Dogramaci's Deflationism About Rationality

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Introduction

What are the rational ways to form beliefs? There seem to be many – including deduction, induction, and abduction. Each of these ways of coming to rational beliefs has their own distinctive rational belief-forming rules. Modus Ponens is a rational belief-forming rule in deduction and Inference to the Best Explanation is the primary rational belief-forming rule of abduction.

Some of these rational belief-forming rules are basic ones. A basic belief-forming rule is a rule that we employ directly. Modus Ponens is a basic belief-forming rule because when we follow it, we do not do so by following some intermediate deductive rule. A belief-forming rule like "believe in the theorems that follow from your axioms according to the rules of classical logic" would be non-basic. Following that rule would require employment of a more immediate rule (for example, Modus Ponens). This paper is focused on those belief-forming rules of ours that are both rational and basic. Our rational and basic belief-forming rules form the basis for all of our justified beliefs about the world, but what is it that explains their rationality? What is the property that all and only the basic rational rules have that explains their being rational? It cannot be that they are rational because they are derivative on other rational rules – we are concerned with the basic ones.

What we are looking for in an answer to this question is a "unifying property" that unifies the basic rational rules. A "unifying property" for our basic rational belief-forming rules is a property that applies to all and only our basic rational rules and is also "explanatorily illuminating." Call the condition that a unifying property for our rules must be a property that all and only our rational basic rules have the N&S (necessary and sufficient) condition. Call the other condition that the property must be "explanatorily illuminating" the EI condition. An "explanatorily illuminating" property is one that explains why the basic rational rules are rational in a "normatively fundamental, deep, or interesting" (Dogramaci (2015), p. 794) sort of way.

Let's call a view that maintains there is some explanatorily illuminating property that all and only the rational rules have an inflationist view. Inflationist proposals have been developed in Boghossian (2003), Peacocke (2004), Enoch and Schechter (2008), and Wedgwood (2011). These philosophers disagree about what exactly the unifying property is. For example, Enoch and

Schechter claim "[T]he epistemic justification of basic belief-forming methods is grounded in their indispensability to rationally required projects" (p. 575) and Boghossian (2003) writes "The 'inflationary' answer.... I want to explore may be roughly formulated as follows...: A deductive pattern of inference P may be blamelessly employed.... just in case inferring according to P is a precondition for having one of the concepts ingredient in it" (p. 239).

Let's call deflationism the view that there is no explanatorily illuminating property that all and only the rules we call "rational" have. Deflationism is a radical picture. If deflationism is correct, it means that there is nothing of normative significance that the rules we constantly employ, like Modus Ponens, have to distinguish them from rules we'd call non-rational like Wishful Thinking (which says "If you wish P to be the case, believe in P"). Horwich (2008) develops a sort of pessimistic induction argument for deflationism. After surveying candidate inflationist proposals and finding serious fault with each, Horwich concludes "in light of the grave deficiencies in all these proposals, which I take to be the most initially appealing of the available accounts of epistemic rationality, we ought to ask ourselves whether we should ever have expected to come up with such a thing. Is there any good reason to hold that our familiar norms of justification must be susceptible to some sort of philosophical grounding? I do not think so" (p. 469-470). But there is a more recent and ambitious argument for deflationism about rationality. This is the argument developed by Sinan Dogramaci in his 2015 paper "Communist Conventions for Deductive Reasoning."

Dogramaci begins his argument by presenting his distinctive view on the function of our epistemically evaluative language. This view, developed in his (2012) "Reverse Engineering Epistemic Rationality," is called epistemic communism. Dogramaci argues from epistemic communism to his conclusion that there is "no reason to think our rules have a unifying property" (2015, p. 796). In this paper, I am not going to evaluate the truth of epistemic communism. However, I am going to show that one can reject a premise of Dogramaci's argument from epistemic communism to deflationism while remaining non-committal to the truth of epistemic communism. That is, I show that epistemic communism does not necessarily lead to deflationism, as Dogramaci's argument has it. By rejecting a premise of Dogramaci's argument, we can reject his deflationism about rationality and therefore have inflationist views conceptually open to us whether we are epistemic communists or not.

In section 1, I explain Dogramaci's epistemic communism and his motivation for it. In section 2, I offer a reconstruction of Dogramaci's argument from epistemic communism to deflationism. In section 3, I raise an objection to Dogramaci's argument. Dogramaci does have a response to this objection, but I argue that this response is less than satisfactory. Showing that this response is unsatisfactory requires discussion and employment of David Enoch and Joshua Schechter's (2008) view on the justification of our basic deductive rules, at least, as a working assumption. After pushing my objection to Dogramaci's argument, section 4 is devoted to developing, on Dogramaci's behalf, an objection to my non-deflationary attempt to undermine his argument. In section 5, I reply to

this objection.

1 Epistemic Communism

Epistemic communism is a view about the function of our epistemically evaluative language. In this section, I will offer Dogramaci's motivation for epistemic communism and then describe the view.

I should first define some terms. In this paper, I'll follow the literature and use "belief-forming rule," "epistemic rule," and "belief-forming method" interchangeably. It is also important to note that both in the present paper, and Dogramaci's own paper, the type of belief-forming rules focused on are basic *deductive* belief-forming rules. This is for manageability, and because many of the authors trying to provide an account of rationality (like Enoch and Schechter, Wedgwood, and Boghossian) are focused on trying to provide a justification for our basic deductive belief-forming rules. One more thing to note — throughout my paper, and throughout Dogramaci's own work, rationality is being used as a synonym for justification or reasonableness (2015, p. 777).

