
ЕТИЧЕСКИ РАКУРСИ

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EPISTEMIC VALUE OF PUBLIC DELIBERATION IN A DEMOCRATIC DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Abstract: This paper discusses the epistemic value of public deliberation in a democratic decision-making process. I first discuss David Estlund's standard account of epistemic democracy – in order to be legitimate, a decision must be a result of both fair and epistemically reliable procedure, i.e., of procedure that in most cases leads us to (procedure-independent) correct outcomes. This approach is characterized by the idea that democratic deliberation only has instrumental epistemic value, i.e., serves as a good means to achieve desired ends – a high correctness probability of the outcomes. I defend this approach from three objections put forward by Fabienne Peter, who claims that Estlund's position is not a practicable conception of democratic legitimacy, that it makes unnecessary demands and that it is normatively misleading. Finally, I argue against pure epistemic proceduralism, an alternative approach that tends to reject consequentialist epistemology in favor of proceduralist epistemology. By doing so, it has lost a way to evaluate the epistemic value of (deliberative) democratic procedures, and is thus vulnerable to the problem of various (reasonable) people holding different epistemic practices and disagreeing on which practice should be the one that is epistemically valuable and that produces legitimate decisions.

Keywords: epistemic democracy, legitimacy, proceduralism, instrumentalism, deliberation, hybrid epistemology.

Резюме: В статията се обсъжда епистемичната стойност на публичните дебати при демократичния процес на вземане на решения. Първо обсъждам стандартното тълкуване на епистемичната демокрация, предложено от Дейвид Естлънд: за да бъде легитимно, решението трябва да произтича от една честна и същевременно епистемично надеждна процедура, т.е. процедура, която в повечето случаи води до правилни (независимо от процедурата) резултати. Този подход се основава на идеята, че демократичният дебат има само инструментална епистемична стойност, т.е. той служи като добро средство за постигане на желана цел, а именно: висока степен на вероятност на резултатите. Защиствам този подход срещу три възражения, изтъкнати от Фабиен Петер, която твърди, че позицията на Естлънд не е практична концепция за демократичната легитимност, че тя поставя ненужни изисквания и че е заблуждаваща в нормативно отношение. Накрая на статията оспорвам чистия епистемичен процедурализъм, който представлява алтернативен подход, който има тенденция да отхвърли епистемологията на последиците в полза на една процедуралистка епистемология. По този начин този подход се лишава от един способ за оценяване на епистемичната стойност на (съвещателната) демокрация и следователно става уязвим в случаите, когато различни (разумни) хора се придържат към различни епистемични практики и не постигат съгласие относно това коя практика е епистемично стойностна и служи за постигане на легитимни решения.

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I. Introduction

What is the epistemic value of public deliberation in a democratic decision-making process? Is it exhausted in improving the quality of decisions we make, or does it have some sort of procedural value? Two options that can come out from these questions are separately discussed in this paper. In order to present a brief background for further discussion, I first explain what the dominant positions in the discussion on political legitimacy are, and how they interpret and incorporate the epistemic value of collective deliberation (part 2). Following the theoretical background, I first discuss Estlund's rational epistemic proceduralism. Estlund holds that, in order to be legitimate, a decision must be a result of both fair and epistemically reliable procedure, i.e. procedure that in most cases leads us to (procedure-independent) correct outcomes. Having laid down the basics of Estlund's view, I will examine some of the objections raised by Fabienne Peter, namely that his position is not a practical conception of democratic legitimacy, that it makes unnecessary demands and that it is normatively misleading. I briefly answer each of these objections before moving to an alternative approach introduced by Fabienne Peter (part 3). This view, as well as Estlund's, holds that it is a decision-making procedure that has to satisfy certain political and epistemic qualities, but these epistemic qualities are not procedure-independent. Peter believes that this position can answer previously raised objections better than Estlund's view because, unlike Estlund, she uses non-consequentialist proceduralist epistemology. However, it seems that though proceduralist epistemology can answer these objections, it brings along a few problems of its own. Namely, I want to argue that, by abandoning consequentialist epistemology, we are losing a way to evaluate the epistemic value of (deliberative) democratic procedures, and are thus vulnerable to the problem of various (reasonable) people holding different epistemic practices and disagreeing on what practice should be the one that is epistemically valuable and that produces legitimate decisions (part 4).

