second, I use the psychological literature to show how this strategy risks inclining children to favor individualized and meritocratic arguments over structural ones as they develop increasingly more complex models of justice over time.

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## **👤 Speakers**



**Barrett Emerick**

St. Mary's College of Maryland



**Rosa Terlazzo**

Associate Professor  
University of Rochester

Moderator



**Sahar Heydari Fard**

Assistant Professor  
The Ohio State University

## An Agenda for Political Philosophy of Science

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 4

📍 River Room I

### Abstracts:

#### **An Agenda for Political Philosophy of Science, Andrew Schroeder**

Although science is routinely characterized as an “objective” or “value-free” enterprise, philosophers of science have shown that this view of science is mistaken, even as an ideal. Core parts of the research process are and should be influenced by non-epistemic values. Scientists must make value judgments when setting standards for hypothesis acceptance, balancing the importance of different types of error, defining concepts, creating classification systems, and constructing models. Case studies show that these value judgments can have a major impact on a study’s conclusions.

With broader acceptance that important aspects of science involve non-epistemic values, philosophers of science have recently paid more attention to thinking about how scientists should make the associated judgments. How should scientists, for example, choose among competing definitions of a concept like *employed*, *species*, or *COVID-caused death*? Should climate models be “tuned” to prioritize accurate predictions of mean temperature, precipitation, or sea level?

To date, scientists and scholars of science weighing in on questions like these have primarily taken one of two approaches. The first is to avoid engagement on the substance of these issues by focusing on transparency – permitting scientists to make these decisions however they like, so long as they describe what they have done. The second is to engage with these issues using the sort of normative reasoning familiar from practical ethics. That might involve asking what definition of a concept is consistent with our best ethical theories, or which type of error is likely to cause greater harm.

A growing number of philosophers of science, though, have argued for a different approach. Given the highly technical nature of much research, transparency will often be of limited value to non-specialists. It is thus important to offer substantive guidance to scientists. The centrality of scientific research to policymaking suggests that the right standards to apply may not be those from practical ethics; they may be distinctly political. That is, rather than seeking to define concepts or weigh error in whatever way would be *morally best*; it might be preferable to do so in a way that is *politically legitimate*.

Unfortunately, the existing literature exploring a political approach to evaluating scientific value judgments is largely disconnected from contemporary work in political philosophy. Philosophers of science who have argued that scientists should defer to the public on matters of value say relatively little about what form that deference should take – failing, for example, to make use of relevant work in democratic theory. Philosophers have proposed that citizen scientists could serve as representatives for the public at large, but don’t engage with the philosophical literature on representation.

The work philosophers of science are doing here could be greatly improved through collaborations with political philosophers. Accordingly, I end the talk by identifying specific issues where collaboration is needed – setting an agenda for work in “political philosophy of science.” This includes questions about what count as legitimate democratic procedures (especially when widespread public participation is infeasible), questions about managing democratic disagreement (exploring alternatives to majoritarianism), and questions about the appropriate interpretation of public reason (especially concerning claims that entangle empirical facts and values).

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#### **Science Journalism in a Democratic Society, Vanessa Schipani**

From climate change to pandemics, we need science to guide policymaking. However, giving science such authority threatens policymaking’s democratic integrity. Why? Two reasons: (1) Most people’s limited scientific understanding prevents them from participating in a science-based policymaking process. (2) Citizens also have a democratic right to live according to their values. How then can we use science in policymaking if people reasonably disagree with the values philosophers argue pervade science?<sup>1</sup> This paper argues we can – if we consider journalism’s role in democracy. When done properly, journalism cultivates a well-informed citizenry and holds those in power to account. Yet when scholars examine the tension between science and democracy, many deny journalism a central role in resolving it.<sup>2</sup> I push back against this by addressing a question of increasing interest to political philosophers: whether scientific reasons are public. If they aren’t, then science-based policymaking conflicts with public reason.

