

## BIAP workshop: Evidential Norms and the Sources of Normative Knowledge

University of Barcelona (*Seminari de Filosofia*), 07 - 09 October 2024.

### PROGRAMME

#### Monday, 7th October

15.30 — 16.50 **Dario Mortini** (U.Barcelona): 'Evidentially Hedged Assertions'

17.00 — 18.20 **Mona Simion** (Glasgow): 'Inquiry, Justified Belief, and Justified Credence'

#### Tuesday, 8th October

10.00 — 11.20 **Bob Beddor** (Florida): 'Egalitarian Inquiry'

11.30 — 12.50 **Elise Woodard** (King's College London): 'How to Start Changing Your Mind'

15.00 — 16.20 **Karl Bergman** (Uppsala/U. Barcelona): 'Can Proper Functions Ground Doxastic Norms?'

16.30 — 17.50 **Claire Field** (Zürich): 'Varieties of Conflict'

#### Wednesday, 9th October

10.00 — 11.20 **Ylwa Sjölin Wirling** (Gothenburg): 'Metaepistemology, Metaethics, and Neutrality'

11.30 — 12.50 **Michele Palmira** (UCM, Madrid): 'Competent Evidence-Gathering'

Organisers: **Karl Bergman** (Uppsala University/University of Barcelona), **Manuel García-Carpintero** (University of Barcelona), **Dario Mortini** (University of Barcelona) and **Sven Rosenkranz** (ICREA-University of Barcelona).

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### ABSTRACTS

#### Dario Mortini

##### 'Evidentially Hedged Assertions'

**Abstract:** Speakers make *evidentially hedged assertions* whenever they weaken commitment to what they assert in virtue of disclosing imperfectly reliable sources of evidence in their assertions. A novel and recently influential case for the knowledge norm of assertion appeals to conjunctions of evidentially hedged assertions and knowledge ascriptions. In this talk, I show that such novel case rests on questionable assumptions, and I introduce additional conjunctions that further sever the connection between evidentially hedged assertions and knowledge ascriptions. The upshot calls for a reassessment of this new linguistic evidence for the knowledge norm, and it also highlights noteworthy features of the normativity of evidentially hedged assertion.

**Mona Simion**

**'Inquiry, Justified Belief, and Justified Credence'**

**Abstract:** The talk develops a unified, naturalistically friendly theory of the normative relation between justified credence, justified belief, and inquiry. The account takes epistemic norms mapping on to justified belief and justified credence to drop out of the etiological epistemic function of inquiry: generating knowledge. In this way, the account unifies inquiry, knowledge, justified belief, and justified credence normatively.

**Bob Beddor**

**'Egalitarian Inquiry'** (joint work with Finnur Delsén)

**Abstract:** What is the point of inquiry? Some say that the aim of inquiring into some question is to come to know its answer; others, that the aim is to attain justified belief, epistemic improvement, or some other coveted epistemic status. Still others eschew "aim" talk altogether, and instead formulate norms governing inquiry. However, virtually all extant work on inquiry has agreed on at least this much: the aims or norms of inquiry can be specified in terms of the epistemic states of the inquirer (that is, the party conducting the inquiry). This talk argues against this claim. In many cases, the goal of inquiry is not merely to attain some epistemic benefit for the inquirers, but to confer such benefits on others. Moreover, this has important ramifications for how agents should structure their inquiries. We go on to develop an egalitarian conception of the aims and norms of inquiry, and unpack some interesting implications of this conception.

**Elise Woodard**

**'How to Start Changing Your Mind'**

**Abstract:** Is it ever rational to change your mind based on others changing theirs? This talk answers affirmatively. Changes of mind are doubly epistemically significant. First, they provide compelling reasons for further inquiry. Second, they offer second-order evidence about the existence or quality of first-order evidence. However, critical evaluation is crucial to distinguish meaningful changes from irrelevant ones. By outlining key questions about reported changes and discussing potential pitfalls, we can better identify which changes are epistemically significant. If correct, my proposal highlights mind-changing as a valuable yet overlooked source of information when exploring complex and contentious issues.

**Karl Bergman**

**'Can Proper Functions Ground Doxastic Norms?'**

**Abstract:** Proper functions seem to constitute norms, of a kind. In the first instance, they seem to constitute norms for the entities whose functions they are—for the *function bearers*. Do proper functions also constitute or ground norms *for agents*? In particular: Does the function of an entity ground a norm for the agent of whom that entity is a component? Does the fact that *my heart*, *my eyes*, or *my belief-forming system* have certain functions ground any norms applying to *my actions*? That's the question I seek to answer in this paper. The question admits of several interpretations, and so I try to isolate the most substantial and philosophically interesting sense of the question likely to have an affirmative answer. I examine what it is about proper functions that make them apt to be described as norms for their bearers, drawing parallels to other norms that can likewise be said to be "in force," such as those embodied in social conventions. I then investigate to what extent the normative force of proper functions, thus understood, extend beyond the bearer, to the agent of whom it is part.

**Claire Field**

**'Varieties of Conflict'**

**Abstract:** How can we tell when someone is structurally irrational? Structural irrationality (in contrast to substantive rationality) is associated with coherence between attitudes. The requirements of structural rationality prohibit particular kinds of conflict, and this conflict is often marked by an intuitive sense that the conflicting attitudes do not 'fit together'. But, not *all* attitudes that do not seem to 'fit together' are structurally irrational, and it is difficult to characterize precisely what, if anything, unifies the various disparate requirements usually cited as requirements of structural rationality, beyond an appeal to intuition. This introduces the possibility of apparently reasonable mistakes about the requirements of structural rationality. Given this, in this paper I examine which kinds of conflict should we regard as prohibited by the requirements of structural rationality and consider how we should adjudicate disagreement about this.

**Ylwa Sjölin Wirling**

**'Metaepistemology, Metaethics, and Neutrality'**

**Abstract:** It is commonly assumed that the field of metaepistemology is closely analogous to the field of metaethics. For decades, philosophers have discussed the relationship between metaethics and first-order questions in ethics. In particular it has been discussed whether metaethics is, or should be, neutral with respect to normative ethics. But the corresponding question of metaepistemology's relationship to first-order questions in epistemology has not received much attention. In this talk I address this gap in the literature. I first argue that metaepistemology is not neutral with respect to first-order questions in epistemology (adding to a stock of purported examples of cases where metaethics fails to be neutral with respect to normative ethics). I then draw out some interesting implications of this: implications for the status of the analogy between metaethics and metaepistemology, for the first-order debate about epistemic value, and for the attraction (or not) of neutrality.

**Michele Palmira**

**'Competent Evidence-Gathering'**

**Abstract:** I discuss a version of the dogmatism paradox for inquiry, due to Carter and Hawthorne ("Dogmatism and Inquiry", *Mind* 2024), saying that inquirers who already know the answer to the question they are investigating ought to be dogmatic and refrain from gathering easily available evidence that bears on that question. I argue the paradox vanishes once we acknowledge that gathering further evidence in the target cases amounts to the manifestation of a zetetic competence. By so doing, I bring the success/competence distinction to bear on the debate on epistemic norms of inquiry.