II. Background

Democracy concerns collective decision making, i.e. collective decisions that are made for groups and that are binding on all the members of the group. But where does the normative justification of these decisions come from? Why are they binding on all members of the group, and why should we accept the authority of democratic decisions, even when we do not agree with some of them?

Though the debate on legitimacy of states and elected governments raged for centuries, from Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* to the influential Max Weber's writings on social and economic organization, it was John Rawls who shifted focus from legitimacy of states and governments to the process of democratic decision-making itself. The central question now became what qualities should a decision have in order to be considered legitimate. I will not discuss in detail theories of political legitimacy based exclusively on *substantive qualities* of a decision in question. According to this view, decisions are legitimate if and only if they are true (or just), and democracy as a form of collective decision-making has only instrumental value – it represents a good means to achieve a desired goal, i.e. to

bring about correct decisions (democratic instrumentalism). Realizing that in the context of reasonable value pluralism interests and perspectives of the members of democratic constituency inevitably diverge, and that consequently people will not be able to agree upon which decisions are true (and thus legitimate), this view faces serious problems and is widely rejected¹. An alternative approach is to focus on *procedural qualities* of democratic decisions; the question is no longer whether a particular decision is correct or just, but whether a decision came about through a process that has certain qualities that make it legitimacy-generating. The discussion intensifies when we ask what these qualities are. Though many authors (Gaus 1996, Christiano 2008) find appealing the idea that *only political qualities* of a decision-making process are relevant for it to be considered as a source of legitimate decisions, I will focus on alternative theories that emphasize the *epistemic value* of democratic process².

Authors that perceive epistemic qualities of a democratic process as a necessary (though not sufficient) requirement for its legitimacy-generating potential disagree when discussing what represents this epistemic value, as well as what is the best institutional arrangement for achieving it. Most authors believe that the best way for the development of epistemic qualities of democracy can be found in the context of deliberative democracy. However, they disagree on the epistemic value of collective deliberation. For some authors (Estlund 2008, Talisse 2009), epistemically valuable procedures are those that have a high probability of producing correct outcomes. The epistemic quality of a procedure is determined by its ability to ‘track the truth’, and it is this ability that gives legitimacy-generating potential to already fair procedures. On the other hand, some authors (Peter 2009) have argued that collective deliberation has both instrumental and procedural value; however, they emphasized procedural value as the source of legitimacy-generating potential.

This paper addresses the debate on instrumental and procedural epistemic value of collective deliberation. It takes as a starting point the proceduralist approach to democratic legitimacy, the epistemic value of democratic process and deliberative democracy as a proper institutional arrangement for the realization of this epistemic value. I will not discuss these theories in the rest of the paper, focusing instead on the epistemic conception of deliberative democratic proceduralism represented by David Estlund’s standard account of epistemic democracy and Fabienne Peter’s proceduralist approach to epistemic democracy.

III. Standard Account of Epistemic Democracy

Estlund’s view probably represents the most sophisticated version of a standard account of epistemic democracy. This account is characterized by three main features (Cohen 1986): first, it presupposes an independent standard of correct decisions, insisting that a correct outcome exists prior to and outside of ac-

¹ For detailed arguments against democratic instrumentalism see Estlund (2008) and Peter (2009).

² Numerous arguments in favour of epistemic conception of democracy can be found in Cohen (1986), Estlund (2008), Peter (2009) and Talisse (2009).

tual democratic process. Second, it establishes a cognitive account of voting by making voters express beliefs about what correct policies are, not merely personal preferences for policies. Finally, it perceives an account of decision-making as a process of adjustment of beliefs, requiring from individuals to adjust their beliefs in light of the available evidence. Estlund's account clearly satisfies all three conditions.³ He holds that there exists, independently of an actual decision-making process, a correct decision and that legitimacy of democratic decisions depends, at least in part, on the ability of decision-making process to generate the correct outcome. This account invokes veritistic consequentialist epistemology, according to which we evaluate the epistemic value of a certain cognitive practice by evaluating its ability to track the truth, i.e. to produce a correct outcome.

