Charlie Blunden

Curriculum Vitae

Postdoctoral Researcher
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PhilPeople
ORCiD: 0000-0002-7027-2269

Research Areas

AOS: Ethics (esp. moral progress and moral change, empirically-informed ethics), Social and Political Philosophy (esp. political philosophy of economic institutions)

AOC: Metaethics, Moral Psychology, Business Ethics, Philosophy of the Social Sciences (with a focus on cultural evolutionary theory)

Employment

2025-2027 **Senior Assistant (Postdoctoral Researcher)**
Institute of Philosophy, Zagreb
Project: Moral Progress: Individual and Collective (MoPIC)
PI: Tvrtko Jolić
Funded by: Croatian Science Foundation (HRZZ)

2020-2025 **PhD Researcher**
Utrecht University
Project: The Enemy of the Good (PROGRESS)
PI: Hanno Sauer
Funded by: European Research Council (ERC)

Education

2020-2025 **PhD in Philosophy**
Utrecht University
Dissertation: *Moral Prosperity: Basic, Instrumental, and Vindicated Moral Progress* (Available online)
Supervisors: Hanno Sauer, Joel Anderson
Committee: Daniel Cohnitz, Ibo van de Poel, Annemarie Kalis, Joseph Heath, Nicholas Smyth
Research visit: Sept-Nov 2022, University of Toronto, Joseph Heath

2017-2019 **Research Master's (MA) in Philosophy**
Utrecht University
Graduated *cum laude*
Master's Thesis: "Brace Yourself: Prospects and Problems for Improving the Mental Environment."
Honours programme: Graduate Honours Interdisciplinary Seminars

2013-2016 **BA in Philosophy**
University of Reading
First-class Honours

Publications

Peer-reviewed articles

Forthcoming

(with Paul Rehren) "The 'Who,' 'What,' and 'When' of Moral Progress." *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, online first. https://doi.org/10.1080/00048402.2026.2688289

(with Hanno Sauer) "Perfect Strangers: Moral Progress, Cultural Evolution, and the Inclusivist Anomaly." *Philosophical Explorations*. Accepted, pre-print: https://philpapers.org/go.pl?aid=BLUPSM

"A Vindication of the Value of 'Choice'." *Inquiry*, online first. https://doi.org/10.1080/0020174X.2025.2549731

2025

"It's Only Natural! Moral Progress through Denaturalization." *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy*, 29 (2): 219-48. https://doi.org/10.26556/jesp.v29i2.3316

(with Benedict Lane) "Vindicating Universalism: Pragmatic Genealogy and Moral Progress." *European Journal of Philosophy*, 33 (1): 249-268. https://doi.org/10.1111/ejop.12975

(with Jeroen Hopster, Chirag Arora, Cecilie Eriksen, Lily Frank, Julia Hermann, Michael Klenk, Elizabeth O'Neill, and Steffen Steinert) "Pistols, Pills, Pork and Ploughs: The Structure of Technomoral Revolutions." *Inquiry*, 68 (2): 264-96. https://doi.org/10.1080/0020174X.2022.2090434

- Lead drafter for section on plough agriculture and gender norms.

2024

(with Paul Rehren) "Let's Not Get Ahead of Ourselves: We Have No Idea if Moral Reasoning Causes Moral Progress." *Philosophical Explorations*, 27 (3): 351-369. https://doi.org/10.1080/13869795.2024.2363876

2022

(with Michael Klenk, Elizabeth O'Neill, Chirag Arora, Jeroen Hopster, Cecilie Eriksen, and Lily Frank) "Recent Work on Moral Revolutions." *Analysis Reviews*, 82 (2): 354-366. https://doi.org/10.1093/analys/anac017

- Lead drafter on Robert Baker's account of moral revolutions.

"Between Market Failures and Justice Failures: Trade-Offs Between Efficiency and Equality in Business Ethics." *Journal of Business Ethics*, 178 (3): 647-660. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-021-04767-7

2021

(with Hanno Sauer, Cecilie Eriksen, and Paul Rehren) "Moral Progress: Recent Developments." *Philosophy Compass*, 16 (10): 1-10. https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12769

- Lead drafter for section on the concept of moral progress.

