Third Annual

Political Epistemology Network Conference

Amsterdam, December 7–8, 2022

Programme & Book of Abstracts

Conference Programme

Location:
Trippenhuis, Kloveniersburgwal 29, 1011 JV Amsterdam

Wednesday, December 7

8.30–8.50	Coffee and Registration
8.50–9.00	Introduction
9.00–10.00	Keynote **Aidan McGlynn** (he/him) (University of Edinburgh) Epistemic Injustice: Phenomena and Theories

Lightning talk session

10.15–10.30	**Sonja Riegler** (she/they) (University of Vienna) A Functionalist Approach to Ignorance and its Relevance for Political Epistemology
10.30–10.45	**Ahmed Aljuhany** (University of Calgary) Entrenched Ideas Die Hard: Why Pernicious Ignorance Persists in the Science and Politics of Sexuality
10.45–11.00	**Natascha Rietdijk** (Tilburg University) Collective gaslighting and collective self-trust
11.00–11.10	Break
11.10–11.25	**Keith Raymond Harris** (Ruhr-Universität Bochum) Misinformation and collective activity

11.25–11.40 **Tanuj Raut** (UC Irvine)
Are prejudices like hinges?

11.40–11.55 **Hugo Ribeiro Mota** (University of Oslo)
Argumentative and non-argumentative approaches to social deep disagreements

11.55–12.15 Break

Regular papers

12.15–13.00 **Emma Young** (they/them) (University of Groningen)
Feminist Standpoint Theory, Ideology, and Deference

13.00–14.00 Lunch

14.00–14.45 **Flora Löffelmann** (they/them) (University of Vienna)
Investigating Rhetoric-Epistemic Oppression by the example of trans* experiences

14.45–15.30 **Sarah Stein Lubrano**
(University of Oxford)
Cognitive Dissonance, False Consciousness, and Standpoint Theory

15.30–15.45 Break

15.45–16.30 **Uğur Aytaç** and **Enzo Rossi** (Utrecht University & University of Amsterdam)
Ideology critique without morality: a radical realist approach

16.30–17.15	**Cat Saint-Croix** (University of Minnesota) Epistemic Virtue Signaling, Code-Switching, and the Double-Bind of Testimonial Injustice
19.00	Conference Dinner Location: Hemelse Modder, Oude Waal 11, 1011 BZ Amsterdam

Thursday, December 8

8.30–8.50 Coffee

8.50–9.00 Introduction

9.00–10.00 Keynote
Jana Bacevic (Durham University)
Epistemic what? () Positioning, () injustice, and the political economy of knowledge production

Lightning talk session

10.15–10.30 **Nora Kindermann** (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)
Fundamentalism as a contested concept

10.30–10.45 **Megan Hyska** (Northwestern University)
Political Movements as Units of Explanation

10.45–11.00 **Stephanie Deig** (she/they) (University of Lucerne)
Performing Resistance: Rights-Claiming Practices and Epistemic Friction in the Ni una Menos Movement

11.00–11.10 Break

11.10–11.25 **Merel Talbi** (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)
A Political Epistemology of Space: How we can Foster Deliberation by Altering the Physical Environment

11.25–11.40 **Egbert de Jong** (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)
Enhancing the feasibility of the ideal of deliberative democracy as a coping mechanism for wicked problems

11.40–11.55 **Moritz A. Schulz & Simon Scheller** (University of

Bamberg)
Being a Believer: Social Identity in Post-truth Political Discourse

11.55–12.15 Break

Regular papers

12.15–13.00 **Erica Yu** (Erasmus University Rotterdam)
How should representatives change their mind in deliberations?

13.00–14.00 Lunch

14.00–14.45 **Amelia Godber and Gloria Origgi** (EHESS)
Telling propaganda from legitimate political persuasion

14.45–15.30 **Neri Marsili** and **Michel Croce** (Universitat de Barcelona & University of Genoa)
Trusting the wrong sources: Pseudo-experts & belief in conspiracy theories

15.30–15.45 Break

15.45–16.30 **Joey Pollock**and **Kim Pedersen Phillips** (University of Oslo & King's College London/Oslo Metropolitan University)
Scientific Communication and Misinterpretation

16.30–17.15 **Gabriele Contessa** (Carleton University)
Public Trust in Science and the Socio-Epistemic Infrastructure

17.15–17.30	Break
17.30–18.30	Keynote **Briana Toole** (Claremont McKenna College) Trojan Horse Speech and Coded Discourse
18.30	Closing Remarks

Practical Information

Venues

All presentations will be held at the Trippenhuis, Kloveniersburgwal 29, Amsterdam.

The conference dinner on Wednesday will take place at Hemelse Modder, Oude Waal 11, 1011 BZ Amsterdam

Transportation

There are various ways to get to the conference venue in the historical center of Amsterdam.

From Schiphol Airport

We recommend taking a train from the airport to Amsterdam Central Station.

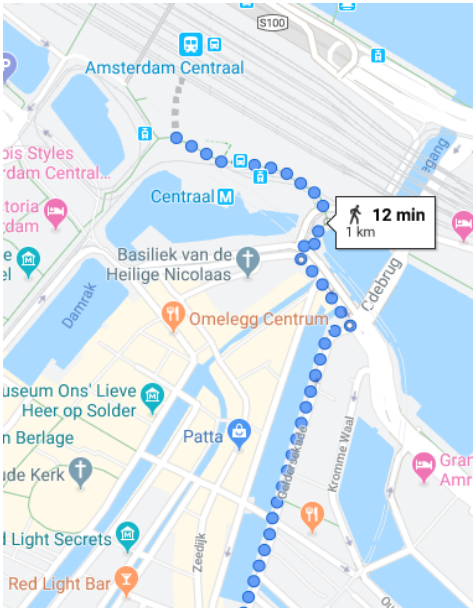
Go to the train station in the arrival hall at Schiphol Airport. You can buy a ticket directly from the yellow NS machines, or you can buy an OV-chip card from the NS service point counter there (please note that you must first load credit onto the card before taking the train).

From Amsterdam Central Station

Walking

The conference venue, Trippenhuis, is about a 12 min (1 km) walk from the station.

Exit Amsterdam Central Station through the main entrance (towards the city center).



Outside, immediately turn left. Keep walking past the tram stops until you reach the Kamperbrug at your right. Cross the bridge, following the Gelderskade. Cross Nieuwmarkt square, and enter the Kloverniersburgwal, keeping the canal to your right. After 100 meters, you will find the Trippenhuis to your left.

Metro

From Amsterdam Central Station, you can take metro 51 (Isolatorweg), 53 (Gaasperplas) or 54 (Gein). Exit at the first stop, called Nieuwmarkt. From there, follow the above instructions.

Taxi

Taxis can be ordered by phone/app or found at taxi ranks near major stations and large hotels in the city. Take note that Amsterdam taxis are expensive, particularly if you are travelling to/from Schiphol Airport.

Cycling

Amsterdam is very well equipped to accommodate cyclists. Amsterdam Central Station, Leidseplein and Dam Square are major rental hubs, with day rates averaging € 10.

Helpful links

To plan your journey:
GVB (Amsterdam public transport): https://en.gvb.nl/
NS (Dutch railways): https://www.ns.nl/en
9292ov.nl (all Dutch public transport): https://9292.nl/en

More information on public transport in Amsterdam:
https://www.iamsterdam.com/en/plan-your-trip/getting-around/public-transport

Information on OV-chip cards:
https://www.ov-chipkaart.nl/everything-about-travelling/how-does-travelling-work-1.htm

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Book of Abstracts

In order of presentation

Epistemic Injustice: Phenomena and Theories

Aidan McGlynn (University of Edinburgh)

Epistemic injustice has become one of the most widely discussed topics in social and feminist epistemology, and has contributed to reviving interest in issues in the intersections between epistemology and ethics/political philosophy. Much of the impetus for this recent explosion of interest has been the influential work of Miranda Fricker; however, Fricker's framework and terminology for discussing the phenomena and examples she's interested in have not always been cleanly separated from the phenomena themselves. This talk examines what's distinctive of Fricker's treatment of the phenomena she labels epistemic injustice, focusing on the two varieties that her discussion highlights: testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice. Once the distinctive elements of Fricker's treatment are clearer, we will be better placed to assess which of them are plausible and which implausible, and to consider alternative theoretical frameworks for thinking about the phenomena, such as that developed by Kristie Dotson.

