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ABSTRACTS

The Foundations of Behavioral Welfare Economics

Erik Angner (University of Alabama, Birmingham)

After the establishment of behavioral economics as a bona fide subfield of economics in the last few decades, recent years have seen at least two new developments. The first is the proliferation of "second-wave" studies, which attempt to incorporate behavioral assumptions into increasingly sophisticated, mathematically rigorous models of economic phenomena at both the micro and the macro levels. The second is the appearance of behavioral welfare economics, which attempts to explore normative implications of the positive theory. The literature on behavioral welfare economics -- which I take to include the literature on "behavioral law and economics" -- is, however, beset by confusions about the normative standards to be applied, and about the extent to which the policy prescriptions are paternalistic. The aim of this paper is to spell out the normative assumptions underlying behavioral welfare economics, in particular, and the sense in which behavioral welfare economics is paternalistic. My main thesis is that the normative standards underlying behavioral welfare economics are, in fact, no different from the normative standards underlying mainstream (neoclassical) economics, and that what the behavioral economists refer to as "light" or "asymmetric" paternalism is not paternalism, as typically understood, at all.

The Clinical Conceit": Locating the Causal Antecedents of Domestic Violence

Ann E. Cudd (University of Kansas)

Legal scholar Linda Mills proposes that feminist inspired theories of domestic violence have led to intervention strategies that harm the victim and fail to end its recurrence for most victims. She argues that in most cases, women behave in ways that provoke violent response out of an unconscious impulse to reenact previous traumatic occasions. Furthermore, women often react violently, making them responsible in part for the elevation of the level of violence and also subject to arrest under current mandatory arrest procedures. Thus, Mills argues for revoking mandatory arrest, allowing victims to decide whether to pursue charges, and for therapeutic responses that attempt to reconcile the domestic partners. In response to Mills, Evan Stark has charged that her theory commits what he calls the "clinical conceit, the view that individual agency and 'choice' are the foundation of 'empowerment,' and therefore, that interventions are properly assessed by whether they respect women's choices and ameliorate suffering." Stark argues for a sociological, institutional explanation of domestic violence, as feminists have offered for decades.

This paper argues that although the correct strategy for intervention depends on properly locating the causal antecedents of domestic violence, they are overdetermined, and that determining effective intervention is primarily a normative question that must be based in valid social science. However, because it is overdetermined, a variety of strategies could be effective in curtailing domestic violence. The question of which strategy to choose can only be answered by determining secondary effects of the possible strategies and the desirability of those other effects

The Place of Self-Respect in a Theory of Social Justice

Jerry Doppelt (UC-San Diego), John Berteaux (Monterey Bay)

Self-Respect seems to be a matter of how an individual evaluates himself or herself, and how the person is evaluated by others. As such, the concept of Self-Respect would be central to issues in ethics, but peripheral to the concerns of political theory. Nonetheless, the tradition of Rawlsian liberalism advances the view that social justice requires 'equality in the social bases of self-respect', and provides an account of how this view can be cashed out. Our paper challenges some fundamental aspects of the Rawlsian analysis of self-respect, the account of the 'social bases' of self-respect, and the whole notion that it is a distributional good, such as income or liberty, for which 'equality' is a coherent political ideal. The aim is not, however, to reject the Rawlsian view, but rather to reconstruct it — so that its normative intentions are better aligned with what we know about the social dynamics of respect and recognition in modern society. More concretely, the paper argues that the problem of self-respect — as a feature of political arrangements — calls for a synthesis of sociological and philosophical insights concerning the structure of modern economic and political culture. In particular, can a liberal theory of social justice accommodate the impact of the systems of race, class, and gender on the dynamics of recognition and self-respect in modern societies? How does the sociology of recognition reframe the philosophy of social equality and justice?