Public reason says the reasons justifying coercive policies should be shared by citizens. However, for the two reasons noted above, some claim scientific reasons aren’t public.<sup>3</sup> To (1), I respond: Scholars conflate the scientific knowledge needed to form policy justifications with what’s needed to merely understand them. Citizens

don't need to be experts: They need journalists to translate the justifications for them. Responding to (2) is trickier. I argue we can reconcile policymaking with the accessibility approach to public reason, which relies on shared evaluative standards, not shared reasons.<sup>4</sup> What are those shared standards? As the pandemic illustrated, scientists, let alone citizens, often don't share evaluative standards at the level of specific policies. That is, they disagree – because of reasonable value differences – about what standard of evidence warrants policy action. However, scientists do share the standard of epistemic responsiveness, I argue, or continually updating their theories in light of new evidence. This standard defines science and allows for disagreement at the levels of reasons and policy-specific evaluative standards. Still, many citizens can't assess whether scientists are epistemically responsive when they inform policymakers, which brings us back to (1). This is where journalists come in: They can hold scientists to account – including asking, 'what would change your mind?' – and then reporting to the public.<sup>5</sup> In concluding, I illustrate my argument using the debate over lockdowns during the pandemic.<sup>6</sup> I also address one crucial objection: Unlike scientists, many citizens don't value epistemic responsiveness, to which I respond more could with the help of journalists. <sup>7</sup>

1 Douglas (2009). *Science, Policy, and the Value-Free Ideal*.

2 Kitcher (2011). *Science in a Democratic Society*; Pamuk (2021). *Politics and Expertise*.

3 Kogelmann and Stich (2021). "When Public Reason Falls Silent: Liberal Democratic Justification versus the Administrative State." *Oxford Studies in Political Philosophy, Volume 7*.

4 Vallier (2014). *Liberal Politics and Public Faith*; Badano and Bonotti (2020). "Rescuing Public Reason Liberalism's Accessibility Requirement." *Law and Philosophy*.

5 Douglas and Richards (eds) (2021). *Science, Values, and Democracy: The 2016 Descartes Lectures*.

6 Lipsitch (2020). "Good Science Is Good Science." *Boston Review*; Ioannidis (2020). "The Totality of the Evidence." *Boston Review*.

7 Baron (2017). "Philosophical Impediments to Citizens' Use of Science." *The Oxford Handbook of the Science of Science Communication*.

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### **Values in Science, Public Reason, and the Shifting Boundaries of the Political Forum,** Gabriele Badano

There is a 'near consensus' emerging in philosophy of science that value judgements are ineliminable from scientific inquiry.<sup>8</sup> Which values should then be employed by scientists? This paper aims to develop a novel answer to this question, labelled 'the public reason view', and defend it against the currently dominant family of responses, focused instead on citizens' values.

To place this answer on firm ground, I first need to bring together the near consensus mentioned above and recent discussions about the role of science within Rawlsian public reason liberalism.<sup>9</sup> In the background of these discussions is a distinctly one-dimensional picture of the proper functioning of scientific inquiry, which is described as trading in factual knowledge, without any mention of values. However, inductive risk, i.e., the unavoidable chance that some of the many decisions contributing to one's scientific theory might be wrong, implies that the job of scientists necessarily involves value judgements. I argue that once we accept this, scientific advisors to policymakers should finally be recognised as having a duty to follow public reason – a duty that is needed to create a barrier against any problematic values that scientific researchers might have entered into their work. Indeed, communicating the outputs of scientific research to policymakers without employing public reason as a filter would risk what I call the 'rule of non-public values', threatening the legitimacy of any ensuing political decision.

Next, I aim to specify how scientific advisors to policymakers should approach values judgements to satisfy public reason, arguing that they should work from within a conception of justice that is political, rests on reasonable foundations, adopts reasonable priority rules, and gives some weight to all relevant reasonable considerations. Drawing on several examples of science controversies, I show that these requirements provide concrete guidance to scientific advisors. Also, I argue that scientific researchers at large are not morally bound by them but should instead communicate their value judgements by following specific norms of transparency that facilitate scientific advisors' public reasoning.