1.1 Motivation for Epistemic Communism

Dogramaci's core motivation for epistemic communism is the fact that validity and rationality can come apart. Dogramaci asks us to consider Fermat, who once wrote in the margin of his copy of Diophantis's *Arithmetica* that he had proved the theorem that we call Fermat's Last Theorem. We do not know what Fermat's proof looked like, but Dogramaci asks us to imagine that it began with a few simple and standard mathematical axioms, "and then, with no intermediate steps, no intermediate lemmas, took an inferential leap right to the theorem" (2015, p. 777). We would not say that Fermat's belief in the theorem would then be rational. Of course, nowadays, given Wiles's proof, we do know that such a transition is a valid transition. The immediate transition from some standard mathematical axioms to Fermat's Last Theorem is a basic belief-forming method (since it does not require using any intermediate deductive rules) and a necessarily truth-preserving transition. Therefore, such an immediate transition is a basic, deductively valid belief-forming method. However, it is not a rational one.

For another example, consider Peirce's Law: $((P \rightarrow Q) \rightarrow P) \rightarrow P$. Call Peirce's Rule the epistemic rule that infers Peirce's Law directly from no premises. Peirce's Rule is another basic belief-forming rule that is valid, but not rational.

As Dogramaci says "[o]nly a very small handful of the infinitely many valid rules are rational rules" (2015, p. 778). These are: Modus Ponens, Conditional Proof, Conjunction Introduction, Conjunction Elimination, Disjunction Introduction, Disjunction Elimination, Reductio ad Absurdum, "and a small handful of others" (2015, p. 778). One may rationally follow a non-basic epistemic rule for inferring Peirce's Law, but this would not be Peirce's Rule, which by stipu-

lation is basic. Dogramaci's point here is that very few of the infinitely many, deductively valid, basic rules are rational rules.[1]

One may have pause at this point and wonder in what sense, for Dogramaci, is Modus Ponens a rational rule and Peirce's Rule not. Dogramaci concedes that there may be some senses of the term "rational" on which Peirce's Rule is rational (778). But, his core claim "is only that there is an ordinary type of epistemic evaluation, a type we typically used ordinary words like 'rational,' 'justified,' ... to express, and on this standard of evaluation conclusions reached by Peirce's Rule are not capable of being rational in the way Modus Ponens conclusions are" (2015, p. 778). If one is still unconvinced, Dogramaci asks that we take it as a premise that Modus Ponens has a special status of rationality that Peirce's Rule does not (2015, p. 778). However, this is not a problematic premise to adopt as the primary views (Enoch and Schechter's, for example) on the justification of our deductive rules all share this premise (2015, p. 778).

The fact that the rational belief-forming rules are a very small subset of the valid belief-forming rules motivates Dogramaci to develop his view on the function of our epistemically evaluative language — epistemic communism.

1.2   Epistemic Communism

We are not epistemic islands. Much of our epistemic life depends on the input of others in our epistemic community.[2] Therefore, we need to "safely trust the testimony of others" (Dogramaci (2015), p. 780). The most effective way for us to be able to safely trust the testimony of others is to coordinate on a set of belief-forming rules. The function of our epistemically evaluative language like "rational" or "irrational" is to promote that coordination. When I call your belief "irrational" that serves as social stigma intended to make you stop using whatever belief-forming method you used to reach that belief. When I call your belief "rational" I am praising your belief-forming method. In this way, we each, and collectively as an epistemic community, mold each other into using one coordinated set of epistemic rules so that we may each trust the others in our community as our "epistemic surrogates" (2015, p. 780). This is what epistemic communism claims.

Let's take Modus Ponens and Peirce's Rule and explain why we call the first "rational" and the latter "irrational" on Dogramaci's view. Dogramaci asks us to imagine a team of ordinary mathematicians supplemented by someone who follows Peirce's Rule. This team has the goal of maximizing the "number and interestingness of the results they prove while minimizing on costs of time and intellectual resources" (2015, p. 779). The person who follows Peirce's Rule can immediately pronounce they have proved Peirce's Law. It is a valid theorem, so this person seems to be succeeding at the team's goal. However, since the team operates qua team (they operate as an epistemic community), the rest of the team needs some way of checking that this person who employs Peirce's

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[1]For most of what follows, I will leave "basic" and "valid" unmentioned. It should be assumed that throughout this paper I am discussing valid and basic epistemic rules.

[2]I got this "epistemic island" way of putting it from Schoenfeld (2015), p. 265.

Rule is not making wild, unproven claims. Unless the team checks on testimony like this, they are at risk of gullibly believing all kinds of false pronouncements. Peirce's Law should only be acceptable to the rest of the team once "a proof has been offered which only uses rules they [the entire team] accept, rules like Modus Ponens" (2015, p. 779). But, since checking the work of someone who employs Peirce's Rule requires slow, double-checking procedures, the person who employs Peirce's Rule is not helping the team with regards to their goal — maximizing results in minimal time. The team progresses at their goal when everyone coordinates and uses the same rules (2015, p. 780). Because the whole team already uses Modus Ponens, they do not need to double-check the results of someone who employs Modus Ponens. This team of mathematicians would call the belief formed by employing Peirce's Rule "irrational" and beliefs formed by employing Modus Ponens "rational," because employing Peirce's Rule hurts coordination of belief-forming method, and employing Modus Ponens promotes it. Why do we want coordination of our epistemic rules? The benefit we are trying to capture, qua epistemic community, with epistemic rule coordination is "efficient division of labor among members of a group aiming to discover and share interesting results with a minimum of cost" (2015, p. 780).

