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COMPARATIVE STANDARD IN INSTITUTIONAL EPISTEMOLOGY

ABSTRACT
Which epistemic value is the standard according to which we ought to compare, assess and design institutional arrangements in terms of their epistemic properties? Two main options are agent development (in terms of individual epistemic virtues or capabilities) and attainment of truth. The options are presented through two authoritative contemporary accounts-agent development by Robert Talisse's understanding in *Democracy and Moral Conflict* (2009) and attainment of truth by David Estlund's treatment, most prominently in *Democratic Authority: A Philosophical Framework* (2008). Both options are shown to be unsatisfactory because they are subject to problematic risk of suboptimal epistemic state lock-in. The ability of the social epistemic system to revise suboptimal epistemic states is argued to be the best option for a comparative standard in institutional epistemology.

1. Introduction

Institutional epistemology is the study of the epistemic performance of *social epistemic systems,* institutional arrangements governing over large and complex populations of epistemic agents[1]. One of the foundational concerns of institutional epistemology is according to which property of the social epistemic system must we judge its epistemic performance – the question, then, of comparative standard. The present text argues the ability of the social epistemic system to revise suboptimal epistemic states should be regarded as a comparative standard in institutional epistemology.

The difference between the comparative standard, a methodological device for achieving the task of being more likely to attain knowledge, and the task of attaining knowledge must be clearly delineated. I will argue that the system which is designed to be able to revise suboptimal epistemic states, as opposed

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1   The population is comprised of individual agents, and presumably, of communities of agents which may be understood as a single agent (Page 2008. For authoritative work on social ontology, see List and Pettit 2011; Tuomela 2013; Gilbert 2014). For the purposes of this text, I will however use the terms "agent" for individuals and "community" for groups.

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to the one designed to nurture agent development or attain the truth, is *more likely* to succeed in search for knowledge. Both agent development and attainment of truth as comparative standards *decrease the likelihood* that the social epistemic system will reach a less suboptimal or the optimal epistemic state – a justified social normative commitment (Brandom 2001) to a true belief.

The present discussion differs from the one on "procedure-independent standard of correct decision", a concept of frequent attention in literature on epistemic democracy (Peter 2016), inasmuch as the question of concern is not whether the decision made through the democratic procedure should be judged according to some such standard or it is epistemically and politically justified by the procedure itself. The interest here lies in a broader inquiry in social epistemology – according to which standard should we design and assess the epistemic output of any large and normatively complex population governed by a any institutional arrangement? While epistemic democrats will feature prominently in this area of social epistemology, the new methodological concept was needed to distance us from the particular debates in epistemic democracy, and to allow us a viewpoint from which we will be able to judge the total epistemic merit of any social epistemic system.

The plan of the text is the following. First, the two most relevant candidates for the comparative standard of social epistemic systems, agent development and attainment of truth, will be presented and it will be shown how they fail to escape the threat of suboptimal epistemic lock-in. While agent development will be supported by the work of Robert Talisse, namely his epistemic capability perfectionism, attainment of truth will be discussed in relation to the work of David Estlund and his political and epistemological treatment of the claim that those who are more likely to attain truth should exercise political authority over others. Secondly, the ability of the system to revise suboptimal epistemic states will be derived from the objections to both agent development and attainment of truth as the third candidate for the comparative standard in institutional epistemology. By focusing primarily on the threat the first two are unable to systematically stave off, the third candidate effectively tracks how conducive the social epistemic system is to learning. It will also be shown that the ability of the system to revise suboptimal epistemic states as a comparative standard can be recognized as supported by work in pragmatism and political economy, as well as in line with recent developments of "negative approach" to institutional design as argued for by Miranda Fricker.

