

ERC Starting Grant 2020 Part B2

Section a. State-of-the-art and objectives

1.a.1 Why Social Epistemology?

We are highly social creatures, dependent on each other for flourishing in all walks of life. Our epistemic endeavours make no exception: due to our physical, geographical, and psychological limitations, most of the knowledge we have is sourced in social interactions.^{23,38,67,69,94,95} We must inescapably rely on the intellectual labour of others, from those we know and trust well, to those whose epistemic credentials we take for granted online. Given the staggering extent of our epistemic dependence—one that recent technologies have only served to amplify—social epistemology is amongst the most thriving research areas in contemporary philosophy. In short, if we are to successfully navigate the informational thickets of the modern world, replete with both easy-access information *and* misinformation, we need to know what sources of testimony we can trust, how to respond to cases of disagreement, how to come to know as a group, and what epistemic responsibilities we shoulder as providers of information. Results in social epistemology have wide, direct impact on: (1) scientific practice (e.g. concerning academic publishing, guidelines for scientific authorship and collaboration, knowledge policy and debates over the role of the Internet in knowledge transmission and creation); (2) society at large (e.g. concerning voting, legal standards for criminal conviction, cross-cultural communication barriers, licensing mass communication policies, increasing social cohesion). Yet, to date, there is little agreement as to what the best methodological approach to social epistemological issues is. In turn, little is known about how these various complex social epistemic interactions should inform our everyday decisions, both as receivers and as providers of information.

1.a.2. Individualism vs. Socialism in Social Epistemology

Until recently, the study of knowledge and justified belief in social settings was highly individualistic in focus. People working in this tradition start philosophical analysis with the individual, and ask the question: ‘What are the epistemic responsibilities of the individual in social settings?’ In turn, social settings are widely taken to be less epistemically safe than mere physical settings, in virtue of people’s ability to lie. As a result, Individualism^{15,16,17,18,20,21,22,45} lays a heavy epistemic burden on the shoulders of the individual cognizer: she is supposed to do most of the epistemic work in gathering enough evidence for knowledge by checking the credentials of her social sources. Notably, this approach encounters one significant problem: In laying too heavy a burden on the shoulders of the individual cognizer, it is empirically implausible: due to our physical and psychological limitations, we know most of the things we know from interacting with others. If social epistemic interactions were to require so much work on the part of the individual, we would end up not knowing much. As Thomas Reid puts it: ‘Most men would be unable to find reasons for believing the thousandth part of what is told them.’⁷³ Individualism, then, leaves a significant amount of generated knowledge unexplained.³⁴

More recently, several prominent social epistemologists^{31,32,33,34,35,37,39} have proposed to abandon the traditionalist methodology and focus on the epistemic significance of the social factor. These philosophers put the social first in their analysis: they ask the question: ‘How should the social environment be in order for the individual to acquire justified beliefs?’ and argue that social norms present at the context of information exchange determine whether the individual needs to do more or less epistemic work: in settings where we have norms of truth-telling, for instance, less work is needed on the hearer’s part than in settings where such norm is not active. As such, Socialism avoids laying too heavy an epistemic burden on the shoulders of the individual cognizer, and gives the social primary epistemic significance. There is one main problem with this methodological approach, however: there are epistemically good and epistemically bad social norms. If our epistemology indiscriminately allows social factors to determine our epistemic standards, it threatens to license various forms of: (1) epistemic injustice, whereby socially marginalised knowers are not given due credibility. For instance, in societies where women are socially deemed to be intellectually inferior to men, a social-norms-based approach will have the result that one cannot justifiably believe women’s testimony. (2) socially-generated epistemic errors: if particular social norms licence trust in unreliable testifiers (due, for instance, to their privileged social status, or popularity), Socialism risks licensing beliefs based on unreliable sources. What we seem to need is a principled way to distinguish epistemically good from epistemically bad

social norms. But if that is the case, the social does not come first: rather, as I have argued extensively in previous work,^{72,73} epistemic value does.

Against this background, my principal aim in this project is to develop a novel and urgently-needed methodological approach to social epistemology, one with exciting substantive implications for a range of phenomena we care about, from testimony to disagreement and group knowledge. On the approach I favour, we should put not individuals and not social factors, but *epistemic value first* when theorising about the epistemic norms that govern social exchanges of information. It is widely accepted in epistemology that knowledge is the central value of the epistemic domain.^{51,72,85} In the light of this, my project takes knowledge as a primitive in the philosophical analysis of social epistemic phenomena. It starts the investigation with the epistemic function of social epistemic interactions – that of generating knowledge^{46,59,64,70,89,93,94,95,96,97} – and asks the question: ‘How should we proceed in social epistemic interactions in order to generate knowledge?’ Thus, ‘*Next Frontier 1*’ will develop a knowledge-first methodological approach for social epistemology. In what follows, I illustrate the need for a novel methodology for social epistemology by looking at the particular case of the epistemologies of testimony, disagreement, groups and the media.

1.a.2.1 Testimony

According to individualist^{15,16,20,21,22} views in the epistemology of testimony, testimonial knowledge requires that the hearer have independent positive reasons to believe what they are being told. This sort of view is called ‘reductionism’ about testimony, because it ‘reduces’ the justificational force of testimony to the combined justificational forces of perception, memory, and inductive inference.

There are ‘global’ and ‘local’ incarnations of this view: According to global reductionism, the hearer is *prima facie* justified in believing based on testimony if and only if she has independent positive reason to believe that testimony is generally a reliable source. The problem with this view is that it is too demanding: the observational basis of ordinary epistemic agents is much too small and limited to allow an induction to the general reliability of testimony.

Local reductionisms require the hearer to have independent positive reasons to believe that the particular testifier involved in the target testimonial exchange is reliable, or reliable on the topic at issue. The problem with local views is that the hearer needs to do the background epistemic work of checking the credentials of the testifier over and over again, for every speaker and, indeed, for every topic. Since we are physically and psychologically limited creatures, and since we rely on each other for most of our knowledge, this view leaves a lot of testimonially generated epistemic value unexplained. We can, for instance, easily gain knowledge from strangers in the street about the right way to the train station, and other such everyday trivial matters, without having any clue as to how reliable they might be on the subject matter.

Generally speaking, then, the problem for Individualism is that it assumes a distorted picture of the human epistemic situation, which is largely shaped by social relationships and institutions.^{23,38,67,69,94,95} As a result, it lays too heavy a burden on the shoulders of individual cognizer to be empirically plausible, thus leaving a vast array of testimonial knowledge unexplained.

In contrast to individualist reductionism, according to social anti-reductionism,^{25,32,34,35,38,40,42} testimonial justification is *sui generis* and, at times, fairly easy to come by. This is because, on this view, some of the justificatory work is done by the social context: by the social norms present at the relevant context^{35,37} or by the social roles of the parties in the testimonial exchange.³⁹ What these views share is the fact that they put social factors first: depending on the social context in which the testimonial exchange takes place, the hearer needs to do more or less justificatory work.

There is one main problem with this methodological approach, however: as previously discussed, there are epistemically good and epistemically bad social norms and roles. If our epistemology indiscriminately allows social factors to encroach on epistemic normativity, it threatens to license various forms of epistemic injustice. For instance, in societies where women are socially deemed to be intellectually inferior to men, a social-norms-based approach will have the result that one cannot justifiably believe women’s testimony. Similarly, a social-roles based approach will have the result that, given the epistemically insignificant social role of women in these societies, their testimony should not be trusted. Conversely, the approach also has difficulties explaining socially-generated epistemic errors. If particular social norms licence trust in unreliable testifiers (due, for instance, to their privileged social status, or popularity), or if these unreliable testifiers are unjustifiably assigned crucial epistemic roles, Socialism risks licensing beliefs based on unreliable sources. What we seem to need is a principled way to distinguish epistemically good from epistemically bad social norms governing testimony. But if that is the case, the social does not come first in philosophical analysis: epistemic value does.

In sum, both individualist and socialist epistemologies of testimony leave a vast array of generated

epistemic value unexplained. ‘*Next Frontier 2*’ will develop a knowledge-first view of testimonial justification that supplies this lack; in virtue of being knowledge-first, this approach takes knowledge as a primitive in philosophical analysis: it starts with the thesis that testimonial exchanges aim at generating knowledge in the hearer and moves downwards to discover how we should treat the testimony of others in order to most reliably do so.