Finally, I contrast my public reason view with arguably the dominant family of responses to the 'which values in science' question, which posits that scientists should instead rely on values that are shared or at least common among actual citizens.<sup>10</sup> (e.g. Lusk, 2021; Schroeder, 2021). Specifically, I attack such approaches by demonstrating that they share several problematic features with the now marginal 'external conception' of Rawlsian public reason liberalism.<sup>11</sup>

8 Lusk (2021). "Does Democracy Require Value-Neutral Science? Analyzing the Legitimacy of Scientific Information in the Political Sphere." *Studies in History & Philosophy of Science*.

9 Bellolio (2019). "The Quinean Assumption: The Case for Science as Public Reason." *Social Epistemology*.

10 Lusk (2021); Schroeder (2021). "Democratic Values: A Better Foundation for Public Trust in Science." *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*.

11 Quong (2011). *Liberalism Without Perfection*.

## 🔊 Speakers



**Andrew Schroeder**  
Professor of Philosophy  
Claremont McKenna College



**Vanessa Schipani**  
PhD Candidate  
University of Pennsylvania



**Gabriele Badano**  
Lecturer in the Department of Politics  
University of York

## 🔊 Moderator



**Clarissa Busch**  
PhD Candidate  
University of Pennsylvania

## Institutional Thinking in Corporate Governance

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 4

📍 River Room II

*Overview: Firms are required to employ collective choice mechanisms to allow the individuals who have ownership rights over the firm to aggregate their views to exercise control of it. This entails, as Hansman (1996, p. 4) notes, that “firms necessarily have a strongly governmental, or political, character.” The three papers in this panel seek to draw from and engage with constitutional theory, political philosophy, and economics to shed light on the normative question: “How should for-profit firms be structured?,” with particular focus on the ethical dimension of this question.*

*Previous approaches to this question have traditionally deployed applied moral-philosophical ethics (e.g., Bowie, 1999) and legal analysis (e.g., Berle, 1931; Boatright, 1994; Dodd, 1932; Stout, 2012). In the past couple of decades, however, some scholars have begun to appreciate the importance of a more institutional perspective for understanding the norms of corporate governance, drawing more heavily on fields such as economics, political science, and political philosophy (e.g., Heath, 2014; Heath, Moriarty, & Norman, 2010; Singer, 2019). Our panel builds on this latter tradition to shed light on the institutional role of corporations and the implications that their institutional context has for the norms that should guide their governance.*

*Paper 1 exploits a symmetry in authoritative relations across firms and governments to advance theory of corporate governance with reference to what constrains and justifies state authority in constitutional traditions. In short, taking on a more macro lens, it attempts to mine the descriptive and normative theory we already have for authority-laden formal structures, suggesting a constitutional justification for special duties to shareholders and new focus on initial formation and alteration of corporate governance structures over time. Paper 2 makes a complementary methodological argument, pushing for a focus on institutional ‘engineering’ as an important focus of theory-building in business ethics, which would shed light on justifications for economic arrangements typified by the profit motive and that context-dependent norms that prevail in corporate governance. In this vein of institutional engineering, Paper 3 examines the specific kinds of corporate control that may be vested in shareholders, and argues the neoclassical economic justification for shareholder control in truth succeeds only with regard to firm strategic decisions. This paper then entertains potential changes in institutional control over corporate ethics.*

*Our panel should be of interest to scholars interested in politics, philosophy, and economics, in particular to those interested in exploring how analytical tools and concepts from these fields can be brought to bear on questions related to business firms. Our panel is also intended to help scholars from the business ethics academic community appreciate the value of drawing on these scholarly traditions.*

### **Abstracts:**

#### **Failure Analysis, Engineering Problems, and the Ethics of Corporate Governance, Carson Young**

Wiens (2012) distinguishes between architectural and engineering problems in the design of institutions: architectural problems concern “the ways in which different configurations of institutional components embody different sets of values” (47), whereas engineering problems “concern the application of social scientific principles with an eye to making institutions capable of withstanding the pressures to which they will be subject” (ibid). He argues that normative theorists tend to adopt an ‘ideal guidance approach’ to designing institutions that systematically underappreciates the importance of engineering problems versus architectural problems.