Our discussion will begin with empirical insights of critical theorists of race concerning the social practices which distort the recognition and personhood of blacks in American society. We will draw on these empirical insights in order to question John Rawls' analysis of Self-Respect, his account of the social basis of Self-Respect, and his conception of the structural changes in American society sufficient for justice. Rawls' liberalism turns on his ideal of free and equal persons who are supposed to choose principles of justice. The empirical dynamics of race challenge Rawls starting point that we already are committed to the ideal of persons as free and equal. We look at sociological phenomena concerning scarcities of respect and pathologies of Self-Respect, which call for a somewhat larger conception of critical philosophy than what is contained in Rawls' political liberalism and theory of justice. The aim here is to point the way to a richer and more critical account of liberalism, not to reject it entirely. Our discussion should open up new explorations of the intersection of critical sociology and normative political philosophy. The everyday politics of a struggle with personhood can alter our understanding of the practices at stake in social justice.

The « Psychological Pluralism » of Racial Prejudice

Luc Faucher (Université du Québec à Montréal), Edouard Machery (University of Pittsburgh):

With very few exceptions (for instance, Corlett 2003; Blum, 2004), philosophers of race have not been interested in what psychology (more specifically social psychology) has to say on racial prejudice. One might suspect that for some philosophers, it is a certain conception of the task of philosophy that is responsible for the situation. According to that conception, philosophers's job would be to define what race and racism are and what moral issues race and racism raise; and this could be done without looking at the empirical literature. But others have resisted the to consider psychology on a different ground, arguing that cognitive mechanisms are not able to explain what is of interest to philosophers. For instance, philosophers like Paul Taylor, maintain that races are "institutional facts" and are thus to be explained by mentioning particular social and cultural factors. Since hard-wired mechanisms are thought to produce outputs independently of culture or society, they would not be able to explain the peculiar forms taken by race and racism in different societies and/or at different times.

We disagree with both groups of philosophers. In previous papers (2005a, 2005b), we have argued against the kind of position hold by philosophers like Taylor's. In this paper, we will suggest reasons why philosophers interested in moral issues raised by race and racism should pay more attention to the psychological literature. Our strategy will be first to focus on a recent debate between Garcia and Blum concerning the adequate moral characterization of racism.

In a series of papers (1996, 1997, 1999, 2004), Garcia defended a volitional view of racism according to which it is a necessary condition for something (be it an action, a belief or an institution) to be called

'racist' to be motivated by a vicious kind of attitude characterized by disregard for the welfare directed at members of another race, like hatred or malevolence. As Blum (2002, 2004) pointed out Garcia's account is somewhat too narrow to capture everything that is wrong with race. To use Blum terminology, there are 'racial ills' that are not the result of racism *per se*. Blum thus opposed to the "moral monism" of Garcia's account. More recently, Blum (2006) has also argued that Garcia's account of racism was not predicated on a sufficiently psychologically rich description of the phenomena, therefore, it could not give a textured enough description of the moral virtues related to racism. This time Blum opposed Garcia's "psychological monism".

We agree on both counts with Blum. But we will focus our attention on the problem of Garcia's psychological monism. We think, like Blum, that a more refined description of the psychological underpinnings of racial phenomena is crucial to understand, and ultimately change, the kind of moral persons we are. But we want to propose that a psychologically refined image of the moral subject cannot be obtained only by harm-chair psychology. Our claim is that one has to use the best available tools there are to produce this image and that social psychology (understood broadly as to include social neuroscience) is one of them. To make our point, we will look at recent works in social psychology.

We will first start by presenting a socio-functional threat-based approach to prejudice (Cottrell and Neuberg, 2005) according to which traditional conceptions of prejudice have neglected the rich texturing of emotions that people feel toward different groups. These studies have shown that subjects that are equally prejudiced against different ethnic groups, may feel quite different emotions depending of the kind of threats they represent these groups to pose to their own group (we will term this position as "moral pluralism"). If these studies are right then it becomes crucial to study the workings of particular emotions (like fear, disgust, anger, envy, pity, etc.) underlying emotions to understand the underlying mechanisms of racial prejudices. In this presentation, we take seriously the need for a piecemeal investigation of emotions underlying prejudice by focusing our attention on two emotions: fear and disgust. More precisely, we will examine the work from Elizabeth Phelps and her colleagues (Phelps and Banaji, 2006 and Olsson et al., 2005) on fear acquisition of racial groups and the work of Faulkner and colleagues (2004) Fessler and colleagues (Navarrete, Fessler and Eng, 2007; Navarrete and Fessler, 2006; Fessler, Eng and Navarrete, 2005) on individual differences in disgust.

