

IN DEFENCE OF MODERATE PRAGMATISM

ABSTRACT: Moderate pragmatism is the view that practical factors can make a difference to what a subject ought to believe by determining how much evidence is necessary for a subject to believe rationally. In a recent paper, Worsnip (2020) argues that endorsing moderate pragmatism cannot truly be distinguished from the view that there are practical reasons to believe. In this paper, I argue that these arguments against moderate pragmatism fail. In particular, I argue that the risks-costs principle based on Moss' (2018) distinction between the risks and costs of believing actually succeeds in explaining why practical factors can make a difference to what one ought to believe some cases without having to endorse the stronger claim that there are practical reasons to believe.

BIO: Melanie Sarzano is a doctoral researcher working at the University of Zurich, Switzerland. She received her PhD in Spring 2020 with her thesis "Believing Rationally Under the Influence". Her research concerns irrational beliefs such as self-deception and other motivated beliefs. In particular, she focuses on the interactions between epistemic and pragmatic considerations and the ways in which these affect or not our doxastic rationality. Her research is thus situated at the intersection between the ethics of belief, rationality, pragmatic encroachment and the philosophy of cognitive science.