2 Dogramaci's Argument for Deflationism

Dogramaci never lays out an explicit, step-by-step argument for deflationism, but my reconstruction is an attempt at such a presentation. After the argument is presented, I will spend the remainder of this section explaining the premises which need explanation and identifying the textual support for those premises. Here is the argument:

1. Epistemic communism is true.

2. If epistemic communism is true, then there are many different sets of epistemic rules that could equally serve the function of promoting coordination in our epistemic community.

3. Therefore, there are many different sets of epistemic rules that could equally serve the function of promoting coordination in our epistemic community. [From 1 & 2]

4. If there are many different sets of epistemic rules that could equally serve the function of promoting coordination in our epistemic community, then the set of rules that we call "rational" is chosen arbitrarily.

5. Therefore, the set of rules that we call "rational" is chosen arbitrarily. [From 3 & 4]

6. The chances of an arbitrarily chosen set of rules having a unifying property are exceedingly small.

7. If the set of rules we call "rational" is chosen arbitrary, and if the chances of an arbitrarily chosen set of rules having a unifying property are exceedingly small, then "there is no reason to think our rules have a unifying property" (2015, p. 796).

8. Therefore, "there is no reason to think our rules have a unifying property." [From 5, 6, & 7] [3]

2.1   Premise 2

I have already thoroughly covered epistemic communism, so I will not say anything further about premise 1. As for premise 2, I will criticize it in the following section, but for now I'd like to offer some textual support for my formulating it in the way I do. Recall that the epistemic communist thinks that we could, in principle, coordinate on any set of valid rules to serve as the basic deductive rules in our community.[4] Dogramaci is clear that any set of valid deductive rules could *equally* serve the coordinative function "if we just consider the intrinsic features of the epistemic rules themselves" (2015, p. 793). If we take our actual cognitive psychology, then different sets of rules, that is, different extensions for "rational," may "not serve the coordinative function equally well" (2015, p. 793). But, if we focus on just the "intrinsic features of the epistemic rules," then any set of deductively valid rules could equally serve the function of promoting coordination. This point will be the focus of my criticism in the following section.

2.2   Premise 4

Dogramaci claims that "[w]ith regards to our epistemic goal, the choice between an extension for 'rational' that excludes Peirce's Rule versus an extension that includes it is thus an arbitrary choice" (2015, p. 793). The idea is that since there are infinitely many candidate extensions for "rational" that could equally serve the function of promoting epistemic coordination in our community, any choice of one set over another is an arbitrary choice. This idea that our choice of rules is arbitrary is obviously based on premise 2, and will be subject of my critiques in the following section to the extent that premise 2 is.

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[3]Dogramaci's strategy here is intended to roughly mirror the arguments for deflationism about truth found in Quine (1970) and Leeds (1978).

[4]This is not exactly right. We may still want the rules that our community coordinates on to be sufficiently general. For example, the basic deductive rule that takes us from the Peano axioms to Fermat's Last Theorem may not be of much use to generally employ throughout our reasoning. So, it may be more felicitous to say that we could, in principle, coordinate on any sufficiently general set of valid rules to serve as the basic deductive rules in our community. However, there are still infinitely many sufficiently general deductive rules we could coordinate on.

2.3 Premise 6

Dogramaci claims that it is "not plausible that most or many of the candidate extensions [of "rational"] are unifiable" (2015, p. 795). Every possible set of deductively valid rules is a candidate extension for "rational," thus there are infinitely many of them. For Dogramaci, since a unifying property is a necessary, sufficient, and explanatorily illuminating property, it is supposedly a "rare sort of property" (2015, p. 795). Given that a unifying property must meet these two conditions (the N&S condition, and the EI condition), and given that there are an infinitely many sets of epistemic rules that count as candidates for the extension of "rational," there are very likely not unifying properties "out there unifying the various candidate extensions of 'rational'" (2015, p. 795).

Before moving on, I should discuss in a bit more detail what, for Dogramaci, counts as a unifying property. As I've already stated a unifying property is a necessary and sufficient property that is also explanatorily illuminating. However, these notions, especially the notion of "explanatorily illuminating" are, so far, a bit under-described. A property that meets the EI condition must be "normatively fundamental, deep, or interesting" (2015, p. 794). What Dogramaci has in mind as a property that is explanatorily illuminating in the normatively interesting kind of way are the sorts of properties offered by the philosophers who have proposed theories about what justifies our basic deductive rules. For example, Dogramaci mentions Enoch and Schechter's view that what justifies our basic epistemic rules is that these rules have the property of "fulfilling certain fundamental epistemic entitlements or obligations to deliberate about and explain the world" (2015, p. 794-795). For Dogramaci, Enoch and Schechter's theory on the property that undergirds our justified, basic, deductive rules is the sort of property that is explanatorily illuminating in the right kind of way (This property, however, according to Dogramaci, does not meet the N&S condition. This will be discussed shortly.). Likewise, the sort of property offered by Wedgwood and Boghossian of "being a rule whose reliability cannot be antecedently questioned due to certain limits on concept possession" (Dogramaci (2015), p. 794) is another property that Dogramaci cites approvingly as an example of an explanatorily illuminating and normatively deep property.

Dogramaci also approves of Enoch and Schechter's view of what an explanatorily illuminating property is (though they don't use this "explanatorily illuminating" language). Enoch and Schechter say that an explanatorily illuminating property is a property "that presents the relevant methods in a rationally positive light" (2008, p. 549).

What about the N&S condition? Dogramaci is using "necessary and sufficient" in the strictly metaphysical sense on which a necessary and sufficient property is a property that is instantiated by a single object across every possible world, and is only instantiated by this unique object in every possible world.[5]

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[5]In correspondence, Dogramaci has written "I meant "necessary and sufficient" in the metaphysical sense, that is, a property unique to just that thing in all worlds." I have interpreted "a property unique to just that thing in all worlds," I think rather accurately, as a property that is instantiated by a single object across every possible world, and is only

The relevant sort of object for our discussion will be a list or set of epistemic rules.