Much work in business ethics, like in many fields of practical ethics, has tended to focus on architectural problems when thinking about corporate purpose and related questions in business ethics. ‘Applied ethics’ approaches take a normative theory—Millian utilitarianism, Kantian deontology, Habermasian discourse ethics—and use it to derive normative implications about both institutional design and the ethical responsibilities of individual agents functioning within institutions. I argue in this paper that our understanding of ethics in business would benefit from adopting more of a focus on engineering problems. A focus on engineering problems provides a better justification of the moral importance of the profit motive compared to more traditional approaches, and a better understanding of how ethical norms of corporate governance can differ depending on institutional context.

## Morality and Efficiency: A Corporate Governance Puzzle , Santiago Mejia

Neoclassical accounts of the theory of the firm help us understand the economic principles that explain why so many for-profit firms give formal ownership rights to investors (Coase 1937; Alchian and Demsetz 1972; Hansmann 1996). The theory of the firm suggests that by giving ownership rights to shareholders, the firm's ownership and contracting costs are minimized (or, what is equivalent, the firm's net benefits are maximized). This explains not only why shareholders tend to have ownership rights over firms but also why such firms are better positioned for their long-term success.

It is natural to assume (and the scholarship has typically assumed it) that the constituency granted formal ownership rights should also have the rights of what one may call moral control, i.e., the power to ensure that the firm's activities conform with the firm's moral obligations. This paper seeks to show that this assumption is unwarranted.

The theory of the firm establishes what one may call the rights of *strategic* control by evaluating the effect of giving ownership rights to a particular constituency by analyzing contractual and ownership costs involved in doing so. I develop a similar framework to assess the effects of giving the firm's rights of *moral* enforcement to different constituencies. In particular, I evaluate a series of moral modifiers that strengthen or debilitate the ability of constituencies to make the firm comply with its moral obligations. I argue that the constituencies that, according to the neoclassical theory of the firm, should have ownership rights are not well positioned to enforce the firm's moral obligations. I argue that applying this framework suggests that employees or an independent ethics board may be much better positioned to enforce the firm's moral obligations.

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## ESG and the Publicization of Regulation, Paul Forrester

In 2021, a small activist hedge fund called "Engine No. 1" led the charge to install three new directors at ExxonMobil. These new directors aimed to improve the company's strategic planning concerning the "existential" risks to their business model posed by climate change and the energy transition. Engine No. 1 did not accomplish this alone: it had the backing of Blackrock, as well as the support of Vanguard and State Street, three of Exxon's largest shareholders. This episode exemplifies a significant trend in the American political economy. The big three asset managers, growing ever larger due to the ongoing passive investing revolution, are using the proxy votes that they control to promote ESG standards in their portfolio companies.

I will defend two claims about this trend in this paper.

My central analytical claim is that asset managers are exercising regulatory control over their portfolio companies. Exxon was forced by its large shareholders to reduce its carbon footprint. But on the very same day, Shell was forced by a Dutch court to take similar actions. I argue that the same thing is happening in both cases—a company is being regulated—but different bodies are doing the regulating: in one case the state and in the other case asset managers. I consider several other cases where asset managers have implemented a regulation in one jurisdiction, but the state has implemented the same regulation in another. This illustrates what I dub "publicization" (the opposite of privatization), which occurs when non-state institutions grow so large that they possess incentives to provide public goods. Crucially, I explain how exercising regulatory control is consistent with the fiduciary obligations of asset managers. Due to their substantial diversification and long time horizons, there is a large overlap between the interests of patient owners and the public interest.

My central normative claim is that this regulatory control is not democratically legitimate: the power of asset managers to set social and environmental policy is not accountable to the public at large. Rather, technocrats on the stewardship teams and at proxy advisory services decide how companies are regulated. I discuss two existing mechanisms for holding asset managers accountable: pass-through voting and investor exit. They share two common problems: (1) investors are rationally apathetic about how their shares are voted and (2) even if investors (irrationally) voted their shares, investors do not form a representative sample of the population: they are wealthier, whiter and older than the public at large. In a capitalist democracy, each dollar gets one vote and each person gets one vote. Allowing this trend of publicization to continue would transfer political power from the

median voter to the median dollar. I discuss what role the lack of democratic legitimacy should play in the overall cost-benefit analysis of our capital market institutions, and I conclude by proposing some novel mechanisms which could legitimize the power of asset managers.

