

## **In search of the sources of philosophical intuitions - new methods in experimental philosophy**

Philosophers often use intuitions as evidence for philosophical theories. Sometimes they construct thought experiments – short descriptions of imaginary situations – in order to elicit specific intuitions about certain philosophical issues. One of the most notable examples are Gettier cases. Before Gettier's famous two-page paper was published, philosophers claimed that knowledge is justified true belief. Gettier presented two counterexamples – short stories where a protagonist has a justified true belief. However, Gettier argued that we intuitively feel that the belief (though true and justified) does not constitute knowledge in those cases. This intuitive assessment of the counterexamples is widely considered to be a reason for rejecting the standard definition of knowledge. Most philosophers agreed with Gettier and started to seek alternative accounts of knowledge.

In recent years, many thinkers have claimed that folk might not share the intuitions of Gettier and other philosophers. If this is true, why should we think of philosophers' intuitions as a device for evaluating philosophical theories? This type of questions is related to the rise of experimental philosophy, new approach to traditional philosophical questions, aiming – among others – to investigate what intuitions people have and whether they differ from those of professional philosophers.

The scope of research in experimental philosophy has broadened. Philosophers who conduct experimental research are interested not only in what intuitions folk and philosophers have, but also in why they have such intuitions. The method they have chosen is to look at the experimental research in the fields of cognitive psychology, psycholinguistics and neurosciences to see whether they can explain common patterns of intuitions observed in the philosophical discourse. In contemporary literature, this kind of approach is known as the "Sources project". After a thorough examination many of intuitions about philosophical issues might be revealed to be caused by cognitive illusions – situations, where a certain reliable cognitive mechanism malfunctions and produces misleading intuitions. In such cases, we would gain reasons not to trust such intuitions as evidence for our philosophical theories.

The aim of the research project is to investigate this new approach from a theoretical and an empirical standpoint. As far as theoretical side of the project is concerned, the main research question is what concept of intuition this new approach implies. As a part of the research project, I will develop the theory of intuition that will integrate traditional philosophical debates with new emerging research on the sources of intuitions. On the one hand, it must be useful for empirical research in a new paradigm of experimental philosophy. On the other hand, it must be compatible with the traditional philosophical notion of intuition at least to a certain extent. In order to develop such a conception, I will thoroughly analyze existing psychological explanations of various patterns of intuitions ranging from explanations of intuitions that underly the classical argument from illusion, through explanations of intuitive plausibility of ontological dualism, to conflicting intuitions about trolley cases. I try to reconstruct the common argumentative structure of these accounts.

As an empirical part of the research project, I plan to come up with new explanations in the vein of the Sources project and to test them experimentally. I will employ methods used in experimental philosophy but I will also borrow methods from corpus linguistics and psychology, mainly from psycholinguistics. One of the most promising ways to explain certain philosophical intuitions is to show how they are produced by automatic inferences based on stereotypical association of certain words used in philosophical thought experiments or arguments. For example, the existence of such stereotypes and inferences can be reliably tested in pupilometric experiments, which employ sets of sentences that are congruent and incongruent with postulated stereotypes. When a participant is presented with a sentence that is incongruent with the stereotype, the changes in pupil's diameter allow one to infer that the comprehension of the sentence required additional cognitive effort to "cancel" the stereotypical inference. The presence of stereotypes can be also seen in real language. One of the best ways to analyze the usage of certain words is to use the methods of corpus linguistics. We can search for statistical patterns in large collections of real-life textual materials. I will show how questionnaire studies, which are characteristic for experimental philosophy, can be successfully combined with eye-tracking methods and with corpus linguistics.