

# RREM.2021



Programme & Abstracts

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## Rhine-Ruhr Epistemology Meeting 2021

### Details

- Venue: Online Event
- Date: July 22–23, 2021
- Organisation: Peter Brössel, Anna-Maria Asunta Eder, Christian J. Feldbacher-Escamilla
- Funding and Support: University of Cologne (UoC), Rhine-Ruhr Epistemology Group (RREG)
- Website: <http://dclps.phil.hhu.de/rrepiSTEMology/rrem2021/>

### Speakers

- Thomas Grundmann (Cologne)
- Joachim Horvath (Bochum)
- Luis Rosa (Cologne)
- Eva Schmidt (Dortmund)
- Lukas Schwengerer (Duisburg-Essen)
- Dunja Šešelja (Eindhoven)
- Erik Stei (Utrecht and Bonn)
- Christian Straßer (Bochum)
- Corina Strößner (Bochum)
- Paul Thorn (Düsseldorf)

## Aims & Scope

his is the inaugural meeting of the Rhine-Ruhr Epistemology Group. Our members work on a variety of topics in descriptive and normative, individual and social, formal and non-formal, and a priori and experimental epistemology. The group aims at connecting epistemologists, bridging different topics and methods in epistemology, and fostering research in epistemology in general.

## Schedule

RREM.2021: Thursday, July 22, 2021:

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|-------------|---|
| 10:00–10:10 | Welcome   |
| 10:10–11:00 | Thomas Grundmann:<br><i>Dependent Reliability: Why and How Conditional Reliability Should be Replaced by It</i>                       |
| 11:10–12:00 | Erik Stei:<br><i>What's so Bad about Echo Chambers?</i>   |
| 12:10–13:00 | Eva Schmidt:<br><i>Reason-Giving XAI and Responsibility</i>   |
| 13:00–14:00 | <i>Lunch Break</i>  |
| 14:00–14:50 | Dunja Šešelja & Christian Straßer:<br><i>Investigating Bias and Deception with an Argumentation-Based Model of Scientific Inquiry</i> |
| 15:00–15:50 | Lukas Schwengerer:<br><i>Group Lies And Knowledge They Should Have Had</i>  |
| 16:00–16:50 | Luis Rosa:<br><i>Akrasia and the Contents of Higher-Order Beliefs</i>   |
| 17:15       | <i>Social Event (Online)</i>  |

## Schedule Continued

RREM.2021: Friday, July 23, 2021:

- 10:00–10:50 Corina Ströbner:  
*Conceptual Change and Local Incommensurability*
- 11:00–11:50 Paul Thorn:  
*Probabilism without Priors: an Internalist Foundationalist Approach to Justification*
- 12:00–12:50 Joachim Horvath:  
*Gettier and Supposition*
- 12:50–13:00 *Closing*

## Abstracts

**Thomas Grundmann:**

### **Dependent Reliability: Why and How Conditional Reliability Should be Replaced by It**

According to Alvin Goldman, reliabilists need to distinguish between unconditionally and conditionally reliable processes. The latter category is used to account for processes such as reasoning or memory. In this paper, I will argue that Goldman's account of conditional reliability needs substantial revision in two respects. First, conditional reliability must be reinterpreted in terms of dependent reliability to avoid serious problems. Second, we need a more liberal account that allows dependently reliable processes to operate not only on doxastic but also on non-doxastic input. Thinking this way advances the explanatory power of reliabilism significantly.



**Erik Stei:**

### **What's so Bad about Echo Chambers?**

I examine the relation between two characteristics of so-called 'echo chambers': i) echo chambers are primarily a structural phenomenon and ii) they are typically taken to be epistemically problematic. I argue that none of the epistemic deficiencies brought up in connection with echo chambers can be accounted for in purely structural terms. More specifically, meeting the usual conditions of an echo chamber is not sufficient for social epistemic structures to be epistemically 'bad'. I discuss various readings of epistemic badness and argue that they are independent of echo chambers. I highlight some parallels to the philosophical discussion of conspiracy theories and conclude by exploring some options for epistemological approaches to these phenomena.

**Eva Schmidt:**

### **Reason-Giving XAI and Responsibility**

(Co-authors: Kevin Baum, Susanne Mantel, and Timo Speith)

We argue that explainable artificial intelligence (XAI), specifically reason-giving XAI, is needed to ensure that someone can properly be held responsible for decisions that are based on the outputs of artificial intelligent (AI) systems. We first show that, to close responsibility gaps (Matthias 2004), a human in the loop is needed who is directly responsible for particular AI-supported decisions. Second, to meet both the epistemic and control conditions for moral responsibility, and thus to be responsible for her decision, the human in the loop has to have an explanation available of the system's recommendation. Reason explanations are especially well-suited to this end. We support our claims by focusing on a case of disagreement between human in the loop and AI system.



**Dunja Šešelja & Christian Straßer:**

### **Investigating Bias and Deception with an Argumentation-Based Model of Scientific Inquiry**

(Co-authors: Anne-Marie Borg and Daniel Frey)

The problem of bias and deception in science has increasingly gained the attention of scholars employing agent-based models (ABMs) to study mechanisms that produce or mitigate the risk of biased or deceptive behavior. In this talk we study the impact of biased and deceptive agents on the efficiency of scientific inquiry by employing a model structurally different from those that have previously been used to this end, namely, the argumentation-based ABM (ArgABM). The model combines methods from abstract argumentation theory with agent-based epistemic landscape models.

