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Abstracts

Mercredi 6 octobre 2021 | Michele Bocchiola (Université de Genève)

Privacy, Personal Data, and Property

In this paper, I try to show how the right to privacy, in the canonical and common formulation, while prohibiting the unauthorized use of ‘personal data’, allows the secondary use of ‘information’—that is, data obtained, aggregated, processed and stored from personal data. The secondary use of information could still represent a violation of personal privacy. To block the secondary use of information, I argue that we need to recognize and protect personal data ownership.

Mardi 19 octobre 2021 | Vittorio Bufacchi (University College Cork)

Everything Must Change. Philosophical Lessons from Lockdown.

COVID-19 has exposed the structural injustice in modern society. The people who suffered most during this pandemic were also the most vulnerable members of our society. There are important philosophical, political and ethical lessons that must be learned from the last 18 months. The most important lesson is the following: after this pandemic is over things must not go back to normal, since it was the ‘normal’ that was the underlying problem.

Lundi 15 novembre 2021 | Fabio Wolkenstein (Universität Wien)

What Is Democratic Backsliding?

A number of high-profile cases of elected political leaders subverting democracy have made democratic backsliding a major issue of concern. But although there exists a broad empirical and legal literature on the topic, the concept of democratic backsliding itself has rarely been subjected to sustained reflection and analysis. Reacting to this, my paper aims to clarify the concept of democratic backsliding. It develops a more general theoretical account of democratic backsliding that can be applied across a range of different institutional contexts, and is sensitive to the theoretical complexities inherent in the notion of backsliding – notably the fact that backsliding implies regression, which appears to require making potentially problematic assumptions about the directionality of democratic development.

Lundi 22 novembre 2021 | Emanuela Ceva (Université de Genève) & **Maria Paola Ferretti** (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main)

Book symposium: *Political Corruption. The Internal Enemy of Public Institutions*

This book makes political corruption an object of public ethics by demonstrating how it is an internal enemy—a Trojan horse—of public institutions. To understand political corruption, Emanuela Ceva and Maria Paola Ferretti argue, we must adopt an internal point of view and look at how officeholders' interrelated conduct may fail the functioning of their institution because of their unaccountable use of their office's powers. Even well-designed institutions may be derailed if the officeholders fail to uphold by their conduct a public ethics of office accountability. Political corruption is one such failure, and it is wrong even when its negative consequences are unclear or debatable. To correct this failure, the book calls on officeholders to oppose political corruption from the inside by engaging in practices of mutual answerability.

Mardi 23 novembre 2021 | Emanuela Ceva & María Carolina Jiménez García (Université de Genève)

Automating Anticorruption? The Challenges of Integrating Algorithms and Office Accountability

The integration of Machine Learning Algorithms (MLA) into anticorruption has been mainly targeted at corrupt behavior entailing rule violations (that MLA can identify). We challenge such a legalistic approach and recast anticorruption within an institutional ethics of office accountability, which requires mobilizing officeholders to engage in practices of answerability. By these practices, officeholders can call on each other to respond for their decisions in their institutional capacity. We explore two tensions concerning the integration of MLA into anticorruption so conceived. First, the opacity of MLA may undermine office accountability by hiding from officeholders the reasons underlying decisions resting on algorithmic outputs. Second, automating certain processes may disengage officeholders, and hamper their taking forward-looking responsibility for the working of their institution.

Mercredi 1 décembre 2021 | Sara Amighetti (Universität Zürich)

Citizenship, Equality and Irregular Border Crossing.

The ideal of social equality is often understood to apply within the context of a bounded society; many have assumed that it is citizens of the same state who ought to relate to each other as social equals, rather than as superiors and inferiors. I will call this view citizenship egalitarianism. In this paper, I argue against it to show that the demands of social equality ought to be extended to non-citizens. This includes non-citizens who are territorially present within the confines of the state and, more controversially, territorially absent non-citizens.

Mercredi 8 décembre 2021 | Esma Baycan Herzog (Université de Genève)

A Theory of Just Membership

Multiple debates in normative political philosophy focus on ethical dilemmas related to membership in diverse societies. Ethics of immigration, multiculturalism and citizenship focus on culturally, ethnically and religiously diverse groups of citizens, immigrants and indigenous or national minorities. Ethics of technology and animals discuss, respectively the membership of human-like technological beings, e.g. humanoids, and non-human sentient beings such as animals. A full-fledged theory of membership is still absent. In my post-doc mobility project, I will bring together different sets of literatures on ethics of technology, animals and immigration to articulate a theory of just membership.