In conclusion, we will spell out the implications of the "psychological pluralism" we advocate for moral psychology.

Analysing the rational use of formal methods of inference in the special sciences

Damien Fennell (LSE)

Formal methods of statistical and causal inference play a central role in the special sciences. Consider, for instance, the role of hypothesis testing in psychology, that of randomized controlled trials in medicine or the widespread use of econometrics in economics. For some, these methods are the *sine qua non* of good research. But why are these methods so influential, so dominant in particular disciplines? Arguably the dominance is due to belief that adherence to these methods guarantees important epistemic benefits: greater rigour, lack of bias, greater accuracy and the like. These beliefs are often supported by strong arguments about why these benefits follow in principle. Yet such beliefs have not gone unchallenged – there have been strong methodological critiques. Some criticise the grounds for the belief, others whether the beliefs are reasonable given the use of formal methods in practice. Gerd Gigerenzer (2000), for example, criticises hypothesis testing in psychology for conflating the Fisher and Neyman-Pearson approaches and applying inconsistent Bayesian intuitions. Lucas (1976) in his critique of econometrics argues that econometric inferences will not be stable to policy interventions because of agents' expectations. More recently still, Worrall (2007) has questioned the alleged superiority of randomised controlled trials over other experimental methods in medicine. What all of these critiques have in common is an analysis of what rationalises a formal method, some to emphasize the importance of consistency (Gigerenzer), others to question the assumptions being made in that rationalisation (Lucas, Worrall).

Discussions like these are not simply abstract academic exercises, far from it, if the use of such formal

methods rests on strong beliefs that they are epistemically superior, it is really important to understand those epistemic rationales and their strengths and limits. In addition, if one is to use these methods in a context-sensitive way, it is vital to relate these epistemic rationales to the context in which inferences are made and the contexts to which they are applied. In part, this is to emphasise the importance of studying the logic of inference of these methods, one that sets out formally how and in what conditions the method achieves knowledge. However, this paper argues that this is just a part of what is required for a more reflexive use of formal methods in practice. If we are concerned with the practice of science and in particular how the conclusions of those who use these formal methods are justified, we must go beyond the lofty study of logics of methods of inference. This is because in practice, particularly in the special and social sciences, scientists face highly complex situations, where key assumptions of the logic of inference will often not be satisfied. Overly focussing on the logic of inference, can lead to the rejection of practice as 'unscientific' and lead discussion away from the other good reasons (epistemic or not) that scientists may have for practical conclusions they make using these formal methods. The paper argues this would be unfortunate. Instead, the paper argues that a concept of 'model of inference' is a more fruitful one for analysing the reasonable use of formal methods. This approach treats the users of the method as having a model of the world and the method in it, that makes some epistemic sense of why and how they use it. This epistemic sense is captured in part by the logic of inference. However, by using the concept of a 'model', it assumes that this logic denotes an ideal case that may not be met in actual situations where the method is used. This crucially allows the possibility of considering further reasons (epistemic or not) as to why such formal method may be applied in a context. This is done by considering reasons why a model can reasonably applied even when it is not a perfect representation.

Rational Choice Model of Intentions

Randall Harp (University of Vermont)

In this paper I develop a model of rational choice theory which can account for the intentions of agents in a game to play some action, or bring about some outcome. Traditional choice theories, I argue, do not have the resources necessary to account for volitional pro-attitudes such as intentions; in order for them to do so, we must supplement such theories with intentions. Intentions, I argue, can permit strategically-reasoning agents to solve certain types of games that traditional choice theories have difficulty solving. In addition, although I do not detail the argument here, intentions can permit us to model cooperatively-reasoning agents, and describe cooperative reasoning and cooperative activities (as opposed to strategic reasoning and cooperative outcomes produced by strategic reasoners).