A Functionalist Approach to Ignorance and its Relevance for Political Epistemology

Sonja Riegler (University of Vienna)

Current theorizing on ignorance in feminist epistemology and critical race studies stresses that ignorance is more than just a gap in knowledge. Rather, these accounts consider ignorance to be a "substantive epistemic practice" that can serve purposes of domination

(Alcoff 2007, Sullivan & Tuana 2007, Mills 1997 & 2007, Pohlhaus 2012, Dotson 2014). I am sympathetic towards the aims of substantive-practice accounts (SPA) since they reckon with ignorance's ties to social structures. However, I find existing SPAs insufficient in at least two respects. First, they fail to explain how precisely the practice of ignorance operates on a conceptual and social level. This is problematic since no account of ignorance as a practice is complete unless it captures their different modes of operation. Second, I believe that ignorance serves a multitude of social functions, not all of which are negative or repressive.

In this talk, I seek to address these shortcomings by introducing a "functionalist approach to ignorance". Central to my own account is what I label "Craigean functionalism". In his book "Knowledge and the State of Nature" (Craig 1990), Edward Craig uses a so-called "state-of-nature" scenario to explain why it is useful for an imagined community to introduce precursors of our concept of "knowledge". The guiding idea in Craig is that instead of asking what knowledge is, we should rather ask what the term "knowledge" is for (Craig 1990, Hannon 2019, Kusch & McKenna 2018). I draw inspiration from this project and apply it to ignorance.

The first step of my genealogy of ignorance shows that to ascribe ignorance is not just the opposite of attributing knowledge; it is something more specific of a particular social situation. The second stage of my state-of-nature story introduces a social-developmental layer and asks what happens once social situations become more complex. I discern several specific mechanisms through which ignorance operates as a practice. Additionally, Craigean functionalism sheds light on the multitude of social functions of ignorance, not all of which are negative or repressive.

I submit that my account constitutes an important amendment to existing lines of inquiry on ignorance as a social and political

phenomenon. I believe that once we understand ignorance in this reduced, stripped-down setting, it makes it easier to characterize it in more complex scenarios. For instance, my account can be used to illuminate the permissibility of epistemically paternalistic interventions since it addresses how epistemic labor is divided and how this leads to legitimate ascriptions of expertise or ignorance. Think of the involvement of experts in decision-making processes. At times, it seems reasonable to outsource certain decisions to experts and conversely attribute ignorance to the non-experts. What is more, one could ask if there are legitimate instances of producing ignorance in others. For instance, is it beneficial to suppress forms of information that threatens the well-being of certain groups? I believe that my functionalist approach to ignorance is superior to SPAs when it comes to answering these questions.

Entrenched Ideas Die Hard: Why Pernicious Ignorance Persists in the Science and Politics of Sexuality

Ahmed Aljuhany (University of Calgary)

The idea that sexual orientations are innate and immutable characteristics has long been circulated among members of the LGBTQ+ community. Historically this account of sexual orientations has been bolstered by biological theories of sexuality. According to these theories, sexual orientations are inborn and unchanging attractions towards certain genders (see Hernn 1995). Several scholars, however, have argued that this biological view is harmful. It fosters ignorance of the fact that sexual orientations are social in nature, denoting "social roles" that people use to coordinate expectations and interactions (McIntosh 1968). This ignorance emboldens people to deny others' sexual orientations whenever those orientations deviate from the biological view's rigid expectations. A man who comes out as gay after a heterosexual marriage, for instance, would have his gay identity

denied by a beholder of the biological view. He'd be forced to suffer the hurt and indignity of testimonial injustice (Fricker 2007): his credibility as a knower of his own sexuality would be undermined.

This case of "pernicious ignorance" (Dotson 2011) eludes our usual explanations. Pernicious ignorance is usually explained in one of two ways. The first is by citing standpoints. Explaining ignorance in this way amounts to showing that those perpetuating ignorance occupy social positions that keep them from knowing what they otherwise would know (see Harding 1991). The second is by citing a deception of oneself or others. Explaining ignorance in this way amounts to showing that a person or group is willingly keeping themselves from knowing some fact or is deliberately ensuring that others are kept from knowing it (see Mills 2007). Insightful as they may seem, these explanations cannot help us explain ignorance of the social nature of sexual orientations.

Neither of the explanations can account for the fact that the biological view of sexuality - the view fostering this pernicious ignorance - is widespread within the gay community (Brookey 2002). The standpoint explanation does not account for why members of the gay community don't occupy standpoints that allow them to overcome the ignorance fostered by the biological view of sexuality. If there's any standpoint that's going to overcome this ignorance, we'd expect it to be the standpoint of the people who are harmed by it. Similarly, the deception explanation does not account for why ignorance is maintained within the gay communities it harms. Neither self-deception nor the deception of others makes much sense if it's harmful. We're going to need a different explanation for this case of ignorance.

I argue that the concept of generative entrenchment - which describes the process by which certain ideas play a role in generating others and so have other ideas depending on them (Wimsatt 2007) - can help us formulate a better explanation. I show that the biological view was

historically entrenched in the science and politics of sexuality. Here, the concept of generative entrenchment reveals two biases that help explain our case of ignorance. The first is a bias towards adopting the view that's most entrenched, which helps explain why members of the gay community tend to take up the biological view despite the ignorance it fosters. The second is a bias against revising entrenched views, which helps explain why the view persists even when it is harmful. Together, these two biases help us explain ignorance of the social nature of sexual orientations.

Collective gaslighting and collective self-trust

Natascha Rietdijk (Tilburg University)

Accusations of gaslighting occur increasingly often in the political domain. In discussions on, for instance, institutional racism, sexual harassment, and vaccination, it is regularly suggested that groups of people are gaslit. Does it make sense to talk about gaslighting in this collective sense? The term originates in psychology, where it is used to refer to one person manipulating another (often a partner or family member) into questioning their own senses, memory and judgment. I believe there is potential for the concept of gaslighting to be as illuminating in the political domain as in the context of intimate relationships, once we look at how collective gaslighting works to undermine collective self-trust.

So far, several philosophers have analyzed specific types of collective gaslighting, including racist gaslighting (Davis and Ernst 2017), misogynistic gaslighting (Stark 2019), and cultural gaslighting (Ruíz 2020). However, what is still missing and what I aim to develop is a more generalized account of collective gaslighting that can accommodate all of these more specific forms and also be applied to different forms, like post-truth political gaslighting. An important challenge for any account

of collective gaslighting is the worry that using this term outside its traditional scope and context amounts to conceptual inflation. Philosophers like Abramson (2014) and Sweet (2019) explicitly state that gaslighting is a phenomenon of interpersonal relationships and Case (2019) even argues that "overstretching" is disrespectful to victims. Judging from the sometimes quite loose and polemic use of gaslighting in the political arena, I think this worry is not unfounded. Yet the challenge can be met if we understand gaslighting not in terms of the presence of specific manipulative intentions but in terms of how it affects self-trust.

Drawing on the existing literature on gaslighting and its criticisms, we can then distill three basic criteria that a theory of collective gaslighting should meet. First, it should do justice to the myriad forms gaslighting dynamics can take, without becoming too broad. Second, it should explain collective gaslighting in terms sufficiently similar to one-on-one gaslighting, while clarifying how its dynamics translate to the political domain. Third, it should help us distinguish justified political accusations of gaslighting from unfounded provocations as well as possible. On the basis of these criteria, I develop an account of collective gaslighting which centers on self-trust. Whereas individual gaslighting aims at undermining a target's trust in herself (see, e.g. Spear 2019), I define collective gaslighting as a process by which a collective's epistemic self-trust is illicitly and non-accidentally undermined. Building on El Kassar's (2021) work on collective intellectual self-trust, I will explain how collective gaslighting works to harm it, what this means for victims, and how it relates to and interacts with other forms of political and epistemic oppression. Finally, I demonstrate that my account fulfills the three criteria and retains the central value of the term gaslighting: its power to reveal a very harmful dynamic and thereby making it possible to resist it.