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#### 🔊 Speakers



**Carson Young**  
Assistant Professor  
SUNY Brockport



**Santiago Mejia**  
Fordham



**Paul Forrester**  
Yale

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#### 🔊 Moderator



**Joseph Porter**  
DePauw University

## Social Preconditions and Limits of Freedom

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 4

📍 Terrace Room

### Abstracts:

#### **Democratic Deliberation and Freedom of Thought**, Lucas Swaine

Putative duties to engage deliberatively with one's fellow citizens can conflict sharply with the right to freedom of thought. Deliberative theorists occasionally identify desiderata or requirements of deliberation that run afoul of freedom of thought, and which fail to respect the fundamental prerogatives afforded by that crucial liberty. For example, while it is plausible that citizens have an unenforceable pro tanto duty to deliberate publicly with fellow citizens, when it comes to making decisions on controversial and weighty political matters, that is different from having a duty to disclose a great deal of one's thoughts on the matters under discussion. The former duty does not entail the latter. Second, it is unclear that democratic deliberators should or must be fully forthcoming about the thoughts motivating their public contributions, given that much of the thinking in question may be private or intimate, or important for citizens to keep to themselves for other reasons. The special value of freedom of thought illuminates the grounds of a democratic citizen's individual prerogative to keep her thoughts to herself, even given associated costs to participation and transparency that such a prerogative provides.

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#### **Liberalism, Freedom and Social Practices**, John Christman

Alistair MacIntyre famously argued that because human action was intelligible only when understood as embedded in social roles and practices, the emphasis that modernist liberalism put on state neutrality toward conceptions of the good had to be abandoned. As part of the communitarian critique of liberalism, this view put pressure on the commitment to pluralism and neutrality thought to be central to the liberal project. Decades of discussion since then has resulted mostly in the rejection of the communitarian project, but what has not been sufficiently appreciated by liberals was MacIntyre's claims about the social nature of human action.

For many theorists in the liberal tradition, freedom ranges over individual basic actions, understood as simple behaviors (whether in coordination with others or by oneself). In this way, protecting liberty looks to be consistent with neutrality concerning the ways of life and conceptions of the good that citizens may be pursuing in carrying out those actions. However, for various reasons, it is preferable to see liberty as ranging over not just individual acts or actions but rather practices – activities that are normatively structured in a variety of ways and which require social cooperation and support to be meaningful and feasible. The freedom of religion, for example, ranges not merely over neutrally described acts and behaviors like putting one's hands together, bowing one's head, and muttering certain words. Rather, it involves the existence of socially structured institutions like churches, synagogues or temples, the public recognition of specialized roles such as priests, etc., and broadly shared understanding of the meaning and importance of those socially constituted structures. To protect and promote freedom in this way, then, involves the public recognition and support of social structures that have decidedly normative character.

Accepting this view of action and freedom, which I argue is motivated independently, poses deep challenges to

the pluralism espoused by liberalism, as McIntyre noted. However, rather than reject the commitment to pluralism, as most of the communitarian writers did in raising this challenge, I want to explore ways that the protection of freedom in this sense can be understood as consistent with the commitment to pluralism that liberalism (and related perspectives) needs to retain. In particular, I lay out, first, the case, for seeing social practices as the fundamental unit of the kind of freedom that is worth protecting and promoting in a just society, and then, second, sketch out a framework for a procedural conception of the promotion of liberty, one that avoids the value particularism of communitarian views and responds to the challenge of pluralism.

