

4<sup>th</sup> International Conference “Economic Philosophy”

*Lyon, Wednesday 27th - Friday 29th June, 2018*

## **Norms and Normativity**

The 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference “Economic Philosophy” will be held at the University of Lyon from 27th to 29th June 2018. This conference is organized by the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon (ENS), the University of Saint-Etienne, University Lyon 2, University Lyon 3, the Institut des Etudes Politiques (IEP) and Institut National des Sciences Appliquées (INSA) (Triangle UMR5206, GATE Lyon Saint-Etienne UMR 5824, Irphil EA4187).

We invite economists and philosophers, but also all contributors working on economic philosophy, to submit papers relevant to the theme. Papers on other topics are also welcome.

Collective life is structured by norms. Even though such norms manifest as regularities for those who observe them, they also constitute rules to follow or ideals to mimic. May these norms be social, moral, or legal, they organize practices and orient judgments, especially in the economic sphere. Consequently, they constitute one of the first objects of study for both economics and philosophy, and more broadly for the social sciences.

From this perspective, at least three kinds of questions can be asked:

First, from an ontological point of view: What do constitute the norms? The nature of norms in themselves is debated, since such norms could refer to behavioral regularities, shared beliefs, incorporated rules, or intelligible principles, etc. What is their social function, and what is their role for individual representation and action? According to certain approaches, such as institutionalist-pragmatist approaches in economics, where institutions are defined as rules, norms are dynamic mediators between individuals and society. Norms orient individual behavior, consciously or not, intentionally or not, imperatively or through incentives, making difficult to draw a unified picture of their mode of action, making it even more difficult when such norms interact. What are their conditions of emergence? Norms evolve with economic and social life, however they can also slow down and orient the movement of both economic and social life. The origins of norms appearance, their crystallization, their laying on, or even their effacement towards other norms are complex and uncertain. What are norms’ conditions of efficacy? For instance, should the social responsibility of enterprises come under a private order or a public one?

Second, from an epistemological point of view: How to know the norms? The delimitation of the normative objects studied largely determine their conditions of analyses and orient their descriptions, as well as their explanations, which leads us to question the concepts that economists use to approach such norms. Which methodologies can guide their identification, their interpretation, and their explanation? The theoretical frameworks that are mobilized to highlight the evolution and efficacy of economic and social norms, from the rational choice theory to the theory of evolution, are multiple and often appear hardly compatible. Thus, one has to either articulate such theories together or to separate them. The theoretical framework allowing to identify such norms come under the social choice theory.

Third and finally, from an axiological point of view: How to assess and arbitrate conflict among norms? Diverse rationality or moral requirements are usually given to norms that were drawn from individual or collective behavior or that were imagined by theoretical models. However, it is not certain that such requirements offer the possibility to obtain a reliable and coherent order for these norms. From which value judgments – epistemic, moral or aesthetic – are they liable? Axiological judgments on norms can be linked (depending on the meta-ethic or more broadly on the meta-normative position one endorses) to superior rank norms, to values that would justify them, to interpretative hypotheses simply postulated, or even to preferences shaped by social or psychological preferences.

These three axes of questions lead to a reflection on normativity, that is, on what creates and imposes norms, as well as on the recognition of a specific dimension of the social and economic life. The normative, be it imperative or appreciative, distinguishes itself from the positive. Normativity is in itself the object of plural interrogations.

Is the dividing line between normative and positive really easy to draw in economic science and public action? It is often argued that norms are opposed to facts, as well as prescriptive and evaluative judgments are opposed to descriptive judgments. Some scholars challenge this dichotomy either by attempting to get rid of such distinction or by proposing to add a new one, isolating for instance the prudential from both the normative and the positive.

Can scientific discourses about economics and the economy really separate the study about fact from a normative reflection? The articulation of these two dimensions operate differently depending on whether the evaluative goal or the prescriptive one is assumed, as in welfare economics, or whether these goals are not assumed, because, for example, such goals would be contrary to an axiological imperative of neutrality. However, questions about time consistency or efficacy often lead to axiological questioning.

Can regulated judgments be considered at the origins or foundations of normativity? Norms or values, especially the moral ones, aiming to assess economic and social norms can even be described, studied, or assessed within their conflictual diversity, sometimes using economics tools such as formalization. The economist is thus steered to enable dialogue between concepts originally from meta-ethics or within social justice theories. Furthermore, the economist is pushed to interrogate the power she can have on such tools, which determine the framework of her own reflection. Besides, economics as a whole discipline is steered to create a dialog with other disciplines such as law, political science, and ethics.

Finally, which role can economists play in the production of appreciative or prescriptive discourses within the public space? Economists regular interventions in the public sphere obliges one to interrogate the norms that can regulate the production – intentionally or not – of normative effects from economics. Consequently, it seems necessary to question the standard for desirable interventions and the political interpretation of results and discourses produced by economists, as well as the place they fill in public consultation, deliberations, and public decisions.

Papers could be about reflections on norms, normativity in philosophy of economics; they could also come from any methodological perspective. Among the themes that could be addressed:

- Norms plurality and economics: social, ethic, legal norms; moral norms, justice norms; cultural norms; gender norms; linguistic norms;
- Rationality and norms: rationality norms, epistemic norms; norms and practical rationality;
- Nature, origins, and foundations of normativity: law, moral, ethic, politics; functionalism and norms efficacy; scientific expertise and constructivism;
- Norms dynamics: evolution; conflict of norms; interaction between different norms; democratic process and norms
- Positive and normative economics: facts and norms; axiological neutrality and normative aims in economics;
- Universality and plurality of norms: knowledge, interpretation and explanation of norms; cognitive sciences and norms; democracy and norms;
- Normativity approaches in economics: political philosophy, welfare theory and social choice, law and economics, institutionalisms ...

## **Important Deadlines:**

- *Abstract Proposals*

Abstracts (around 500 words) should be prepared for blind review and sent at [sciencesconf.org](http://sciencesconf.org) by November 15, 2017.

Abstracts and papers can be written and presented either in French or in English

- *Notification of acceptance*

Notification of acceptance should be sent on February 9<sup>th</sup> 2018.

- *Full paper*

The final version of the paper should be sent on June 15<sup>th</sup> 2018

- *Registration*

Early registrations will be accepted till April 27<sup>th</sup> 2018 and late registrations will be accepted till June 15<sup>th</sup> 2018.

### **Keynote speakers**

Marc Fleurbaey (University of Princeton)

Uskali Mäki (University of Helsinki)

Hilary Greaves (University of Oxford)

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Claire Pignol (PHARE, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne)  
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Don Ross (University of Cape Town)  
Miriam Teschl (EHESS, Université de Marseille)  
Stéphane Zuber (CNRS et PSE)  
Danielle Zwarthoed (Chaire Hoover, Université Catholique de Louvain)

### **Organization Committee**

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**For more information :**

- <http://triangle.ens-lyon.fr/spip.php?article6992>
- <https://www.gate.cnrs.fr/spip.php?article1102&lang=en>
- <http://irphil.univ-lyon3.fr/appe1-a-communications-4eme-colloque-international-de-philosophie-economique-normes-et-normativites--1090521.kjsp>
- <https://philoeco2018.sciencesconf.org/>