

School of Ideas in Neuroscience 2024 took place in Warsaw and lasted one week (9-15.07.2024) as planned. It consisted of 12 workshops led by 12 scientists from different research institutions and countries (the US, Portugal, the UK, Germany, Switzerland) and representing a variety of backgrounds (ranging from philosophy and psychology to neurobiology, ethology, computational neuroscience and mathematics). Participants (17; 7 men, 10 women) who were chosen to take part in the event also represented a variety of backgrounds (from philosophers to experimentalists), positions (PhD students, early postdocs) and countries (Argentina, Brazil, the US, Canada, Germany, Ukraine, Norway, the UK, the Netherlands, Denmark, Switzerland, Sweden). Those who had difficulty in getting funding from their home institutions were supported by the stipends (full or partial fee waivers). Two participants traveling from Argentina and Brazil obtained travel grants of 500 euro each, funded by EBBS.

During Frameworks sessions participants got more deeply acquainted with some of the most hotly debated theoretical frameworks in neuroscience, such as embodied cognition, basal cognition, behavioral genetics, chemical networks, and evolutionary developmental biology. They had the chance to discuss those theories with the prominent scientists: Anna Ciaunica, Patrick Haggard, Henry Yin, Anne von Philipsborn, Barbara Finlay, and Gáspár Jékely who not only work within those frameworks, but also develop them. Further, during Meta-theory sessions held by David Barack, Mazviita Chirumuuta, and Danielle Williams, participants gained deeper insight into factors that shape our understanding of concepts such as cognition. They also learnt about epistemic origins of certain views on mental processing, such as computer metaphor. During these sessions they could re-consider the theoretical assumptions on which their research is based and its implications for the interpretation of their results. Finally, School also involved a Thinking Tools session held by John Bickle, Hiba Sheheitli, and Fernando Rosas during which participants trained communication skills and the ability to translate theoretical statements into questions. They also learnt how they can balance between experimental focus on details and a more broad theoretical perspective on their work and how mathematical modeling can guide theory development in neuroscience. Beyond workshops, participants were involved in group tasks and as well as formal and informal debates concerning the role of theories in neuroscience.

Overall, School of Ideas in Neuroscience provided a unique possibility for the scientists to meet and discuss not about scientific methods enabling us to gather more data, but about theories and ideas on how to interpret all these data we have already collected. We believe that this is vital to make the field of neuroscience progress. Our event allowed philosophers and researchers representing different subfields of neuroscience to inspire each other, which resulted in some potential collaborations between participants and participants and guests. We hope that skills in theorizing gained by the participants during all the workshops and discussions will positively influence their research work, starting from the process of designing experiments till the moment of interpreting and presenting results. This, in turn, will likely result in gaining more reliable information about the brain and its function. Given that our School was again positively assessed by guests and participants, we hope that it will continue as an annual event which will significantly contribute to spreading new ideas and ways of thinking about the brain.