Why are these two conditions, the EI and the N&S conditions, the conditions Dogramaci puts on a unifying property? In Dogramaci's estimation, all of the inflationist proposals seem to be trying to explain what being a rational rule amounts to by proposing properties for being a rational rule that are necessary, sufficient, and explanatorily illuminating (2015, p. 788). Dogramaci says that in proposing these sorts of properties in their theories of rationality, they are adopting a unificationist model of explanation, on which a good explanation involves "unifying" properties that meet the N&S and EI conditions (2015, p. 788). Since they are proposing properties with those conditions in mind,[6] Dogramaci is willing to go along and agree that a "unifying" property must meet these N&S and EI conditions.

2.4   The Conclusion

Putting the pieces together, since we have no reason to think that many of the candidate extensions for "rational" have a unifying property, and since our set of epistemic rules was chosen arbitrarily among these, we have "no reason to think that our rules have a unifying property" (2015, p. 796). This is how Dogramaci puts it at the end of his paper, but his conclusion is actually a bit stronger than this. A unifying property is a rare sort of property, and since our epistemic rule set was chosen arbitrarily among the infinite amounts of possible rule sets, it would be astronomically unlikely that the set of rules we called "rational" instantiated a unifying property. We thus have strong, positive, probabilistic reason to think that our rules do not have a unifying property. However, I will continue to put his conclusion as "we have no reason to think that our rules have a unifying property." This is because this is the way that Dogramaci explicitly puts it. This deflationary position about rationality is quite radical — there is no unifying, normatively justifying, explanation for the basic, deductive rules that we constantly all employ. And certainly, we would have liked to have such an explanation if we could get one.

3   Where Dogramaci's Argument Goes Wrong

In this section, I identify premise 2 as the problematic premise in Dogramaci's argument. Dogramaci already anticipates the objection I have against his premise 2, and he offers a response to it in his paper. I will argue that Dogramaci's response is unsatisfactory by employing Enoch and Schechter's work on the justification of our basic rules. However, Enoch and Schechter's work is just being employed to prove a general point; I am fairly sure this general point could

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instantiated by this unique object in every possible world.

[6]I do not mean to imply that Dogramaci says that the theorists of rationality that he is citing have this account of a unifying property *explicitly* in mind. But, Dogramaci does think they have something like this guiding their theorizing.

be made using the work of others like Wedgwood and Boghossian. In showing Dogramaci's response to my objection is unsatisfactory, I discuss how a certain property, inspired by Enoch and Schechter's view, could be a unifying property in the very way Dogramaci defines the term.

3.1 Rejecting Premise 2

Recall that premise 2 says: "If epistemic communism is true, then there are many different sets of epistemic rules that could equally serve the function of promoting coordination in our epistemic community." I reject this premise. Let's grant epistemic communism and therefore accept that there are many different sets that could serve the function of epistemic coordination. What I do *not* accept is that "there are many different sets that could *equally* serve the function of epistemic coordination."[7] Given our cognitive psychology, I think certain sets would better serve the function of epistemic coordination for us.[8]

This is what I will call my original objection to Dogramaci's argument. Dogramaci does have things to say about this line of thought, however. Here is his response in full:

> I do not mean these alternatives [all of the possible candidate sets for the extension of "rational"] are *under all circumstances* equally good for this. If we take it as given that our cognitive psychology is as it actually is, then of course different extensions for 'rational' would not serve the coordinative function equally well. Modus Ponens is psychologically privileged over Peirce's Rule. I am claiming that if we just consider the intrinsic features of the epistemic rules themselves, then Modus Ponens is not better than Peirce's Rule at serving our fundamental epistemic goal, our goal of true belief. With regard just to our epistemic goal, the choice between an extension for 'rational' that excludes Peirce's Rule versus an extension that includes it is thus an arbitrary choice (Dogramaci, 2015, p. 793).

If we consider psychological features of different epistemic rules, like Modus Ponens and Peirce's Rule, then Modus Ponens is better at serving our fundamental epistemic goal. If Modus Ponens is more psychologically hard-wired into us or is, in some sense, psychologically indispensable, then Modus Ponens can more easily and more quickly be deployed to discover truths. Therefore, if we are allowed to consider psychological features of the rules, then certain rules may better serve our fundamental epistemic goal; if we could consider psychological features, then our choice of rules would not be arbitrary. So, my challenge to Dogramaci's response is: why should we only consider the intrinsic features of the epistemic rules?

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[7] The italics here are my own.

[8] Or perhaps, given our cognitive psychology, the particular set of rules that is the actual set we call "rational" would *best* serve the function of epistemic coordination for us.

I think that Dogramaci believes we should only look to the intrinsic features of epistemic rules when examining to what degree they can serve the coordinative function because he thinks that psychological features cannot figure into a unifying property. Presumably, in determining to what degree certain rules can serve the coordinative function, we can either look to their intrinsic features or their psychological features. If we privilege the psychological features of the rules in determining to what degree the rule can serve the coordinative function, then our choice of epistemic rules would not be arbitrary. But, if our choice of rules is not arbitrary, then something must unify, in the sense of being a unifying property, that non-arbitrary set of rules. But if that is the case, and our rules are non-arbitrary because of the rules' psychological features, then there is a unifying property that involves thinkers' psychologies. However, there can be no unifying property that involves psychological features, so we should only look to the intrinsic features of epistemic rules in determining what degree they can serve the coordinative function. This seems to be Dogramaci's reasoning for why we should only consider the intrinsic features of the epistemic rules, and not any psychological features. Let us grant all of the rest of this argument, but now push the following question: why can there not be any unifying property that involves psychological features?