1.a.2.2 Disagreement

The prevailing methodological approach in the epistemology of disagreement is the study of idealised, perfect-peer disagreement.^{10,11,13,14} That is to say, this approach focuses on idealised cases where two perfect peers (roughly, agents in possession of the same evidence and cognitive powers) disagree about whether a particular fact obtains. There are two main views on what one should (epistemically) do in the face of peer disagreement: ‘steadfast’ views^{17,18,45,96} hold that the individual cognizer has the right to hold on to her beliefs. In that, steadfast views are individualist views: they lay greater epistemic significance to individuals’ beliefs than to the beliefs of the disagreeing party. In contrast, ‘conciliationist’^{10,11,13,14} views emphasize the defeat power of disagreement, which is, in turn, is viewed as being sourced in social factors. According to these views, when faced with perfect-peer disagreement, the rational thing to do is to weaken one’s confidence in one’s belief if not abandon it altogether.

As a first observation, note that this methodological approach notably faces a transition problem: how to account for the normativity of belief for cases of everyday disagreement, in the light of the results, whatever they may be, the approach produced for how to account for cases of perfect-peer disagreement? Second, by focusing on the evidential parity present in cases of perfect-peer disagreement, this approach misses the most important asymmetry that is inherent to all cases of disagreement as to whether something is the case: one party’s belief is closer to knowledge than the other’s. If we disregard this important asymmetry, however, we render our epistemology of disagreement impotent in explaining the epistemic significance of the practice of disagreement: i.e., its role in generating knowledge by giving us the opportunity to improve the epistemic status of our beliefs. On a general normative level, this problem arises because this methodological approach gives priority to prescriptive epistemic norms – norms telling one what one *ought to do* in the face of disagreement – over evaluative norms – norms prescribing what ones epistemic status *ought to be* after having faced a disagreement.^{24,63,86} This generates several problems; first, objective prescriptive norms – widely embraced in the epistemological literature of the last twenty years – notably^{27,28,29} face difficulties when it comes to their power to guide belief formation. Since cases of perfect-peer disagreement are, by definition, cases of evidential parity, it is an open question what the best thing *to do* is. However, all cases of disagreement as to whether something is the case are, again, by definition, cases in which one party’s belief has a better epistemic status than the other party’s belief. Focusing on evaluative normativity, then – on what the doxastic epistemic status post-disagreement *ought to be* – will capture the significance of this asymmetry, and deliver what we want from our epistemology: to tell us how to get closer to knowledge. Thus, ‘*Next Frontier 3*’ will develop a knowledge-first account of disagreement that focuses on evaluative rather than prescriptive normativity of belief in cases of disagreement, i.e. on closeness to knowledge.

1.a.1.3 Group Justified Belief

Individualism about group knowledge is widely believed to be mistaken: a group can know a fact without any of its members having knowledge.^{54,55} Furthermore, it looks as though a group can know a fact even when none of its members form the corresponding belief. The classical case is that of a jury who reaches the right verdict, even though all of its members are deeply racially biased, and thus cannot get themselves to form the corresponding beliefs. This poses a problem for accounting for the structure of group knowledge, since knowledge is widely thought to imply belief.

Socialism about group knowledge takes social knowledge to not imply belief, but rather a weaker attitude, i.e. group joint acceptance.^{41,64,102} In a nutshell, defenders of the acceptance view take it that beliefs are paradigmatically formed in an automatic and involuntary manner.⁴⁰ The alleged problem is that it is hard to see how whatever mental states groups are capable of hosting, they could paradigmatically be formed in this way, especially once we conceive of them as agents over and above their individual members. Consider the case of the jury again: when the jury comes to know that the defendant is innocent, the jury members must explicitly agree on this view. By the same token, they do not arrive at their view in a likewise automatic and involuntary fashion. Crucially, joint acceptance differs from belief in that, unlike belief, it is non-automatic and voluntary.

There are several problems with this view, however: first, it makes social knowledge into strange knowledge: while individual knowledge is belief-based, group knowledge is joint acceptance-based. In turn, this turns knowledge *simpliciter* into a disjunctive kind. Since disjunctive kinds are metaphysically suspicious, this is a fairly heavy theoretical commitment.

Second, the rationale offered for group belief scepticism is problematic: recall that the thought is, roughly, that beliefs are paradigmatically the result of an involuntary and automatic formation process, while groups do not seem to have the ability to have involuntarily and automatically formed doxastic attitudes. Note, though, that what the argument needs to go through is a stronger premise: it needs to assume that something is a belief if and *only if* it is involuntarily and automatically formed. The fact that they are typically so formed does not imply that they cannot be formed as a result of a voluntary, non-automatic process: indeed, beliefs that are the result of conscious judgment and deliberation are the result of a non-automatic, voluntary process. Note, also, that it need not be that all types of epistemic agents have the ability to form all types of beliefs: non-sophisticated cognizers (e.g. small children) are the paradigmatic examples of epistemic agents who do not have the ability to form judgmental beliefs. For all that has been said, it may well be – and plausibly so – that groups are epistemic agents who can *only* form judgmental beliefs.

Third, crucially, the joint acceptance view has problems explaining cases of unjustified group beliefs, such as wide spread social biases and superstitious beliefs (where conscious acceptance is missing).

‘*Next Frontier 4*’ will develop a knowledge-first account of group belief, together with a corresponding account of justified group belief.

Next Frontiers

Notable difficulties encountered by the two main methodological approaches to social epistemology in accounting for a vast array of generated knowledge suggest a knowledge-first methodological approach to social epistemological issues. However, this option has been largely overlooked due to the fact that knowledge-first approaches have mostly been employed in individual epistemology.^{4,47,48,56,57,59,60,61,86,94,95,99,100,101} My primary research objective is to develop a knowledge-first methodology for investigating social epistemological issues (1). By doing so, I will thus provide a new theoretical framework for theorising about the epistemology of testimony, disagreement, groups, and other social epistemological phenomena. Furthermore, the project will develop novel accounts of testimonial justification (2), normativity of belief in cases of disagreement (3) and justified group belief (4).

The Social Epistemology of Mass Media

Having a workable framework for social epistemology is increasingly relevant in the context of rapid globalization, where mass communication within and across cultures is becoming more and more crucial to modern society. Thus, my second research objective is to employ the knowledge first framework for social epistemology to develop an integrated account of the epistemology of mass media.

While media ethics is a thriving sub-discipline of philosophy, the study of the epistemology of the media has, so far, largely been conducted in communication and media studies rather than in philosophy.^{19,43,44,47,58,62,70,71,74,90,98} As a first result of this historical contingency, the focus has been mainly on the epistemic obligations of media practitioners, while the epistemic responsibilities of consumers of mass media are acutely under-theorised. One important aim of my project is to supply this lack by developing an epistemology of media consumption.

Second, the results in media studies are mostly descriptive rather than normative: they tell us what processes have good epistemic results in the population (true beliefs, trust), without purporting to explain why that might be the case - i.e. what professional norms are good norms (epistemically), and why. The main debate in communication studies concerning the right epistemic behaviour on the part of media practitioners divide theorists in two camps: champions of substantive objectivity^{58,70,74,90} argue that reliability is all that matters: media practitioners should only cite reliable sources, and the burden lies on the individual practitioner to identify them. In contrast, defenders of procedural objectivity argue that substantive objectivity is an unrealistic ideal to pursue, and propose what has become known as ‘he-said/she-said’ reporting:^{40,41,68,96} on this approach, the only epistemic responsibility of the media practitioner is fairness: citing sources from all camps. Needless to say, there is comfort in this procedure for the reporter, since all the epistemic burden of telling right from wrong lies on the shoulders of the targeted audience.

Several recent studies, however, show that ‘he-said/she-said’ reporting generates false beliefs in the audience.⁵⁸ I have also argued extensively that these results are hardly surprising, as they can be predicted by Gricean pragmatics.⁸⁶ In a nutshell, on pain of irrelevance, citation of a source by media practitioners generates an implicature that there is some non-zero level of credibility that should be assigned to that source. If this implicature is false, the corresponding false beliefs will be generated in the audience.

My knowledge-first approach will shed light on the advantages and disadvantages of both procedures and will propose a novel view on the epistemic responsibilities of media practitioners. On this view, the epistemic responsibilities of mass media amount to properly balancing reliability and fairness to the aim of epistemic function fulfilment, i.e. generating knowledge in the audience. Thus, my second research objective is to employ the knowledge-first social-epistemological framework to develop the first integrated account of the epistemology of mass media, together with a set of policy briefs targeted at the (epistemic) improvement of professional norms for mass media.