The problem with traditional rational choice theories is that the resources available to them (viz. belief-type attitudes and desire-type attitudes) fail to account for two conditions that an acceptable theory of action must meet: they must account account for what justifies the adoption of a goal (and actions performed in pursuit of that goal), and they must also account for what it means to possess a goal (that is, to be settled on performing some action or bringing about some outcome). The first condition is called the justification condition, and the second is called the possession condition. Traditional choice theories are either normative or descriptive; normative choice theories detail which action a rational agent should play (or which outcome an agent should bring about), while descriptive choice theories describe which action a rational agent will play (or which outcome the agent will bring about). I argue that neither normative choice theories, nor descriptive choice theories, can account for both the possession condition and the justification condition.

If we want to account for both, I argue, we need to supplement our choice theory with intentions. I describe several desiderata for a theory of intentions: intentions must restrict our deliberation, they must be broadly satisfiable, they must be revisable (subject to certain constraints), and they must impose volitional commitments on their holder.

I develop a theory of intentions in which intentions function as self-imposed constraints on a game form. I describe two stages: there is the adoption stage, which is modeled as an extensive game over sets of intentions, and there is the implementation stage, in which intentions serve to restrict the outcomes an agent judges it rational to bring about

Persons as Agents and Objects of Social Science

Jessica Heineman-Pieper (George Mason University)

Social sciences from psychology to economics continue to embed residual logical empiricist assumptions that exert a systematic bias on the results of their inquiries. In this paper, I explore this interaction in the context of a particular case study: The relationship, in experimental psychology, between (1) the attempt to ground objectivity in spite of rather than through scientists' autonomous agency and capacity to choose guiding ideals, and (2) the disappearance of guiding ideals from the image of human agency projected in social scientific theorizing. In line with logical empiricist prescriptions and as evidenced by disciplinary criteria for 'reliable' data, experimental psychology still aspires to ground objectivity in formalized rules and procedures that—notwithstanding Wittgenstein's rule following insights—are taken to coerce and determine the expression of scientists' agency and to constitute structural impediments to manipulation by human agency and interests. But assuming that particular sets of rules provide superior safeguards to objectivity miscasts the sources of objectivity and suppresses the kinds of inquiry needed most effectively to evaluate and support it. Furthermore, when the scientific community elevates a supposedly mechanical adherence to formalized rules and procedures over the vital role of scientists' personal commitments to scientific ideals, the result is that the highest, regulatory levels of human agency become invisible both in the scientific activity and in the scientific theories that result from those activities. With respect to scientific activity, scientists and human research 'subjects' are in fact both choosing to be guided by individual and, normally, collective ideals that govern their participation in the scientific research. With respect to scientific theorizing, direct effects of these methodological blind-spots should perhaps not be surprising: Causal and meaningful structures are explored primarily by engaging with them, and therefore the quest to theorize restricted parts of only the research participant's side of an interaction, especially while asserting inertness on the scientist's side of the interaction, is prone to result in substantive distortions. Indeed, the experimental social sciences usually yield theories that are skeptical of the human capacity to choose and be guided by ideals – especially shared, mutual ideals – and frequently portray persons as selfish, encapsulated instrumental rationalists of the sort that populate sociobiology, game theory, and much of psychology and economics. This paper concludes by suggesting how the social sciences can improve objectivity and reduce mimetic circularities when they recognize and take into account the guiding ideals and regulatory agency of both the agents and objects of social science research.

The Trouble With Stereotypes for Our Spinozan Psychology

Bryce Huebner (UNC-Chapel Hill)

Spinoza (1677, part II, section 48) argues that the various stimuli with which we are confronted immediately modify our psychology, producing ideas that have substantial effects without any cognitive assent. According to this view of the mind, it is only by way of an active process of resistance to a belief that 'unbelieving' can occur (cf., Gilbert 1993). I begin by adopting this Spinozan view of psychology. I then argue that this view of psychology brings with it serious worries about the capacity for resisting and modifying our behaviors. In particular, I argue that merely resisting patriarchal stereotypes of gendered identity will, ironically, often lead to a recapitulation of these stereotypes. Here, in brief, is how the argument works.