A natural thought is that psychological features cannot play a part in a unifying property because properties that involve thinkers' psychologies cannot meet the N&S condition.[9] Thinkers' psychologies are contingent, not necessary. But, Dogramaci also thinks that psychological features cannot be normatively deep in a way that meets the EI condition.[10] It is exactly these claims — that psychological features cannot properly figure into a property that meets the N&S or the EI conditions – that I want to question.

Recall that Dogramaci cited Enoch and Schechter's view of what justifies our basic deductive rules as a view that offers the right sort of normatively deep, explanatorily illuminating property. But isn't this property, at least partly, psychological? If so, it seems like psychological properties can be normatively significant and therefore explanatorily illuminating in the right kind of way. Let's take a further look at Enoch and Schechter's view. Their account is a pragmatic account that says whatever basic epistemic rules are indispensable to complete projects that are required for creatures like us are thereby justified (Enoch and Schechter (2008), p. 553-556). They are justified because they are indispensable for us in completing certain "rationally" required projects.[11]

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[9]Dogramaci has written to me in correspondence that "I meant 'necessary and sufficient' in the metaphysical sense, that is, a property unique to just that thing in all worlds. Since properties that involve thinkers' psychologies and circumstances are contingent, they would not be unifying in this sense."

[10]Dogramaci says on p. 794 of "Communist Conventions. . ." that merely psychologically significant properties can not be normatively deep. Though, he does go on to mention Boghossian, Wedgewood, and Enoch and Schechter, as all proposing views on the justification of our deductive rules that do offer properties that are normatively deep in the right kind of way. Given that these views can be cashed out in terms that cite psychological features, these accounts do seem to be able to meet the EI condition. This tension and what I have to say about it will be more thoroughly explained in what follows within the body text.

[11]I do not want to get into details defending the specifics of their account. Since I am

Enoch and Schechter suggest that contingency planning is required for thinkers to engage in (at least, it may be required for the kinds of thinkers to which rational requirements apply), and Modus Ponens is indispensable for engaging in contingency planning. Therefore, Modus Ponens is a justified basic rule. But, in what sense is Modus Ponens indispensable for these agents to engage in contingency planning? Presumably, it is a sort of psychological indispensability. Modus Ponens is psychologically indispensable (for creatures like us, at least) for contingency planning; indispensable given our actual cognitive psychology. And since this is a rationally-required project on Enoch and Schechter's account, Modus Ponens is a justified basic rule. But what is important here is that psychological indispensability figures into Enoch and Schechter's view, and Dogramaci offered Enoch and Schechter's view as a view that does offer a property that meets the EI condition. So, if Dogramaci is willing to grant that what Enoch and Schechter are proposing is a property that is explanatorily illuminating in the right sort of way, then he should be willing to grant that psychological features can meet the EI condition.[12]

3.2 Psychological Properties Can Meet the N&S Condition

I've just argued that properties involving thinkers' psychologies can meet the EI condition. But, it remains to be proven that properties that involve thinkers' psychologies can meet the N&S condition. It is a very plausible thought that they can not. This subsection will show that properties that involve psychological features can be properties that meet the N&S condition. When this is established, I will have my full objection to Dogramaci's deflationary argument, since his argument relies on the claim that psychological properties cannot be unifying properties.

Take this property: *being the set of rules that is indispensable for actual humans to do all of their rationally required projects.* I'll call this property P. Is P a unifying property? First, is it explanatorily illuminating? As we have discussed in the previous subsection, the only condition Dogramaci puts on explanatorily illuminating properties is that they are "normatively deep" and Enoch and Schechter only claim that such a property is one "that presents the relevant methods in a rationally positive light." I see no reason to deny that this property is normatively deep or that it presents the relevant methods in a positive light.

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using their account as a working assumption to prove a general point (that I think could just as equally have been proven by employing Wedgwood's or Boghossian's views as working assumptions), it is not important, for my purposes, to defend, or explain in much detail, the intricacies of Enoch and Schechter's account.

[12]Just to add a bit more concrete detail to Enoch and Schechter's view, I'll briefly explain the difference between Peirce's Rule and Modus Ponens on their account. Peirce's Rule is not psychologically indispensable for us to complete any of the projects rationally required for creatures like us; Modus Ponens is. Peirce's Rule could be of some use in meeting some rational requirement, but it is not indispensable.

Second, is it a metaphysically necessary and sufficient property? Yes. Let's say that there are some projects that are rationally required for actual humans to undertake and let's also grant that there is a particular set of epistemic rules that is indispensable for us to employ in succeeding at those projects. Now take this set of epistemic rules that is indispensable for actual humans to do all of the projects rationally required of them. Does this set have P in all worlds? Yes. In every possible world, the particular set of epistemic rules that is indispensable for actual humans to do their rationally required projects has the property of *being the set of rules that is indispensable for actual humans to do all of their rationally required projects.*

In every world, is it only this particular set that has P? Yes. Let us consider some rival sets. A completely rival set that contains none of the rules in our identified set cannot have P. And a proper subset (of the set we have identified) cannot have the property either. A proper subset might have the property *being a set of rules that is indispensable for actual humans to do **some** of their rationally required projects*, but it would not have the property we are interested in. What about some larger set of which the actual set of our rationally-indispensable rules is a proper subset?[13] That set would not have the property we are interested in either because it has some dispensable rules as its members. So, the property of *being the set of rules that is indispensable for actual humans to do all of their rationally required projects* is instantiated by the same object in every world, and in every world, the only thing that instantiates this property is that very same object. This is exactly the N&S condition Dogramaci has put in place. What I have shown is that a property that involves thinkers' psychologies can meet Dogramaci's N&S condition on being a unifying property.