1.a.2 Objectives. Using innovative methods, I will meet the following challenges:

Challenge 1: To develop a novel, knowledge-first methodology for social epistemology, based on epistemic function-generated normativity.

Challenge 1.1: To develop a novel, knowledge-first account of testimonial justification.

Challenge 1.2: To develop a novel, knowledge-first view on the normativity of belief in the face of disagreement.

Challenge 1.3: To develop a novel, knowledge-first view on justified group belief.

Challenge 2: To employ the knowledge-first framework in the service of the epistemology of mass media.

Challenge 2.1: To develop the first integrated epistemology of mass media, accounting for both the epistemic responsibilities of media consumers, and the epistemic obligations of media practitioners;

Challenge 2.2: To draw up policy briefs for media professional norms in the light of my findings.

Ground-breaking research

The proposed research will go substantially beyond the state of the art because it will produce: 1. A new research programme for social epistemology; 2. The first knowledge-first account of testimonial justification; 3. A methodological turn in the epistemology of disagreement; 4. The first knowledge-first account of justified group belief; 5. The first view on the epistemic responsibilities of media consumers in the literature, 6. The first ever integrated account of the epistemology of mass media.

Timely, high-impact research

This framework is highly relevant in the context of a globalised society: first and foremost, with an abundance of information just clicks away, it is more important than ever to know what separates trustworthy sources of information from untrustworthy ones. Second, widely spread expert disagreement about high stakes issues (ranging from climate change to nuclear deterrence to presidential elections) asks for a knowledge-generation-oriented approach to disagreement. Third, cross-cultural exchanges of information and international scientific collaborations require a better understanding of the nature of group justification, which, in turn, is essential in mapping out epistemic failures on behalf of groups (e.g. countries, organisations, public institutions), such as group biases and group polarisation.

Last but not least, KNOWLEDGELAB employs the knowledge-first social epistemological model in the service of the epistemology of mass media, and develops the first integrated account thereof in the literature. In recent years, public trust in mass-media has registered a historically un-precedented abrupt decline: e.g., according to recent research from the Pew Research Centre (2018), only 32% of the UK trust the news media. General public dissatisfaction with the media gives rise to calls for journalists to live up to the standards of their profession. But many researchers in media studies worry that the fault lies, in part, with the standards themselves.⁴⁴ Developing a systematic, knowledge-generation-focused study of the epistemology of the media will help us understand better what journalistic standards (epistemically) should look like, and, in turn, what our epistemic obligations as media consumers are, in light of these standards.

Section b. Methodology

The knowledge-first methodology, notably proposed in Timothy Williamson's ground-breaking book 'Knowledge and Its Limits' (2000) has registered impressive results in the epistemology of individual doxastic attitudes and the epistemology of speech acts. In particular, the literature features extremely influential knowledge-first accounts of justified belief,^{1,4,46,48,56,59,92,93,99,100, 101} permissible assertion,^{12,42,49,50,52,77,79,80,81,82,84,88,89,96} epistemic reasons,^{57,61} epistemic abilities,^{48,56} evidence and defeat^{57,61} and epistemic functions.^{49,50,86} Twenty years since the publication of this field-changing work, however, little

^{2,88,91,76} to no progress has been made in developing a knowledge-first methodology for social epistemological issues. KNOWLEDGELAB aims to supply this lack.

Work Packages

To meet the above five challenges, my highly ambitious project will comprise five interlocking work packages (WPs), which have been scheduled to optimize knowledge transfer and contingency planning (see Timeline): WP1 develops the knowledge-first methodology for social epistemology (Challenge 1); WP2 develops a novel, knowledge-first account of testimonial justification (Challenge 1.1); WP3 develops a novel, knowledge-first view on the epistemic normativity of belief in cases of disagreement (Challenge 1.2); WP4 develops a new, knowledge-first account of justified group belief (Challenge 1.3); WP5 employs the results from WP1, WP2, WP3 and WP4, as well as results in my previous work on the normativity of asserting and reporting, to develop the first ever integrated account of the epistemology of mass media (Challenge 2: 2.1 and 2.2).

WP1: Knowledge-First Methodology for Social Epistemology (Challenge 1)

Research Aims. To develop a knowledge-first methodological approach for social epistemology. I will start with the epistemic function of our social epistemic interactions – that of generating knowledge – and identify the normative structure that is borne out by this function.

Methods. Functionalist normative frameworks have been thoroughly researched and developed in the philosophy of biological functions.^{7,30,36,66,68,103} The etiological theory of proper functions is notably well suited for applications to normative domains. In previous and current work^{86,87} (funded by the JuMo Early Carer Grant and the Mind Fellowship), I have transferred this framework to epistemic normativity: just like biological functions generate biological functional norms, I have shown that epistemic functions generate epistemic functional norms.

This WP employs this framework for social epistemological purposes. On this view, a token process of type T has the etiological epistemic function of producing effect E in system S if and only if (1) tokens of T produced E in the past, (2) producing E resulted in epistemic benefit in S/S's ancestors and (3) producing E's having epistemically benefitted S's ancestors contributes to the explanation of why T exists in S. In turn, there are two ways a functional device might go right, and two ways it may go wrong. The unhappy cases are: malfunction and failure to fulfil its function. The happy scenarios are proper functioning and function fulfilment. On this view, epistemic norm compliance supervenes on the proper performance of cognitive processes that have generating knowledge as their epistemic function. The standards for proper functioning are thus constitutively associated with promoting knowledgeable beliefs.

I take social epistemological interactions to be moves in inquiry. In turn, I take inquiry to be an epistemic practice. Practices in general aim at the most valuable easily achievable goal. Since, in most walks of life, knowledge is very easily achievable (as opposed to stronger epistemic standings), and widely taken to be distinctively valuable^{5,51,53,68,73} (in comparison with lower epistemic standings), I will argue, knowledge is the aim of the practice of inquiry.

The epistemic function of inquiry consists in generating knowledge. Moves in practices aim at fulfilling the function of the practice. In virtue of being moves in inquiry, the function of social epistemic interactions will be to generate knowledge. Etiologically: social epistemic interactions have produced knowledge in the past, which was epistemically beneficial to us and our ancestors, and this contributes to the explanation of why we continue to engage in social epistemic interactions. In turn, our social epistemic interactions will generate knowledge when properly functioning in normal conditions. Epistemic norm compliance will supervene on the proper functioning of social epistemic interactions that have generating knowledge as their epistemic function. In the remaining WPs, I show how this translates to the case of testimonial justification, the normativity of belief in cases of disagreement, justified group belief and the epistemic normativity of the mass media.

Ground breaking. WP1 will develop a new research programme for social epistemology, and thus has the potential to revolutionise the field. It will go well beyond the state of the art in several ways: 1. It will lay the theoretical foundations for knowledge-first approaches to a vast array of topics in social epistemology; 2. It will put forth an epistemic-value-first alternative to the extant individual-first and social-first methodologies; 4. In contrast to extant methodologies, it will avoid the risk of leaving generated epistemic value unexplained; 5. In contrast to individual-first approaches, it will be empirically adequate, in that it will not

lay too heavy an epistemic burden on the individual cognizer; 6. In contrast to social-first approaches, it will not licence socially accepted but epistemically irresponsible behaviors.

Impact. WP1 will develop a new research programme for social epistemology. Consequently, WP1 will impact the field significantly, by providing a novel framework with which to approach issues pertaining to how we gain knowledge and justified beliefs in social settings and by guiding future research questions in the field.

Importantly, WP1 will also provide a theoretical basis for developing knowledge-first *formal* social epistemologies. Extant work by Timothy Williamson on the normativity of action has provided the theoretical basis for excellent recent research results in knowledge-first decision theory.⁷⁵ In a similar fashion, KNOWLEDGELAB will provide the theoretical basis for developing knowledge-first formal approaches to social epistemology.

The framework will also have broad impact beyond philosophy, on (1) scientific practice (e.g. concerning academic publishing, guidelines for scientific authorship and collaboration, knowledge policy and debates over the role of the Internet in knowledge transmission and creation); (2) society at large (e.g. concerning voting, sentencing decisions, dissolving cross-cultural communication barriers, licensing mass communication policies and increasing social cohesion).

