Theoretical Reflections on Exploitation in Practice: A Workshop at the University of Guelph

October 9-10, 2015

University of Guelph
Guelph, Ontario
Canada

Organized by: Monique Deveaux, Department of Philosophy, U of Guelph
Vida Panitch, Department of Philosophy, Carleton University
Meena Krishnamurthy, Department of Philosophy, University of Michigan
Theoretical Reflections on Exploitation in Practice: A Workshop at the University of Guelph

Presenters have 25 minutes to outline the argument of their pre-circulated papers, and discussants have 10 minutes to respond. The remaining time is for discussion.

Friday Oct 9

Friday Venue: Delta Hotel & Conference Centre, 50 Stone Rd., Guelph (Winegard Room)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:30-10:50</td>
<td>Coffee &amp; registration</td>
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<td>10:50 – 11:00</td>
<td>Welcome remarks by the organizers</td>
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<td>11:00 - 12:10</td>
<td>Exploitation and Consequentialism</td>
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<td>Presenter: Ruth Sample, University of New Hampshire</td>
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<td>Discussant: Loren King, Wilfred Laurier</td>
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<td>12:10 – 1:10</td>
<td>Lunch (Delta restaurant)</td>
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<td>1:10 - 2:20</td>
<td>The Feminization of Responsibility As Exploitation</td>
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<td>Presenter: Serene Khader, CUNY Brooklyn</td>
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<td>Discussant: Lauren Bialystok, OISE, University of Toronto</td>
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<td>2:25 - 3:35</td>
<td>Exploring the Implications of Global Commercial Surrogacy on Theoretical Concepts of Exploitation</td>
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<td>Presenter: Agomoni Ganguli Mitra, University of Edinburgh</td>
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<td>Discussant: Mara Marin, Frankfurt University, and Centre for Ethics, University of Toronto</td>
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<td>3:35 – 4:00</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
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<td>4:00 - 5:10</td>
<td>Exploitation, Commodification, and Equality</td>
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<td>Presenter: Anne Phillips, London School of Economics</td>
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<td>Discussant: Monique Deveaux, University of Guelph</td>
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<td>5:15 – 6:25</td>
<td>Commodification, Exploitation, and Bodily Sales</td>
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<td>Presenter: Vida Panitch, Carleton University</td>
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<td>Discussant: Michael Kessler, Trinity College, University of Toronto</td>
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<td>7:00 -</td>
<td>Conference Dinner, Babel Fish Bistro, 80 Macdonell St, Guelph, ON</td>
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<td>(519) 826-6709, <a href="http://www.babelfishbistro.com/">http://www.babelfishbistro.com/</a></td>
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Saturday Oct 10

Saturday Venue: University of Guelph campus, Room 1817 - Pathobiology Building

(Coffee/tea will be available in our meeting room upon arrival)

10:00 – 11:10  **Legitimacy and the International Trade Regime**  
Presenter: Tom Christiano, University of Arizona  
Discussant: Cristian Dimitriu, University of Guelph

Presenter: Richard Miller, Cornell University  
Discussant: Joseph Carens, University of Toronto

12:25 – 1:30  Lunch (Catered/on site)

1:30 –2:40  **Beauty, Choice, and Exploitation**  
Presenter: Heather Widdows, University of Birmingham  
Discussant: Meena Krishnamurthy, University of Michigan

2:45 – 3:55  **Exploiting Hope Through Unproven Medical Interventions**  
Presenter: Jeremy Snyder, Simon Fraser University  
Discussant: Violetta Igneski, McMaster University

3:55 – 4:20  Coffee/tea break

4:20 – 5:30  **Exploitation and Promises**  
Presenter: Hallie Liberto, University of Connecticut  
Discussant: Waheed Hussain, University of Toronto

6:30 -  **Conference Dinner**, Artisanale, 214 Woolwich St, Guelph, ON  
(519) 821-3359, http://www.artisanale.ca/
Theoretical Reflections on Exploitation in Practice

Workshop Description

Philosophical discussions of exploitation generally focus on the nature of exploitation — on what it is and what makes it wrong. Typically, this analysis begins in the hypothetical, focusing on two-person examples that abstract away from the details and concrete realities of the real world. Abstraction of this kind is supposed to be valuable because it fosters clearer thinking about what makes a given relationship or practice exploitative.

While the abstraction can be very useful for illuminating precisely what makes a two-person situation exploitative, it is often less helpful when it comes to illuminating the nature of, and possible solutions to, exploitative practices that are pervasive social and economic phenomena — such as human trafficking, sweatshop labour, and commercial gestational surrogacy.

Influential consequentialist accounts of exploitation are outcome-oriented, stressing the particular wrongs caused by exploitative practices (such as paying an unfairly low wage to an illegal migrant worker). Those who take this approach, such as philosopher Alan Wertheimer, say that it helpfully allows us to concede that some instances of exploitation nonetheless improve the circumstances of the exploitee (relative to their baseline). From this, consequentialists conclude that prohibiting these types of exploitive interactions would be counterproductive and, in turn, may be morally impermissible. Instead, other solutions — such as better pay or fairer contracts — are offered as appropriate alternatives. But, given its broader social and economic significance, one wonders whether such remedies are genuinely sufficient to reduce or eliminate exploitation.

Deontological conceptions of exploitation, such as those of Onora O'Neill and Ruth Sample, focus on the ways in which particular practices violate ethical principles of action. O'Neill and Sample argue that an exploitative relationship is one in which a person is disrespected and degraded, and in which his or her dignity and autonomy are undermined. But this approach, which often leads to the conclusion that exploitative practices should be opposed and prohibited, cannot readily help us to imagine practical alternatives to exploitative practices in a world rife with deep structural inequalities and oppression. Nor can it help us to make moral sense of exploitative arrangements that are of some small benefit to exploited persons.

