

PROGRAM SOCIAL ONTOLOGY 2023

Time	Wednesday 16th of August	Thursday 17th of August	Friday 18th of August	Saturday 19th of August
9.00	Registration (9.00-10.00)	Keynote: Katharine Jenkins	Keynote: Vanessa Wills	Keynote: Muhammad Ali Khalidi
10.00	Welcome			
11.00	Keynote: Michael E. Bratman	Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break
12.00		Parallel sessions	Parallel sessions	Parallel sessions
13.00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
14.00	Parallel sessions	Parallel sessions	Parallel sessions	Parallel sessions
15.00		Coffee break		Coffee break
16.00	Parallel sessions	Panel: Social Ontology: What is it? What do we want it to be?	Parallel sessions	Keynote: Emma Tieffenbach
17.00	Parallel sessions	ISOS meeting		
18.00			City Hall Formal Dinner	Informal Dinner (boat)

THURSDAY THE 17TH OF AUGUST 2023

13.30-14.30

Room 8

Room 10

Room 11

Room 13

Room 14

Room 15

Room 19

Chair: Laura Martin

Chair: Hans Bernhard Schmid

Chair: Eve Kitsik

Chair: Katherine Ritchie

Chair: Liam Livesley

Chair: Abe Roth

Chair: Matthew Rachar

Esa Diaz Leon: Epistemic Injustice and Social Construction.	Artur Kosecki: John Searle's Theory of Institutional Facts in the Context of Roman Ingarden's Existential Ontology.	Karsten Klint Jensen: Applying Co- operative Utilitarianism.	Saba Bazargan- Forward: Institutional Racism Without Racists?	Cody Gomez: Essentialism, Folk Genetics, and the Ontology of Race.	Olof Leffler: Desire, Disagreement, and Corporate Mental States.	Ric Sims: A coordinated systems approach to group cognition.
Aleksandra Knežević: Uncovering the ontology of social change.	Arto Laitinen: Constitutive and Regulative Rules: Against the Transformation View.	Minhua Yan, Sarah Mathew, and Robert Boyd: "Doing what others do" does not stabilize continuous norms.	Hochan Kim: Complexity and the Limits of Structural Injustice Theory.	Ben Jenkins: The Role of Individual Cognition in Ontological Wrongs.	Franz Altner: Two Faces of Group Agency.	Martin Niederl: Actions, Reasons, and Animals.



Sponsors

The organizing committee is grateful for the generous support from:

- Stockholms Stad for hosting the conference dinner at the City Hall
- The Society for Applied Philosophy
- Anders Karitz' Foundation
- The International Social Ontology Society
- The Department of Philosophy

Other

The keynote lectures and the panel on social ontology are available on the conference website.

The Journal of Social Ontology invites participants to submit "clusters" or individual contributions:

www.journalofsocialontology.org



Social Ontology 2023 - Abstracts for parallel sessions

Harry Ainscough. *Gender Classifications and Trans-Inclusive Social Structures.*

Like other areas of philosophy that draw on marginalised perspectives, the goal of a better, more just and inclusive, social world is the overarching aim for work on trans-inclusive social ontology. However, the literature so far is dominated by how we should classify gender through accounts of gender terms, concepts, or kinds. The impulse behind this is clear: the aim is trans-inclusion, so we ought to engineer our concepts, as an example, such that trans people are classified correctly. In this paper I argue that to make progress, we ought to abandon the focus on classifications as the central problem of analytic trans philosophy.

The social world, including socially intelligible meanings and social structures, is constructed in far more complicated ways than how we classify. I argue that where some contexts – such as trans subcultural contexts – have already enacted social structural change within them, we should turn towards these contexts as the basis from which to move towards broader social structural change (following Dembroff: 2018, Haslanger: forthcoming). Philosophical work that aims to make social structures more trans inclusive should turn to look at how trans subcultural contexts have successfully changed these structures, and how this can be incorporated in more mainstream contexts. In making this argument, I draw heavily on the work of Bettcher (Bettcher: 2013, 2020) and Dembroff (Dembroff: 2018), as both adopt a methodology embedded in both mainstream contexts and trans subculture. Through doing so, both reveal some of what can be gained from turning to trans subcultural contexts.

Focusing on how we classify gender will not be enough to understand firstly, how trans subcultural contexts have developed an alternative social structure, or secondly, how these social structural changes could be brought to a wider range of contexts. I argue that we ought to focus on how resistant social structures were constructed through developing alternative, discursive and non-discursive, social practices. Whilst Dembroff's approach (Dembroff: 2018) for example, makes progress, I argue that their argument to import trans-inclusive classification practices has two significant, intimately connected, limitations. Firstly, classification practices are still not enough to change a social structure, and secondly, they still adopt the parameters of the "trans-inclusion debate" as it has been set up in dominant contexts, which seems to miss something that could have been gained by acknowledging the full extent of the structural differences between trans subcultural contexts and dominant contexts.