Outputs. Data from WP1 will produce individual papers targeted at peer-reviewed journals (e.g. *Philosophical Review*, *Nous*), two chapters for a monograph (entitled ‘*Knowledge First Social Epistemology*,’ henceforth KFSE), and will be disseminated via conferences (e.g. *Social Epistemology Network* meetings, *European Epistemology Network* meetings). These data will also be combined with data from WP2 – WP5 to produce novel accounts of testimonial justification, normativity of belief in cases of disagreement, justified group belief and the epistemology of the mass media.

Contingency Planning. Since WP1 will form a fundamental basis for WP2 – WP5, it has been scheduled early in the program (see Timeline). Having conducted several such large-scale interlocking research projects, I have developed efficient research protocols to mediate risk. Data from my previous research and the successes registered by knowledge-first methodologies for individual epistemology also demonstrate the feasibility of the proposed methods. Results from WP1 will also be presented at international conferences where feedback can be gathered and used to refine analyses and interpretation of the results.

WP2: Testimonial Justification (Challenge 1.1)

Research Aims. To develop a knowledge-first view of testimonial justification. According to this view, in virtue of the epistemic function of testimonial exchanges, hearers are *prima facie* justified (absent normative defeaters, i.e. reasons against believing) to form beliefs based on speakers’ assertions. The view does not require hearers to actively search for positive reason to trust testifiers. Rather, the epistemic burden on the shoulders of the receiver of testimony is to (passively) filter for defeaters, such as signs of deception and overriding practical interests on the speaker’s side. In that, the view is strongly superior to individualist reductionism when it comes to empirical adequacy: absent defeat, testimonial justification is easy to come by. The view also explains cases of justified belief from the testimony of members of socially marginalised groups, as well as cases of unjustified belief from unreliable but socially accepted testimonial sources: if and only if there are no normative defeating considerations, the hearer is justified in accepting testimony, independently of the social status of the source.

Method. This ambitious WP aims to derive hearers’ default justification to believe based on testimony on a priori grounds, based on the nature of the speech act of assertion.

It starts with the epistemic function of testimonial exchanges of generating knowledge in the hearer, and identifies the normative landscape borne out by this function. First, in line with previous work,^{74,75,76,77,84} I argue that knowledge is the epistemic norm of assertion; that is because asserting from knowledge is the most reliable way to achieve epistemic function fulfilment. Since generating knowledge is the constitutive function of assertion – in that it contributes to the explanation of why the practice of assertion persists – the knowledge norm generated by this function will be a constitutive norm:^{49,100} a speech act will not be an assertion unless it is governed by a knowledge norm.

In turn, the fact that a constitutive epistemic norm requiring knowledge for permissible assertion is in place, affects the utility profile of testimonial exchanges: absent overriding considerations, conforming to

the knowledge norm will enjoy default rationality on the side of the speaker. All else absent, speakers have incentive to assert knowledgeably in virtue of the presence of the epistemic norm, just like, all else absent, drivers have incentive to stop at the red light in virtue of the corresponding constitutive traffic norm. Both norms are constitutive of these practices, and both can be overridden by stronger considerations. However, that does not change the default normative picture, which is in place due to the constitutive nature of the norms. If that is the case, I argue, the default position (absent defeaters) for hearers is justified belief, just like the default position (absent defeaters) for pedestrians is justified crossing the street on a green light.

Last, I will compare my knowledge-first anti-reductionist account with its main competitor in the literature, the truth-first anti-reductionism developed by Tyler Burge.^{8,9} Like my account, Burge's view attempts to derive testimonial justification a priori: my derivation relies on the nature of assertion, Burge's derivation relies on the nature of reason. Burge also puts epistemic value first: he takes truth generation to be a primary function of reason, and attempts to show how this generates justification to believe on the hearer's side. Here is, for the sake of precision, my reconstruction of Burge's derivation: (1) One is prima facie entitled to believe based on intelligible presentations-as-true if they reliably indicate true content in normal conditions. (2) Intelligible propositional expressions indicate generation by a source endowed with rational abilities. (3) Intelligible presentations-as-true are intelligible propositional expressions. (4) Intelligible presentations-as-true indicate generation by a source endowed with rational abilities (from 2 and 3). (5) Rational abilities have the function of generating true contents. (6) If something *X* has the function of *phi*-ing, then *X* reliably *phi*-s in normal conditions. (7) Rational abilities reliably generate true content in normal conditions (from 5 and 6) (8) Intelligible presentations-as-true indicate generation by a source that reliably generates true content in normal conditions (from 4 and 6). (9) One is prima facie entitled to believe based on intelligible presentations-as-true (from 1 and 8). I will argue that the derivation fails on function-theoretic grounds. The premise I take to be problematic is (6), and the worry concerns reason's dual function: theoretical and practical. Contra Burge, there are many examples (in nature) of functional devices that have two main functions, and in which, when in conflict, one function takes precedence over the other (e.g. our sexual/excretory organs). If conflicting functions are not an exception in nature, however, Burge's derivation will not go through on a priori grounds: the practical function of reason may override the theoretical function when they come in conflict. If that is so, (6) is false: it need not be the case that reason reliably generates true assertions, rather than practically advantageous assertions.

Ground breaking. WP2 will develop a novel view of testimonial justification. It will go well beyond the state of the art in that: 1. It will develop a knowledge-first epistemology of testimony; 2. It will develop a novel a priori derivation of default testimonial justification, based on the nature of the speech act of assertion; 3. It will lay the theoretical foundations for knowledge-first approaches to a vast array of topics in the epistemology of testimony (e.g. expertise, online testimony, scientific testimony); 4. It will offer a theoretical basis for explaining cases of epistemic injustice.

Impact. WP2 will develop a new view on testimonial justification. Consequently, WP2 will impact the field significantly, by providing a novel framework with which to approach issues pertaining to how we gain knowledge and justified beliefs from the mere say-so of others, and guide future research on questions in the epistemology of testimony. The results of WP2 will also have impact outside philosophy, e.g. in social sciences (communication studies), political science (political discourse analysis), law (victim testimony).

Outputs. To optimise impact across sub-disciplines, the results of WP2 will be widely promoted via peer-reviewed publications in general philosophy journals (*Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*), but also specialist epistemology and philosophy of language journals (*Synthese, Mind & Language*) and will be disseminated via conferences (e.g. *Social Epistemology Network* meetings, *European Epistemology Network* meetings). WP2 will also produce a chapter of the KFSE monograph. These data will also be combined with data from work packages 3 and 4 to produce a novel account of the epistemology of the media.

Contingency Planning. WP2 partially relies on the results of WP1. Data from my previous research in the epistemic normativity of assertion and the epistemology of testimony, as well the successes registered by knowledge-first methodologies for individual epistemology demonstrate the feasibility of the proposed methods. It is possible that worries sourced in the practical normativity of assertion might arise, i.e. worries pertaining to the latter overriding the epistemic normativity at stake, which might be thought to threaten the a priori derivation. I plan to dispel such worries by use of the distinction between regulative and constitutive norms and their respective normative force.¹⁰⁰ That is, I expect to find that constitutive norms are such that their normative force cannot be swamped by regulative norms, which, in turn, safeguards the derivation.

Results from WP2 will also be presented at international conferences where feedback can be gathered and used to refine analyses and interpretation of the results.

WP3: Norms of Disagreement (Challenge 3)

Research Aims. To develop a knowledge-first view of the normativity of belief in cases of disagreement: The Epistemic Improvement Knowledge Norm of Disagreement. Building on my previous work on the general normativity of belief,⁸⁶ I will argue that in cases of disagreement, one should (i) improve the epistemic status of one's doxastic attitude by conciliating if the other party has a doxastic attitude with a better epistemic status and (ii) stick to one's guns if the other party's doxastic attitude has a worse epistemic status. In turn, the quality of the epistemic status at stake is measured against closeness to knowledge: given a value ranking R of epistemic states with respect to proximity to knowledge, in a case of disagreement about whether p , where, after having registered the disagreement, by believing p , S is in epistemic state E_1 and, by believing not- p , H is in epistemic state E_2 , S should conciliate if and only if E_1 is lesser than E_2 on R and hold steadfast iff E_1 is better than E_2 on R . The view has several crucial advantages over extant views, e.g.: a. it accounts for the epistemic significance of disagreement as a social practice, i.e. its conduciveness to knowledge; b. it straightforwardly applies to everyday disagreement rather than to idealised, perfect-peer disagreement cases, and thus does not face a transition problem.

