

# Workshop on Impartiality in Ethics and Philanthropy

Thursday, March 5th  
University of Geneva, Geneva, Switzerland

Impartiality is a central but contested concept in both ethical theory and philanthropic practice. This one-day workshop investigates the ethical questions surrounding the extent to which individuals are morally required to treat others impartially, especially in our benevolent endeavors. What is the right balance between personal interests and our ethical responsibilities toward others? How should we balance the moral demands stemming from different groups of beneficiaries?

The workshop will take place at the University of Geneva from 10:45 to 17:30 (CET). It is free and open to all.

10:45-12:00 | François Jaquet (University of Strasbourg)

Location: Colladon (Rue Jean-Daniel-Colladon 2, 1204)

## ***Against Species Partiality***

Abstract: Call “species impartiality” the view that we should give equal consideration to the equal interests of humans and other animals. This view is prevalent in animal ethics since the publication of Peter Singer’s *Animal Liberation*. Most often, it is grounded in Singer’s principle of equal consideration, according to which equal interests should be given equal weight, no matter whose interests they are. This traditional defense of species impartiality has recently been challenged by Shelly Kagan, who offers a series of counterexamples to the principle of equal consideration. In this talk, I put forward an alternative argument for species impartiality, one that does not rest on the principle of equal consideration and, therefore, avoids Kagan’s counterexamples.

13:30-14:45 | Antonin Broi (University of Geneva)

Location: Colladon (Rue Jean-Daniel-Colladon 2, 1204)

## ***Cause Neutrality in Ordinary Philanthropy***

Abstract : The ethics of philanthropy presents us with an apparent paradox. While a majority of philosophers in the recent literature on how and where to give defend the importance of our duties to *effectively* help others, a quick look at the most common practices in philanthropy reveals a striking gap. Many donors seem to focus on a cause area (e.g. research on cancer, helping stray dogs, etc.) on the basis of identity-based, agent-relative reasons, and then choose the most effective action within their preferred cause area. In this talk, I argue that this strategy is not defensible and that donors should follow effective altruism (EA) in endorsing *cause neutrality*, the idea that we should prioritize cause areas based on effectiveness only.

14:45-16:00 | Agnès Baehni (University of Geneva)

Location: Colladon (Rue Jean-Daniel-Colladon 2, 1204)

## ***How to Be Partial to Oneself Without Being an Egoist***

Abstract: The role that the first-person perspective is allowed to play in moral reasoning is a major source of contemporary debate between partialists and impartialists. The discussion usually revolves

around the question of partiality's justification when it is intended to benefit our loved ones. Surprisingly, the issue of partiality to oneself is rarely addressed directly and its link with egoism is left unexplored. In this presentation, I will seek to fill this gap by focusing on some of the difficulties raised by the idea of justified partiality to oneself.

16:15-17:30 | Ralf Bader (University of Fribourg)

Location: Philosophes, Phil 116 (Boulevard des Philosophes 22, 1204)

### ***Impartiality Without Impersonality***

**Abstract :** This paper argues that impartiality need not be understood in terms of an impersonal evaluation that transcends the perspective of any person, but can also be understood as an evaluation that abstracts from the particularities of anyone's perspective. Put differently, it need not be the view from nowhere but can be the point of view of no one in particular. This makes it possible to develop an impartial person-affecting approach in population ethics that rejects impersonal good yet is able to operate with a permutation-invariant betterness ordering and hence avoids the non-identity problem.

Organized by Antonin Broi, Romolo Borra and Julien Deonna