

Laws about Frequencies

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Abstract

A law about frequencies would be a law of nature that imposes a constraint on one or more (actual, global) frequencies. On any of the leading philosophical approaches to laws of nature, there could be laws about frequencies. Hypotheses that posit laws about frequencies turn out to behave very similarly to hypotheses that posit corresponding laws about probabilities or chances -- they make the same predictions, provide similar explanations, and are confirmed or disconfirmed by empirical evidence in the same ways. This makes it interesting to consider the possibility of interpreting probabilistic laws from scientific theories as laws about frequencies. This is surprising proposal, but I argue that the resulting view (which I call 'nomic frequentism') is able to overcome all of the standard objections to frequentist interpretation of objective probabilities.

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