Erasmus Institute of Philosophy and Economics (EIPE)

Rotterdam-Tilburg Graduate Workshop in Philosophy of Science
Tilburg Center for Logic and Philosophy of Science (TiLPS) and
Erasmus Institute for Philosophy and Econmics (EIPE)
Thursday, 17 November 2011

This exchange workshop brings together Master's and PhD students from Rotterdam and Tilburg to discuss their work. In the Summer Semester 2012, there will be a second exchange workshop held in Rotterdam.

Programme

13.00 -14.00   Francois Claveau (EIPE and Philosophy, EUR)
The Independence Condition in the Variety-of-Evidence Thesis
Comments: Luca Moretti (Aberdeen and TiLPS)

14.00 - 15.00   Chiara Lisciandra (TiLPS)
Conformorality: A Study on Conformity and Normative Judgement
Comments: Johanna Thoma (EIPE and Philosophy, EUR)

Coffee

15.30 - 16.30   Attilia Ruzzene (EIPE and Philosophy, EUR)
When Process Tracking Works, and How
Comments: Lorenzo Casini (Kent and TiLPS)

16.30 - 17.30   Soroush Rafiee Rad (TiLPS)
Anchoring in Deliberations
Comments: René Lazcano (EIPE and Philosophy, EUR)

Drinks and Dinner

The plan for each session is the following: 30 min talk, 10 min comments, 20 min discussion.

Abstracts

The Independence Condition in the Variety-of-Evidence Thesis
Francois Claveau

The variety-of-evidence thesis is one of these apparently simple ideas which turn out to be far from simple once we sit down to think about it. The thesis says that the degree of warrant given to a hypothesis by an evidential set increases with the variety of this evidential set, ceteris paribus. In other words, if my evidential elements are more 'independent' of one another, my hypothesis will be, all things equal, better supported. Many philosophers were claiming that Bayesian epistemology could easily show the correctness of this thesis until Bovens and Hartmann (2002, 2003) proposed a

Bayesian model in which independence could backfire under special circumstances. This paper revisits the model of Bovens and Hartmann and concludes that it plays with an untenable understanding of 'independence'. A more appropriate idea of independence is proposed and the result is a rehabilitation of the variety-of-evidence thesis.

Conformorality: A Study on Conformity and Normative Judgement
Chiara Lisciandra

This study concerns people's normative judgement. It explores whether and how people's normative judgement is different when expressed in social contexts. Drawing upon philosophical and empirical results in moral psychology, we identify a number of features that can be used to distinguish between three types of norms: moral, social and decency norms. Based on this taxonomy we designed an experiment to test whether individuals are systematically influenced by other people's judgments in different ways according to the type of norms under consideration. The results we found indicate that group conditioning affects moral judgments to a significantly lesser degree than other norms. We also found, quite unexpectedly, that there does not seem to be a difference between social and decency norms. The talk is based on joint work with Marie Nilsenova and Matteo Colombo.

Anchoring in Deliberations
Soroush Rafiee Rad

Consider a committee that has to fix the value of a real-valued parameter. Initially every committee member assigns a different value, and so the committee decides to start a deliberation. We construct a model of deliberation, which shows that the order in which the committee members speak and present their views matters. More specifically, we show on the basis of computer simulations and analytical calculations that the first speaker has the highest impact on the consensus at which the group eventually arrives at. The first speaker anchors the deliberation, even if all committee members behave completely rationally and update their assignments according to plausible rules. The talk is based on joint work with and Stephan Hartmann.

When Process Tracking Works, and How
Attilia Ruzzene

Process tracing is the method case-study researchers use when they articulate causal hypotheses about singular outcomes. In case studies they conclude that an effect is the case, or has been the case, in virtue of the process that brought it about. Process tracing thus consists in collecting the evidence that testifies that the process occurred so as to lead to the observed result. That evidence so collected validates in fact the causal hypothesis at stake is however object of dispute. On the one hand, Little rejects the idea that process tracing unaided offers valid evidence on the grounds that it only displays chronologically ordered chains of events (1991, 1994, 1998). At the other extreme, Daniel Steel (2004, 2008) argues that process tracing helps solving the problem of confounders in cases in which the statistical method fails to do so by means of what he calls indirect inference. Process tracing and the statistical method, he further argues, can thus be mutually supportive methods. Upon examination of some scientific practice I will argue that both conclusions are to some extent misguided and need refinement. Process tracing does not only offer historical evidence for ordered sequence of events but can indeed support causal conclusions, pace Little. In particular, it does so by offering evidence that is consilient and single out what are truly causal processes. Pace Steel, I argue that the statistical method and process tracing are not mutually supportive in the sense he suggests. They are only mutually supportive when both offer evidence that is valid on its own.