Misinformation and collective activity

Keith Raymond Harris (Ruhr-Universität Bochum)

The recent surge of academic, media, and public interest in misinformation is no doubt due to the perception that misinformation can negatively impact large-scale social activities like voting and compliance with public health measures. However, recent work in cognitive science has suggested the surprising impotence of misinformation in shaping individuals' beliefs. This work might be taken to indicate that misinformation is not, after all, a serious threat to normative social activity. I argue that such an optimistic conclusion would be mistaken.

The thrust of the argument developed here is that focusing on the impact of misinformation on individual beliefs distracts from some alternative pathways by which misinformation impacts collective activity. These pathways need not go through individual beliefs. To illustrate, I consider the examples of pluralistic ignorance and shared acceptance.

Pluralistic ignorance occurs when the members of a population ascribe to most members of that population a belief that few if any actually hold. Misinformation can encourage pluralistic ignorance by, for example, making salient a proposition, even if few if any individuals believe that proposition. This process can be facilitated by social media platforms that encourage individuals to outwardly express support for propositions favoring their ideological tribes, regardless of their sincere attitudes toward those propositions.

Shared acceptance occurs when many individuals opt to act as if some particular proposition is true within restricted contexts, and expect others to do the same. To illuminate shared acceptance, I contrast this concept with joint commitment, which requires mutual awareness

among a group. Compared to joint commitment, shared acceptance is relatively common and easy to achieve within large, diffuse groups.

Pluralistic ignorance and shared acceptance can facilitate collective activity by creating expectations for how various activities will be rewarded and punished. Roughly, one expects to be rewarded for acting as if some target proposition is true and punished for failing to do so. The extremity of these rewards and punishments may vary across contexts. In an authoritarian society, one may expect deviation from the party line to result in severe penalties. In more open societies, one might expect failure to act as if certain propositions are true to lead to ostracization from a valued social group. In either case, misinformation can shape collective activity by shaping perceptions of how one's actions are likely to be received by other members of a group. I illustrate this point with examples, including misinformation surrounding the 2020 US Presidential election and the COVID-19 pandemic.

I conclude by discussing some pathways by which misinformation might promote counter-normative collective activity. In addition to making salient certain false propositions, misinformation might work by merely obscuring the truth, leaving individuals to despair of guiding their actions according to the truth, rather than some socially favored narrative.

Are prejudices like hinges?

Tanuj Raut (UC Irvine)

While we generally believe in others' testimonies, when an identity-prejudice is present the speaker's testimony fails to count as evidence for the hearer, because the hearer is malfunctioning ethically and/or psychologically. This is Miranda Fricker's (2007) account of

why negative identity-prejudice undermines testimonial exchange. In light of Wittgenstein's On Certainty, Anna Boncompagni (2021) offers a hinge account which clarifies the epistemic function of prejudice in the structure of testimonial justification. Hinges are norms which govern our epistemic practices. While hinges (eg. 'There is an external world') themselves are neither justified nor unjustified, they provide the justificatory grounds for empirical claims and determine whether something counts as evidence for our beliefs or not. According to Boncompagni, these two features suggest a useful parallel between hinges and prejudices — prejudices, are like hinges. This (strictly epistemic) account addresses two related phenomena: (i) prejudice's resistance to counterevidence, and (ii) the overcoming of prejudicial belief. One problem for the hinge account is its inability to track the relevant difference between commonsense hinges and negative identity-based prejudices. That is, on this account there is no sharp boundary between commonsense (de facto) hinges like 'No one has ever been on the moon' — which are unchallenged at some time but could be challenged given new evidence — and negative identity-prejudices. For Boncompagni, this is a feature of the account rather than a defect. I show that there are worrying disanalogies between commonsense hinges and negative identity-prejudices in terms of their modal profiles, and what it means to revise them. However, these are worries only if we think that prejudices are like hinges. I try to show that they are not. Negative identity-prejudices, unlike hinges, have distinctively social functions and that a strictly epistemic account fails to make sense of them. I discuss the notion of ideological belief to explain what it means to say that prejudices have social functions. By understanding these social functions, not only are we able to have a broader view of why identity prejudices are so difficult to overcome, but also track the relevant difference between negative identity-prejudices and commonsense hinges.

Argumentative and non-argumentative approaches to social deep disagreements

Hugo Ribeiro Mota (University of Oslo)

Recently in the deep disagreement literature there has been a surge of works regarding the application of its theories into real cases related to political issues (Lagewaard 2021; Kloster 2021; Aberdein 2020; Knoll 2020). Further advancing this discussion, this presentation focuses on what I call social deep disagreements, which are genuine, persistent, and collective disagreements over structural social issues. Besides political and social injustices, its underlying causes are harmful kinds of epistemic exclusion, namely epistemic oppression (Dotson 2014) and other varieties of epistemic injustice (Pohlhaus 2017), such as hermeneutical injustice (Posey 2021). For this reason, they also are characterized by a significant discrepancy in social, political and epistemic power (Archer and Cawston 2022). This asymmetry might also be understood in terms of a global hermeneutical domination (Catala 2015; Santos 2021), which is the systematic exclusion of marginalized perspectives via a continues imbalance of political power in institutional settings. A clear case of this global domination is described by Mills' (2014) claim that white supremacy has been the prevalent political ideology shaping the ways we interact with other people.

The role and effectiveness of argumentation is central to the question of whether these social deep disagreements are rationally resolvable. Assessing how argumentation theorists have answered the challenges of such structural conflicts, I argue that even the most suitable to the task, such as Zarefsky's (2010) Rhetorical Approaches and Rational Persuasion strategies inspired by Williams' (1995) reflections on blame, also have important shortcomings. The main problem is that these proposals are blind to asymmetric conflicts involving structural oppression. To account for this, I consider Novaes' (2020) three-tiered

model of epistemic exchanges for a less idealistic account on argumentation. An important aspect of this model is that it addresses Frye's (1983) claim that political issues are not just problems of knowledge, but also matters of attention.

This is directly related to my distinction between two cognitive dimensions of deep disagreements, i.e., the argumentative and the perspectival dimensions. The first is a propositional disagreement regarding a clash in structuring commitments, while the second is a non-propositional perspectival disagreement regarding a clash in salience perspectives (Whiteley 2022). I argue that if there are successful methods of resolving social deep disagreements, they must primarily focus on changing perspectives, not just a set of beliefs.

According to this claim and considering that the perspectival dimension has been overlooked in both the deep disagreement debate and the argumentation theory literature, I explore non-argumentative forms of communication directed towards perspective change and assess to what extent they are suitable and useful to overcome structural conflicts such as social deep disagreements. Here I consider the Perspective Taking Account (Maibom 2018), the Imagination Expansion Account (Peacocke 2021), the Transformative Experience Account (Paul 2014), and the Recognition Accounts (Hänel 2020; El Kassar 2021; Giladi and McMillan 2022).

My proposal to communicatively respond to structural oppression lies on what I consider to be a moderate position. Considering a scale where in one extreme we find exclusively argumentative strategies and in the other extreme we find radically non-argumentative approaches such as Gandhian Nonviolence (Mantena 2012), I argue for a pluralistic method which uses both argumentative and non-argumentative forms of communication.

Feminist Standpoint Theory, Ideology, and Deference

Emma Young (University of Groningen)

Feminist standpoint theory includes the claim that certain oppressed groups have an epistemic privilege with regard to knowledge of the systems of oppression that they face. This epistemic privilege, however, must be gained through political struggle and education and is not an automatic achievement for any member of that group. Yet, the acceptance of a framework of standpoint theory now often finds expression in a practical norm of deference. As Olúfémi Táíwò notes, it is becoming increasingly normalized in socially progressive circles that speakers who talk about oppression should have the identity that is generally affected by the type of oppression in question. This form of deference is the ground for the most common critiques of standpoint theory as it is taken to demonstrate the underlying essentialization of people with socially marginalized identities as having a form of political consciousness by mere virtue of their social identity. This essentialization neglects one of the central claims of standpoint theory - the achievement thesis - which concerns the premise that critical, political consciousness can only be achieved through political struggle.

