

## Inauguration of CEPDISC

On Friday 4 December 2020 CEPDISC had its official opening ceremony.

Corona adjourned the originally planned official opening of the Centre in August. Approaching the rescheduled December opening, the evolving state of the pandemic coupled with the uncertainty about bringing an in-person event together already limited in size the Centre pivoted to a hybrid event.

## Workshop on Algorithmic Fairness

The workshop on Algorithmic Fairness was organized in collaboration with Sune Holm (University of Copenhagen). It was prompted by a call for philosophical reflection on how to assess the fairness of algorithmic decision making in order to realize the potential benefits of applying computer systems to make consequential sometimes discriminatory decisions about people in both the public and private sector. What it means for an algorithm to be fair is not a question that can be solved mathematically. It is a question of ethics. Hence, there have been calls from the machine learning community for philosophers to engage in and apply their expertise to the topic of algorithmic fairness. The aim of this workshop was to do just that.

## Other events

The CEPDISC seminar series was to bring a number of high profile speakers to Aarhus. Like Danish research institutions in general, CEPDISC was much affected by the covid-19 situation and most of its research seminars and workshops were therefore held online.

## CEPDISC member launches new book

In “The Epistemology and Morality of Human Kinds” Marion Godman puts forward the view that groups of people classified according to their gender, religion or ethnicity, are historical kinds. The groups are historical kinds as they are underpinned by cultural lineages of reproduction. Such reproduction occurs because we humans are socially motivated learners (we both like to do things together with others and like to do things the way they do it). This means we identify with and learn from pre-existing cultural models (of say a particular gender or a religious practice), eventually leading to continuities of kinds and identities across generations. But historical kinds are also associated with prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination. One might therefore be sceptical of their use in generalizations, explanations and in policy. In response, Marion argues that the human kinds due to cultural reproduction are deserving of scientific study not in spite of, but because of their role in explaining our identity and patterns of injustice and discrimination.

## CEPDISC draws national attention

The inauguration of CEPDISC was mentioned in a number of national newspapers. CEPDISC researchers were called upon to give perspectives on discriminative behaviour in various cases discussed in the national media. For example Ditte Marie Munch-Juriscic was on the local news reflecting on sexism, bias and epistemic injustice (TV2 ØSTJYLLAND, Wednesday 19 August 2020, 19:30 News) and Michael Bang Petersen was frequently in the medias commenting on citizen behaviour and its consequences on the development of the coronavirus epidemic qua his research on the HOPE project.



Head of Centre Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen presenting the Center's research aim at the Inauguration. Photo: Lars Kruse/AU



Opening address by the Danish National Research Foundation's CEO Søren Peter Olesen. Like most participants DNRNF joined on a Zoom connection. Photo: Lars Kruse/AU

## About CEPDISC

Centre for the Experimental-Philosophical Study of Discrimination (CEPDISC) explores the nature of discrimination from the perspective of experimental philosophy.

CEPDISC initiated its activities at Aarhus University on 1 August 2020. Presently, CEPDISC consists of 14 researchers with backgrounds in social and political psychology, on the one hand, and philosophy and political theory, on the other hand.

The Centre asks three main research questions in relation to discrimination:

- 1) What is discrimination?
- 2) What are the main grounds for objecting to discrimination and how do these grounds relate?
- 3) What can and should be done to counteract discrimination?

CEPDISC's primary objective is to address these questions from an experimental-philosophical perspective.

CEPDISC's vision is to demonstrate how an experimental-philosophical approach can shed light on some of the important issues of relevance to research and society in relation to discrimination.