

Einladung zum GASTVORTRAG

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Echo Chambers, Trust, and Epistemic Agency under Oppression

Mi., 1. 12. 2021, 18.00 Uhr s.t., eLecture - online

<https://webconference.uibk.ac.at/b/joh-ycc-1sf>

I argue that much of the discourse about echo chambers and filter bubbles ignores the agency of marginalized people, and I suggest some ways that epistemologists can center oppressed people in their analysis. I begin by diagnosing a common pattern in internet epistemology. Step 1: concern grows about bad actors doing epistemic harm. Step 2: a structural feature of the internet is identified that is being exploited by the bad actors to do epistemic harm. Step 3: arguments are made that the structural feature is an epistemic threat and/or should be eliminated. I show how this pattern appears in a recent account of the harms of online personalization (Gunn and Lynch 2021). I argue that this account ignores how marginalized people use the internet to protect their epistemic agency. In hostile epistemic environments, oppressed people often need to protect their epistemic agency by shielding their time, maintaining their self-trust, and sustaining their connection to epistemic communities. By filtering out hostile voices and cultivating distrust in those who disrespect them as knowers, marginalized people use online personalization for epistemic good. I conclude by arguing that adopting standpoint methodology and centering the concept of power in internet epistemology will provide more fruitful accounts of the promise and pitfalls of online personalization and other features of the internet.



Karen Frost-Arnold is an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Hobart & William Smith Colleges in New York. Her research focuses on internet epistemology, trust, social epistemology, and feminist philosophy. She is currently finishing a book on social epistemology of the internet.

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