In this paper, I argue that the norm of deference does in fact follow from the beginnings of feminist standpoint theory, which can explain why the achievement thesis is so quickly forgotten by both its detractors. I will locate the source for this neglect in the absence of a satisfactory account of ideology in Nancy Hartsock's pioneer article about the feminist standpoint. The main problem with Hartsock's conception of the ruling ideology is that it envisions a simple dichotomy (between feminine and masculine, concrete and abstract) whereby patriarchy raises one side of this dichotomy above the other. Hartsock's response is to turn the dichotomy on its head and reaffirm the value of the concrete and physical labor that is traditionally considered feminine. Due to what I consider her more

phenomenological approach to ideology, she takes women's experiences under patriarchy to not only form the starting point for feminist consciousness, but as its truth content. I argue that the act of reversing the dichotomy, however, does not take into account how the ruling ideology not only devalues, but also distorts the reality of the exploited and oppressed. Therefore, a transformation of the consciousness of the oppressed is as necessary as the displacement of the ruling ideology. Consequently, I will argue that Georg Lukács' dialectical understanding of ideology can better support the difference between workers' (and women's) actual consciousness and the critical consciousness they may develop when they assume the proletarian (or feminist) standpoint. His theory of reification explains how workers can gain class consciousness due to the structure of capitalist ideology, not in spite of it. I conclude that Lukács' standpoint theory does provide a strong basis for upholding the achievement thesis, thereby evading the deference problem.

Investigating Rhetoric-Epistemic Oppression by the example of trans* experiences

Flora Löffelmann (University of Vienna)

This project from the field of trans* philosophy combines epistemology (Fricker 2007, Dotson 2014) and queer phenomenology (Ahmed 2006, Salamon 2018) with aspects of foucauldian genealogy (Foucault 1978) in order to investigate the phenomenon 'rhetoric-epistemic oppression' (REO). 'Rhetoric' signals that this is a form of oppression which targets a speaker. I argue that paying attention to productive mechanisms of power can shed light on injustices that happen because someone is believed only if they present in a certain way. I am interested in the way in which speakers are forced to speak about themselves in ways that are both epistemically oppressive and epistemically productive (i.e. producing knowledge about the speaker that furthers their

oppression). In the case at the centre of my study, the victim of REO is pressured (coerced or manipulated) to fashion statements about their embodied situatedness according to socially prevalent norms and expectations.

REO harms subjects in at least two ways. First, on a discursive level, it prevents subjects from articulating important ranges of truths about themselves. REO thus infringes upon subjects' epistemic agency. Second, on an experiential level, the coerced utterances influence subjects' embodied situatedness, thereby harming them in their ability to explore possibilities of being.

REO does not only affect trans* people. But arguably they are a particularly salient target. I will focus on trans* subjects' engagement with contexts in which cis people and binary gender norms are predominantly operative. In many medical and legal contexts, for example, trans subjects are forced to speak of their embodied situatedness in ways that conform to, and reproduce, binary ideas of gender. Trans subjects comply in order to get medical care or legal assistance. Their dependence upon such care is a signal that the related interactions take place in an environment permeated by power relations.

This will be a work-in-progress talk on my PhD project. It will also feature some empirical material attained through interviews with trans* people who I consider to be experts on this field. This is warranted in light of trans scholars' claim that TP ought to focus on the everyday lives of trans people (Bettcher 2017). The direct engagement through interviews will allow me to ask about an aspect of experience, to wit, embodied situatedness, which might not be recorded in literary accounts trans people give of their habitual life. It is mandated moreover by the standpoint-theoretical consideration that our specific, embodied position allows us to experience things differently depending on where and when we observe them.

Cognitive Dissonance, False Consciousness, and Standpoint Theory

Sarah Stein Lubrano (University of Oxford)

Standpoint theories suggest that being a member of an oppressed group places subjects in a uniquely fruitful epistemological position to understand the oppressive nature of the social world. Thinking together, then, women can best understand the nature of the patriarchy, and working class people can best analyse capitalism. Standpoint theorists have emphasised this standpoint, and the potential resultant recognition of one's oppression, is the result of a process. In other words, a standpoint is not merely a viewpoint; it is an accomplishment of a group. Oppressed subjects do not automatically see the world more clearly; they must go through a process together with others to come to greater insight about the nature of the social order.

These theories are promising and have contributed to the way social movements are organised and operated. At the same time, existing theories often provide only patchy explanations for how this kind of epistemological insight is achieved - and for that matter why, prior to the formation of a standpoint, subjects fall prey to what Marxists call "false consciousness," and thus believe in, and even fight for, ideas that justify their own oppression.

In this paper I offer suggestions for how to address this challenge using Cognitive Dissonance Theory, an established theory in empirical psychology that posits that subjects experience visceral discomfort when faced, even unconsciously, with a contradiction between two or more of their beliefs or actions. Subjects are driven to reduce this discomfort. The result is sometimes a conscious process of reasoning and a change of beliefs, but it is often flawed types of thinking, especially rationalisation and confirmation bias.

I describe how CDT provides an empirically robust (though by no means exclusive) explanation for why subjects of oppression may at first hold oppressive beliefs: rationalising one's materially necessary actions reduces painful psychological dissonance, and oppressive ideologies provide a convenient template for these often-unconscious rationalisations. In this way, CDT provides a naturalised explanation for false consciousness and subjects' belief in harmful ideologies.

At the same time, CDT also helps explain why oppressed subjects can escape these beliefs and resist the social order, generally while engaged in both action and interdependent reasoning. The support of a group helps subjects to notice and consciously grapple with the discomfort of dissonance, and allows them to resolve this discomfort in new ways, creating new concepts and theories. The presence or absence of support for this complex process provides a partial explanation for why subjects sometimes escape 'false consciousness' and sometimes do not. I also provide-real world examples of what this type of process of overcoming false consciousness might look like, from "deep canvassing" to the support of a group as one develops new beliefs.

I ultimately suggest that CDT not only enriches standpoint theories but also combats vague folk-psychological language overused in political theory. Furthermore, the specific findings of dissonance theory point to the importance of the action-oriented and social nature of consciousness-raising, which in turn suggests the importance of amplifying these aspects of social movements.

Ideology critique without morality: a radical realist approach

Uğur Aytaç and Enzo Rossi (Utrecht University & University of Amsterdam)

Ideology critique uncovers flaws in our cultural practices—but what kinds of flaws, and on what grounds? There has been a renaissance of

ideology critique in Anglo-American philosophy over the last few years, with novel answers to those questions, driven by the application of contemporary analytic methods to the traditional aims of Critical Theory. These philosophers, however, retain their discipline's tendency to centre morality in political theorizing, and so identify ideological flaws on the basis of moral commitments: ultimately, ideologies are flawed insofar as they contribute to injustice or oppression. In this paper we criticise that approach, and make the case for an alternative one, grounded in epistemic rather than moral commitments. Our aim is to construct an approach to ideology critique grounded in epistemic norms, and devoid of mainstream political philosophy's moralism. We do this by putting forward two related claims: (i) ideology critique can debunk beliefs and practices by uncovering how, as an empirical matter, they are the product of self-justifying power, and (ii) the self-justification of power should be understood as an epistemic rather than moral flaw.

Let us illustrate the idea with a toy example: a patriarchal society in which men's power is sustained by the widespread belief that "father has everyone's best interests at heart". That belief is ideologically flawed to the extent that its persistence is explained by paternal inculcation—but not because fathers are oppressive or patriarchy is unjust, but because the belief is the product of self-justifying power, and self-justifying power is epistemically suspect: judges in their own affairs are comparable to authors refereeing their own manuscripts. That is to say, the principle that people shouldn't be judges in their own affairs is widely accepted for reasons of fairness, but also for epistemic reasons: all else equal, judges in their own affairs are less likely to reach the verdict that fits the evidence best. More specifically, we will argue that self-justifying power creates ideological distortions because of a malignant epistemic circularity vitiated by what social psychologists call politically motivated reasoning. Some hierarchies empower dominant groups to disseminate their motivated reasoning about their own

legitimacy to subordinate groups—a circular pattern leading to the prevalence of an epistemically flawed understanding of social relations.