Before moving on, let me respond to some objections that may arise at this point. The first says: is it not straightforward that facts about human psychology are contingent, and not necessary? It should be contingent whether, say, Modus Ponens, is rationally-indispensable and therefore the set we have identified does not have P in every world. My response is: yes, of course facts about human psychology are contingent. In other possible worlds our human counterparts certainly may have completely different psychologies such that Modus Ponens is not indispensable to their contingency planning. But, in identifying the set as I've done above, I did a bid of rigidifying.[14] Out of the host of deductively valid epistemic rules, identify the set that is psychologically indispensable for *actual* humans. So we have {x | x *is a rule that is rationally-indispensable for actual humans*}. Let's call this set S(a). Let's call the property of *being the set of rules that is rationally-indispensable for actual humans* P(a).[15] The word

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[13]I will often use "indispensable" or "rationally-indispensable" as short hand for "psychologically indispensable for a rationally required project." This just allows me to capture the Enoch and Schechter-type properties, like P, with fewer words.

[14]Is this rigidification justified? Yes, I think it is. We are interested here in whether our rules (the rules rational for us to employ) have a unifying property. If we do not do the rigidification, then we are not examining whether our set of rational rules exemplifies the candidate property in other worlds; instead we would be examining whether *counterparts* of our set of rational rules exemplify the property.

[15]I call it P(a) here to focus on how it contrasts with what I call P(1) shortly. But notice,

"actual" is important here, because it does the rigidifying. Let's go to a nearby possible world, where our human counterparts have a slightly different psychology. In this world, W(1), the humans there use Modus Tollens for contingency planning. In that world, there is {x | x *is a rule that is rationally-indispensable for W(1) humans*}. Let's call that set S(1). S(1) ≠ S(a). Qua abstract object, S(a) exists in W(1). S(a), just like S(1), exists in every world. Here's the interesting point. In W(1), S(a) still instantiates P(a). Just as, in W(a), S(1) still instantiates P(1) (where P(1) is *being the set of rules that is rationally-indispensable for W(1) humans*). The sets exist in every possible world, but in every possible world, only one thing instantiates the property P(a) – and that thing is S(a). Of course in alternative worlds, our human counterparts there would use "human" and "actually" indexically to pick out the rules that are indispensable to them. But, we are using to it to indexically pick out our rules and then we rigidify our reference across worlds. It is in this sense that the set I've identified has P in every world.[16]

The second objection is this: the most natural position of a deflationist would be to say that P has a null extension. The deflationist could just claim, contra Enoch and Schechter, that there is no set of rules that is rationally-indispensable since rationally required projects can be completed on the basis of many different, equally good sets of epistemic rules. But notice, one cannot derive the claim that our rationally required projects can be completed on the basis of many different, equally good sets of epistemic rules from epistemic communism. Epistemic communism entails that any set of valid epistemic rules could serve the coordinative function. Epistemic communism does not deliver the result that, for example, Modus Ponens is (psychologically) dispensable for actual humans in contingency planning. This objector is certainly correct that insofar as a deflationist wants to remain a deflationist they cannot accept the claims of an inflationist theory like Enoch and Schechter's. But, my project in this paper is to show that Dogramaci's argument for deflationism from epistemic communism is flawed, not that deflationism is false. This objection requires using the conclusion of Dogramaci's argument (deflationism) to defend its premise 2. But this would be circular.[17]

Since this Enoch and Schechter-inspired property, P, that I've just identified is the sort of property that can meet Dogramaci's EI and N&S conditions, P can be a unifying property. However, the point of this essay is not to establish that Enoch and Schechter's view is correct — the point is to reject Dogramaci's deflationism by rejecting premise 2 of his argument. My objection to premise 2 was that not all sets of rules could *equally* serve the coordinative function, because not all rule sets are psychologically equal. To which Dogramaci replied that we should only consider the intrinsic features of the epistemic rules, because considering their psychological features requires the possibility of a unifying property that involves thinkers' psychologies. But, for Dogramaci, there can be no such psychological unifying property, because a psychological property

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P(a) and P are the same.

[16]Thank you to reviewer three for introducing this objection.

[17]Thank you to reviewer two for introducing this objection.

cannot meet the EI condition or the N&S condition. I've spent the past two sub-sections arguing that a property which involves thinkers' psychological states can meet these two conditions, and therefore can be a unifying property. Therefore, my objection to premise 2 stands. Dogramaci's response to my original objection to premise 2 is an unsatisfactory response.

3.3   A Quick Clarification

Dogramaci's argument from epistemic communism does not successfully establish deflationism. But, while I reject Dogramaci's argument from epistemic communism to deflationism, this does not mean that I reject his epistemic communism. I can accept Dogramaci's communism without accepting his deflationism. Specifically, I can accept that we do have reason to think that our rules have the sort of psychological unifying property that I've identified and also accept that the function of our epistemic evaluative terms such as "rational" is to coordinate our community's belief-forming rules. We can say that a rule not on our list of rationally-indispensable rules is irrational, while also agreeing that the function of saying some belief is "irrational" is that the utterer thinks that the belief-forming method used to get at that belief should not be used.

As I've said, what I object to is: "Given epistemic communism, there are many different sets that could *equally* serve the function of epistemic coordination." What I do not necessarily reject is: "Given epistemic communism, there are many different sets that could serve the function of epistemic coordination." I am actually quite sympathetic to epistemic communism, even while I remain sympathetic to non-deflationary positions about rationality.