Estlund explicitly emphasizes that the first condition for the legitimacy of a particular decision is the fairness of the process that produced it. Even if correct, a decision cannot be legitimate unless it is produced by a fair procedure. However, Estlund is aware that alternative institutionalizations of fair democratic process will differ in their truth-tracking potential. He thus claims that a decision is legitimate if it is a product of epistemically the best procedure among those that fall within the set of fair procedures. Estlund's view on political legitimacy is clearly non-monistic; in order to be legitimacy-generating, a procedure must have both political and epistemic qualities.

Unlike democratic instrumentalists, Estlund claims that democracy has an intrinsic value (for being a fair procedure), but holds that fairness can be satisfied in various forms of democracy. We are to discriminate among different forms of democracy according on their ability to produce correct outcomes. Estlund defends deliberative over aggregative democracy, but the justification he offers for deliberative procedures is instrumental; deliberation is seen as the best means to achieve the desired end – to have correct outcomes in most cases. If it would be a case that a fair aggregative procedure brings about correct decisions in most cases (and proves to be better than any deliberative procedure), Estlund would have to acknowledge it as a source of legitimacy.

Fabienne Peter (Peter 2009) rises a series of objections against standard account of epistemic democracy, targeting its truth-tracking requirement for democratic legitimacy and instrumentalist approach to the value of public deliberation. I will now briefly present three main arguments Peter raises against Estlund's view, as well as potential replies in favour of standard account.

(I) Peter objects that a standard account of epistemic democracy is not a practical conception of democratic legitimacy (Peter 2009; 133). Correctness is difficult, if not impossible, to determine. After all, Estlund has rejected democratic instrumentalism by arguing that in the conditions of reasonable pluralism inter-

³ Estlund introduces his position by suggesting all three conditions. (i) *Assume that for many choices faced by a political community some alternatives are better than others by standards that are in some way objective.* (ii) *If so, it must count in favour of a social decision procedure that it tends to produce the better decision.* (iii) *Public deliberation improves the formation of individual preferences by facilitating the exchange of reasons and information about correct outcomes* (Estlund 1997: 173).

ests and perspectives of the members of the democratic constituency inevitably diverge. When different people consider different outcomes as correct (and consequently legitimate), it is impossible to have a political decision that can be reasonably accepted by all community members. How can we expect that in the conditions of reasonable pluralism the members of the democratic constituency will agree upon a single procedure that all will see as epistemically the best, i.e. see it as the procedure that tracks the truth better than all others? If we cannot agree what the truth is and what propositions are correct (or at least justified), it is very unlikely that we can agree upon a single procedure that leads us towards truth.

Recent works of both Robert Talisse and Cheryl Misak can be used to answer this objection. Though they use different approaches and starting points (Talisse argues using folk epistemology while Misak adopts Peirce's pragmatist epistemology), both want to show that there is a reason for anyone to accept deliberative democracy as the best procedure for coming to correct answers. I am not going to discuss their argumentation in detail⁴. I will instead focus on the implications this objection may have on Peter's new theory of democratic legitimacy (Peter 2012). Having abandoned the hybrid epistemology of Helen Longino, Peter uses recent debate on peer disagreement as a new starting point in her argumentation. However, by taking Elga's definition of epistemic peers as people who take each other as equally likely to make a mistake (Elga 2007), Peter reintroduced correctness in the debate on political legitimacy. Similar objection can thus be raised against her as well; if correctness is difficult to determine, and we cannot agree on a single decision-making procedure as the right one (epistemically the best among the set of fair procedures), how can we determine the common criteria for whether someone should be classified as our epistemic peer or not? And if we cannot have common criteria for determining epistemic peerhood, we most definitely cannot have a practicable conception of legitimacy. It seems that, along with her theory based on hybrid epistemology, Peter should also withdraw the first objection raised against Estlund.