Note, though, that the epistemic flaw isn't due to the mere fact that one group influences the other. For instance, education arguably requires teachers' authority over students. But good teachers can transmit knowledge in ways that eventually transcend the need for institutionalized authority. Self-justifying power is epistemically flawed to the degree that it shields the powerful's motivated reasoning from effective contestation by others, and makes it dominant legitimizing discourse. This is primarily a defect in the justificatory status rather than the truth of legitimizing discourses. Hence, we can dispense with the notion of false consciousness as well as with moral judgment.

This epistemic approach is qualitatively more parsimonious than morality-based approaches. Morality-based approaches inevitably employ epistemic norms as well. As a result, they expose themselves to two different sets of criticism about their sources of normativity. In contrast, our approach only employs epistemic sources of normativity while delivering a similarly radical social criticism of power relations.

Epistemic Virtue Signaling, Code-Switching, and the Double-Bind of Testimonial Injustice

Cat Saint-Croix (University of Minnesota)

Virtue signaling is a familiar concept. Westra (2021) offers the following account: "Virtue signaling is the act of engaging in public moral discourse in order to enhance or preserve one's moral reputation. [...] What makes the act in question an act of virtue signaling is not the content of the moral expression itself, but rather the status-seeking desires of the person or corporate entity making it." Examples abound: Big box stores decorate their social media profiles with rainbows during Pride month, celebrities decry scandalous events in interviews, and so

on. In each case, the expression aims not only to put forth a judgment, but also to influence the audience's judgment of the actor's moral character. But, what about profile pictures framed by “Vaccines work!”? Or memes posted to an anti-vaccine group echoing the group's view that “Only sheep believe Big Pharma!”? These actions don't express moral views—both of the claims involved are empirical (if imprecise). Nevertheless, they serve a similar purpose: to influence the judgments of their audience. But, where rainbow profiles guide their audience to view the agent as morally good, these acts guide their audience to view the agent as epistemically good. They are instances of epistemic virtue signaling (EVS).

The first goal of this paper is to offer an account of epistemic virtue signaling. I will argue that there are two forms of EVS, content-based and form-based, each of which serves purposes in public discourse similar those of moral virtue signaling. Content-based EVS occurs when the propositional content conveyed by the act in question is the means by which epistemic goodness is to be conveyed. By contrast, form-based EVS occurs when individuals behave (manner of speech, affect, presentation, etc) in ways that they presume will be taken as assurance of epistemic virtue (rigor, trustworthiness, etc) by their audience.

With these concepts in mind, the second goal of this paper is to show that there is much work for them to do. First, EVS illuminates an important form of code-switching, motivated by the need to achieve credibility with one's audience. As I'll argue, this form of incentivized code-switching is insidious in that it is simultaneously rationally recommended and yet requires the code-switcher to endorse (or appear to endorse) attitudes that may undermine the epistemic norms of their own communities. Second, epistemic virtue signaling illuminates a double-bind faced by those who suffer from and seek to overcome testimonial injustice. This is because EVS is often seen as self-undermining in much the same way as moral virtue signaling. So,

an individual who chooses not be silenced (in Dotson (2011)'s sense) in the face of testimonial injustice, and instead attempts to offset the deflation of her credibility by engaging in EVS thereby risks having her credibility further deflated if she betrays evidence of virtue signaling. This is an important form of epistemic injustice because it highlights the fact that targets of epistemic injustice not only ought not be responsible for overcoming it, but cannot be.

Epistemic what? () Positioning, () injustice, and the political economy of knowledge production

Jana Bacevic (Durham)

Some philosophers have expressed concerns about the proliferation of concepts that use the adjective 'epistemic' - epistemic bubbles, epistemic closure, epistemic crisis, epistemic trespassing, and epistemic violence, among others. I discuss what this kind of epistemic positioning (Bacevic, 2021) - the intersection between epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007) and intellectual positioning (Baert, 2012) - tell us about the field of academic knowledge production and the assumptions concerning relationships between persons (or their social identities) and knowledge claims.

Fundamentalism as a contested concept

Nora Kindermann (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

Social sciences increasingly study politically contested phenomena, such as extremism, conspiracy theories, and fundamentalism. It is contested what exactly these phenomena are, how we should conceptualize them, and who has a say in these matters. In this paper, I scrutinize these questions by zooming in on fundamentalism.

While fundamentalism emerged as self-ascription in the context of U.S.-American Protestant fundamentalism, it quickly was used derogatively. In media and ordinary language use, the notion still is used pejoratively. The academic domain has been plagued by the questions whether to use the notion despite its negative connotation, and, if so, how to use it. Broadly, we can distinguish three ways of dealing with these questions. (1) Despite this lack of agreement on whether and how to use the notion, each year hundreds of social scientific studies (most prominently psychological studies) are published on fundamentalism, relying on various definitions and operationalizations that often have negative normative moral and epistemic assessments build in. (2) There are those who criticize normative assessments built into the very notion of fundamentalism and strive to develop a descriptive and neutral conceptualization. Here again a variety of different more or less neutral conceptualizations are proposed. (3) There are those who reject the notion of fundamentalism either by arguing that the concept does not capture any real or meaningful phenomenon and is therefore useless, or by arguing that the term 'fundamentalism' is biased and should be substituted, for example by naming the phenomenon under study 'revivalist religion'.

We thus see that the notion of fundamentalism is used in a variety of ways, and that there is disagreement on how one should use the notion in academic research. In this paper, I scrutinize that discussion to answer the questions whether and how we should use the concept of fundamentalism in research, and what we should mean by it. In doing so, I study explicit arguments on how we should conceptualize fundamentalism, brought forward in the social science literature. On the other hand, I analyze disputes about the right meaning of the term 'fundamentalism' that are not literally expressed (so-called metalinguistic negotiations, see Plunkett 2015). I proceed as follows: First, I provide an overview of conceptualizations of fundamentalism. In doing so, I pay attention to the historical development of

conceptualizations and different historical and political contexts of application. Second, I provide an overview of the reasons and justifications implicitly or explicitly brought forth to either support certain conceptualizations, or argue against the use of the concept of fundamentalism. Here, I pay specific attention to arguments that take into account the historical and political context of usage (e.g. the worry that the concept is orientalist). Third, I assess these reasons and justifications, paying specific attention to the questions 'What do we need these concepts for?' 'And who gets to make this decision?' I argue that, by answering these questions, and by taking into account historical and contextual developments, we can responsibly engineer contested concepts (see Queloz, 20221), such as fundamentalism.

Political Movements as Units of Explanation

Megan Hyska (Northwestern University)

Since the 1950s, the social sciences have generated a number of ways of conceiving of social and political movements as a kind of complex social object. It's generally taken that movements must, for instance, consist of a mixture of individuals and formal organizations, and must be engaged in some sort of contestatory politics. I show, however, that none of the extant accounts offer a fully satisfactory analysis of movementhood, and I offer a novel diagnosis as to why. The basic intuition behind my proposal is that part of what makes social movements special and distinct from other sorts of collectives--- NGOs, political parties, formal mass membership organizations or mere crowds---is that they are, as a matter of definitional necessity rather than mere contingent fact, posited as part of an explanation of social change. A social movement for x--- e.g. for racial justice, for tax reform, for climate change mitigation--- is a social unit that is posited as part of what will explain x's coming about, when and if it does.

What counts as a political movement will then depend on which explanations of social change are accepted. This means that the expression "political movement" has something in common with certain epistemically flavored predicates of personal taste (e.g. "convincing," "credible") and with epistemic modals (e.g. "might," "must"): its extension shifts based on whose epistemic perspective it is indexed to. I argue that existing accounts of movementhood have succeeded in articulating some context-invariant necessary conditions, but that these conditions are not jointly sufficient unless conjoined with this further condition concerning social explanation, the precise content of which shifts between contexts. On this picture, talk about political movements is a distinctively epistemic sort of talk, and its interpretation implicates background suppositions about how the social and political world is to explained and understood.