4   An Objection on Dogramaci's Behalf: Unifying the Entirety of Rationality

We can now reject Dogramaci's argument for deflationism. However, I think there is a good objection that is readily available to Dogramaci that I'd like to develop within this section.

4.1   The Objection

As I've shown, properties that cite psychological features can meet the N&S condition. However, one may have another worry about the apparent contingent nature of these sorts of properties. One may think that while the sort of Enoch and Schechter-inspired property that I've offered (*being the set of rules that is indispensable for actual humans to do all of their rationally required projects*) could unify human rationality, it would not unify *rationality*. That is, on my Enoch and Schechter-inspired way of showing that psychological properties can be unifying properties, I may be able to identify properties that unify Martian rationality, and human rationality, and, for all x, rational-species-x rationality,

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but I cannot, using this view, unify all of these rationalities into one thing — rationality.

The objection that I now offer on Dogramaci's behalf says: Even if we can establish that our rules have a unifying property, why does unification for just one epistemic community (or one species) matter? Don't we want to unify all of the "candidates" for the extension of "rational?" Don't we want Martian and human rationality to be unified together qua one singular concept – rationality?[18] To do that requires identifying a property that unifies all of the candidate extensions of "rational": the Martian one, the Human one, the rational-species-x one, etc. This is a criterion that a non-deflationary take on rationality should meet. But the non-deflationary account I've developed so far fails at this criterion. Therefore, the non-deflationary account that I provided to undermine Dogramaci's argument fails. This is the objection.

4.2 Proof That It Is Impossible to Unify All of the Candidate Extensions of "Rational"

In this subsection, I show that part of Dogramaci's charge is correct — it is true that it is impossible to provide a unifying property, on Dogramaci's definition of a unifying property, for all the sets of candidate rules. Let's be generous to my position and allow that every possible set of epistemic rules is a set of rules that is, as a whole, psychologically indispensable to some species or other for those species to do the projects rationally required of them. Even taking this generous starting point, Dogramaci is technically correct that there is no unifying property for all of these sets of rules.

Call the large set of all the sets of epistemic rules that are rationally indispensable for some species or other L*. Let us look at some candidate unifying properties for L*. I'll offer two plausible and intuitive candidates, based on my Enoch and Schechter-inspired position from earlier, and show that both candidates are not unifying properties (given Dogramaci's account of the term). Here is one, let's call it P*(1): *being a set of rules that is indispensable for some creature or other to do all of the rationally required projects (for those creatures)*. This property is normatively deep as it presents "the relevant methods in a rationally positive light," and it therefore is explanatorily illuminating in the right sort of way. It succeeds at being explanatorily illuminating in the exact same way as P, from earlier, succeeds at being explanatorily illuminating. So, P*(1) meets the EI condition on being a unifying property.

Does P*(1) meet the N&S condition? Here is where the problem arises. The problem is that any one set of epistemic rules that is rationally indispensable to any one species has P*(1). For example, the set of rules that is rationally-indispensable for actual humans has P*(1). After all, the set of rules that is rationally-indispensable for actual humans is a set of rules that *is indispensable for some creature or other to do all of the rationally required projects (for those creatures)*. So, a lot of objects instantiate P*(1). Every list of rules that is

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[18]Thanks go to Declan Smithies for bringing this objection to my attention.

rationally-indispensable for any species has the property, and, of course, L* instantiates the property as well. Since in every world, multiple objects (each individual set of rules that is rationally-indispensable for every individual species plus the set L* itself) have this property, P*(1) does not meet the N&S condition. It is not the case that in every world only one object has this property. Since P*(1) does not meet the N&S condition, P*(1) cannot be a unifying property. Therefore, P*(1) cannot be a property that unifies, in the Dogramacian sense, rationality across the board. P*(1) cannot unify Martian and human rationality.

Call the second candidate unifying property of L*, P*(2). This property is: *being a set of sets that are indispensable for some creatures to do the rationally required projects (for those creatures).* Imagine for a moment that the set {Modus Ponens, Disjunction Introduction, Universal Instantiation, Conjunction Elimination} is the exhaustive set of rules that is rationally indispensable for actual humans. Now imagine another species, species y, for which {Modus Ponens, Disjunction Introduction} is the full set of rules that are rationally indispensable for their species. Now imagine an additional species for which {Universal Instantiation, Conjunction Elimination} is the exhaustive set of rules that are rationally indispensable for that species, species z. Then the four-membered set of rules that is rationally-indispensable for actual humans can be partitioned into two subsets: one consisting of Modus Ponens and Disjunction Elimination and the other consisting of Universal Instantiation and Conjunction Elimination. Now this means that the set of epistemic rules that is rationally-indispensable for humans is a set of sets that are indispensable for some creatures to do the rationally required projects (for those creatures). So the set of rules indispensable to humans has the very same property, P*(2), that was proposed to unify L*. This means that, in every world, so long as some species's (or epistemic community's) set of rules can be partitioned into sets of rules that are rationally indispensable for some other species, more than one object has P*(2). Therefore, P*(2) does not meet the N&S condition either. Therefore, P*(2) cannot be a unifying property for cross-species rationality. P*(2) cannot be a unifying property of L*.

Since P*(1) and P*(2), once we have taken my Enoch and Schechter-inspired non-deflationary line, are the most intuitively plausible candidates for properties that can unify the entirety of rationality, and since they cannot be unifying properties (on Dogramaci's definition of a unifying property), I think it is firmly established that Dogramaci's objection was partly right. It is impossible to identify a unifying property for all of the possible candidate extensions of "rational." One cannot unify Martian and human rationality. Though I agree with this element of this objection, in the next section, I will respond to the objection. I disagree that this notion of a unifying property is important, at least with regards to unifying cross-species rationality.