(II) Peter raises a second objection by asserting that Estlund's proposal makes unnecessary demands (Peter 2009; 133). Estlund claims that two fair decision-making procedures can have different outcomes; one can usually lead to correct outcomes, while the other can usually lead to biased decisions. Estlund concludes that the fair procedure that tends to give correct outcomes will be legitimate, while fair procedure that tends to give biased outcomes will no be legitimate. However, since a fair procedure should ensure that everyone is able to participate in the process as an equal, it should also enable all those opposed to certain bias (racism, sexism) to efficiently challenge these premises. If a procedure is fair, one would not expect a biased proposal to go through. Peter thus claims that only unfair procedures can lead to biased outcomes. She concludes that the assumption of a procedure-independent standard of correctness is unnecessary since bi-

⁴ A detailed argumentation on this positions can be found in Talisse (2009) and Misak (2009).

ased outcome can only be attributed to unfair procedures. We do not need rational epistemic proceduralism; pure epistemic version will suffice.

There are several ways to answer this objection. I will first present a reply by Jose Marti (Marti 2013) and argue against it, claiming that it does not have a sufficient strength to bring down Peter's objection. I will then refer to Estlund work and try to show that this objection can be answered by carefully going through his articles.

Cass Sunstein's recent work on the statistical regularity known as group polarization can seem like a good answer to Peter's objection. Group polarization means that "*[...] members of a deliberating group predictably move toward a more extreme point in the direction indicated by the members' predeliberation tendencies*" (Sunstein 2003; 81). Like-minded people, after discussing with their peers, tend to end up thinking a more extreme version of what they thought before they started to talk. When the group polarizes, the members adopt more extreme versions of their former positions, and this movement is not driven by new or better arguments. Following Sunstein, Marti wants to show that deliberative bodies of like-minded persons are epistemically unstable. Consequently, it seems that it is possible to have a fair and simultaneously biased procedure, what indicates that Estlund's procedure-independent standard of correctness is necessary after all. I find this answer problematic not because of Sunstein's work, but because of the conditions Peter (following Longino) imposes on deliberation in order to call it fair and ascribe it procedural epistemic value. Namely, four procedural conditions that the knowledge producing process ought to satisfy seem rigorous enough to exclude any form of group polarization (Longino 2002). First condition is the existence of *publicly recognized* forums for criticism of evidence, methods, assumptions and reasoning. Group polarization usually occurs in deliberative enclaves and they are rarely either public or publicly recognized. Longino's second condition requires *people being responsive to one another's arguments*. In the case of group polarization, as we have seen earlier, the movement is not driven by new or better arguments. Peter can thus reject Marti's answer by simply asserting that no procedure-independent criterion is necessary since Longino's second procedural condition can alone eliminate the case of group polarization by describing it as epistemically unfair. Finally, Longino's fourth condition asks for tempered equality of intellectual authority. This means that every person should have an equal (effective) ability to participate in deliberative process. Since we are discussing public deliberation, and in the context of reasonable pluralism there is a variety of propositions, theories and perspectives that can be asserted, it seems impossible to have a *public* deliberation of completely like-minded persons. While comparing it with his position, Estlund himself writes that in fair deliberative proceduralism "*[...] inputs are not merely to be tallied: they are first to be considered and accommodated by other participants, and, likewise, revised in view of the arguments of others*" (Estlund 1997; 178). It seems that even according to Estlund's version of fair deliberative proceduralism group polarization is not a good answer to Peter's objection, since his

version of fair deliberative proceduralism is immune to Marti's answer as well. Group polarization is a problem that targets the third feature of what Joshua Cohen calls standard account of epistemic democracy – the requirement that individuals should adjust their beliefs in the light of the available evidence. Since the movement toward the extreme in group polarization is not driven by new or better arguments (evidence), it fails to satisfy this requirement. However, the debate between Estlund and Peter is not about the third, but about the first feature of standard account of epistemic democracy – the question is whether an independent standard of correct decision exists and whether the approximation of correctness is necessary for legitimacy. This is why Marti's argument fails to answer Peter's objection; group polarization can be an argument against some forms of deliberation, but it fails when confronted with legitimacy-generating *procedural* requirements imposed by Peter and Longino. We can have a procedure without procedure-independent standard of correctness that can nonetheless resist the argument of group polarization.