In defense of Spinozan psychology, I appeal to a social psychological attack on the widely shared assumption that conscious decision and deliberate choice play an integral role in the production of our everyday behavior. Abundant experimental studies demonstrate that human behavior is often produced automatically in response to apparently innocuous stimuli. Volunteers who are primed with terms associated with the elderly walk more slowly to an elevator (Bargh et al 1996); volunteers who are primed with 'professor' outperform those who are primed with 'soccer hooligan' in games of trivia (Dijksterhuis and Van Knippenberg 1998); and, the presence of a backpack in a room yields cooperation while the presence of a briefcase yields competition (Kay et al 2004). But if such innocuous stimuli have such a significant effects on our behavior, it is no surprise that the overt propaganda of modern media affects numerous nearly automatic behaviors as well (cf., Mandelbaum, in prep). One place where we should expect the production of automatic behavior is in the stereotypical gendered identities that pervade the

mass media. But of course this is no surprise to anyone who is aware of feminist and Marxist criticisms of mass media. What is surprising, however, are the effects of resistance to these gendered stereotypes.

Gilbert (1993) argues that there are two ways in which Spinozan systems can protect themselves against false beliefs. First, they can reject the false beliefs that they have antecedently acquired. Second, they can avoid situations in which these false beliefs are acquired. Unfortunately, since resistance to gendered stereotypes typically occurs antecedent to exposure to the mass media, the first strategy is the only viable option for most people. However, Daniel Wegner famously demonstrates that attempting to suppress thoughts about white bears results in an increased tendency to obsessively think about white bears. Attempting to suppress thoughts about white bears by thinking about any old thing is likely to yield “why am I thinking about this” thoughts, and in the absence of an obvious alternative topic for thought, people obsessively return to thinking about white bears. Macrae and colleagues (1994) have demonstrated that attempts at suppressing stereotypical judgments evokes a similar ‘rebound-effect’. Attempting to modify behavior by avoiding what has typically been done, may, thus, yield “why am I doing this new thing” thoughts, and in the absence of a clear alternative, an obsessive return to stereotypical behavior. Building on this research, I argue that the person who is initially most successful in carrying out the suppression of gendered stereotypes may eventually be most susceptible to a resulting obsession with those stereotypes. The key, then, to obviating gendered stereotypes lies in the second method for protection from false beliefs—organizing situations so that the problematic propaganda is not encountered. But this is, after all, precisely what Spinoza thought was required for genuine knowledge of how to live.

Understanding Patient-Reported Outcomes

Leah McClimans (University of South Carolina)

Health-related quality of life measures, sometimes referred to as patient-reported outcomes, can be used to provide researchers with a picture of patients’ subjective experience before and after a clinical intervention. In 2006 the FDA issued a document stating that patient-reported outcomes can in fact be used to provide evidence of a drug’s effectiveness or benefit. But the FDA cautions that these measures can only establish benefit if there is also good evidence that they actually measure their target construct. To that end the FDA proposes to review patient-reported outcomes in terms of their measurement properties, namely, reliability, validity, ability to detect change and interpretability.

In this paper I focus on a measure’s interpretability to argue, in part, that interpretability is not the property of a measure and, moreover, that difficulty interpreting a measure’s outcomes signals a problem with a measure’s validity. As presently conceived these properties do not provide us with good evidence of a measure’s ability to assess its target construct.

Interpretability refers to how we should understand a quality of life measure’s metric; how, for instance, we might understand a six-point decrease on the Sickness Impact Profile. Is a 6-point decrease clinically significant? Does it change behavior? Attitude? Does one feel better as a result? The FDA suggests that interpretability should be assessed in terms of a measure’s Minimum Important Difference (MID): the difference in scores over time from those who report being “a little better” after an intervention.

But researchers in England have recently found that the MID changes from individual to individual depending on their baseline severity. They suggest that these differences represent a clinical phenomenon and, moreover, that it is futile to identify a single MID as an invariant property of a measure. I further argue that we have good reasons to think that these differences are not merely clinical phenomena, but also interpretive phenomena—that what accounts as a minimal change after an intervention also has to do with individual expectations and how they understand what makes for a good or bad life. What makes for a significant improvement in quality of life is not a property of the measure, but rather a property of what we take a good quality of life to consist in.