Method. My knowledge-first methodology contrasts with the mainstream, peer-disagreement-first methodology widely employed in the epistemology of disagreement,^{10,11,13,17,18} in that it focuses on the fundamental asymmetry present in cases of disagreement about whether a particular fact obtains: one party's doxastic attitude is closer to knowledge than the other's. In a nutshell, the alternative is to take into account what has been left out of the equation so far in the epistemology of disagreement and what defines the subject matter: the fact that the doxastic attitudes of disagreeing parties never have the same overall *epistemic status*. This *fundamental asymmetry* present in all cases of disagreement is an asymmetry concerning evaluative normativity – i.e., how good (epistemically) the doxastic attitudes of the disagreeing parties are. In this way, by accounting for the rational response to disagreement in terms of what all cases of disagreement have in common, I can easily address all possible cases of disagreement, independently of whether they are instances of peer or everyday disagreement. Indeed, that a given case is a case of peer or everyday disagreement is orthogonal to the distribution of epistemic statuses.

Knowledge is the function of the practice of inquiry. Social epistemic interactions such as disagreements are moves in inquiry, therefore their function is to generate knowledge. If that is the case, I will argue, in cases of disagreement one should make progress towards achieving knowledge. Last, I compare my Epistemic Improvement Knowledge Norm of Disagreement to the simple Knowledge Disagreement Norm account proposed by (Srinivasan and Hawthorne 2015).⁹⁰ On this account, in a situation where A believes that p and B believes that not- p : (i) A ought to trust B and believe that not- p if and only if were A to trust B , this would result in A 's knowing not- p , (ii) A ought to dismiss B and continue to believe that p if and only if were A to stick to her guns this would result in A 's knowing p , and (iii) in all other cases, S ought to suspend judgment about whether p . I will argue that there are two main problems with this view: first, it is silent on defeat in cases of disagreement. Since, arguably, defeat is present in the vast majority of cases of disagreement, the view remains theoretically unsatisfactory. Second, the view licences a problematic ranking of epistemic statuses; on this account, outcomes with knowledge are better than outcomes of withholding belief, which are better than outcomes with knowledge-less belief. This ranking is highly implausible in that it renders true belief and justified true belief less valuable than no belief at all.

Ground breaking. WP3 will develop a new view on the norm of belief in cases of disagreement. It will go well beyond the state of the art in several ways: 1. It will develop a novel, knowledge-first methodological approach to the epistemology of disagreement; 2. It will explain epistemic normativity for all cases of disagreement, not merely for idealised cases of perfect-peer disagreement; 3. It will lay the theoretical foundations for knowledge-first approaches to a vast array of topics in the epistemology of disagreement, as well as a vast array of topics in the application of epistemologies of disagreement to political philosophy, political theory and philosophy of science.

Impact. WP3 will develop a new methodological approach to the epistemology of disagreement, together with a novel view on the norm of belief in cases of disagreement. Consequently, WP3 will have significant impact across fields, by providing a novel framework with which to approach issues pertaining to how we should react doxastically to cases of disagreement, and guide future research questions into the epistemic

normativity of particular types of disagreement, such as political and scientific disagreement.

Outputs. Data from WP3 will produce individual papers targeted at general philosophy peer-reviewed journals (e.g. *Journal of Philosophy*, *Nous*), one chapter for the KFSE monograph, and will be disseminated via conferences (e.g. *Social Epistemology Network* meetings, *European Epistemology Network* meetings). These data will also be combined with data from WP2 and WP4 to produce a novel account of the epistemology of the media.

Contingency Planning. Since WP3 relies partly on WP1, it has been scheduled later in the research program (see Timeline). Data from my previous research on evaluative epistemic norms and knowledge-functions, as well the successes registered by knowledge-first methodologies for individual epistemology demonstrate the feasibility of the proposed methods. One difficulty that might arise concerns the ranking of epistemic statuses vis-à-vis closeness to knowledge. Some rankings seem trivial (true belief higher than false belief, justified belief higher than unjustified belief), others will be, inevitably, theoretically-loaded (is unjustified true belief closer to knowledge than justified false belief? While epistemological internalists will deny this, externalists might very well favour a positive answer). What is important, though, is that the view need not be wedded to a particular ranking, so in principle it can accommodate different theoretical commitments within the same closeness-to-knowledge evaluation. Rather than considering this a limitation of the view, then, I take it to be a measure of its flexibility in accommodating different views on epistemic value priority. Results from WP3 will also be presented at international conferences where feedback can be gathered and used to refine analyses and interpretations of its results.

WP4: Justified Group Belief (Challenge 4)

Research Aims. Developing a knowledge-first view of justified group belief. According to this view, groups are social epistemic agents, they can have knowledge independently of whether any individual member knows the target proposition, and they can have beliefs independently of whether any individual member believes the target proposition. Group knowing and believing are analogues of individual knowing and believing: groups are social epistemic agents. In turn, mere group belief that falls short of knowledge is an instance of failure in function fulfilment. However, a system can fail to fulfil its function while functioning properly. When groups' epistemic processes are functioning properly, even if they fail to fulfil their function of generating knowledge, they generate justified group belief. The view is strongly superior to the joint acceptance^{41,64,101} view of group knowledge, in that it does not make social knowledge a strange variety of knowledge. It also has the advantage of accounting for cases of unjustified belief in groups, such as widespread social biases and superstitious beliefs.

Method. I will employ an etiological functionalist framework^{7,30,36,66,68,86} and unpack the epistemic function at stake in terms of knowledge. This framework will be used, first, to give a functionalist account of the metaphysics of epistemic social agents: I will argue that a group is an epistemic agent insofar as it has an epistemic function. In turn, a group has an epistemic function insofar as its members contribute cognitively to the generation of a propositional output, which generates epistemic benefit in the social system, which, in turn, contributes to the explanation of why the epistemic group persists.

Second, I will employ the etiological functionalist framework in the service of explaining the nature of justified group belief. The epistemic function of group epistemic processes is generating knowledge. Just like all functional devices, when properly functioning and in normal environmental conditions, these processes reliably generate group knowledge. Reliability is not infallibility, however: group epistemic processes can function properly and still fail to generate knowledge. In these cases, the generated group beliefs are justified.

Last, I will compare my account of epistemic social agents and group belief with the account of epistemic social agents developed by (Bird 2010).² Bird's view on groups relies on a Durkheimian social metaphysics. On this view, individuals form a social unity when they cohere because of the mutual interdependence that arises from the division of labour and thereby give rise to an organic solidarity. Social epistemic agents, such as, for instance, groups of scientists, meet this requirement, in that they give rise to an organic solidarity with the function of generating knowledge. I will argue that my account compares favourably to Bird's account in that, by modelling the view on an etiological theory of functions, it does not over-generate group membership. To see this, note that Bird's view will have the result that any participant in the mutual interdependence that ends up in knowledge generation is a member of the epistemic group. However, we don't want to say that the mailman who delivers the scientists' correspondence, for instance, is

part of the group that possesses the relevant item of knowledge. Due to the fact that the Durkheimian model does not distinguish cognitive from non-cognitive contributions, however, Bird's view does not have the theoretical resources to avoid this result. In contrast, my etiological framework specifically asks for the members to contribute cognitively to the generation of the relevant output, and for this contribution to contribute to the explanation of why the group is maintained as a generator of epistemic outputs. It is easy to see that the mailman will not qualify as a member of the knowing group, in virtue of not making a cognitive contribution that explains the persistence of the group.

Ground breaking. WP4 will develop a new view on justified group belief, together with a novel account of the metaphysics of epistemic groups. It will thus go well beyond the state of the art in several ways: 1. It will develop a knowledge-first account of group belief; 2. It will develop a knowledge-first account of group justification; 3. It will generate new understanding the nature of social epistemic subjects.

Impact. WP4 will develop a new view on justified group belief, but also a novel approach to the metaphysics of social epistemic subjects. Consequently, WP4 will have significant impact across several sub-disciplines, by providing a novel framework with which to approach issues pertaining to group epistemic endeavours – such as group scientific projects – as well as concerning the epistemic credentials of group practical reasoning and decision making which is crucial for understanding group epistemic responsibility e.g. for voting, opening/closing borders and corporate decision-making.