In short, the dominant — highly abstract — philosophical method of theorizing about exploitation is incomplete, if not incorrect. It has led to somewhat implausible and even inaccurate concepts of exploitation that are deeply disconnected from the real world. Of more practical importance, it has not generated compelling solutions to concrete instances of exploitation. A new paradigm and method — one that takes seriously the reality of exploitation — is needed to conceptualize and genuinely address the pressing and pervasive problem of social and economic exploitation.
Presenters


Vida Panitch is an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Carleton University. She has published extensively on the concept of exploitation in connection with global "reproductive markets" (specifically, surrogacy), drawing attention to exploitation in cross-border reproductive care. Recent publications include "Transnational Surrogacy and the Justice Condition of Non-

Anne Phillips is the Professor of Political and Gender Theory, Gender Institute and Government Department at the London School of Economics and Political Science. She is a political theorist with expertise in feminist theory and democratic political thought. In particular, she is well known for her work on equality and inequality in connection with marginalized groups in society. Her recent books include *Our Bodies, Whose Property?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013); *Gender and Culture* (London: Polity Press, 2010); *Multiculturalism without Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); and *Which Inequalities Matter?* (London: Polity Press, 1999).


Discussants


Monique Deveaux is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Guelph, where she holds the Canada Research Chair in Ethics and Global Social Change. She is the author of Gender and Justice in Multicultural Liberal States (Oxford University Press 2006), Cultural Pluralism in Liberal and Democratic Thought (Cornell UP 2000), and co-editor of the volumes Reading Onora O’Neill (Routledge 2013) and Sexual Justice, Cultural Justice (Routledge 2007). Deveaux’s current research focuses on the social and political agency of poor individuals and communities and argues that it should inform our discussions of global injustice and its remedies. She argues this in “The Global Poor as Agents of Justice,” The Journal of Moral Philosophy 12 (2015).


Waheed Hussain is an Assistant Professor in Philosophy at the University of Toronto.  He has written widely on the ethics of a range of economic practices, such as ethical consumerism and profit maximization within market economics. His publications include "Is Ethical Consumerism an Impermissible Form of Vigilantism?" Philosophy and Public Affairs Vol. 40, no. 2 (2012); "Corporations, Profit Maximization and the Personal Sphere" Economics and Philosophy Vol. 28, no.3 (2012); "The Unromantic Rousseauian: Scanlon on Justice, Value Coherence and
Violetta Igneski is an Associate Professor in Philosophy at McMaster University. Professor Igneski’s work in ethics and political philosophy addresses primarily the question of what we owe to strangers, which is of crucial importance to discussions of exploitation in both a global context and in a medical context. Recent publications include “A sufficiently political orthodox conception of human rights,” Journal of Global Ethics Vol.1, no. 2 (2014); "Defending Limits on the Sacrifices We Ought to Make for Others,” Utilitas Vol.20, no. 4 (2008); "Equality, Sufficiency and the State", Dialogue XLVI (2007); and "Perfect and Imperfect Duties to Aid,” Social Theory and Practice Vol.32, no. 3 (2006).

Michael Kessler is an Assistant Professor at Trinity College in the University of Toronto and the director of the Trinity One program. His research focuses on the moral and political implications of impaired consent. In particular, his work explores the variety of ways that consent can become impaired, and the range of normative implications that follow, including exploitation. His current work focuses on childhood as a form of impaired consent, and the practice of trying children as adults for crimes they commit while under the age of majority. Other recent work looks at the legal doctrine of unconscionability, the difference between pornography and obscenity, and the role of neutrality within political institutions.


Meena Krishnamurthy is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Michigan and a member of the program in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics. She works in normative democratic theory but has deep interests in questions about the nature and wrongness of exploitation and coercion. Her works include “(White) Tyranny and the Democratic Value of Distrust,” The Monist (Forthcoming); “Nudging Global Poverty Alleviation?” Law and Ethics of Human Rights (Forthcoming); “Completing Rawls’s Arguments for Equal Political Liberty and its Fair Value: The Argument from Self-Respect,” Canadian Journal of Philosophy 43.2 (2013); and “Reconceiving Rawls’s Arguments for Equal Political Liberty and its Fair Value: On our Higher-Order Interests” Social Theory and Practice, Vol. 38, no. 2 (2012).

Marin Mara is a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Ethics, University of Toronto, 2015- 2016. She is a political theorist with expertise in liberal political theory and gender theory. Her works include Connected By Commitment: Rethinking Relations of Oppression and Our Commitment to Undermine Them. Under contract, Oxford University Press; "Care, Oppression and Marriage," Hypatia Vol. 29, no. 2 (2014); and "Marriage as Commitment: A Revisionary Argument" in American Multicultural Studies, edited by Sherrow O. Pinder (Sage Publications, 2012).
This way to the restaurants; follow Gordon St. N. Gordon St. turns into Norfolk St.

Artisanale Restaurant
Free parking for first 2 hours

Downtown Guelph
Gordon St. S leads directly to Hwy 401

Babel Fish Bistro Restaurant

Norfolk St. S turns into Gordon St. which leads to the university
Guelph Taxi Services
Canadian Cab- 519-824-3110
Red Top Taxi- 519-821-1700

VIA Rail Train Station 1-888-842-7245
79 Carden St. Guelph

Delta Guelph Hotel and Conference Centre
50 Stone Rd. W
519-780-3700

GO Transit
www.gotransit.com, 1888-438-6646
141 Macdonell St. Guelph

Greyhound Bus Terminal
17 Wyndham St. S
519- 824-0771, open until 7:30pm