This account of political movements has a number of generative potentials: first, it suggests an interesting intervention into debates in sociology concerning whether the movement is a historically specific phenomenon; second, it suggests some ways in which talking about a movement as an event will come with different commitments than talk of a movement as an object; and third, it suggests an illuminating interpretation of political conflicts over who is and isn't included within a given movement.

Performing Resistance: Rights-Claiming Practices and Epistemic Friction in the Ni una Menos Movement

Stephanie Deig (University of Lucerne)

In this paper, I examine how rights claiming can be understood as a performative political-epistemic practice -- through which, what José Medina (2013) has coined as beneficial epistemic friction, i.e., the acknowledgment, critical engagement with, and reflective

consideration of standpoints and subjectivities that differ from our own, can occur. To explore this, I focus on a few examples of rights-claiming practices in the Argentinian feminist resistance movement, Ni una menos. Translating to not one (feminized person) less, it originated in 2015 and became a clarion call that not one more person die or be harmed as a result of gendered violence during widespread protests against femicides. It has since served as an organizing principle for many protests, strikes, consciousness-raising, and other forms of resistance and activism. It has also come to be an umbrella term for many transnational resistance actions and movements in digital and physical spaces that center the material experiences of persons, who experience gendered violence or oppression.

To do so, I outline how the practice of making rights claims can iteratively relate ways of knowing (standpoints) and their respective conceptions of subjectivity, i.e., experiences of being a subject within a specific social position, that challenge the values or norms of justice that have been broadly articulated and are widely accepted in the discursive field. I explore how the early invocation of a trans-feminist standpoint in rights claiming practices within the Ni una menos movement, produced epistemic friction to essentializing notions of subjectivity in women's rights discourses thus shifting away from a conception of identity-based struggle as the source of gendered oppression to focus on the shared material struggles of those experiencing gendered oppression. I argue that this epistemic friction expanded notions of subjectivity and thus revealed interconnected sites and mechanisms of gendered oppression such as sexual violence, reproductive and bodily autonomy, and the relation of women's social power or agency to financialization.

I contend that such rights-claiming practices provide a critical opening or site where interpretations of the values or norms of justice can be questioned by examining and contesting the experiences that are

thought to constitute the subjectivity of those who are entitled to rights. Importantly, this occurs by virtue of asserting and making knowable marginalized subjectivities and standpoints that are not being recognized in the language of rights in the discursive field. As such, it can create what Medina refers to as epistemic counterpoints that can serve to connect the marginalization of these subjectivities with material, historical, epistemic, social, political, and legal injustices, or oppression. Furthermore, I argue rights claiming practices are often a site of what Medina refers to as echoing in which epistemic friction is enacted on a collective scale and serves to generate meta-lucidity or awareness of the forms of subjectivity to which we need to direct our critical, epistemically resistant gaze in order to motivate transformations of the epistemic frameworks that inform collective political action.

A Political Epistemology of Space: How we can Foster Deliberation by Altering the Physical Environment

Merel Talbi (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

If some philosophers are to be believed, we are living in uniquely polarized times. This leads someone like Robert Talisse to despair: given our great political differences, deliberation on political questions is made impossible, due to our mutual distrust and distaste for each other's political beliefs (Talisse 2020). This is unfortunate from an epistemic perspective, because others in the tradition of social epistemology, such as Hélène Landemore, insist that deliberation is fundamental to knowledge production, especially when those who contribute to that deliberation have different ideas, opinions or identities (Landemore 2017).

The idea that deliberation and argumentation, or the giving and asking for reasons, will lead to better and more robust knowledge, is thus thwarted somewhat by situations of adversariality or conflict, where winning an argument, rather than learning, is the main focus of the communicative exchange (Dutilh Novaes 2020). This type of conflictual arguing is less conducive of producing knowledge. However, this negative effect may in some cases be mitigated by changing the setting or context of the deliberative exchange, such as when we employ certain communicative interventions when dealing with exclusion in political discussions, as suggested by Iris Marion Young (Young 2002).

One avenue that has not yet been explored in much political or social epistemology, is how physical or material space may affect the course of deliberation, and how it might foster the exchange of reasons and arguments, even in situations of polarization. Borrowing insights from social and political geography, we might indeed wonder how the setting of a room, or the design of an urban locale, may either hinder or ameliorate social processes – and through it, the exchange of reasons and production of knowledge. The re-appreciation of matter is embraced in Science Studies, by authors such as Bruno Latour (2007) and Karen Barad (2003), and has been politically explored in Bonnie Honig's work on the importance of public things, where Honig argues that public things – from libraries to sewage systems – are crucial for the proper functioning of a democracy (Honig 2017).

In this paper, I will explore how spaces of deliberation may work to foster the exchange of arguments to learn, thus producing knowledge even in conflictual situations. Through the use of a case study from the legal field, where students redesigned a court room to alleviate hierarchical relations in a legal setting, I will showcase how our physical surroundings are one of the many conditions which may affect the successful exchange of reasons, even in situations of political polarization.

Enhancing the feasibility of the ideal of deliberative democracy as a coping mechanism for wicked problems

Egbert de Jong (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

The coming of age of deliberative democracy, originating in a growing emphasis on its feasibility as a practical ideal (Bohman 1998), has been stunted by the fact that hardly any author has elaborated on two fundamental concepts in the field of political epistemology: political knowledge and collective problems. According to Friedman (2019), in the debate on more or less democracy (Landemore & Brennan 2022), both epistemic democrats and advocates of epistocracy just assume that some group of people – whether ordinary citizens or social-scientific elites – can unproblematically know how to deal with collective problems. Yet, neither of them have elaborated on the conditions under which we pursue to obtain political knowledge. Even more, the authors who did, are highly pessimistic about the epistemic merits we may expect from collective decision-making or policy-design by experts (Friedman 2019; cf. Müller 2017).

To the contrary, this paper aims to show that highly complex collective problems, i.e. so-called wicked problems (such as unemployment, climate change, and the war on drugs), are best addressed by participative-cum-deliberative decision making models. However, policy design studies, conceptualizing different types of collective problems, reveal that these models must be embedded in a problem-finding oriented approach to policy-making – whereas epistemic democrats tend to defend deliberative democracy as a problem-solving strategy (see for example Landemore 2013). A problem-sensitive approach to collective decision-making thus calls for the revisitation of deliberative democracy as a practical ideal.

The argumentation will proceed in four steps. First, a problem-sensitive contingency approach to policy design is presented, drawing on conceptual frameworks from argumentative policy analysts (Dunn 1988; Hisschemöller 1993; Hoppe 2010b; Alford & Head 2017). Dunn's 'principle of methodological congruence' (1988) indicates that solid policy design consist in applying problem coping methods concomitant to different problem-types. Good governance of collective problems, then, entails a plural concept of democracy (Hoppe 2010a).

Secondly, it will be argued that problem-solving strategies are relevant no sooner than wicked problems are properly structured, breaking them down in more manageable parts and making them fit for provisional solutions (Alford & Head 2017). Problem-structuring refers to a social political activity that intends to generate new information and insights about the problematic situation (Dunn 2017; Hoppe 2018), and includes generating a social political plausible and acceptable choice of authoritative problem definition (Hisschemöller & Hoppe 1996). As for example, generating a shared frame on the nitrogen-emissions crisis.

From this it follows, thirdly, that sound policy-design in the face of wicked problems requires democratic models of deliberative decision making, in which the focus lies on construing a commonly shared problem definition, and which are primarily concerned with fostering learning processes and making policy-design more transparent and open (Hisschemöller 1993; Hoppe 2010b; Head 2019).

The paper concludes, fourthly, that since wicked problems framework resonates more positively with constructivist approaches to policy-design (Head 2019), this gives reason to revisit the epistemic ideal of deliberative democracy. Instead of arguing for deliberative democracy as a truth-tracking-mechanism, we must pinpoint her epistemic gains in a long-term learning-process (Chambers 2017).

