

René Descartes Lectures 2012
Social Progress: Psychology and
Normative Constraints



Tilburg, 28.11.2012 - 30.11.2012

Synopsis

Main Speaker: Professor Cristina Bicchieri, University of Pennsylvania

The 2012 René Descartes Lectures are devoted to the topic of social norms. Professor Bicchieri's analysis combines philosophical and empirical approaches and stresses the importance of normative expectations and conditional preferences for understanding and describing social norms. It is therefore one of the most innovative and inspiring approaches in current-day social philosophy. In these lectures, she will present her most recent work on the topic and tackle exciting problems such as pluralistic ignorance, experimental elicitation of social norms and sustainable norm change.

In connection to the conference there is in the afternoon-sessions a workshop on **Fairness and Norms**. Each of these sessions consist of a 30 minute talk followed by a 15 minute discussion.

Organizers: Dominik Klein (TiLPS), Rogier de Langhe (TiLPS) and Jan Sprenger (TiLPS),

Professor Cristina Bicchieri

Cristina Bicchieri is the J. P. Harvie Professor of Social Thought and Comparative Ethics at the University of Pennsylvania. She works at the intersection of philosophy, psychology and game theory, with special interest in decisions about fairness, trust, and cooperation, and how mutual expectations affect behavior.

Cristina earned her PhD in philosophy of science from the University of Cambridge in 1984. Before moving to University of Pennsylvania, she taught in the program of Philosophy and Economics at Columbia University, Notre Dame University and Carnegie-Mellon University. Her last book is *The Grammar of Society: the Nature and Dynamics of Social Norms** (CUP 2006). She is a consultant for the UNICEF Human Rights program in the area of social norms change and development. For more information, see her webpage.¹

¹<http://philosophy.sas.upenn.edu/faculty/bicchieri>

Lecture I: It is All In Your Mind

I will explore the commonsensical definition of social norms and explain where my view diverges from common sense. What makes social norms different from moral norms and conventions? Conditional preferences and mutual expectations, both descriptive and normative, define social norms. Mutual expectations, however, may lead people into epistemic traps such as pluralistic ignorance. I will show how pluralistic ignorance may explain the permanence of norms that nobody likes but everybody follows. Another reason why bad norms may persist is the presence of conflicting descriptive and normative expectations. In that case, people will usually disregard the positive normative message and instead imitate the negative behavior.

Commentator: Francesco Guala, University of Milan

Lecture II: Measuring Norms

Behavioral experiments have shown that individuals are not just profit maximizers. Instead, they have social preferences for fairness, reciprocity, and other pro-social behaviors. However, social preference theories are silent about the beliefs that guide players in their pro-social choices. A social norms approach instead relies on the existence of social norms and of mutual expectations of conformity to explain a variety of behaviors that social preference models can only partially explain. In order to use social norms in explanations, we need to assess their existence, and measure individual conformity. Combining behavioral experiments with questionnaires is a way to check for the presence of social norms, as well as to test the hypothesis that empirical/normative expectations support such norms. There is an important difference between norm expression and the readiness to follow norms, and manipulating people's expectations in experimental settings shows that.

Commentator: Ken Binmore, University College London

Lecture III: Creating and Destroying Norms

A narrow view of instrumental reasoning supports the introduction of economic incentives to induce behavioral changes. There is much evidence that such incentives may work in the short run, but change is usually not sustainable. Relying on successful examples of norm change (female genital cutting,

child marriage) and norm creation (sanitation), I will show how changing empirical and normative expectations achieves significant and sustainable results, and how this is done by appealing to motives such as status, prestige and ranking order.

Commentator: Gerald Gaus, University of Arizona

Program

Wednesday 28.11.

Location: TZ7

09:30 - 09:45 Registration
09:45 - 10:00 Opening
10.00 - 11.00 Cristina Bicchieri
Chair: Gerald *It Is All in Your Mind*
Gaus
11.00 - 11.15 coffee
11.15 - 12.00 Commentary by Francesco Guala
12.00 - 13.15 lunch break

Location: room

TZ7

13.15 - 15.30 Chiara Lisciandra, Ryan Muldoon & Stephan Hartmann
Chair: Dominik *Why Are There Descriptive Norms? Because We Looked for*
Klein *Them*
Jan-Erik Lönnqvist, Jan Sprenger, Markku Verkasalo, Gari
Walkowitz & Philipp Wichardt
Judgement and Behaviour in the Prisoner's Dilemma: The
Impact of Moral and Strategic Considerations
Ehud Lamm
Social Norms and the Evolution of Phenomenological Nor-
mativity
15.30 - 16.00 coffee
16.00 - 17.30 Ryan Muldoon
Chair: Matteo *A Series of Unfortunate Mistakes: On the Emergence of*
Colombo *Social Norms*
Ken Binmore
Fairness and Norms
17.30 opening reception

Thursday 29.11.

Location: DZ5

10.00 - 11.00

Cristina Bicchieri

Chair:

Measuring Norms

Francesco Guala

11.00 - 11.15

coffee

11.15 - 12.00

Commentary by Ken Binmore

12:00 - 13:30

lunch break

Location: C186

13.30 - 15.45

Matteo Colombo, Aistis Stankevicius & Peggy Seris

Chair:

Jan

Effects of Social and Non-Social Rewards on Learning a Social Norm. Results from the Tipping Game

Sprenger

Kai Spiekermann & Arne Weiss

Hide and Seek: Self-Serving Norm Context Shaping Through Individual Strategic Manipulation of Information Sets

Gerald gaus

Optimal Norms and Moral Diversity

15.45 - 16.15

coffee

16.15 - 17.45

Jason McKenzie Alexander

Chair: Ryan Muldoon

The Dynamics of Low Quality Norms

Giulia Andrighetto, Daniela Grieco & Luca Tummolini

Guilt-Aversion: A Servant of Two Masters

19:30

Conference Dinner

Friday 30.11.

Location: A017

10.00 - 11.00

Cristina Bicchieri
Creating and Destroying Norms

Chair: Ken Bin-
more

11.00 - 11.15 *coffee*

11.15 - 12.00 Commentary by Gerald Gaus

12:00 - 13:15 *lunch*

13.15 - 14:45 Franseco Guala

Chair: Rogier de
Langhe *Is Group Identity Group-Efficient? An Empirical Test of
Team Preference and Collective Intentionality Theories*

Paul Morrow

Mass Atrocity and Manipulation of Social Norms

14.45 - 15.15 *coffee*

15.15 - 16.45 Alan Thomas

Chair: Jason
Mckenzie Alexander *Critique and Utopia: Amartya Sen's Critique of Rawls's
'Transcendental Institutionalism*

Ingrid Robeyns

Should Social Norms Be Included in the Subject of Justice?

Acknowledgement

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