2019 "Libertarianism and Collective Action: Is There a Libertarian Case for Mandatory Vaccination?" *Journal of Medical Ethics*, 45: 71-74. https://doi.org/10.1136/medethics-2018-104752

Book chapters

2023 (with Paul Rehren and Hanno Sauer) "Implicit Cognition, Dual Process Theory, and Moral Judgment." pp. 105-15 in J. Robert Thompson (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Philosophy and Implicit Cognition*, Routledge: Abingdon.

Short peer-reviewed publications

2025 (with Jon Rueda and Viktor Ivanković) "A Cautiously Optimistic View on Large Language Model Use Against Linguistic Injustice in Academia." *Nature Machine Intelligence*, 7: 1773-74. Correspondence. https://doi.org/10.1038/s42256-025-01138-z

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Works in Progress

"Why Not Georgism? An Empirically-Informed Pluralist Case for Land Value Taxation." — Under review

(with Benedict Lane) "On (the Cultural Evolution of) Certainty: A Naturalistic Explanation of Acquired Moral Hinges." — Draft available

"O Constance, Where Art Thou? An Analysis of Normative Components in Evaluations of Moral Change." — In progress

(with Marko-Luka Zubčić) "The Political Economy of the Collective Brain." — In progress

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Grant Applications

2026

MSCA European Postdoctoral Fellowship
Horizon Europe
Project: Evolved Ideas We Need (EvoIN)
Status: Submitted, pending decision

OPUS 31 Grant
Polish National Science Centre (NCN)
Project: Evolved Ideas We Need (EvoIN)
Status: Submitted, pending decision

Rubicon 2026-1 Grant
Dutch Research Council (NWO)
Project: Evolved Ideas that Work: Are Moral Concepts Culturally Evolved to Meet Human Needs?
Status: Not funded (Rated: Very good)

Conferences and Academic Presentations

Refereed

2026 (with Marko-Luka Zubčić) "The Political Economy of the Collective Brain."
Technology Ethics in Turbulent Times, Ethics of Socially Disruptive Technologies (ESDiT) Conference, Wageningen University, Nov 4th

(with Benedict Lane) "The Cultural Evolution of Moral Hinge Certainties."
12th European Congress of Analytic Philosophy (ECAP12), Complutense University of Madrid, August 25th

"Why Not Georgism? A Pluralistic Case for Land Value Taxation."
European PPE Network Conference, University of Bayreuth, July 21st

"O Constance Where Art Thou? Normative Components in Moral Progress Judgments."
Contemporary Philosophical Issues, University of Rijeka, June 27th

(with Benedict Lane) "The Cultural Evolution of Moral Hinge Certainties."
OZSW Conference, Erasmus University Rotterdam, May 19th

"Why Not Georgism? A Pluralistic Case for Land Value Taxation."
Justice in the XXI Century: New Challenges, New Directions of Inquiry, University of Catania, February 25th

2025 "The Fact of *Progress*? Pluralism, Liberalism, and Cooperation."
Zagreb Applied Ethics Conference, Institute of Philosophy, Zagreb, September 25th

2024 "Vindication and the Value of 'Choice'."
Rethinking Ethics – Reimagining Technology, ESDiT Conference, University of Twente, October 3rd

2023 (with Benedict Lane) "Vindicating Universalism: Pragmatic Genealogy and Moral Progress."
MANCEPT Workshop, Causal Histories: The Role of Genealogical Inquiry in Moral, Social and Political Philosophy. University of Manchester, September 12th

"It's Only Natural! Moral Progress Through Denaturalisation."
SOPhiA Conference, University of Salzburg, September 8th

"The De-Naturalisation Mechanism: Conventionality, Status-Quo Bias, and Moral Progress."
IV Geneva Graduate Conference in Political Philosophy (GECOPOL), University of Geneva, February 16th

2021 "Brace Yourself: Can We Improve the Cognitive Environment of Democratic Politics?"

