

> Thursday, March 19, 2026  
> 10:30 – 12:00  
> ICOR

# RESEARCH SEMINAR



EMPOWERING CHANGEMAKERS FOR A BETTER SOCIETY

## ‘WHEN LAYPERSONS CLAIM TO KNOW: DIGITAL MEDIA AND THE RELATIONAL DYNAMICS OF EXPERTISE’

With Mathieu Bouchard - University of Ottawa

### PRESENTED BY SIDDHANT RITWICK

Incoming Assistant Professor at the University of Zurich



#### ABSTRACT

Digital media reshapes access to information and ability to voice views in society, disrupting the monopoly of credentialed experts on accepted knowledge. This creates a pluralistic epistemic universe where knowledge claims from laypersons and experts compete.

We theorize how digital media enable laypersons to make knowledge claims that challenge core aspects of expert work, and how credentialed experts enact a range of responses to deal with layperson claims. Building on these ideas, we contribute to the relational expertise literature in organization studies by developing a recursive process model of epistemic dynamics between laypersons and experts, delineating how they negotiate expertise through digital media.

Furthermore, we explain how the give-and-take of layperson knowledge claims and expert responses can evolve over time to make their relations either more acrimonious, or harmonious.



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## ‘EMBEDDING ARTIFICIAL BENEVOLENCE IN HUMAN-AI INTERACTION: FUNCTIONAL OVERPERFORMANCE AND ETHICAL CHALLENGES’

### PRESENTED BY GUILLAUME MERCIER

Associate Professor in Business Ethics at IÉSEG Lille



#### ABSTRACT (1/2)

AI systems are engaging in increasingly significant interactions with humans and exert a growing ethical impact on organizational life. Yet the possibility of embedding values and virtues within such systems remains underexplored, particularly benevolence, a foundational virtue of human relationships.

This conceptual paper, supported by empirical vignettes, develops the notion of artificial benevolence, understood as an AI system’s active orientation toward the good and flourishing of humans, operating as a functional analog of human benevolence.

The enactment of artificial benevolence is fundamentally human-centric: it is oriented toward the good of human users and realized through human involvement in the cultivation of virtue, the introduction of human intentionality, and the shaping of human–AI relationships.

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#### ABSTRACT (2/2)

At the organizational level, artificial benevolence may serve as a lever for trust and ethical culture through both formal and informal modes of benevolent engagement. In practice, artificial benevolence exhibits functional overperformance in terms of constancy, stable attention, disinterestedness, and non-judgmentality.

What appears as an enhancement may simultaneously operate as a subtle form of moral displacement, affecting how humans cope with vulnerability, exercise autonomy, and ultimately flourish.

The article concludes with implications for the genuine calibration and development of artificial benevolence in organizations.