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### **Communicating & Interpreting Experiments in Living**, Luise Papcke

The marketplace of ideas is a central concept within the ideal of liberal pluralism. In liberal society, individuals are free to live according to their own ideas of the good within the limits of preserving that same freedom for others. As formulated most famously by John Stuart Mill, the societal benefit of this diversity arises because, in each living according to their own values and wishes, individuals are thought to be able to learn from one another's "experiments in living". In allowing competing lifestyles to exist alongside each other within an overarching liberal legal and normative framework, not only are citizens 'richer' in options, but society as a whole also benefits because it is able to continuously update and adapt its norms and stave off the "dead dogma" of ossified beliefs and traditions. Individual eccentricity, including people's mistakes and wasted lives, are thus harnessed for the good of others as well as the collective good.

In order for citizens to learn from each other's experiments in living, however, presumably more than simply co-existing in the same society is needed. Arguably, even observing one another is not enough for people to meaningfully learn from each other's lives given the unintelligibility of deep difference. Rather, some sort of communication is necessary that can allow persons to grow sufficient levels of understanding and empathy to be able to effectively decode the life choices of others and evaluate their consequences. Without such communicative practices, the promise of the liberal ideal of the marketplace of ideas, and the benefits of experiments of living, remains empty. Mill himself seemingly takes the mere existence of diversity and eccentricity—and the absence of social or legal oppression—as sufficient for societal learning. Theories of deliberative democracy and political liberalism on the other hand focus mostly on how to communicate about the *res publica* in order to find political compromise across difference. But political communication is not the full potential of the marketplace of ideas. I turn to two earlier liberal thinkers, Wilhelm von Humboldt and Friedrich Schleiermacher, who like Mill were preoccupied with how best to accommodate and foster individual-level and group-level diversity within society. I examine their ideas on the social preconditions of flourishing individual diversity and the hermeneutics of interpreting the individuality of others and their experiments in living. This allows me to retrace what kinds of social interaction and exchange they theorized was needed for individuality to be effectively communicated between persons and between groups, and to analyze what behavioral and institutional preconditions they believed to be required for the marketplace of ideas and liberal pluralism to function.

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#### **Speakers**



**Lucas Swaine**

Professor of Government  
Dartmouth College



**John Christman**

Professor of Philosophy, Political Science, and WGSS  
Penn State



**Luise Papcke**

Yale University

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#### **Moderator**



**Eric MacGilvray**

Professor  
Ohio State University

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## **PPE and Technology: Addiction, Deepfakes, and Algorithms**

🕒 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM, Nov 4

📍 Tower Room

### **Abstracts:**

**The Duty to Protect Collective Autonomy from Addictive Technology**, Timothy Aylsworth, co-authored by Clinton Castro

There has been much discussion of the moral and prudential reasons we have to restructure our relationship with technology in virtue of the harmful effects it has on us as individuals.<sup>1</sup> But if we restrict our focus to the ways that technology can harm us as individuals, we overlook morally significant harms to groups *qua* groups. We argue that addictive technology weakens our capacity to act autonomously *as a group*. We defend this claim by arguing that the certain features of the attention economy (e.g., that it contributes to polarization<sup>2</sup>) threaten to undermine the legitimacy of political institutions.

We begin in section 2 by explaining what is distinctive about group-level harms. In short, we hold that as a group collectively pursues goals (and acts on the basis of shared intentions),<sup>3</sup> they are vulnerable to being harmed in ways that undermine the group's capacity to achieve those ends. In section 3 we show how trust and trustworthiness play an important role in preserving a democratic state's legitimacy. Many of the state's aims can be accomplished only if those who are subject to its rule see it as trustworthy. This means that undermining public trust (and/or the state's trustworthiness) would hinder the state's ability to fulfill its responsibilities. We will argue that states are vulnerable to group-level harms insofar as their group agency is susceptible to being undermined by threats to public trust.

In section 4, we show how trust and trustworthiness play an important role in preserving a democratic state's legitimacy. Many of the state's aims can be accomplished only if those who are subject to its rule see it as trustworthy. This means that undermining public trust (and/or the state's trustworthiness) would hinder the state's ability to fulfill its responsibilities. And given the nature of democratic legitimacy, trust and trustworthiness are key components of the state's agency. Without trust, the government is unable to achieve its aims or fulfill its commitments. Various features of the attention economy threaten to undermine trust in the government and the government's trustworthiness. Thus, the attention economy not only harms us individually, as many critics of it have argued, it harms us collectively as well.

