



**4th Groningen – Wharton PPE Workshop
September 8th-9th, 2025**

University Library, Groningen (Tammesaal, 4th floor library building, Broerstraat)

General information

This is a workshop to discuss work in progress from the realm of PPE (Philosophy, Politics, and Economics). Papers will be circulated in advance and participants are expected to read them beforehand. Authors will give a short introduction, followed by a commentary and then a general discussion. The workshop is supported by the Zicklin Center for Business Ethics Research of The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and the Center for Philosophy, Politics and Economics at the University of Groningen. It has been organized by Brian Berkey (bberkey@wharton.upenn.edu), Lisa Herzog (l.m.herzog@rug.nl), and Andreas Schmidt (a.t.schmidt@rug.nl) and will be held in person at the University of Groningen.

Registration

If you are interested in participating, please contact the local organizer, Lisa Herzog, at l.m.herzog@rug.nl. Places will be allocated on a first come, first serve basis.

Timetable

Monday, September 8

- 9.30-10.00 Welcome and round of introductions
- 10.00-11.00 **Simone Gubler (Brown University) and Ryan Doody (Brown University): Work Worth Doing: Esteem, Justice, and the Case for a Job Guarantee**
Commentator: Wike Been (University of Groningen)
- 11.00-11.30 Coffee break
- 11.30-12.30 **Andreas Schmidt (University of Groningen): Democracy and institutional longtermism**
Commentator: Brian Berkey (University of Pennsylvania)
- 12.30-13.30 Lunch break (provided for all participants)
- 13.30-14.30 **Jennifer Jhun (Duke University): The problem of measuring market power**
Commentator: Michael Schwan (University of Groningen)
- 14.30-15.30 **Markus Furendal (University of Stockholm): Automated Decision-Making in the Public Sector: Legitimacy and the Global-Local Tension**
Commentator: Herman Veluwenkamp (University of Groningen)
- 15.30-16.00 Coffee break

- 16.00-17.00 **Frank Hindriks (University of Groningen): Structure and Culture in a Just and Open Society**
Commentator: Shuk Ying Chan (University College London)
- 17.30 Drinks (place t.b.c., for all participants)
- 19.00 Dinner (place t.b.c., speakers and commentators only)

Tuesday, September 9

- 9.30-10.30 **Lukas Linsi (University of Groningen) and Adam Leaver (University of Sheffield): Control Rentierism? How post hoc adjustments maintain high executive pay during downturns**
Commentator: Glory Liu (Georgetown University)
- 10.30-10.45 Coffee break
- 10.45-11.45 **Lisa Herzog (University of Groningen): Why economic democracy should include unpaid family work**
Commentator: Jens Jorund Tyssedal (University of Bergen)
- 11.45-12.45 **Brian Berkey (University of Pennsylvania) and Kritika Maheshwari (Delft University of Technology): The Ethics of Partner Hiring in Academia**
Commentator: Titus Stahl (University of Groningen)
- 13.00 Lunch (place t.b.c., speakers and commentators only)

Abstracts

Simone Gubler (Brown University) and Ryan Doody (Brown University): Work Worth Doing: Esteem, Justice, and the Case for a Job Guarantee

Why should a state guarantee jobs when it could just guarantee income by means of something simpler, more efficient, and less messy, like a Universal Basic Income (UBI)? One thought, is that there is something special about work. It isn't just a way to get money—it's also a source of personal meaning, structure, and social recognition—key contributors to self-esteem. That's why some argue in favor of a Job Guarantee (JG): a state commitment to provide employment to any able job-seeker who desires it.

But here's a worry, famously raised by Jon Elster: if your job only exists because the state created it, how can it be a source of self-esteem? Esteem, Elster claims, tracks demand—if no one would pay for your work voluntarily, is it really socially valued? In particular, is it an apt source of positive self- and social-regard?

In this paper, we take Elster's challenge seriously—and offer a reply. We argue that while acquiring a job through a JG program might not aptly inspire self-esteem, working in such a job—and keeping it—can. If JG jobs come with real standards—if they ask something of workers, and if those standards are enforced—then success in those roles can ground genuine pride. The key, we argue, is to design jobs that are not just available, but regulated, meaningful, and worth doing. A Good Job Guarantee, properly structured, can secure both material security and the social bases of self-respect.