Amsterdam Graduate Conference in Political Theory, University of Amsterdam, December 6th

"Brace Yourself: Can We Improve the Cognitive Environment of Democratic Politics?"
OZSW Conference, University of Tilburg, December 3rd

2018 "Libertarianism and Collective Action: Is There a Libertarian Case for Mandatory Vaccination?"
SOPhiA Conference, University of Salzburg, September 14th

Invited

2026 "It's Only Natural! Moral Progress through Denaturalization."
The Sciences of Ethics and Political Philosophy Reading Group, Online, April 15th

2023 (with Paul Rehren) "Doing Empirical Philosophy: Two Anecdotes and Some General Lessons."
ESDiT Workshop on Engaging with Empirical Studies as a Philosopher, Utrecht, May 24th

Departmental colloquia / Talks at co-organised events

2026 "O Constance Where Art Thou? Normative Components in Moral Progress Judgments."
Moral Progress & Moral Change Summer School, Institute of Philosophy, Zagreb, June 16th

2025 "A Vindication of the Value of 'Choice'."
Colloquium, Institute of Philosophy, Zagreb, December 10th

2024 (with Benedict Lane) "Vindicating Universalism: Pragmatic Genealogy and Moral Progress."
Ethics Institute Colloquium, Utrecht University, February 27th

2023 (with Paul Rehren) "Can Moral Reasoning Explain Moral Progress?"
Ethics Institute Colloquium, Utrecht University, January 24th

2022 "There Is Some Alternative: Conventionality, Status-Quo Bias, and Moral Progress."
History of Philosophy Colloquium, Utrecht University, February 17th

2021 (with Paul Rehren) "How Do We Know If It's Moral Progress?"
OZSW Conference, University of Tilburg, December 3rd

(with Paul Rehren, Cecilie Eriksen, & Hanno Sauer) "How Do We Know If It's Moral Progress?"
Ethics Institute Colloquium, Utrecht University, June 8th

Teaching

Teaching interests: Ethics; Political Philosophy; PPE; Business Ethics; Metaethics; Philosophy of Moral Progress and Moral Change; Philosophy of Green Growth and Degrowth; Moral Psychology.

Institute of Philosophy, Zagreb

2026 — Secondary supervisor to the PhD student in the MoPIC project

Utrecht University

2022, 2024 — Ethical and Political Implications of Human Nature
Weekly seminar (BA level), Sole instructor for seminar group; graded mid-term exams and final papers; ~20 students per run

2021-2022 — Knowledge, Ignorance and Democracy
Weekly seminar (MA level), Teaching assistant, ~8 students

Service

Editor for 'Moral Progress' category on *PhilPapers* (2024-present)
https://philpapers.org/browse/moral-progress

Peer review for:
Social Theory and Practice (2023)
Philosophical Psychology (2024)
Philosophical Studies (2024, 2025)
Mind and Society (2025)
Analysis (2025)
Philosophy & Technology (2026)

Organising and Administrative Experience

Institute of Philosophy, Zagreb

2026 — Co-organiser Moral Progress & Moral Change Summer School, June 16-18th. Invited keynotes: Agnes Tam, Victor Kumar, John Danaher
- Lead role in inviting keynotes.

Sole organiser of the online talks series The MoPIC talks, as part of the project Moral Progress: Individual and Collective (MoPIC). The series features talks on the philosophy of moral progress and change

Utrecht University

2021-2024 — Co-organiser of the online talks series The PROGRESS talks, as part of the project The Enemy of the Good (PROGRESS). The series featured talks on moral progress and moral psychology

2022-2023 — 'Back to the Office' Workgroup

	Representative for PhD candidates and postdocs; gathered their feedback and relayed it to the workgroup

Outreach

2021	"Vindicating Moral Progress?" *Blog of the APA.* September 6th https://blog.apaonline.org/2021/09/06/vindicating-moral-progress/
2018	"Evolution, Realism, and Ethics: Assessing the Darwinian Dilemma" Presented to the Manchester Philosophy Group, November 6th

Fellowships

2017-2019	*Bright Minds Fellowship* Utrecht University and the Utrecht University Fund

Languages

English (native)
Dutch (B1)

References

Hanno Sauer (Associate Professor)
Utrecht University
Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies
h.c.sauer@uu.nl

Joseph Heath (Professor)
University of Toronto
Department of Philosophy
joseph.heath@utoronto.ca

Christopher Wareham (Associate Professor) **[Teaching reference]**
Utrecht University
Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies
c.s.wareham@uu.nl

Tvrtko Jolić (Research Associate)
Institute of Philosophy, Zagreb
Department of Practical Philosophy
tjolic@ifzg.hr