I believe there can be an alternative response to Peter's second objection. Her argument stresses that Estlund makes unnecessary demands; it is unnecessary to make a distinction between fair (or pure) deliberative proceduralism and (rational) epistemic deliberative proceduralism since it is quite clear that both positions will have potential to bring about correct (or at least unbiased) outcomes. It is almost inconceivable to think of a fair deliberative procedure that, as its result, will have a biased outcome. However, I believe this cannot be a serious objection since Estlund himself emphasizes the same idea. He writes that "*[...] post-deliberative voting probably has considerable (instrumental⁵) epistemic value*", however the problem is that "*[...] fair deliberative proceduralism must be indifferent between it and a coin flip*" (Estlund 1997; 179). The idea that every deliberative procedure that incorporates the third feature of Cohen's epistemic democracy (i.e. represents a process of adjustment of beliefs, requiring from individuals to adjust their beliefs in light of the available evidence) has an instrumental epistemic value is uncontested. The question remains whether this epistemic feature of public deliberation should play a role when determining legitimacy of decisions produced by it. Following fair deliberative proceduralism, instrumental epistemic value of the procedure should be of no importance when evaluating its legitimacy-generating potential. It is because of this reason that fair deliberative proceduralism must be indifferent between post-deliberative voting and post-deliberative coin flip⁶. Fair deliberative proceduralism is a bad position not be-

⁵ Fabienne Peter makes a useful distinction between instrumental and procedural epistemic value (Peter 2012). Instrumental epistemic value of a procedure regards its ability to increase or decrease the accuracy of the beliefs of the participants. When he writes about epistemic value of a procedure, Estlund thinks exclusively on its instrumental qualities. On the other hand, procedural epistemic value is typically captured in terms of mutual accountability, equal respect and relationship of reciprocity. In *Democratic Legitimacy*, Peter wants to constitute political legitimacy on procedural epistemic value.

⁶ Estlund uses the coin flip argument because he takes it for a fair decision-making procedure with no epistemic value (Estlund 2009; 18). There is a reason to believe that Peter would not

cause it involves deliberation with no instrumental epistemic value (Peter's interpretation of Estlund's argument), but because it places insufficient emphasis on the instrumental epistemic value that the deliberation already has when determining legitimacy conditions. Procedure-independent standard of correctness can be a good reason for arguing against coin flip and for public deliberation as a legitimate decision-making procedure. In the part four of this paper I will demonstrate further advantages that procedure-independent standard of correctness has when defending deliberative democracy by referring to its instrumental value.

(III) Third and final objection emphasizes that Estlund's position is normatively misleading (Peter 2009; 135). While Estlund treats democratic process as having knowledge-producing potential, he does not have a convincing account of what the epistemic value of sustained democratic deliberation is. His position relies on the constructive function of democratic decision-making, but does not have a good account of this function. Estlund's account reduces deliberation to a process of selecting a particular outcome – he does not acknowledge the learning process that deliberative democracy enables. Deliberation contributes to how participants form their preferences and how the political agenda is determined – however, Estlund uses epistemic argument only as a selection device, not as a part of defense of deliberative democracy.

This argument makes two related points against Estlund. First, it emphasizes the lack of adequate account of constructive function of democratic decision-making. Second, it claims that Estlund overstates the epistemic function of deliberation as a selection device, simultaneously neglecting the learning process that collective deliberation enables. Both can be summarized in the following way: if we could find a semiperfect coin, one that brings about correct decisions in vast majority of cases (not always, yet still more often than deliberative democratic procedure), following Estlund's account we would have to characterize it as a valid legitimacy-generating procedure. It is fair, after all, since all the members of a political constituency have an equal chance to influence the final outcome (i.e. no chance at all), and it is epistemically superior to deliberative democratic procedure. Peter wants to challenge the latter idea; semiperfect coin may have a greater instrumental epistemic value than collective deliberation, but it does not have a superior procedural epistemic value. This is a very plausible idea and one has to acknowledge this as a flaw in Estlund's argument. However, I believe that there is a reason why this 'flaw' was included in his account.