Outputs. Data from WP4 will produce individual papers targeted at peer-reviewed general philosophy journals (e.g. *Nous*, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*) as well as specialist philosophy of science journals (*British Journal of Philosophy of Science*), one chapter for the KFSE monograph, and will be disseminated via conferences (e.g. *Social Epistemology Network* meetings, *European Epistemology Network* meetings). These data will also be combined with data from WP2 and WP3 to produce a novel account of the epistemology of the media.

Contingency Planning. Since WP4 relies on results from WP1 it has been scheduled later in the research program (see Timeline). Data from my previous research on the nature of belief, as well the successes registered by knowledge-first methodologies for individual epistemology also demonstrate the feasibility of the proposed methods. The riskiest component of the account is its reliance, in line with knowledge-first accounts of individual belief, on the Williamsonian¹⁰⁰ view that knowledge is a *sui generis* mental state. If this turns out to be false, the view will lose the traditional metaphysical grounding of the claim that non-knowledgeable belief is a failure in function fulfilment. My alternative will be to extend the functionalist metaphysics of epistemic agents to explain group belief. Results from WP4 will also be presented at international conferences where feedback can be used to refine analyses and interpretations of its results.

WP5: The Epistemology of the Mass Media (Challenge 5)

Research Aims. This highly innovative and ambitious WP aims to develop the first integrated account of the epistemology of the mass media in the literature. It has two research aims:

A1. Developing a knowledge-first epistemology of media consumption. On this view, the epistemic responsibilities of the audience mainly consist in spotting epistemic defeaters in media testimony and withholding belief until defeater defeaters are identified. In virtue of the epistemic function of media testimony, hearers are prima facie justified (absent defeaters) to form beliefs based on media assertions. The view does not require hearers to actively search for positive reason to trust each and every media source. Rather, the epistemic burden on the shoulders of the audience is to filter for defeaters, such as overriding practical interests on the media outlet's side and on the side of the cited sources.

A2. Developing a knowledge-first epistemology of media testimony. On this view, reliability (substantive objectivity-driven procedures) and fairness ('he-said/she-said' procedures) should be weighed against each other with a view to generating knowledge. The view puts less pressure on the media practitioner than substantive objectivity views,^{58,70,74,89} in that it acknowledges cases where the practitioner has diminished epistemic access to the facts, and has to inform the public indirectly, by presenting all views on a particular topic. It also, however, explains why, in cases in which the practitioner is aware of the facts, he-said/she-said reporting^{43,44,71,97} is epistemically impermissible, in that it carries false implicatures regarding the credibility of the two sources, and thus generates non-knowledgeable beliefs in the audience.

Method. This WP builds on the results of the previous WPs in the following way: *Method1*: For A1, I will employ the view on testimonial justification developed in WP2, together with my results in previous work on

the normativity of reporting.⁸² I take the epistemic function of consuming media testimony to be knowledge acquisition. While the default position (absent defeaters) for the hearer is justified testimonial belief, the case of media consumption is one where defeaters are often present, due to prevailing practical interests and widespread disagreement between outlets. The framework thus explains why media consumers are often guilty of gullibility if they take media testimony at face value, rather than withholding belief until the extant defeaters will have been defeated by further inquiry into the subject matter (checking other media sources, consulting experts). *Method2*: For A2, I will employ the views developed in WP3 and WP4. The view on the normativity of belief in cases of disagreement will inform the procedure of balancing fairness (he-said/she-said) against reliability in citing sources, thus achieving proper epistemic functioning. The view of group belief developed in WP4 will explain how to reliably generate good, knowledgeable belief in the audience, taken as an epistemic group, and thus achieve epistemic function fulfilment. In light of this framework, I will first look at what happens when there is no prudential constraint in place to override the epistemic norm for proper reporting. That is, when the timeframe needed for the reporter to get a hold of the relevant data does not exceed the timeframe available given the urgency rating of delivering the relevant piece of news. I will argue that, for this context, he-said/she-said reporting is both epistemically and all-things-considered problematic, in that it generates a number of implicatures that are not known by the media outlet: (1) that all the assertions cited are *relevant* to the context of utterance, i.e. news reporting; (2) that the cited assertions are all the reporter can say about the subject matter given the urgency rating attached to this particular piece of news. Both of these implicatures are not known by the media outlet: in the first case, this is due to the undercutting defeaters generated by the practical interests of the testifiers; in the second case, it is simply because the implicature is false. Second, I will look at what happens when urgency considerations step in and override the epistemic norm. That is, when the time frame needed for the reporter to get at the truth about p exceeds the timeframe available due to the urgency rating of delivering the piece of news. In this case, I will argue, the all-things-considered propriety of reporting changes dramatically. First, with regard to (2), the knowledge norm of assertion is respected. The media outlet knows that, given that it would take a significant amount of time to get access to the relevant data, 'he-said/she-said' is all that can be reported about the subject matter given the urgency at stake. Second, as far as (1) is concerned, although it is in breach of a knowledge norm – due to undercutting defeaters –, 'he-said/she-said' reporting is all-things-considered proper, due to prudential requirements stepping in.

Ground breaking. WP5 develops the first integrated account of the epistemology of the mass media in the literature. It will thus go well beyond the state of the art in several ways: 1. It will put forth the first ever account of the epistemic responsibilities of media consumers in the literature; 2. It will put forth the first ever account of the responsibilities of media practitioners in philosophy; 3. It will lay the theoretical foundations for knowledge-first approaches to a vast array of topics in the epistemology of mass media; 4. It will extend knowledge-first methodology to the philosophy of the mass media; 5. It will lay the theoretical foundations for explaining a vast array of epistemological phenomena specific to mass communication, such as e.g. fake news, media impartiality, objectivity in media and media responsibility; 6. It will lay the theoretical foundations for drawing up a set of epistemologically-informed professional norms for the mass media.

Impact. WP5 will develop the first integrated epistemology of the mass media. Consequently, WP5 will have impact across several fields – philosophy, media and communication studies, information studies and media law – by providing a novel framework with which to approach issues pertaining to the epistemic responsibilities of media outlets.

In order to maximise impact efficiency, I will work closely with the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) and the UK National Union of Journalists (NUJ) (of which I am a member) to disseminate the results of KNOWLEDGELAB. The NUJ and EFJ respectively are full members of the Ethical Journalism Network (EJN), which is the main resource for ethical reporting regulation in Europe, to which *all European media outlets* in good standing subscribe. While EJN traditionally works closely with specialists in media ethics to develop its ethical standards, there has been, to date, no input from epistemology in this respect. This has the direct result that one can identify epistemological issues in the current EJN prescriptions. For instance, EJN currently lists five core principles for ethical journalism: (1) truth and accuracy; (2) independence; (3) fairness and impartiality; (4) humanity; (5) accountability. As we have seen above, however, more often than not (1) and (3) come in conflict, epistemically. The EJN recommendations, as they stand, are silent about how to deal with this conflict when it arises. KNOWLEDGELAB will provide the much-needed framework to address this problem. WP5 will also produce a policy brief for amending EU-wide mass media professional norms in light of the results of the

theoretical work.

Outputs. WP5 will produce individual papers targeted at peer-reviewed general philosophy journals (e.g. *Philosophical Studies*, *Nous*) as well as top media and communication studies journals (e.g. *Journalism*), one chapter for the KFSE monograph, and will be disseminated via social epistemology and interdisciplinary conferences. The WP will also produce a policy brief for amending EU-wide mass media professional norms in light of the results of the theoretical work.

Contingency Planning. Since WP5 heavily relies on the results from WP1 – WP4, it has been scheduled late in the research program. Having conducted several such large-scale interlocking research projects, I have developed efficient research protocols to mediate risk. Data from my previous research in the normativity of reporting, as well the successes registered by knowledge-first methodologies for individual epistemology also demonstrate the feasibility of the proposed methods. One difficulty that might arise concerns the impact of the policy briefs for actual media regulation. Going from general epistemological guidelines to successful amendments of professional norms may require expertise in media policy making. For this contingency, I plan to rely on the expertise of the European Federation of Journalists (of which I am a member) and to collaborate closely with the Glasgow Media Group (<http://www.glasgowmediagroup.org/>), based in the School of Social and Political Studies at the University of Glasgow. The Glasgow Media Group has extensive experience and has achieved significant successes in media policy change in the past. Results from WP5 will also be presented at international interdisciplinary conferences where feedback can be gathered and used to refine analyses and interpretations of its results, and at a major interdisciplinary engagement event I will organise at Glasgow.