Theories about what make for a good quality of life are essential for the construct validity of a measure. Because quality of life measures lack a gold standard, construct validity provides not only an account of a measure’s accuracy, but also tells us what the questions and answers in such a measure might mean. This latter aspect of construct validity is often overlooked in the literature on patient-reported outcomes,

but it is important to the topic of interpretability because it shows that how we understand a measure's metric should be part of what is going on when we validate our measures. If many so-called valid measures lack interpretability as the research generally suggests, then I argue that this incongruence implies a deeper difficulty in how we validate these measures. This paper will explore just what this difficulty is and propose that if interpretability is not a property of these measures neither is validity simply such a property.

Epistemologies of Resistance: Feminist and Postcolonial Challenges

Iris Mendel (University of Vienna and York University)

The epistemological dimension of marginality and strangeness has been a recurrent issue in the social sciences. Already Georg Simmel (1908) and Karl Mannheim (1929) not only associated positions of marginality and their ambivalence of closeness and distance with the ability to grasp society in objective (Simmel) or total (Mannheim) ways, but also granted them a particular affinity to social critique (by measuring social phenomena in more general abstract terms in Simmel and by engaging in ideology critique in Mannheim). However, although these authors were very well aware that our social relations structure our understanding of the world, they – unlike Marx – did not completely let go of the notion of some neutral, or at least, “more neutral” position. For Marx (1845 and 1845/46), on the other hand, knowing is engaging with the world and hence necessarily political in a society structured by social hierarchies.

In this paper, I will argue that the affinity between difference and critique is not only an etymological one and that critical knowledge production requires some “engaged standpoint” or “engaged vision”, as it often arises from marginal positions (see Haraway 1991 and Harding 2006). Drawing on the insights of sociology of knowledge and feminist standpoint theories, I will examine whether certain “marginal” positions or positions “in between”, allow for a more critical vision of society and may hence contribute to the project of critical social sciences. I do not advocate, however, any essentializing of certain identities and experiences, but rather propose a concept of critical positioning in methodological and epistemological terms.

In order to identify the potentially critical marginal positionings, however, one relies on critical social theory. Hence, one of the main arguments of my paper is that both, epistemological and methodological considerations in the social sciences, cannot let go of social theory, if they do not want to lose their critical impact. Therefore, in my paper, I shall engage with two politically informed social theories which have posed the greatest epistemological and methodological challenges for the social sciences in the last three decades: feminist and postcolonial theories.

First I will turn to feminist standpoint theories, in particular to Dorothy Smith's conception of “bifurcated consciousness” (1990) and Patricia Hill Collins' concept of the “outsider within” (1986), and examine their account of how experiences of strangeness and not belonging may lead to criticizing and resisting the “ruling relations” and the “conceptual practices of power”. I will argue that they do not simply essentialize certain experiences, as some critics (e.g., Bar On 1993, Hekman 1997, Pels 2000) claim, but, despite being problematic in many respects, may provide a reflexive methodology for the social sciences which is not only compatible with, but also adds to Bourdieu's reflexive sociology and his demand to objectify the objectifier (e.g., Bourdieu 1993).

I will then turn to postcolonial concepts such as Gloria Anzaldúa's “consciencia de la metiza” (1987) and Chela Sandoval's “oppositional consciousness” (2000) and engage with their notions of knowledge as tied to resistance. Looking at Anzaldúa's and Sandoval's knowing and resisting subjects with reference to Teresa de Lauretis' “eccentric subject” (1990) and Linda Alcoff's concept of positionality (1988), which both critically draw on Foucault's concept of resistance, I will discuss in which ways postcolonial feminist epistemology and methodology may inform the project of critical social sciences.

Causation in the Social Sciences: An Evidentialist Perspective

Julian Reiss (Erasmus University, Rotterdam)

There are a variety of approaches to causation in the social sciences such as:

- Probabilistic methods: aim to infer causal relations from associations in measured data;
- Invariance methods: aim to infer causal relations from patterns of invariance under intervention;
- Process-tracing methods: aim to infer causal relations from evidence about interconnected social practices;
- Comparative methods: aim to infer causal relations from conditional regular associations;
- Counterfactual methods: aim to infer causal relations from the outcomes of 'what-if' thought experiments.