Being a Believer: Social Identity in Post-truth Political Discourse

Moritz A Schulz & Simon Scheller (University of Bamberg)

Throughout the surge of populism across several Western democracies epitomised by the Trump presidency, scholars have been particularly puzzled by the role of apparent assertions of empirical beliefs in what has come to be known as 'post-truth' political discourse: How could a question such as whether the sun was shining during a widely televised event become a divisive matter of deeply personal commitment? Analyses thereof have so far largely focussed on sorting phenomena into cases of lying, bullshitting, misjudgements of expert testimony, or fruits of postmodern relativism. We begin our paper by reviewing these proposals and pointing out difficulties that render them ill-equipped to capture what is most distinctive about 'post-truth' discourse – even though each may explain some phenomena occurring under this broad rubric. By contrast, some scholars have recently drawn attention to how apparent assertions of facts seem to be functionally entangled in expressing or affirming social identities (e.g. Anderson 2021, Toole 2021). While establishing this connection opens up a promising avenue of inquiry, it remains underspecified and open to competing interpretations as it stands. In this paper, we draw out four different ways in which asserting a belief P may be connected to a social identity X:

1. P signals to others that one is an X.

2. P performatively affirms an X-commitment.

3. ¬ P contradicts X-commitments.

4. Commitment to P partially grounds being an X.

Considering more familiar examples, then, the post-truth phenomenon of asserting P against compelling evidence would be like

1. wearing a rainbow flag pin,

2. cheering for a sports team at a match,

3. holding onto your understanding of yourself as living in a perfect marriage against evidence of your spouse's cheating on you, or

4. believing that bread consecrated by the priest at Mass turns into Christ's body as a Catholic.

To get a clearer picture of what post-truth discourse amounts to on each picture, we compare each type of utterance against the epistemically desirable case of an evidence-responsive assertion. Drawing out contrasts on several dimensions should facilitate empirical testing of these alternative explanations against various classes of post-truth phenomena. While again we expect each mechanism to be observable in populist discourse, we argue that mechanisms (1)–(4) better capture what is distinctive about 'post-truth' discourse. This is because on each of them, it has previously been unusual for empirical beliefs to figure as P – and for good reason: using empirical beliefs thus is liable to violating norms of assertion by immunising the underlying belief against countervailing epistemic reasons and because uttering the belief in a way distinct but prima facie indistinguishable from asserting it hinders us in effectively governing assertive discourse by the norms of assertion.

While all four mechanisms share this explanatory benefit, differentiating them is important since, as we will show in closing, they have different implications for how we should respond to post-truth discourse – both in terms of effectiveness and in our normative assessment of such behaviour.

How should representatives change their mind in deliberations?

Erica Yu (Erasmus University Rotterdam)

When representative committees enter into deliberations, they are faced with two opposing forces. On the one hand, they should be able to transform their judgments away from their constituents' in order to reap the epistemic benefits of deliberation (Goodin and Spiekermann 2012; 2018). On the other hand, they have a responsibility to their constituents to make their views present and fight for them in deliberations (Madison, Hamilton, and Jay 1987). Should representatives in deliberations then be delegates who simply follow the instructions of their constituents, or trustees who exercise their own independent judgment? I follow Urbinati (2000) in arguing that both of these roles are essential for a representative to play in deliberations: they should have both a passionate link to their electors' cause and relative autonomy of judgment. In this way, representatives are able to both reap the epistemic benefits of deliberation, while also still being representative of their constituents. While the question of what role (i.e., delegate or trustee) representatives should play in deliberations has been formally analyzed in terms of epistemic effects (Goodin and Spiekermann 2012; 2018), little attention in the literature has been paid to this question in terms of effects on representativeness. In order to delineate precisely which changes of mind are still compatible with representatives' delegate role, I turn to models of deliberative representation and judgment transformation in deliberation in Chamberlin and Courant (1983) and List (2011). I model deliberation as judgment transformation which takes place in two stages. In the first stage, deliberators narrow down the set of views held by the group to a set of `reasonable' ones. Representatives can act as full trustees completely independent of their constituents' wishes---even making changes to their own views. In the second stage, each deliberator chooses a set of views which have been deemed admissible in the first stage. It is here where representatives should act as delegates, choosing the set of acceptable views closest to those of their constituents. This model of deliberation is able to show how precisely a representative

can exercise her independence of judgment as a trustee while still being faithful to her constituents as a delegate.

Telling propaganda from legitimate political persuasion

Amelia Godber and Gloria Origgi (EHESS)

Persuasion is a key component of the public debate that's vital to the health of democracies. Propaganda, by contrast, is a persuasive practice usually thought to compromise healthy public discourse. Historically associated with totalitarian regimes, there is increasing recognition that propaganda is a feature of liberal democracies. Yet today's media landscape presents challenges for telling propaganda from legitimate persuasion. Not only is there an abundance of information factual and fabricated alike, digital platforms facilitate new modes of manipulation. The question we address in this paper is what sets these persuasive practices apart? In answer, we propose a typology based on the rhetorical strategies that propaganda and its legitimate counterpart each employs. We argue that the point of contrast between the phenomena turns on two key features: whether the rhetorical strategy sufficiently engages our deliberative capacities, and whether it runs counter to our epistemic interests.

We start with clarificatory remarks about our use of 'propaganda', and lay out the conceptual tools on which our accounts rely. We use the notion of perlocutionary effects to refer to the effects that political persuasion pursues, and consider these through the lens of hearers' practical and epistemic interests. A third concept central to our accounts is that of legitimacy. We consider a persuasive practice legitimate if it doesn't impede on a subject's ability to intellectually self-direct, and this is a matter of whether the rhetorical strategies a practice employs interfere with her capacity to connect with how she acquires her beliefs.

On our view, legitimate political persuasion is public discourse that uses either rational or a combination of non-rational and rational persuasive means. Rational persuasion (RP) involves a sufficiently fair and neutral presentation of facts, while non-rational persuasion (NRP) appeals to emotion, authority, cognitive biases and the like. To be consistent with intellectual autonomy, NRP must be used in tandem with RP (this is NRRP). Legitimate persuasive means are aimed at securing perlocutionary effects that advance either speakers' or receivers' practical interests, and are never such that they undermine hearers' epistemic interests.

Next, we canvass the philosophical literature on propaganda and argue that the definitions on offer are inadequate. We claim that propaganda employs at least one of two rhetorical strategies we term rational manipulative persuasion (RMP) and irrational persuasion (IP), either or both of which are combined with NRP. RMP expresses truth while communicating falsehood, and IP involves the use of fallacies or outright falsehood. As the persuasive means it employs are characterised by deceptive content, propaganda invariably subverts autonomous rational processes. We suggest, moreover, that the perlocutionary effects sought by propaganda's purveyor aim to advance her practical interests without regard for - indeed, to the potential detriment of - hearers' epistemic interests. The point of contrast with legitimate persuasion is that while it too might aim at advancing speakers' political interests, it doesn't do so at the expense of hearers' epistemic interests.

We discuss the explanatory and descriptive adequacy of our accounts and address potential objections. While in practice the boundary between the concepts is not always sharp, we believe that the accounts identify a set of conceptual tools that help better frame and come to grips with propaganda and legitimate political persuasion in an information-dense and increasingly complex media landscape.

Trusting the wrong sources: Pseudo-experts & belief in conspiracy theories

Neri Marsili and Michel Croce (Universitat de Barcelona & University of Genoa)

In the last decade, we have witnessed a proliferation of online misinformation, leading some researchers to refer to the phenomenon as an "infodemic" (Dan and Dixon 2021). As more people consume misinformation online, conspiracy theories are being endorsed by a growing percentage of the population (Fernandez and Alani 2018; Wang et al. 2019; Ahmed et al. 2020). Many of these convictions (like the QAnon conspiracy theories) have an important impact on citizen's political beliefs – affecting their trust in political institutions, their ability to make informed political decisions, and contributing to political polarization.