Commentator: Wike Been (University of Groningen)

Andreas Schmidt (University of Groningen): Democracy and institutional longtermism

Institutional longtermism – the topic of my book – is the view that the moral choiceworthiness of institutions is in significant part determined by their expected long-term effects. Importantly, longtermism also considers impacts on far-future people, that is people hundreds, thousands, or even million years into the future. In my book, I explore the case for and against institutional longtermism focusing particularly on arguments coming out of political philosophy. I enquire whether central values in our societies and in mainstream political philosophy speak for or against institutional longtermism. I also enquire what institutional values and interventions longtermists should endorse. In this chapter on democracy, I first ask whether central theories of democracy imply that future people must be included in the demos and, if so, whether democracy itself thus implies longtermism. Second, I ask whether longtermism supports near-term democracy or some alternative form of political system instead. For example, Is democracy better or worse than a more authoritarian political system, like in China, in meeting long-term challenges? Finally, I explore which desiderata and values should guide democratic institutions and democratic reform proposals to make them more longtermist.

Commentator: Brian Berkey (University of Pennsylvania)

Jennifer Jhun (Duke University): The problem of measuring market power

Purported violations of antitrust law require that the plaintiff prove that a firm of interest has market power. However, it is not clear how to measure market power. First, the indices used involve formulae for derived quantities that are not entirely products of physical measurements, and second, and perhaps more problematically, such instruments appeal to counterfactuals. These features make it more complicated to reconcile with some extant accounts of measurement, in particular the model-based account of measurement.

Commentator: Michael Schwan (University of Groningen)

Markus Furendal (University of Stockholm): Automated Decision-Making in the Public Sector: Legitimacy and the Global-Local Tension

Public decision-making is becoming increasingly automated, with decisions being delegated to software processes and artificial intelligence (AI) technology. The main rationale for this is the promise of decreasing costs and increasing the consistency of public authority by shifting decision-making from human bureaucrats, who are expensive to employ and sometimes make mistakes. The aim of this paper is twofold: first, it surveys and systematizes what concerns this trend raises from the standpoint of democracy, and second, it sketches a theoretical framework for assessing how different kinds of automated public decision-making require different considerations with regard to democratic legitimacy.

One set of worries relates to the opacity inherent in the dominant machine learning (ML) paradigm in AI development, and specifically the concern that, unlike rule-based Robotic Process Automation (RPA), ML-based public decision-making is essentially incapable of living up to the demand for publicity necessary for decisions to be democratically legitimate.

Another set of worries, which has received comparatively less attention from scholars, is the fact that in the real, non-ideal world, there is a tension between the global context in which many AI systems are being developed, and the national and local contexts in which automated authority is being exercised. Specifically, the AI systems adopted in public sectors world-wide will most likely be developed by a handful or large, multinational companies for a world market, but will be applied in highly specific jurisdictions and distinctive environments. Such systems will, moreover, often be incapable of simply training on specific data from each environment, since data is notoriously non-standardized and often incomplete or systematically flawed. Unless tailored to each use case, the clash between global AI development and local AI deployment may lead to such AI systems being inefficient, incorrect, or both – and the rationales for adopting them are thus undermined. Taking these democratic challenges in automated public decision-making as its point of departure, the paper argues that it will be necessary to distinguish between the varying contexts and complexities of public decision-making when evaluating the requirements of democratic legitimacy of AI applications. For example, it might be the case that for routine, low-stakes decisions, such as processing standardized applications or enforcing straightforward regulations, RPA systems may suffice, provided they adhere to principles of transparency and accountability. However, more complex or discretionary decisions—those that involve value judgments, context-sensitive trade-offs, or significant societal impact—might demand higher levels of deliberative scrutiny and public engagement. In these cases, decisions

cannot be fully delegated to ML technology without losing democratic legitimacy. In addition, the global-local tension in AI system development may call for additional demands, such as ensuring cultural and jurisdictional responsiveness, to safeguard against one-size-fits-all solutions that might erode legitimacy.