5 My Response to the Objection

Here I'll discuss how the P*(1) property proposed above is a sort of determinable property, and as a determinable property it is not problematic that more than one object instantiates it. I will, in effect, be saying that P*(1), while not a unifying property in Dogramaci's strict sense of the term, still gets us what we really want.

5.1 P*(1) as a Determinable Property

Take P*(1) which was the property of *being a set of rules that is indispensable for some creature or other to do all of the rationally required projects (for those creatures)*. It meets the EI condition as it is a normatively deep property in exactly the same way P is. The reason this property cannot be a unifying property is because there are multiple objects that instantiate this property. But what if we view P*(1) as a sort of determinable property? Then each set of rules rationally indispensable to some creature or other is unified by instantiating a determinate (given the psychology of the creatures involved) of P*(1). In this case, P*(1) is a determinable and the only things that could instantiate P*(1), in addition to L* of course, would be other sets of epistemic rules rationally indispensable to some species, that is, only proper subsets of L*.

Since subsets of L* are the only things that could also instantiate P*(1), besides L* itself, the properties that unify each subset of L* are the only things that could be determinates of the determinable P*(1). Given this understanding, while P*(1) is not strictly a unifying property on Dogramaci's definition of the term, as it does not meet the N&S condition, the explanatorily illuminating property that L* has is only additionally had by its proper subsets. But, this does not seem problematic to me. If we think of P*(1) as a determinable property, we should not take it as a problem that some of the objects that instantiate one of its determinates also instantiate the determinable. We have no problem when some objects that instantiate *being scarlet* also instantiate *being red*. In fact, it must happen by the necessity of the determinable/determinate relation. If we take something like P*(1) as the property to "unify" all of rationality, then we have an explanatory illuminating property that only fails to be unique to one object in the same way that all determinables do.[19]

This is my response to the objection that I've offered on Dogramaci's behalf. We have a normatively deep explanation and the only things that could share P*(1) are subsets of L*. While I do think my position is unique (the position that human or Martian rationality can be unified one at a time and that we can "unify" the entirety of rationality if we abandon the N&S condition), I should be charitable to Dogramaci. Dogramaci says some things at the end of his paper that suggests he accepts that we do not need to look for N&S condition-meeting properties to do interesting work in epistemology. Dogramaci says "My only suggestion is that we look beyond the traditional search for necessary and

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[19]I use "unify" in this quoted way to signify that I am no longer talking about Dogramaci's sense of unification.

sufficient, much less unifying, properties of rational epistemic rules, and, one way or another, continue to shake things up in epistemology" (796). While I think we can find, and I spent section 3 developing, plausible unifying properties for "our rules" (or any individual species's rationally-indispensable rules), I agree with this quote of Dogramaci's when it is taken to be about the entirety of rationality. We will not find a property that can unify both Martian and human rationality into one rationality. But, we can arrive at what I've offered in this section — a normatively deep property that can only be instantiated by the sets of epistemic rules rationally-indispensable to some species or other. So, I am "shaking things up" and following Dogramaci's suggestion, but perhaps one can say that I am doing that in a rather conservative way. Either way, the core difference is that I think our rules can have a unifying property.

Conclusion

In this paper, I've outlined Dogramaci's argument for deflationism about rationality. I discussed the premises of his argument including his appeal to epistemic communism. Then I rejected the premise of his argument that claimed any set of valid deductive rules could serve the function of coordination for an epistemic community *equally*. I think that psychological features can make the sets of rules unequal. But, Dogramaci had something to say about that — we should only consider the intrinsic features of the rules. His reasoning for that parochial focus on the intrinsic features of the rules is because psychological features, presumably, cannot be included in unifying properties. This is because unifying properties must meet the EI and N&S conditions, but properties that involve thinkers' psychologies supposedly cannot be normatively deep nor meet the N&S condition. However, I do not see why psychological features cannot play a role in a normatively deep property. For example, take Enoch and Schechter's view that says that our basic rules are justified because they are rationally-indispensable to us. This is a normatively deep property. Moreover, this indispensability must be a psychological indispensability, and therefore psychological features can feature in normatively deep properties. Properties that feature thinkers' psychologies can also meet the N&S condition. I spent section 3 showing this to be the case.

I spent section 4 and 5 developing, then answering, another objection I offered on Dogramaci's behalf. This objection said that the Enoch and Schechter-inspired view that I offered to explain how the property that unifies our rules could be psychological, could only unify species (or epistemic community) relative sets of epistemic rules. This account could only unify human rationality and, separately, Martian rationality, but it could not unify human rationality with Martian rationality. Since I am trying to argue against deflationism, the sort of non-deflationary account I am offering ought to be able to unify cross-species rationality — or so this objection goes. But, I argued that there is a property, P*(1), that is an explanatorily illuminating, determinable property. This determinable, while not able to meet Dogramaci's strict N&S condition,

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can only be shared by objects that instantiate one of its determinates. So, we have an explanatorily illuminating property (that only fails the N&S condition in the way that other determinables do) that can "unify" (on a less strict understanding of the term) cross-species rationality.

Nothing in epistemic communism itself disallows that we can find a unifying property for "our rules" — the basic, deductively valid rules that we call "rational." Moreover, nothing in epistemic communism disallows us from claiming that all of the rational rules are the rules that are psychologically indispensable for some intelligent species or other. This latter property, while it fails to meet Dogramaci's N&S condition, is still good enough to get us what we want — the ability to claim that there is something normatively special about the rules that we and other intelligent species employ throughout all of our everyday reasoning. The deflationist will need more than epistemic communism to prove their case.

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