2. The Assessment of Comparative Standards: Agent Development and Attainment of Truth

2 .1. Agent Development as the Comparative Standard

The design of a social epistemic system based on agent development as comparative standard would posit that the superior social epistemic system is the

one which allows for the best epistemic development of its *individual* agents. This may include, for instance, development of individual epistemic virtues or capabilities. I will present the case for agent development as a comparative standard through a specific argument for epistemic capabilities perfectionism featured in Talisse's *Democracy and Moral Conflict*. Two objections from the division of epistemic labour to agent development as the comparative standard will be presented – first, that there can be a combination of "good" and "bad" individual epistemic traits and behaviours which combined give a collectively better epistemic output then exclusively a combination of "good" individual epistemic traits and behaviours; and second, that there can be epistemic traits which contribute to the development of the agent but are unknown at the point of assessment, and which therefore cannot be accounted for by the assessment. Both objections point to the central threat of a suboptimal epistemic state lock-in which social epistemic system designed with agent development as a comparative standard cannot avert. While I will focus on a specific account for illustration and clarity, the objections presented can be used to argue against any design of the social epistemic system based on this particular comparative standard.

2. 1. 1. Epistemic Capabilities

I will first explicate Talisse's account of epistemic perfectionism. While his primary argument in *Democracy and Moral Conflict* is itself highly relevant, sound and elegant, particularly with regards to the discussions in the fundamental discursive nature of epistemic agents, the focus here is on the argument for epistemic perfectionism with which Talisse is concerned in the second part of the book (Talisse 2009: 156–192).

Talisse's primary argument in *Democracy and Moral Conflict* is that in order for individuals to develop *any* kind of epistemic life they must be able to exercise their capacities for reason-exchange – epistemic agents are *defined* by being able to engage in reason-exchange. This is a sound pragmatist claim. Talisse, furthermore, argues that democracy is the basic institutional arrangement which allows the agents to do so (Talisse 2009: 79–154).Once faced with the Agent Ignorance Objection which challenges the thesis that inclusive deliberation in democracy is epistemically valuable by presenting evidence of individuals in the contingent historical circumstances of particular democratic regime (namely, citizens of USA in the beginning of 21st Century) seemingly ignorant of a multitude of political and scientific facts, Talisse endorses a form of epistemic perfectionism aimed at fuller development of agents' epistemic capabilities (Talisse 2009: 156–185).

The first thing to notice is Talisse's quick concession to the argument based on the contingent historical ignorance of agents. Despite his initial argument not hinging on agents' being knowledgeable (his argument posits that without being able to engage in reason-exchange agents cannot be referred to as epistemic *at all*), Talisse does, in the second part of the book, grow concerned about agents' lack of knowledge on the subjects they are engaged in reason-exchange

on. Let me, before going into Talisse's defense against Agent Ignorance Objection, first point out that from the standpoint of institutional epistemology the objection of agents' ignorance need be conceded as relevant. Epistemic agents should be taken to be "constitutionally" (Hayek 1978: 5) and "irremediably" (Hayek 1982: 12) epistemically suboptimal. They would be *more ignorant* if they did not engaged in reason-exchange. They are less ignorant if they have a chance to engage in the social epistemic system. They, however, remain ignorant either way. As Talisse himself recognizes, this is why there is a need for the *social* epistemic system in the first place[2]. Individual epistemic agents have severely limited epistemic capacities, including the ability to recognize relevant evidence, make use of relevant data and concepts, and develop good inferential practices. Social epistemic system, where populations of agents engage in epistemic activity, as opposed to particular individual agents, is less so.

Talisse's reply to Agent Ignorance Objection is as follows. Given Sunstein's valuable epistemological insights on inferior epistemic output of isolated normative communities (Sunstein 2009), Talisse first diagnoses the epistemic life of agents in question as lacking in trans-normative interaction. Their exposure to reasons and evidence beside those their communities provide is too low. Normative pluralism is the feature of a superior epistemic system because it reduces agent ignorance. This is a sound design understanding and a sufficient answer to the objection. Talisse, however, proceeds to argue for epistemic perfectionism aimed at agent development, and posits a list of capabilities (Talisse 2009: 173–177) the "state" should foster in the agents.

The argument in the next section is *whatever* the capabilities, the list of individually virtuous epistemic features is a flawed attempt at designing a superior social epistemic system. I will not argue against Talisse's capabilities themselves. Their content is beside the point here – the focus on individual epistemic development itself runs the problematic risk of suboptimal epistemic lock-in.