1 For prudential reasons, see, for example, Carr (2010), Newport (2019), Odell (2019). For moral reasons see, e.g., Aylsworth and Castro (2021, 2022); Lo Re, Stefano (2022).

2 See Rathje et al. (2021).

3 We discuss various accounts of group agents in section 2. For the most part, our account of group agents is similar to List and Pettit (2011).

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### **The Politics of Biometric Data and Deepfakes, Emma Prendergast**

Deepfakes are synthetic media that use machine learning to manipulate video and audio content, creating realistic but fake images or sound. A prominent concern about deepfake technology is that it can be used for wrongful deception leading to epistemic harms (Rini 2020). In this paper, I primarily consider the ways that AI generated representations can wrong the agents that they represent even when those representations are *not* deceptive. Rather, we are sometimes wronged by such representations even if the producer of the deepfake presents it honestly as a deepfake. Some of these harms have been recently articulated by Rini and Cohen (2022), including virtual domination and illocutionary harms. Sturino (2023) recently argued that aside from harms, non-deceptive deepfake content using the likeness of individuals may violate their rights. In this paper I will consider potential legal and policy implications, proposing regulations on the collection and use of biometric data. These examples elucidate the (non-deceptive) harms of deepfakes:

*Deepfakes as revenge porn:* Most U.S. states now have statutes that make revenge porn illegal, but not corresponding language that penalizes deepfake pornography. Deepfake pornography can serve the same vengeful function through the nonconsensual dissemination of sexually objectifying material. Victims of deepfake pornography report similar distress at the release of this objectifying imagery, even while it may be publicly known that the representations are fake.<sup>1</sup> The imagery wrongs the represented individual directly through nonconsensual objectification. Sexually objectifying imagery can also lead to broader social harms pertaining to the subordinate position of women in an unjust social hierarchy (Dworkin and MacKinnon 1988). Rini and Cohen (2022) call this harm *virtual domination*.

*Grimes sings a Nazi anthem?:* There has been a recent proliferation of AI-generated versions of popular singers' voices. Some artists have expressed opposition to the use of their voices in AI-generated music, but the musician Grimes recently announced that she would split 50% royalties with anyone who creates a successful AI-generated song simulating her voice. Grimes subsequently asked creators not to do this with toxic lyrics, writing: "try not to exit the current Overton window of lyrical content w regards to sex/violence. ... Rly don't like to do a rule but don't wanna be responsible for a Nazi anthem."<sup>2</sup> Even if a song is credited as "AI-simulation of Grimes" or so forth, a musical artist can reasonably object to the use of an AI trained on their voice proliferating objectionable content. Rini and Cohen (2022) refer to this harm as *illocutionary harm*.

The above considerations about the wrongs (and potential rights violations) brought about by deepfake representation bear importantly on policy and legislation surrounding the machine learning technology that makes their production possible, bringing into view concerns about copyright, intellectual property, and our conception self-ownership. The problems with machine learning technology are complicated by speech statutes and liberal attitudes about free expression, but point to the need for legislation that gives individuals ownership over their biometric data and prohibits the nonconsensual use of it in machine learning datasets. <sup>3</sup>

1 Farokhmanesh, Megan. 2023. "The Debate on Deepfake Porn Misses the Point." Wired. <https://www.wired.com/story/deepfakes-twitch-streamers-gtcinderella-atric-pokimane/> (Accessed May 17 2023.)

2 Grimes [@Grimezsz] "Ok hate this part but ..." Twitter, 2023 <https://twitter.com/Grimezsz/status/1650541506925670428>

3 Precedent for this includes the 2008 Illinois Biometric Information Privacy Act (BIPA).

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**Predictive Algorithms, Enhanced Sentencing, and Just Criminal Punishment**, Lindsey Schwartz, co-authored by Alan Rubel

This paper examines the practice of using predictive algorithmic systems to lengthen the prison sentences of convicted persons when the systems forecast a higher likelihood of re-offense or re-arrest. There has been much critical discussion of technologies used for sentencing, including questions of bias and opacity. However, there hasn't been a discussion of whether this use of predictive systems makes sense in the first place. We argue that it does not by showing that there is no plausible theory of punishment that supports it.

