
Honours Research Project at the Faculty of Humanities

KNOWLEDGEABLE DEMOCRACIES

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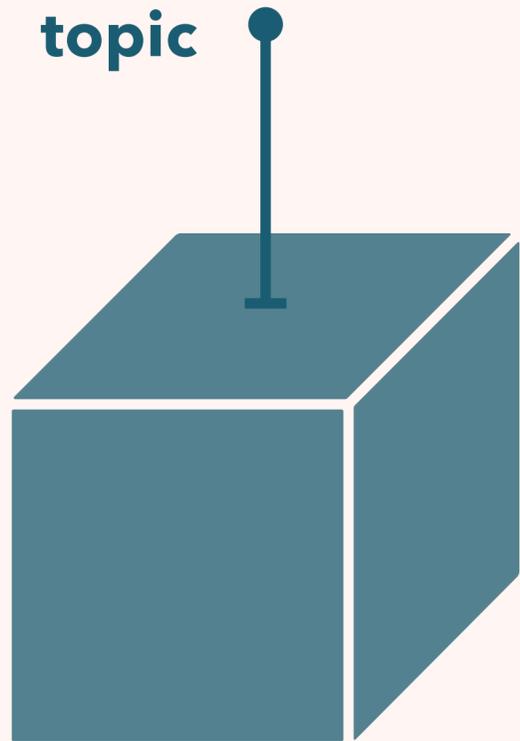
RESEARCH AIM

- **Assess the knowledge producing potential of contemporary liberal democracies**
 - **How is the concept of liberal democracy supposed to be an effective driver in the production of knowledge?**
 - **What challenges to this ideal arise?**
 - **Find approaches to create common ground in entrenched disagreements between political opponents in democracies**
 - **Ultimately, set the basis for evaluating how the major challenges can be overcome such that democracies can become better at producing knowledge**
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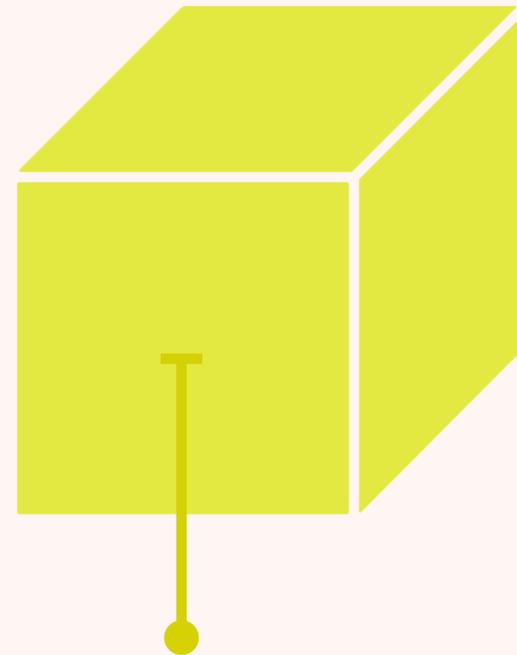
RESEARCH PROCESS

➤ **Main method of research: Literature review and analysis**

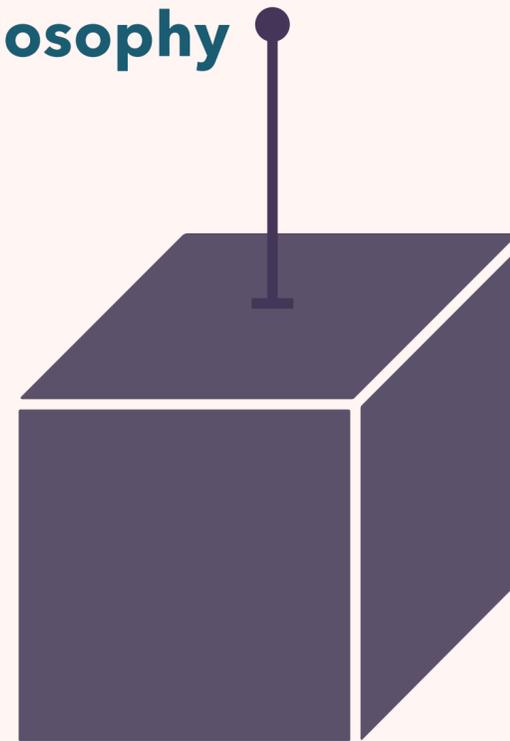
➤ **Started by reading and summarising various popular science books on the topic**



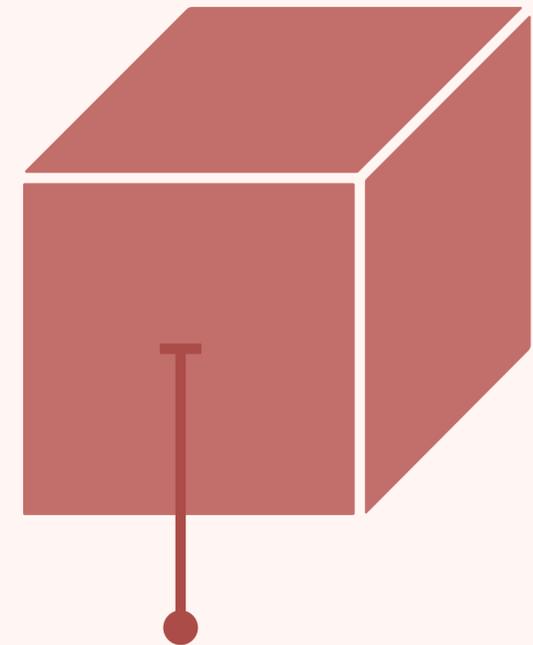
➤ **Attended the Amsterdam Political Epistemology workshop in December 2019**



➤ **Assisted by doing editorial work of two edited volumes on Common Sense Philosophy**



➤ **Wrote a final paper on the subject of "epistemological crises"**



RELEVANCE AND CONTEXT I

- **Within the overarching theme, I was particularly interested in the underlying mechanisms of political polarisation in contemporary liberal democracies, especially in the United States.**
 - **Specifically, I wanted to investigate the impact of the rapid technological developments in information technology of the past decade on political polarisation.**
 - **Example questions that came up during my research:**
 - **How can social media be employed to create "true" knowledge?**
 - **What role do social media bots play in shaping public opinion and common understanding?**
 - **What kind of restructuring process do social media platforms need to undergo in order to increase their epistemic value?**
 - **Do they have a moral obligation to do so?**
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RELEVANCE AND CONTEXT II

- **I believe that these social-epistemological questions around (political) polarisation will only grow in importance as the technological advancements, particularly in the fields of Artificial Intelligence and machine learning, continue at the current pace**
 - **If different members of the same society are confronted with entirely contradicting realities on social media, it becomes impossible to establish common ground for mutual understanding.**
 - **Therefore, I deem the issue of political and belief polarisation in social media as a central problem not only in itself but also because it constrains the set of problems we are able to tackle as a society**
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