In a world characterized by reasonable pluralism deep commitments and values of the members of a democratic community are in constant moral conflict. When their values and moral commitments are challenged or threatened, citizens want a good reason why they should acknowledge the legitimacy of a certain policy, law or political decision. Both Estlund and Peter agree that no substantive reason can do this task; deep pluralism renders the consensus on substantive rea-

consider coin flip as a fair procedure. However, no additional argumentation supporting this idea can be found in her book (Peter 2009). It seems, nonetheless, that she has to include it in her second argument against Estlund in order to adequately challenge his position.

sons impossible. Furthermore, both agree that only procedural reasons can be used when arguing for the legitimacy of a certain decision. A decision is legitimate because it is produced by a legitimacy-generating procedure, not because of the substantive qualities of the decision itself. The distinction between their accounts comes in when we have to decide what are the features of a legitimacy-generating procedure; Estlund claims that such a procedure should be evaluated due to a procedure-independent standard, the (substantive) quality of outcomes it produces, while Peter defines legitimacy-generating procedure as a procedure that satisfies certain purely procedural standards (one of such standards can be knowledge-producing potential of a procedure).

The problem with Peter's approach is twofold: first, the idea of a procedure having knowledge-producing potential without having true (accurate) outcomes comes from Longino's hybrid epistemology (which rests on still controversial proceduralist epistemology). Proceduralist epistemology sees cognition as an inherently social process rooted in a set of knowledge-producing practices to which certain normative criteria apply (Peter 2009; 123). A belief can thus be referred to as knowledge even though it is not true (in a procedure-independent way), and a procedure can be referred to as knowledge-producing even though it does not produce true beliefs. I will discuss the problems of this approach in part four of the paper. Second version of this problem challenges the normative strength of a knowledge-producing potential as a feature of legitimate procedures when compared with a potential to produce accurate (true) beliefs. When facing a law or political decision that regards their deep commitments and values, citizens want it to be correct. Since these issues play an important role in their moral lives, they don't want them to be regulated by a law that itself has no substantive epistemic value. However, they cannot agree upon a law that all will have substantive reason to accept. The best they can get is a procedural reason to acknowledge the legitimacy of a law regulating these important issues; however, in order to be acceptable, this procedural reason will have to guarantee some kind of substantive epistemic quality of the outcome⁷. It seems that, when facing a moral dilemma of great importance (affirmative action, abortion, LGBT rights etc.), citizens would rather embrace and consider as a source of legitimate decisions a fair procedure that has a significant chance of producing correct answer than a procedure that emphasizes the learning process while neglecting the (substantive) epistemic value of its outcomes.

IV. Proceduralist Account of Epistemic Democracy

Unlike Estlund's account that rests on veritistic consequentialist epistemology, Peter builds her position on proceduralist epistemology that focuses exclusively on intrinsic qualities of procedures to judge their epistemic worth. She rejects the idea that the procedure-independent standard is necessary to assess the quality of knowledge-producing procedures. Her position rests on Helen Longino's hybrid

⁷ Detailed argumentation on the importance of truth when considering important moral issues can be found in Robert Talisse's *Democracy and Moral Conflict* (Talisse 2009).

epistemology that combines usually descriptive proceduralist epistemology with normative elements. It is important to notice, however, that these normative elements are not procedure-independent, but reside in the process itself.

Not every deliberative procedure is justified; in order to be considered as a legitimacy-generating procedure, there are several normative conditions that the knowledge-producing process ought to satisfy. (I) Publicly recognized forum for the criticism of evidence, methods, assumptions and reasoning should be formed, thus creating space for the critical discourse. (II) Deliberation should have transformative potential and people should be responsive to one another's arguments. (III) Publicly recognized standards should be made by reference to which theories and observational practices should be evaluated, thus securing that critical discourse is orderly and constructive. (IV) Finally, tempered equality of intellectual authority should be established, thus enabling all citizens to actively participate in public deliberation. Only if deliberative procedure can satisfy these four normative conditions it can be considered fair and epistemically valuable, regardless of the epistemic quality of the outcomes it produces. Epistemic values are irreducibly procedural – there is nothing beyond critically engaging with one another in a transparent and non-authoritarian way.