Commentator: Herman Veluwenkamp (University of Groningen)

Frank Hindriks (University of Groningen): Structure and Culture in a Just and Open Society

What does it take for a society to constitute a liberal democracy? To answer this question, I first investigate what a just society is. According to John Rawls, a society is just exactly if its structure is just, which means that the principles of justice have been properly implemented. He argued that, within a just structure, individuals are free to pursue their self-interest without restraint. Famously, Jerry Cohen criticized Rawls arguing that justice does require individuals to restrain themselves. They should embrace an egalitarian justice. This implies that justice puts constraints both on the structure and the culture of a society. After evaluating this argument, I explore whether a similar argument applies to democracy. Democratic principles, including checks and balances, have to be implemented in the structure of a society if it is to be a liberal democracy. However, this is not sufficient for it to be robust to internal and external challenges. That also requires a democratic culture among a substantial number of citizens. More specifically, it requires an open mentality, which involves mutually tolerant, inclusive and critical attitudes. Whether this is just a prerequisite or a moral requirement remains to be seen.

Commentator: Shuk Ying Chan (University College London)

Lukas Linsi (University of Groningen) and Adam Leaver (University of Sheffield): Control Rentierism? How post hoc adjustments maintain high executive pay during downturns

‘Pay for performance’ remuneration practices are legitimized as tools to hold managers accountable to shareholders. In practice, however, rather than improving corporate performance, they have generated systems of “ups without downs” (Godechot et al. 2023) in pay-outs to corporate elites. Managerial power theories have highlighted a number of ‘upstream’ ex ante mechanisms that can help to explain these outcomes. In this article, we take these insights one step further by leveraging a mixed-methods approach to study in-depth the pay-setting mechanisms at publicly listed Dutch firms during the period 2017-2021. We are able to empirically demonstrate a set of ‘downstream’ post hoc mechanisms through which managers were able to upwards-adjust their pay during economic downturns even once corporate performance was already known. Based on our findings, we argue that deviations of pay from performance are not a mistake in the system, but the logical outcome of ‘control rentierism’.

Commentator: Glory Liu (Georgetown University)

Lisa Herzog (University of Groningen): Why economic democracy should include unpaid family work

Economic democracy applies democratic principles to the economic realm, and specifically the workplace – but what does this mean for those doing unpaid family work? This paper discusses this question, thereby adding an important dimension to the debate of economic democracy, but also throwing light on current suggestions for pro-family policies. After laying out some key principles of economic democracy, it argues both against minimalism views, which see unpaid family work as a purely private matter, and against maximalist views, which want to socialize unpaid family work as much as possible. Instead, it argues for a mix of support institutions that are meant to create a fair balance between individuals with and without unpaid family work, following the principle of “lifestyle parity.” In addition, it suggests that opportunities for democratic participation should be created for those doing family work, e.g. in childcare institutions or in the governance of civil society associations that represent families.

Commentator: Jens Jorund Tyssedal (University of Bergen)

Brian Berkey (University of Pennsylvania) and Kritika Maheshwari (Delft University of Technology): The Ethics of Partner Hiring in Academia

Partner hiring is fairly widespread in universities in certain countries, perhaps most notably the United States. In typical cases, a department that has offered a job to a candidate as a result of a standard search process either offers a job to that candidate’s romantic partner or spouse as well (if the partner is in the same academic field), or arranges for the partner to be offered a job in another department at the university (if the partner is in another academic field).

In this paper, we consider whether we ought to endorse the practice of partner hiring in academia. We limit ourselves to addressing the central questions that arise at the level of industry-wide policies and norms. That is, we ask whether a set of policies and norms across colleges and universities that is roughly like those in place in the United States, according to which partner hiring is at least permissible, and widely viewed as something that departments ought to do when possible, is preferable, ethically speaking, to policies and norms that would rule out partner hiring.

While we acknowledge the force of some of the reasons often appealed to in defense of the practice of partner hiring, and reject some of the reasons most often suggested by others as grounds to reject it, we will argue that there are a number of underappreciated reasons that count against it. Our tentative conclusion is that the force of these reasons is sufficient to outweigh the reasons on the other side, so that all things considered we ought to oppose partner hiring and support the development of policies and norms against it.

Commentator: Job de Grefte, University of Groningen