

# Theme 1: Social Norms & Institutions: Game Theory



Thursday, 3 December 2020

13:55-14:00	Welcome
14:00-15:00	<b>Andrea Borghini:</b> Fat Shaming and Social Norms <i>10 min break</i>
15:10-16:10	<b>Roland Mühlenbernd:</b> (UN)Fairness and Bargaining Games <i>10 min break</i>
16:20-17:20	<b>Mihaela Popa-Wyatt:</b> Oppressive Speech Shifts Norms in Negotiation Games <i>10 min break</i>
17:30-18:30	<b>Justin Bruner:</b> Social Norms in Epistemology (9:30 am MST) <i>10 min break</i>
18:40-19:40	<b>Cailin O'Connor:</b> Measuring Conventionality (9:40 am PST)
19:40-20:40	Optional round-table discussion

Friday, 4 December 2020

13:55-14:00	Welcome
14:00-15:00	<b>Francesco Guala:</b> Are Institutions Conventions? The Case of Marriage <i>10 min break</i>
15:10-16:10	<b>Christoph Hesse:</b> Gaslighting and dynamic update of bargaining power <i>10 min break</i>
16:20-17:20	<b>Kevin Zollman:</b> "Conformity, social networks, and the emergence of pluralistic ignorance" (10:20 am EST) <i>10 min break</i>
17:30-18:30	<b>José Luis Bermudez:</b> Framing in game theory: "I"-frame VS "we"-frame (10:30 am CST)
18:30-19:30	Optional round-table discussion

## ABSTRACTS: DAY 1

### **Fat Shaming and Social Norms**

ANDREA BORGHINI (Università degli Studi di Milano)  
2:00 pm CET

In this talk I discuss how mechanisms of reinforcement and peer pressure can serve to foster fat shaming and hinder body positivity.

### **(UN)Fairness and Bargaining Games**

ROLAND MÜHLENBERND (ZAS Berlin)  
3:10 pm CET

Unfairness emerges in bargaining games under a variety of conditions. Two such conditions are: (i) the Red King effect produces advantage in favor of members of the larger group; (ii) the bargaining power effect produces advantage in favor of the group with more powerful individuals. We explore ways of mitigating unfairness by exploring the relationship between signals, power and the emergence of fair or unfair norms. We show how (i)-(ii) can be reduced when we allow relationships between unobservable and observable traits (or signals).

### **Oppressive Speech Shifts Norms in Negotiation Games**

MIHAELA POPA-WYATT (ZAS Berlin)  
4:20 pm CET

Hate speech causes harm not just in a single conversation, but also in the wider social context. It does so by intimidating members of the target group other than the individual target and encouraging receptive audience members to imitate the speech and shift their attitudes. We see every day how hate spreads and attitudes change in communities, both online and in the real world. In this talk, I will show how the norm shifting effect of slurring utterances on a society can be modelled and simulated. I study a societal Nash demand game in which agents bid for resources. The results show that slurring causes norm shifting to happen much more quickly and to change the balance of resources between two groups.

### **Social norms in Epistemology**

JUSTIN BRUNER (University of Arizona)  
5:30 pm CET — 9:30 am MST

David Henderson and Peter Graham have recently argued that theorizing in social epistemology can benefit from the social-scientific study of social norms. In this talk we explore this claim with special focus on the case of assertions.

### **Measuring Conventionality**

CAILIN O'CONNOR (UC Irvine)  
6:40 pm CET — 9:40 am PST

Standard accounts of convention include notions of arbitrariness. But many have conceived of conventionality as an all or nothing affair. In this paper, I develop a framework for thinking of conventions as coming in degrees of arbitrariness. In doing so, I introduce an information

theoretic measure intended to capture the degree to which a solution to a certain social problem could have been otherwise. As the paper argues, this framework can help improve explanation aimed at the cultural evolution of social traits. Good evolutionary explanations recognize that most functional traits are also conventional, at least to some degree, and vice versa.

## ABSTRACTS: DAY 2

### **Are Institutions Conventions? The Case of Marriage**

FRANCESCO GUALA (Università degli Studi di Milano)

2:00 pm CET

Debates on gay marriage have brought to the fore interesting issues of social ontology. The view that institutions are entrenched conventions or practices, for example, has been used by conservative scholars to argue against the extension of the term ‘marriage’ to non-heterosexual unions. I argue that such arguments are based on an equivocation between institution-types and -tokens. While institution-tokens are conventional solutions to coordination problems, institution-types are not. This, in turn, makes it legitimate to consider non-heterosexual unions as instances of marriage.

### **Gaslighting and dynamic update of bargaining power**

CHRISTOPH HESSE (ZAS Berlin)

3:10 pm CET

Gaslighting is the deliberate manipulation of the beliefs of others about their own epistemic state of mind in order to cause a change in the victim’s behavior. It is a form of psychological manipulation. Among other things, gaslighting can be used to force the perpetrator’s own views on their victim by way of the victim’s engaging in self-censorship. Gaslighting avoids open confrontation and as such subverts the societal visibility of ideological, cultural, religious, intellectual or other belief disagreements. Language is the primary tool of the gaslighter in manipulating their victim’s belief states. In this talk I discuss gaslighting as one aspect of oppressive speech and systemic oppression. I present multi-agent Nash demand simulations building on the work by Bruner (2019) and O’Connor (2019), but extend them by gaslighting, i.e. dynamic updates of agents’ beliefs about their bargaining power on every interaction with other agents. The simulations explore several factors driving gaslighting and systemic oppression, e.g., two societal groups competing for resources in the Nash demand game, agents being able to pass out rewards or punishments to other agents by way of altering their bargaining power, not all agents following the same cultural norms, and interactive belief updates. Simulation results suggest that precisely because gaslighting is a socially less visible form of oppression, checks and balances imposed to counteract or prevent oppression fail because victimized agents start behaving submissively seemingly of their own accord. Even when societal groups start with the same bargaining power, if gaslighting is left unchecked, it can lead to one group being more disadvantaged than the other, similar to overt oppression.

Bruner, J. (2019). Minority (dis) advantage in population games. *Synthese*, 196(1), 413–427.  
O’Connor, C., Bright, L. K., Bruner, J. P. (2019). The emergence of intersectional disadvantage. *Social Epistemology*, 33(1), 23–41.

## **Conformity, social networks, and the emergence of pluralistic ignorance**

KEVIN ZOLLMAN (Carnegie Mellon University)

4:20 pm CET — 10:20 am EST

Occasionally, people refuse to publicly state their beliefs because they think others disagree. Others do in fact share their belief, but are also afraid to speak out for similar reasons. No one is speaking out and as a result, the false group belief persists; each member thinks they believe differently from one another. This phenomenon, known as pluralistic ignorance, is puzzling for many reasons. In this talk, I will use a new computer simulation model for the emergence of pluralistic ignorance to discover under what situations we might expect it to arise. Ultimately, I conclude that pluralistic ignorance requires relatively special conditions to arise. In particular, I argue that pluralistic ignorance will only arise in conditions where individual's beliefs are shifting for other reasons.

## **Framing in game theory: the “I”-frame VS “we”-frame**

JOSÉ LUIS BERMUDEZ (Texas AM University)

5:30 pm CET — 10:30 am CST

This talk explores two different perspectives for framing the costs and benefits of social interactions, showing how they can be modeled within game theory.