There are several objections that can be raised on Peter's account. Cheryl Misak emphasizes the problem of distinction between deliberating well and deliberating badly. No account of deliberative democracy can ignore the call to make this distinction. The trouble is that, *in saying what good, as opposed to poor, deliberation amounts to, one finds oneself facing a justificatory problem: how can we specify what a good deliberation is without simply assuming that our current standards of deliberation and inquiry are the gold standards* (Misak 2009; 35)? Estlund won't have a problem with this distinction; deliberative procedures are justified because they lead us to a more accurate beliefs. Misak and Talisse walk the same path; *virtues are justified because they lead to true belief. Listening to others is not merely the polite thing to do, but it is also good because we might learn something. The virtues are justified because they have epistemic value – they will tend to lead us to the right answer to our questions* (Misak 2009, Talisse 2005).

The problem for Peter is how to defend four normative conditions imposed by Longino if she cannot refer to a procedure-independent standard, the correctness of outcomes? It may be possible to try to deduce them from the idea of political fairness, following the idea that political and epistemic fairness are just two sides of the same coin. This does not seem as a move Peter would do, considering her intentions to do just the opposite, i.e. to deduce political fairness from epistemic fairness. However, both this argumentation and the (epistemic) defense of Longino's normative conditions are not presented in the book, though they seem necessary for Peter's argument.

There are reasons for one to believe that constructing purely procedural justification can be very difficult, if not impossible. Misak warns us that any substantive account of our epistemic virtues will rest rather heavily on what we currently take to be rational or virtuous. *We may be simply confirming our prejudices or*

digging ourselves deeper in the same epistemic rut (Misak 2009; 37). We thus must not take for granted our epistemic values.

It would be wrong to see Peter's position as simply giving us the list of epistemic values and social conditions necessary for their development. On the contrary, great value of her account is the requirement asking us to constantly evaluate our epistemic practices. She sees justification not just as subjecting data and hypothesis to criticism from a variety of perspectives – our reasoning and background assumptions are also constantly subjected to criticism, and it seems that conditions that constitute good epistemic procedure can also be modified in the light of good reasons and arguments. This is why Peter writes that discursive practices are both constructive and justificatory. They are not fixed and unchangeable, but are themselves subject to deliberation.

It seems that, according to Peter's view, our epistemic practices can be improved, and it is precisely one of the tasks of democratic deliberation – to evaluate and improve the epistemic quality of deliberation itself. However, it is very difficult to talk about improvement without knowing the good toward which the practice aims. Unless we can identify the ends that epistemic utility promotes, our demand for justification may be futile (Elgin 1999; 99).

Estlund's view has no problem with this objection; since his veritistic epistemology has a procedure-independent standard for assessing the quality of epistemic procedures (namely, whether they lead to correct outcomes), we can easily say what represents an improvement for a certain epistemic procedure. It also seems very easy to defend normative conditions necessary for good deliberation; they are epistemically good because they improve the quality of outcomes the procedure produces, while some other conditions may be epistemic bad because they reduce the quality of outcomes. Following Estlund, Festenstein writes that we need to think of epistemic virtues as requirements of truth-seeking, Talisse puts forward a pragmatist account and argues that the virtues are justified because they lead to true beliefs, and similar position is taken by Misak, who claims that an epistemic virtue is justified if it is part of reliable method – one that is likely to lead to a true belief. Pure epistemic proceduralism, however, fails to give a plausible account for improvement of our deliberative practices.

V. Conclusion

Epistemic democracy still represents a contested position, with arguments raised both against its normative content and its utopian form. This paper, set deep inside the debate on epistemic democracy, differentiates between two important conceptions of epistemic proceduralism, trying to detect the one better supported by reasons and arguments. Building on proceduralist and hybrid epistemology that rejects the idea of procedure-independent truth, pure epistemic proceduralism fails to give sufficient foundations for the epistemic evaluation of democratic practices, making epistemic practices arbitrary. Standard account of epistemic democracy is, on the other hand, capable of answering this objection, thus representing the stronger version of epistemic proceduralism.

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