We study the epistemically harmful effects of bias and deception in the context of specific factors underlying scientific inquiry (such as

communication structure and procedures via which scientists choose which theories to pursue). Our results suggest that highly connected communities tend to perform better than less connected ones, while some types of theory-choice procedures allow the community to be more robust towards the harmful influence of bias and deception than others.



**Lukas Schwengerer:**

### **Group Lies And Knowledge They Should Have Had**

Jennifer Lackey (2020; 2021) argues that joint acceptance accounts of group belief cannot adequately capture group lies. I provide an attempt to defend joint acceptance accounts against her challenge. First, I develop a different account of the cases that Lackey proposes as problematic group lies. I argue that these cases are better understood as group beliefs under condition of normative defeat. Hence, the group expressing these beliefs is not telling a lie, but merely expresses an unjustified belief. In the second step I supplement this alternative story by proposing an explanation of why we tend to incorrectly take these expressions of unjustified beliefs to constitute group lies. This explanation provides insights into how we form epistemic expectations for groups by looking at the evidence that individual group members have.



**Luis Rosa:**

### **Akrasia and the Contents of Higher-Order Beliefs**

Epistemologists take themselves to disagree about whether there are situations where it is rational for one to believe that p while it

is at the same time rational for one to believe that one's evidence doesn't support  $p$ . The debate here is about the possibility of a certain kind of rational akrasia. In this paper, I point out that the embedded sentence "one's evidence doesn't support  $p$ " can be interpreted in two different ways, depending on what the semantic contribution of "one's evidence" is taken to be. The first one treats "one's evidence" as a sheer indexical, whereas the second one treats it as a descriptive singular term. It turns out that the first interpretation makes it plausible for us to say that the relevant kind of rational akrasia is impossible, whereas the second one makes it plausible for us to say that the relevant kind of rational akrasia is possible. But the proposition that is taken to be expressed by "one's evidence doesn't support  $p$ " by each of these interpretations is not the same. We have thus a rational reconstruction of views that are labelled as being pro and con the possibility of rational akrasia according to which those views do not really contradict each other.



**Corina Strößner:**

### **Conceptual Change and Local Incommensurability**

In recent decades, the logical study of rational belief dynamics has played an increasingly important role in philosophy. However, conceptual change received comparatively little attention within most formal systems of belief revision. This is problematic insofar as the occurrence of conceptual change (especially in the sciences) has been an influential argument against a logical analysis of beliefs. Especially, Kuhn's ideas about the incommensurability of succeeding theories seem to stand in the way of logical reconstruction. Some philosophers have thus developed models of scientific change that are especially focused on drastic conceptual changes (see for example Thargard's work on conceptual revolutions). Note, however, that not all conceptual changes need to be revolutionary. According to Kuhn, even seemingly small conceptual changes can lead to partial lack of untranslatability. He calls this 'local incommensurability'. Within this talk, I investigate predicate change as an example of such a minor

conceptual change. I will incorporate this kind of conceptual change as model-changing operations in dynamic logic. Several versions of conceptual change will be discussed with respect to their influences on the expressive power, translatability and the potential arising of local incommensurability. Moreover, I demarcate predicate change from versions of belief revision. The talk concludes with an application of the results to animal taxonomy in Aristotle's and Linnaeus's work.



**Paul Thorn:**

### **Probabilism without Priors: an Internalist Foundationalist Approach to Justification**

In this talk, I outline a probabilist internalist foundationalist approach to epistemic justification. The approach is based on a probability updating rule, called “defeasible conditionalization”, that generalizes Bayesian conditionalization. The approach avoids the problem of the priors, since judgment, according to the approach, is based upon a limited stock of conditional probabilities that encode, in a schematic form, principles of normatively correct probability judgment. In place of the problem of the priors, the approach takes on the problem of providing the conditional probabilities that form the basis of correct probability judgment. Means to addressing the latter problem are sketched.



**Joachim Horvath:**

### **Gettier and Supposition**

In this talk, I propose a suppositional reconstruction of Gettier's famous thought experiments that is inspired by a detailed analysis of

Gettier's (1963) actual presentation of his hypothetical cases. In doing so, I aim to follow Gettier's actual method as much as reasonably possible, but I also fill a few glaring gaps in his argument and supply some revisionary tools that are badly needed for addressing a number of pressing problems. For example, I reconstruct the involved modal reasoning in terms of suppositional reasoning in hypothetical mode, and I suggest to deal with Gettier's arbitrary names by substituting them with ordinary names of arbitrary referents. Moreover, I propose a top-down and a bottom-up strategy for dealing with the key metaphilosophical problem of deviant realizations. Finally, I contrast my suppositional reconstruction with Williamson's (2007) influential counterfactual account. In terms of descriptive adequacy, the counterfactual account falls short in two respects: first, it requires that Gettier's hypothetical suppositions should be understood as counterfactual suppositions, and second, it misidentifies the content of Gettier's non-conditional suppositional case judgments as non-suppositional counterfactual conditionals. Moreover, given that the counterfactual account offers no principled solution to the problem of deviant realizations, it also does not enjoy a genuine advantage over other reconstructions in this respect. However, the suppositional and the counterfactual account also have a number of commonalities, such that, in the end, the factor of descriptive adequacy concerning a historically successful practice of philosophical thought experimentation may turn out to be decisive.