It is relatively easy to show that none of these methods is either universally applicable or – even within its domain of applicability – fully reliable. The bulk of this paper is devoted to discussing some implications of these circumstances.

I suggest to regard causal relations relate to what one might call their 'manifestations' (such as probability raising, invariance under intervention...) in the same way as diseases relate to their symptoms. Among the positive analogies are the following:

- No disease has a unique set of symptoms that are necessary and sufficient for its identification.
- Diseases are not constituted by their symptoms.
- Diseases have typical symptoms but failing to display a given symptom does not always mean that the disease is not present.
- Sometimes different diseases share the same symptoms; that is, by itself a symptom is a mark of a variety of diseases and conditions.
- Whether or not a symptom is present may itself be subject to substantial uncertainty.

Like symptoms provide evidence – fallible evidence – for the presence of a disease, a typical manifestation of a causal relation provides evidence for the presence of that causal relation. But there may always be other reasons for a manifestation to obtain apart from a causal relation. For instance, a probabilistic dependence may be produced by statistical properties of time series, by conditioning on joint effects or by conceptual or mathematical relations; similarly, an event may be an INUS condition for another but not it's cause because of a common-causal structure and so forth for the remaining approaches.

I draw a number of consequences from the disease-causation analogy. First and foremost, the analogy suggests a very natural and fruitful research strategy for finding out whether there is a causal relation between X and Y: observe the presence of a symptom such as probabilistic dependence between X and Y; try to rule out alternative explanations for that symptom; if all alternative explanations can be ruled out (usually they can't), judge that X and Y are causally related; if they can't, look for additional symptoms and try to rule out alternative explanations for that symptom; stop when-ever the evidence in favour of the causal relation is enough in the light of the context and purpose of the query at hand.

Second, the analogy suggests that causal relations – like diseases – hardly fall into natural kinds. It is rather the case that we classify them relative to contexts, the purposes of queries and our epistemic tools available such that causation itself becomes a decidedly pragmatic notion.

The Economy as an Epistemic Object

Margaret Schabas (University of British Columbia)

'The economy' emerged as an object of inquiry for economists circa 1820 and endures to the present as an epistemic object. At some point, like the history of the concept of temperature, it became part of everyday speech as well. Clearly, the economy can not be perceived directly, though we appeal to 'leading indicators' such as the interest rate or GDP to judge its overall performance and efficacy. 'The economy' must be constructed out of a conviction in the well-behavedness of certain phenomena in the market place (money, prices, labour supply, etc.). The source of that nomotheticity stems from certain distinct commitments to the uniformity of human agency independently of the natural order.

My paper will propose that social facts such as 'the economy' are emergent on other branches of knowledge and thus must necessitate some historical account to make sense of this object. The transformation of Adam Smith's inquiry on the wealth of nations into a science of economics required an evolutionary (historical) and secular sensibility that emerged over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. What I will argue here is that part of the conceptual work that enabled David Ricardo and John Stuart Mill to see a realm in which laws of production and distribution operated had much to do with the concept of human agency, and that this became increasingly explicit by the latter part of the nineteenth century. The market phenomena they studied were the result of what John Searle has called 'collective intentionality' and bear all the markings of Searle's institutional facts (self-reflexivity, inscribed regulations, evolution). In sum, they were Durkheimians in the making, seeing features of the economy such as the interest rate as autonomous of individual agency. For some of the leading contributors to economic discourse in the nineteenth century the key phenomena had become objective social facts that could be detached from physical nature and studied as part of a realm known as the economy.

