

Conference “Knowledge, Citizenship, Democracy”

Date: April 22-24, 2020

Location: Groningen, Center for Philosophy, Politics and Economics, Groningen, in collaboration with the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies, Potsdam

Organizer: Lisa Herzog, in collaboration with Patrizia Nanz, Jeroen de Ridder, Boudewijn de Bruin, Jan-Willem Romeijn, Mathias Frisch

Keynote speakers:

Maria Baghramian, Professor of Philosophy, University College Dublin (t.b.c.)

Albert Dzur, Distinguished Research Professor, Political Science and Philosophy, Bowling Green State University

Theme

The ability of democratic societies to deal with knowledge responsibly seems under threat. In recent years, the public debate has been shaped by the denial of established scientific insights, distrust of experts, and an apparent preponderance of emotions over factual knowledge. Often, instead of agreeing on facts, and conducting political debates about values and interests, knowledge itself has become an area of political contestation.

But how should democratic societies deal with expert knowledge? Democracies are built on the assumption of moral equality; social differentiation, and with it the differentiation of knowledge, introduce an element of inequality. How can this fundamental tension be handled? Historically, claims to expertise have often been used to justify problematic forms of hierarchy and exclusion. But the answer can hardly be to deny all claims to differential expertise; instead, a *democratic* understanding of expertise is needed.

Given today’s big challenges, such as the fight against anthropogenic climate change or against global poverty, it is clear that different forms of knowledge need to be harnessed and integrated into the political process. How can experts and citizens find new forms of interacting with each other, online and offline? What does it mean for experts to act as democratic citizens and democratic professionals? What role does the “marketization” of knowledge play for understanding the current conundrum, and how might these problems be addressed? And last but not least: What epistemic responsibilities do citizens have?

The conference theme thus brings together issues that have been treated in philosophical disciplines such as social/political epistemology, deliberative and epistemic democratic theory, and philosophy of science, but also in neighboring disciplines such as science and technology studies, theories of the professions, or media studies. As is appropriate for a conference hosted at a center for “Philosophy, Politics, and Economics”, we want to bring together different perspectives, in an interdisciplinary dialogue.

Abstract submission

We invite abstracts of 500 words, to be sent to l.m.herzog@rug.nl, by January 15th, 2020. We will inform you about the outcome by the end of February.