Timescale and planning.

Due to the scope, range and complexity of the five interlocking work packages, 60 months will be required to meet the primary objectives: 1. Developing a novel, knowledge-first methodology for social epistemology; 2. Developing a knowledge-first account of testimonial justification; 3. Developing a knowledge-first view on the normativity of belief in the face of disagreement; 4. Developing knowledge-first view on justified group belief; and 5. Developing an integrated account of the epistemology of mass media and drawing up policy briefs for (epistemically) improving professional norms for mass media.

Timeline

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
WP1	Knowledge-First Methodology	Knowledge-First Methodology			
WP2		Epistemology of Testimony	Epistemology of Testimony		
WP3		Epistemology of Disagreement	Epistemology of Disagreement		
WP4			Group Epistemology	Group Epistemology	
WP5				Epistemology of Mass Media	Epistemology of Mass Media

World-leading institution.

COGITO is a world-leading epistemology research centre, based in one of the most highly ranked philosophy departments in the world (ranked 2-nd for epistemology in the UK in 2018). COGITO members are world-leading specialists in cutting-edge research on social epistemology, knowledge-first epistemology, virtue epistemology, epistemic norms, the epistemology of emotions, political and moral epistemology. In particular, COGITO at the University of Glasgow is one of the three most important research clusters in

knowledge-first epistemology (alongside the University of Oxford and Kings College London), and one of the three largest research groups in social epistemology worldwide. KNOWLEGDELAB will particularly benefit from the research expertise of Michael Brady, Adam Carter, Christoph Kelp, Jack Lyons and Fiona Macpherson, who are among the most highly esteemed researchers in epistemology world-wide. The proposed agenda will therefore be greatly accelerated by the synergy of locally available resources and expertise in the relevant methodologies and theories.

PI commitment.

I am genuinely excited by the opportunity that an ERC Starting Grant would provide me to fully realize my passion of understanding how knowledge is generated in social settings. My work spans four traditionally distinct sub-disciplines (epistemology, philosophy of language, ethics and feminist philosophy) and two traditionally distinct research programmes within epistemology (knowledge-first epistemology, social epistemology). An ERC Starting Grant would allow me to address the main challenges in the field of social epistemology in the integrated, coherent and rigorous manner that is required to bridge gaps between distinct methodologies. It would also allow me to develop ground-breaking methods and results with wide-reaching benefits across the fields of social epistemology, philosophy of language, media ethics and media and communication studies, including thorough development of a new framework to structure and implement new research avenues. These activities would contribute significantly to my scientific independence by allowing me to consolidate expertise across multiple research sub-disciplines (e.g. epistemology, ethics, philosophy of language, philosophy of mass media), and positioning me as a leader in social epistemology within an international research market. I commit 100% of my working time to this project.

References

1. Bird, A. (2007). Justified Judging. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 74: 81–110.
2. Bird, A. (2010). Social Knowing: The Social Sense of ‘Scientific Knowledge’. *Philosophical Perspectives* 24: 23–56.
3. Brady, M.S. and Fricker, M. (eds). (2016). *The Epistemic Life of Groups: Essays in the Epistemology of Collectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
4. Carter, J.A., Gordon, E. and Jarvis, B. (eds.) (2017). *Knowledge-First: Approaches in Epistemology and Mind*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
5. Carter, J.A. and Jarvis, B. (2012). Against Swamping. *Analysis* 72: 690-699.
6. Carter, J.A. (2016). Group Peer Disagreement. *Ratio* 29: 11–28.
7. Buller, D. (1999). *Functions*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
8. Burge, T. (1993). Content Preservation. *Philosophical Review* 104: 457-488.
9. Burge, T. (2013). Postscript: ‘Content Preservation.’ In *Cognition Through Understanding*: 254-284.
10. Christensen, D. (2007). Epistemology of Disagreement: The Good News. *Philosophical Review* 116: 187–218.
11. Comesana, J. (2012). Conciliation and Peer-Demotion in the Epistemology of Disagreement. *American Philosophical Quarterly* 49: 237–252.
12. DeRose, K. (2002). Assertion, Knowledge, and Context. *Philosophical Review* 111: 167-203.
13. Elga, A. (2007). Reflection and Disagreement. *Noûs* 41: 478–502.
14. Elga, A. (2010). How to Disagree About How to Disagree. In Feldman, R. and Warfield, T. (eds.), *Disagreement*, New York: Oxford University Press.
15. Faulkner, P. (2011). *Knowledge on Trust*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
16. Faulkner, P. (2017). The Problem of Trust. In eds. Faulkner, P. and Simpson, T. (eds.), *The Philosophy of Trust*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
17. Feldman, R. (2009). Evidentialism, Higher-Order Evidence, and Disagreement. *Episteme* 6: 294–312.
18. Feldman, R. (2006). Epistemological Puzzles about Disagreement. In Hetherington, S. (ed.), *Epistemic Futures*, New York: Oxford University Press.
19. Foreman, G. (2010). *The Ethical Journalist*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.
20. Fricker, E. (Forthcoming) Unreliable Testimony. In Kornblith, H. and McLaughlin, B. (eds.), *Alvin Goldman and his Critics*, Oxford: Blackwell.

21. Fricker, E. (Forthcoming). Inference to the Best Explanation and the Receipt of Testimony. In Poston, T. and McCain, K. (eds.), *Best Explanations: New Essays on Inference to the Best Explanation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
22. Fricker, E. (1995). Critical Notice: Telling and Trusting: Reductionism and Anti-Reductionism in the Epistemology of Testimony. *Mind*, 104: 393–411.
23. Gauvain, M. (2009). Social and Cultural Transactions in Cognitive Development: A Cross-Generational View. In Sameroff, A. (ed.), *The Transactional Model of Development: How Children and Contexts Shape Each Other*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. doi.org/10.1037/11877-009.
24. Geach, P. (1956). Good and Evil. *Analysis* 17: 33–42.
25. Gerken, M. (Forthcominga). Expert Trespassing Testimony and the Ethics of Science Communication. *Journal of General Philosophy of Science*.
26. Gerken, M. (Forthcomingb). The Epistemic Norms of Intra-Scientific Testimony. *Philosophy and the Social Sciences*.
27. Glüer-Pagin, K. and Wikforss, A. (2009). Against Content Normativity. *Mind* 118: 31-70.
28. Glüer-Pagin, K. and Wikforss, A. and (2010). The Truth Norm and Guidance: a Reply to Steglich-Petersen", *Mind* 119: 757-761.
29. Glüer-Pagin, K. and Wikforss, A. (2013). Against Belief Normativity. In *The Aim of Belief*, ed. THW Chan, 121-146.
30. Godfrey-Smith, P. (1993). Functions: Consensus Without Unity. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 74: 196-208.
31. Goldberg, S. (2018). *To the Best of Our Knowledge: Social Expectations and Epistemic Normativity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
32. Goldberg, S. (2014). Interpersonal Epistemic Entitlements. *Philosophical Issues* 24: 159–183
33. Goldberg, S. (2010). *Relying on Others*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
34. Goldman, A. and Blanchard, T. (2018). Social Epistemology. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = [<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/epistemology-social/>](https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/epistemology-social/).
35. Graham, P. (Forthcoming). Sincerity and the Reliability of Testimony: Burge on the A Priori Basis of Testimonial Entitlement. In Stokke, A. and Michaelson, E. (eds.), *Lying: Language, Knowledge, Ethics, Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
36. Graham, P. (2014). Functions, Warrant, History. Fairweather, A. and Flanagan, O. (eds.), *Naturalizing Epistemic Virtue*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
37. Graham, P. (2010). Testimonial Entitlement and the Function of Comprehension. In Pritchard, D., Millar, A. and Haddock, A. (eds.), *Social Epistemology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
38. Greenfield, P.M. (2009). Linking Social Change and Developmental Change: Shifting Pathways of Human Development. *Developmental Psychology* 45: 401-418.
39. Greco, J. (2015). Testimonial Knowledge and the Flow of Information. In Henderson, D. and Greco, J. (eds.), *Epistemic Evaluation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
40. Greenough, P. and Pritchard, D. (eds.) 2009. *Williamson on Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
41. Hakli, R. (2007). On the Possibility of Group Knowledge without Belief. *Social Epistemology* 21: 249–266.
42. Hawthorne, J. (2004). *Knowledge and Lotteries*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
43. Hildenbrand, D. L. (2010). Pragmatic Objectivity in History, Journalism and Philosophy. *SWPS Presidential Address*, Memphis, TN, 13.11.2010.
44. Hirst, M. and Patching, R. (2005). *Journalism Ethics: Arguments and Cases*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
45. Huemer, M. (2011). Epistemological Egoism and Agent-Centred Norms. In Dougherty, T. (ed.), *Evidentialism and its Discontents*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
46. Ichikawa, J.J. (2014). Justification is Potential Knowledge. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 44: 184-206.
47. Iggers, J. (1998). Good news, bad news: journalism ethics and the public interest. Boulder, Colorado: WestviewPress.
48. Kelp, C. (2018). *Good Thinking: A Knowledge First Virtue Epistemology*. New York: Routledge.
49. Kelp, C. and Simion, M. (2018). The C-Account of Assertion: A Negative Result. *Synthese*. Online First.
50. Kelp, C. (2018). Assertion: A Function First Account. *Noûs* 52: 411-42.