We begin with the 2013 case of Paul Zilly, a paradigmatic case of sentencing on the basis of a predictive algorithmic system. When Zilly was convicted in the state of Wisconsin of stealing a push lawnmower and some tools, his lawyer and the prosecutor agreed to a plea deal: one year in county jail with follow-up supervision. The judge, however, overturned the deal. In preparation for sentencing, the Department of Corrections had prepared a presentencing investigation report—a report on an offender's background—on Zilly. The report included an algorithmically-generated prediction of the likelihood that Zilly would reoffend. The judge found the assessment to be, "about as bad as it could be" and sentenced Zilly to two years in state prison, with three years of supervision.

The Zilly case raises many questions, some of which have received ample attention. The software used to generate the risk score—COMPAS—calculates scores via statistical generalization. Was Zilly, then, robbed of his right to an individualized sentence?<sup>1</sup> COMPAS is owned by a private company—Northpointe, Inc.—and, thus, is under proprietary lock and key. Did Zilly suffer an informational wrong in being denied access to the formula that generated his score?<sup>2</sup> COMPAS has been accused of unfairness: it misclassifies Black defendants as high-risk at almost twice the rate it does White defendants; to what extent does this render its judgments illegitimate?<sup>3</sup> These are important questions. However, we are interested in a more foundational question: does it even make sense to use risk assessments in the way that they were used in Zilly's case?

Our contention in this paper is that there is no plausible theory of punishment that fits with the practice of *predictive sentencing*, the practice of lengthening the prison sentences of persons convicted of crimes just because they have high forecasts of re-offense or re-arrest. We do not argue that predictions of future re-arrest or re-offense have no place in the criminal justice system. Indeed, we note that such predictions can play an important role in the allocation of scarce supervisory resources. Our argument is that one cannot infer from the fact that someone is a likely re-offender that they should receive a longer sentence.

We begin by clarifying the concept of punishment itself. We then take a piecemeal approach, working through various theories of punishment one-by-one, showing that none of them jibes with the practice of predictive sentencing.

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Freeman (2016)

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Pasquale (2015)

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Angwin et al. 2016 and Corbett-Davies and Goel (2018)

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#### 🗣️ Speakers



**Tim Aylsworth**

Assistant Professor  
Florida International University



**Emma Prendergast**

Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
Utah Tech University



**Lindsey Schwartz**

Assistant Professor  
Denison University

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#### 🗣️ Moderator



**David O'Brien**

Assistant Professor  
Tulane University

5:30 PM

**Keynote Address: "Justice by Means of Democracy" with Danielle Allen**

🕒 5:30 PM - 6:30 PM, Nov 4

📍 Grand Ballroom II

**Abstract:**

In *Justice by Means of Democracy*, Danielle Allen offers a new paradigm for political economy, power-sharing liberalism. Building on the work of scholars like Amartya Sen, Philip Pettit, and Elizabeth Anderson, Allen offers an innovative reconstruction of liberalism based on the principle of full inclusion and non-domination—in which no group has a monopoly on power—in politics, economy, and society. At a time of great social and political turmoil, when many residents of the leading democracies question the ability of their governments to deal fairly and competently with serious public issues, and when power seems more and more to rest with the wealthy few, Allen reconsiders the very foundations of justice and democracy. The surest path to a just society in which all have the support necessary to flourish is the protection of political equality, and recognizing this leads to an alternative strategy for the project of political economy.

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**Speakers**



**Danielle Allen**

James Bryant Conant University Professor  
Harvard University



**Geoff Sayre-McCord**

Director, PPE Society  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

6:30 PM

**Keynote Reception**

🕒 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM, Nov 4

📍 Magnolia III

Join us for drinks, canapes, and conversation!