According to a popular explanation, beliefs in conspiracy theories are becoming more widespread because laypeople are losing trust in experts and in traditional media (Verma, Fleischmann, and Koltai 2017; Massa 2019; Marconi 2019; Stecula, Kuru, and Jamieson 2020; Battiston, Kashyap, and Rotondi 2021). This "lack-of-trust explanation", however, may be too simplistic, if not wholly misguided: at best, it only applies to some domains but not others (Kassirer, Levine, and Gaertig 2020). In our talk, we offer a more nuanced explanation, grounded in the idea that previous attempts to explain the emergence of conspiracy theories underestimate the role played by what we call pseudo-experts. Through a series of case studies (focused on the political debate surrounding Covid-19 regulations), we illustrate an alternative idea: that rather than not trusting experts, laypeople who end up endorsing conspiracy theories trust the wrong experts. If something has changed, it's laypeople's ability to discern experts from pseudo-experts, not their disposition to trust experts in general.

Relying on existing work in the epistemology (Anderson 2011; Coady 2012; Goldman 2018) and psychology (Hendriks, Kienhues, and Bromme 2015) of expertise, we try to spell out why laypeople get fooled by pseudo-experts. We identify four (clusters of) markers of expertise—accuracy, inquiry-related goals, reputation, and skills. We argue that pseudo-experts, despite reliably providing unwarranted answers to open questions in a domain, instantiate several features of each cluster, making it difficult for people to differentiate reliable sources from unreliable ones. We illustrate this model with our Covid-19 case studies, showing how instantiating markers is crucial to pseudo-experts' ability to disseminate conspiracy theories effectively. To understand how these beliefs spread, we argue, it is important to understand how the perception that these figures are genuine experts drives people's acceptance of conspiracy theories.

We conclude by identifying three advantages of the proposed account. First, it shows (contra the lack-of-trust explanation) that people have not just suddenly turned irrational, and decided to stop trusting experts altogether. Second, unlike the alternative view, it does not overstate the extent to which laypeople are gullible. Third, it provides a refined framework for distinguishing genuine experts from fake ones, for understanding what drives people's acceptance of conspiratorial beliefs, and for identifying actionable solutions to improve laypeople's ability to tell actual experts apart from the fake ones.

Scientific Communication and Misinterpretation

Joey Pollock and Kim Pedersen Phillips (University of Oslo & King's College London/Oslo Metropolitan University)

A well-functioning democracy requires that members of the public have access to, and form appropriate beliefs on the basis of, reliable testimony and advice concerning scientific matters. Current

democracies face a central challenge in this regard which has garnered much attention in political epistemology and elsewhere: even given access to scientific testimony, broad sections of the public resist or reject scientific evidence, e.g. concerning climate change, vaccines, and other burning issues (Goldenberg 2016, Glüer & Wikforss 2022, Hannon & de Ridder 2021, Levy 2021).

In this paper, we identify a related challenge which has received less attention: the problem of misinterpretation of scientific testimony. Laypersons' beliefs may fail to align with the scientific evidence, not just due to resistance to such evidence in cases where it is available, but also due to misunderstanding of pertinent utterances.* This could involve assigning the wrong meaning to the utterance, or a misidentification of the utterance's speech act type. In such cases, scientific evidence isn't truly available to the hearer, even though it may appear to be. Moreover, these misinterpretations may be perfectly rational, given the agent's epistemic perspective.

For example, a climate sceptic may interpret utterances employing the expression "global warming" as concerning a phenomenon that is disproven by the existence of cold-spells, or interpret utterances employing the expression "climate change" as concerning nonanthropogenic changes in weather (cf. Schuldt et al. 2011).

We will argue that many putative cases of resistance to evidence involve some degree of misinterpretation. Moreover, many cases where it seems that a hearer has accepted a piece of scientific evidence instead involve the acceptance of claims which differ from the one intended by the speaker.

In debates concerning scientific communication, communication is often taken to be relatively unproblematic: a simple model is often assumed, according to which a speaker encodes a message into a signal – e.g. an utterance of a sentence - and the hearer recovers the message, given knowledge of the signal's meaning. However, contemporary work

in philosophy of language and pragmatics suggests that communication is vastly more complex than this. The hearer must rely on a broad range of background assumptions in order to infer what the speaker may have intended to communicate (Sperber & Wilson 1995) Successful communication typically requires the presence of shared contextual assumptions, or common ground (Stalnaker 2002). However, scientific testimony often takes place in the absence of this shared context – for example, communication between experts and non-experts, or communication between agents with very different political affiliations. Where there is this mismatch in contextual information across interlocutors, we should expect communication to be more difficult.

This suggests that misinterpretation of scientific testimony could be widespread. This paper investigates the nature and scope of this under-studied challenge for democratic decision-making.

(*)This challenge differs from those raised in the 'public understanding of science' tradition (cf. Goldenberg 2016, Keren 2018), which focuses on public understanding of how science works and of scientific concepts and theories, not issues concerning the interpretation of particular utterances, although the two are obviously related.

Public Trust in Science and the Socio-Epistemic Infrastructure

Gabriele Contessa (Carleton University)

Over the last couple of decades, academics and commentators have become increasingly concerned about the low level of public trust in science, as evidenced by the fact that non-negligible portions of the population in liberal democracies refuse to accept the scientific consensus on issues ranging from the safety of childhood vaccines to the reality of anthropogenic climate change to the very shape of our planet. These concerns have reached their peak during the COVID-19

pandemic, which has brought into full view the breadth and depth of the phenomenon as well as its practical implications.

In order to address the (supposedly) low level of trust in science, we need to develop a satisfactory account of public trust in science. Unfortunately, the dominant individualistic approach to public trust in science is woefully inadequate. In this paper, I briefly summarize the main shortcomings of the individualistic approach and sketch a version of the social approach that, I argue, we should adopt in its stead.

The individualistic approach maintains that it is primarily individuals who trust (or distrust) science and that social groups and societies only trust (or distrust) science insofar as their members do. According to the social approach, on the other hand, it is primarily societies (and social groups within them) that trust (or distrust) science. On this approach, individuals trust (or distrust) science largely because (and insofar as) they live in a society (or belong to a social group) that trusts (or distrust) science. According to the social approach, a society that trusts science is not necessarily one whose members have positively valenced psychological attitudes towards science. Rather, a society trusts science to the extent to which it collectively defers to science on scientific issues. One of the main social benefits of collective deference to science is that it enables an efficient division of epistemic labour. However, while, in theory, full epistemic deference to science might enable a perfectly efficient division of epistemic labour, there seem to be limits to the extent to which absolute trust in science is either attainable or desirable in practice.

According to the version of the social approach that I develop in this paper, low trust in science is not so much a result of individual failings but of a dysfunctional socio-epistemic infrastructure (by which I mean the system of social norms, practices, and institutions that promote the reliable production, transmission, reception, and uptake of information and prevent the spread of misinformation. In particular, I argue that the

socio-epistemic infrastructure of liberal democracies is both poorly designed and poorly maintained and that the resulting mistrust is often practical rather than, as it is usually assumed, epistemic. In order to improve public trust in science, we, therefore, need to map the relevant aspects of the socio-epistemic infrastructure of society and improve them (or even redesign them when needed).

Trojan Horse Speech and Coded Discourse

Briana Toole

"Don't wear that shirt, that's gay!" "Baby on Board!". "Well, what was she wearing?" Some of these statements may immediately strike us as problematic, either because of what they presuppose (that being gay is bad) or what they imply (that how one is treated is justified by how one is dressed). But others — like "Baby on Board" — may be equally problematic and yet escape our notice. In this paper, I introduce and unpack a category of speech act that I call Trojan horse speech. Like the Trojan horse of Greek myth, Trojan horse speech presents itself as one thing (a gift from the Greeks, an innocent utterance) while concealing another (the Greek soldiers, covert content). I first show that Trojan horse speech is not analyzable in terms of existing accounts (focusing in particular on implicature, presuppositions, and dogwhistles); they thus beget further analysis. By drawing on Kate McGowan's (2004) work on *exercitive speech*, I show that Trojan horse speech introduces covert content by altering the permissibility facts in a domain. Such speech should trouble us, I argue, because of its ability to covertly enact norms and compel our tacit acceptance of these norms, even when they may be counter to our explicitly stated or held values and commitments.