Reconceptualizing the Social Situatedness of Epistemic Agents

Warren Schmaus (Illinois Institute of Technology)

I propose a new way of looking at the social situatedness of epistemic agents that emphasizes the role of social location in providing opportunities for critical interaction. It draws on the Durkheimian notion of social density rather than the historical materialist notion of a social, political, and economic hierarchy. For the historical materialist, an individual's place in this hierarchy supposedly "shapes," limits, or even determines what that individual believes. Genuine empirical knowledge is possible only to the extent to which individual epistemic agents find themselves in social locations that are relatively free of distorting influences. Alternative conceptualizations of the social character of knowledge from J. S. Mill to Helen Longino assume that knowledge depends upon a critical dialectic among epistemic agents that will bring to light any adverse effects of the social determinants of belief. On my Durkheimian account, the reliability of both individual and communal knowledge claims depends on the density of social relationships just to the extent that these relationships make possible just this sort of dialogue.

Historical materialism has been an inspiration for feminist standpoint theorists. In philosophy of science, standpoint theory is most closely associated with the writings of Sandra Harding (e.g., Harding 1991). Standpoint theorists made the problematic claim that marginal locations within the social hierarchy are epistemically privileged because they allow their individual occupants a less ideologically clouded and more veridical experience. Their critics have pointed out the problems that arise from the determinist and naïve empiricist assumptions of this position. It has also proved to be very difficult to test this claim just to the extent that we lack a clear definition of a marginal location within a social hierarchy. The point of this paper is to provide a more precise definition of social location and to provide an account of the social situatedness of epistemic agents that assumes neither sociological determinism nor naïve empiricism.

On my alternative view, the social locations of individual epistemic agents such as scientists are defined in terms of the density of their relationships, especially professional relationships, with other epistemic agents. Density is a function of both the quantity and quality of these relationships. Quantity depends on social volume or total population, as well as the proportion of the population engaged in inquiry, their geographical distribution, and the available means of communication and transportation. Quality has to do with frequency and length of contact, the extent of criticism received, and the social location of the epistemic agent with whom one has a relationship. Some social locations are epistemically superior to others because the greater density of social relationships in these locations makes it possible for their occupants to engage in critical interaction with other epistemic agents to a higher degree and thus to increase the likelihood of their making contributions to reliable knowledge. Marginalized epistemic agents are those who find themselves in social locations where the density of social relationships is less, which helps to explain how it is that they are less likely to contribute to the growth of knowledge. This Durkheimian notion of social density helps to explain not only how some individuals are better positioned than others to make contributions to knowledge, but also how science and other forms of inquiry may flourish in some societies more than in others. A society's capacity to contribute to the growth of

knowledge depends on the total size of its community of inquirers as well as the density of relationships of its epistemic agents both with each other and with epistemic agents in other societies.

Critical Social Theory as a Normative Theory without Norms

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In order to determine the nature of social criticism one needs to address its mode of *justification*, its *standpoint*, and its *purpose*. These dimensions correspond to the following three questions: first, how are the normative standards of social criticism to be justified? Secondly, from what perspective is critical social theory possible? And thirdly, what is the purpose of social criticism? With the move to an acceptance of finitude under post-metaphysical conditions, conditions after the end of grand narratives, there has been a call to more modesty in answering these questions. Philosophers as diverse as Habermas and Rorty have agreed that philosophically informed social criticism should understand itself as a form of interpretation rather than a judge who would be capable of legislating external norms "from the outside" of society. However, whereas Rorty argues for a contextualist understanding of norms, Habermas upholds a framework that emphasizes the universal validity of normative commitments.

This paper argues that it is misleading to construe the debate as involving a choice between universalism and contextualism once one agrees that critical social theory consists in (self-)critical interpretation. Interpretation itself needs to decide which phenomena it turns its attention to, which part of the existing normative framework it adopts as authoritative, and how it goes about applying it. Doing so requires to draw on norms that are, in a sense, context-transcendent. On the other hand it is also obvious that the only access we have to these norms is context specific. The paper develops the idea of a "normative theory without norms." By this I mean a theory that refrains from essentializing idealized normative commitments while not giving up on the idea of normative transcendence that is necessary to be critical of given normative frameworks. Norms, it is shown, should always be understood as emerging out of complex processes in which their emergence through histories of domination cannot be categorically separated from their claims to validity. A normative theory without norms thus refrains from idealizing norms or treating them as limited to certain contexts.