51. Kelp, C. and Simion, M. (2017). Commodious Knowledge. *Synthese* 194: 1487-1502.
52. Kelp, C. and Simion, M. (2017). Criticism and Blame in Action and Assertion. *Journal of Philosophy* 114: 76-93.
53. Kvanvig, J. (2003). *The Value of Knowledge and the Pursuit of Understanding*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
54. Lackey, J. (2014). *Essays in Collective Epistemology*. New York: Oxford University Press.
55. Lackey, J. (2014). Socially Extended Knowledge. *Philosophical Issues* 24: 282–298.
56. Lasonen-Aarnio, M. (Forthcoming). Virtuous Failure and Victims of Deceit. In Dorsch, F. and Dutant, J. (eds.), *The New Evil Demon*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
57. Lasonen-Aarnio, M. (2014). Higher-Order Evidence and the Limits of Defeat. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*. 88: 314-345.
58. Lawrence, R.G. and Schafer, M. L. (2012). Debunking Sarah Palin: Mainstream News Coverage of Death Panels. *Journalism* 13:766-782.
59. Littlejohn, C. (Forthcominga). A Plea for Epistemic Excuses. In Dorsch, F. and Dutant, J. (eds.), *The New Evil Demon*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
60. Littlejohn, C. (Forthcomingb). How and Why Knowledge is First. In Carter, A. Gordon, E. and Jarvis, B. (eds.), *Knowledge First. Approaches in Epistemology and Mind*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
61. Littlejohn, C. (Forthcomingc). Reasons and Theoretical Rationality. In Star, D. (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Reasons and Normativity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
62. McKanne, A. (2006). *News Writing*. London: Sage Publications.
63. McHugh, C. (2012). The Truth Norm of Belief. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 93: 8–30.
64. Meijers, A. (1999). Believing and Accepting as a Group. In Meijers, A. (ed.), *Belief, Cognition and the Will*. Tilburg: Tilburg University Press.
65. Millar, A. (2010). Knowledge and Recognition. In Pritchard, D., Millar, A. and Haddock, A. (eds.), *The Nature and Value of Knowledge: Three Investigations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
66. Millikan, R. (1984). *Language, Thought, and other Biological Categories*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press
67. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2018). How People Learn II: Learners, Contexts, and Cultures. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/24783>.
68. Neander, K. (1991). The Teleological Notion of Function. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 69: 454–468.
69. Nobel, K.G., Engelhardt, L.E., Brito, N.H., Mack, L.J., Nail, E.J., Angal, J., Barr, R., Fifer, W.P., Elliott, A.J., and in collaboration with the PASS Network. (2015). Socioeconomic Disparities in Neurocognitive Development in the First Two Years of Life. *Developmental Psychobiology* 57: 535-551.
70. Pingree, RJ (2011). Effects of unresolved factual disputes in the news on epistemic political efficacy. *Journal of Communication* 61: 22–47.
71. Poerksen, B. (2011). *The Creation of Reality: A Constructivist Epistemology of Journalism and Journalism Education*. Exeter: Imprint Academic.
72. Pritchard, D., Millar, A., & Haddock, A. (2010). *The Nature and Value of Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
73. Reid, T. (1817). *Inquiry into the Human Mind: on the Principles of Common Sense* (7th edition), Glasgow: W. Falkoner.
74. Rieder R. (2007) Counting the Spoons: Eternal Vigilance is the Price of Covering National Security and Political Campaigns. *American Journalism Review* 29(2): 4-12.
75. Schultz, M. (Forthcoming). Decisions and Higher-Order Knowledge. *Nous*.
76. Simion, M. (Forthcominga). Testimonial Contractarianism, *Nous*.
77. Simion, M. and Kelp, C. (Forthcoming). How to Be an Anti-Reductionist. *Synthese*.
78. Simion, M. (Forthcoming). Assertion: The Context Sensitivity Dilemma. *Mind & Language*.
79. Simion, M. and Kelp, C. (Forthcoming). The Constitutive Norm View of Assertion. In Goldberg, S. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Assertion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
80. Simion, M. (2018). Epistemic Norm Correspondence and the Belief-Assertion Parallel. *Analysis*, Online First.
81. Simion, M. (2018). Saying and Believing: The Norm Commonality Assumption. *Philosophical Studies*. Online First.
82. Simion, M. (2018). A Puzzle for Epistemic WAMs. *Synthese*. Online First.

83. Simion, M. (2017.) Epistemic Norms and 'He Said/She Said' Reporting. *Episteme*, vol. 14 (4): 413-422.
84. Simion, M. (2016). Knowledge, Rational Credibility and Assertion: The Scoreboard. In Grajner, M. and Schmechtig, P. (eds.), *Epistemic Reasons, Epistemic Norms and Epistemic Goals*. Berlin/Boston: DeGruyter.
85. Simion, M. and Kelp, C. (2016). The Tertiary Value Problem and the Superiority of Knowledge. *American Philosophical Quarterly* 53: 397-411.
86. Simion M. Knowledge-first functionalism. *Philosophical Issues*. 2019; 29:254–267. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phis.12152>
87. Simion, M. (2016). Perception, History and Benefit. *Episteme* 13: 61-76.
88. Simion, M. (2016). Assertion: Knowledge is Enough. *Synthese* 193: 3041-3056.
89. Slote, M. (1979). Assertion and Belief. In Dancy, J. (ed.), *Papers on Language and Logic*. Keele: Keele University Press.
90. Sparrow B (1999). *Uncertain Guardians: The News Media as a Political Institution*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
91. Srinivasan, A. and Hawthorne, J. (2013). Disagreement without Transparency: Some Bleak Thoughts. In Lackey, J. and Christensen, D. (eds.), *The Epistemology of Disagreement: New Essays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
92. Sutton, J. (2005). Stick to What You Know. *Noûs* 39: 359–96.
93. Sutton, J. (2007). *Without Justification*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
94. Tomasello, M. (2001). *The Cultural Origins of Human Cognition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
95. Tomasello, M. (2008). *Origins of Human Communication*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
96. Unger, P. (1975). *Ignorance: A Case for Scepticism*. Clarendon, Oxford.
97. van Inwagen, P. (1996). It is Wrong, Always, Everywhere, and for Anyone, to Believe Anything, Upon Insufficient Evidence? In Jordan, J. and Howard-Snyder, D. (eds.), *Faith, Freedom, and Rationality*. Hanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
98. Ward, S. (2006). *The Invention of Journalism Ethics*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press. Williamson, T. (2000). *Knowledge and Its Limits*. Oxford University Press. Williamson, T. (forthcoming). Justifications, Excuses, and Sceptical Scenarios. In Dorsch, F. & Dutant, J. (eds.), *The New Evil Demon*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
99. Williamson, T. (2013). Knowledge First. In Sosa, E., Turri, J. and Steup, M. (eds.), *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.
100. Williamson, T. (2013). Knowledge Still First. In Sosa, E., Turri, J. and Steup, M. (eds.), *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.
101. Williamson, T. (2000). *Knowledge and Its Limits*. Oxford University Press. Williamson, T. (forthcoming). Justifications, Excuses, and Sceptical Scenarios. In Dorsch, F. & Dutant, J. (eds.), *The New Evil Demon*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
102. Wray, K. B. (2001). Collective Belief and Acceptance. *Synthese* 129: 319–333.
103. Wright, L. (1973). Functions. *Philosophical Review* 44: 409–422.