In more recent work, however, Dembroff seems to be making a similar turn themselves. In 'Reimagining Transgender' they 'advocate for recentering transgender on the experience of costly and wilful gender deviance' (Dembroff: forthcoming) Though their focus is questioning the value of 'transgender' as a term used to delineate a category of identity, I believe their argument resonates with the argument I make here: the experiences and needs of the trans community might not centre on their categorisations – whether as a particular gender, or as 'trans'.

Christian Airikka and Simon Helperin. *A "Science First" Approach to Social Ontology.*

It is often said that social ontology deals with entities studied by sociologists. Inspired by recent developments within the philosophy of physics we propose a "science first" approach, wherein one first examines case studies from the field of sociology and then describes the ontology the sociologist is committed to. We find that we discover entities that defy easy categorisation by current theories of social ontology. We begin by looking at research currently being done on status inequality between and within romantic relationships. At this stage, we remain silent on whether or not the entities under investigation are best understood as groups, kinds, categories, or any of the above. In sociology and economy we find concept-pairs such as endogamy/exogamy, homogamy/heterogamy, and hypergamy/hypogamy. Focusing on the latter, hypergamy refers to partnerships where a woman "marries up" in terms of e.g. educational status, while hypogamy refers to the opposite. Empirical research indicates that changes in the rates of different relationship types over the last decades are driven by selection on partner status, and not by structural factors such as changes in the sizes of different status groups. For instance, the relative number of hypergamous partnerships grows faster than societal changes would suggest, indicating that we ought to consider these concepts social entities that exert influence on the social world.

Zuzanna Krzykalska: On constitutive rules and marriage

It is common in social ontological research to represent its key philosophical concept—the relation of metaphysical dependence—in a formalized way. Whether we talk about constitution, grounding or anchoring, we think of this dependence in terms of rules and we tend to represent it with *'the arrow'*. Such notation, while illustrative, can be quite problematic. In this study I show that the *arrow*-formalization leads to confusion when applied to complex examples of social construction. Nevertheless, I argue that it is valuable for social ontology to utilize a sort of *arrow*-formula. Thus, I propose to examine problems with that *arrow*. When attempting to employ *arrow*-formulas to represent the constitution of some complex institutional facts—such as legal facts—one finds themselves at a theoretical crossroads. I argue that (1.) each decision regarding the formalization turns out problematic and (2.) seemingly kosher operations on the formulas lead to very misleading results. As an example of such complex institutional fact I examine a legal rule stating a dependence of one legal fact upon a set of other institutional facts. For this purpose I utilize three *arrow*-formulas used in theories of J. Searle, B. Epstein and F. Hindriks. The example shows that—even with a well established theoretical background of the constitutive mechanism—the formal language of the *arrow* requires interpretation. The problem seems to be that the familiar appearance of the formulas invites intuitions regarding its structural patterns and the allowed manipulation of its variables. In result, the inclination to treat the *arrow*-formulas as operational might seem appropriate. However, there is little basis for knowing (1.) what the syntactical rules of the formulas' language are and (2.) how to correctly use it in further philosophical deliberations. Thus, as it should follow, no interpretation of the formula itself would be appropriate or methodologically warranted in discussing the accounts of social facts. Nevertheless, in hope to utilize the formulas as more than visual aid, I propose to consider three ways in which the *arrow* can be interpreted in a way that could allow to establish basic laws of logic or algebra for the ontological formulas representing metaphysical dependence.

Aleksandra Knežević. *Uncovering the ontology of social change.*

I start this talk with the following assumption: if we understand the ontology of social change, we are enabled to deliberately initiate it in a socially desired direction. Therefore, the main aim of this talk is to examine said ontology.

To that aim, I first assume that social change happens when there is a change in social norms. For this reason, I argue that to uncover the ontology of social change, we need to understand the ontology of social norms. Further, by understanding the ontology of social norms, I claim that we are able to understand what social actions are necessary for initiating social change.

Second, I use Sperber's (1985) framework of Cultural Cognitive Causal Chains (CCCC) to explain the metaphysics of social norms. Sperber uses CCCC to elucidate how cultural phenomena (e.g., social norms) exist. He defines cultural phenomena as long-lasting and widely distributed cultural representations. For Sperber, cultural representations are a causal complex of two different kinds of representations: mental representations and public productions. Simply speaking, mental representations include things "in the head" such as beliefs, intentions, desires, etc., and public productions include social objects that are public and include, for example, works of art, utterances, written symbols, etc. Therefore, Sperber argues that cultural phenomena exist as a chain or a complex in which two kinds of things causally interact: individual beliefs and social objects.

In the last part of my talk, my ultimate goal is to show that CCCC can be used for clarifying how causal and constitutive social construction cooperate in construing social kinds such as social beliefs and social objects. To do so, I first compare Sperber's framework of CCCC and Haslanger's (2007) ontology of social structures to demonstrate their similarities. Then, contra Haslanger (2003) and Díaz-León (2013, 2018), I state my reasons for holding that causal social construction is relevant for those who aim to design strategies for achieving social change. Lastly, I claim that social change as a change in social norms can be deliberately initiated in a socially desired direction by manipulating the social objects constituted by causally constructed public meanings.