2. 1. 2. Two Objections from the Division of Epistemic Labour

Two objections from the division of epistemic labour to *any* list of individual epistemic virtues or capabilities which arises from understanding agent development as the standard according to which we should design and assess a social epistemic system are:

1. There can be a set of practices or traits which cannot be understood as "good" epistemic practices or traits at the level of the individual, but which contribute to the superior epistemic output of the social epistemic system.

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2 Talisse himself claims: "Our epistemic dependence is unavoidable because each individual has limited cognitive resources. Individually, we simply cannot inquire into every matter that is relevant to our beliefs; we must at some point rely on the epistemic capabilities of others, we must *defer*." (Talisse 2009: 141) He, furthermore, rightly points out that "(...) each of us epistemically depends on an entire *social epistemic system*." (Talisse 2009: 142) He proceeds to argue for the epistemic perfectionism nevertheless.

2. There can be a set of practices or traits unknown to any agent (including the assessor) at t1 which contribute to the superior output of the social epistemic system at t2.

The first objection may be illustrated by Zollman's work in agent-based simulations in social epistemology. In "The Epistemic Benefit of Transient Diversity", Zollman (2010) shows how the population in which information is shared among agents with extreme priors (and thus who conserve strategies or theories despite having evidence to the contrary available) is significantly epistemically superior to the one in which the agents lack such (non-virtuous) individual epistemic traits.

The second objection is more general, and requires only the concession that at any time of assessment there is a possibility of unknown individual traits which could contribute to better epistemic output. Therefore, a population with the set of traits T and an additional trait n, unknown at the time of assessment (which represents *any* time of assessment), may epistemically outperform a population with the set of traits T. Yet, our conceptual apparatus allows only for the assessment of the population with the set of traits T to be recognized as a superior social epistemic system, while in the same time the population with the set of traits T is suboptimal in relation to the population with the T+n set of traits.

What both of these objections present are cases of suboptimal epistemic state lock-in, and they could be understood as a twofold form of a single central objection, namely the objection that *agent development as a comparative standard runs the problematic risk of suboptimal epistemic state lock-in*. As Mayo-Wilson, Zollman and Danks (2011) observe, the divergence of prescriptions for superior individual and group epistemic performance, seminally argued by Kitcher (1990), is among the founding insights of social epistemology. There can be a configuration of individual epistemic practices which cannot be described as "good" from agent-level perspective which produces better epistemic output then does the configuration of exclusively "good" epistemic practices. Furthermore, there can be agent-level traits beneficial to the epistemic development of the population which are unknown at the time of design or assessment – and, as both Elinor Ostrom (Ostrom, Hess 2007: 68) and Friedrich Hayek (1960: 414) have noted, judging the presently best state of knowledge as the standard risks suppressing the optimal development.

2. 2 Attainment of Truth as the Comparative Standard

The other comparative standard featured prominently in the social epistemological debate is the attainment of truth. Epistemic democrats in particular have a tendency to describe features of their favoured social epistemic system as "truth-conducive" or "truth-tracking" (Gaus 2011: 273). Two objections to attainment of truth as comparative standard are: a) it is either conceptually empty without additional specification of the comparative standard according to which we ought to find the truth or knowledge tracked, which in turn

is the controversy presently under investigation; b) or the requirement following from attainment of truth as the comparative standard is that we delegate epistemic labour to those agents who are most likely to attain the truth. I will focus on the second objection, and provide a discussion on David Estlund's work related to the question of authority of those who are more likely to attain the truth. I will argue that his arguments against epistocracy are not satisfactory, and that a stronger epistemological argument against expert governance, and thus against attainment of truth as the comparative standard is required and possible.

The objection from division of labour to delegation of epistemic labour to experts is that it, again, exposes the social epistemic system to risk of suboptimal epistemic lock-in. The pluralism required for superior epistemic performance of a large and complex population must be *redundant*, and thus there *are* agents who are more likely to attain the truth. By delegating the totality of epistemic tasks to experts, the social epistemic system is lacking means of contesting the epistemic state the experts have attained. While they are *more likely* to attain the truth, the experts will not *necessarily* attain the truth. They are, moreover, *still epistemically suboptimal*. Therefore, the epistemic state the experts attained may as well be suboptimal. The agents less likely to attain truth are denied any possibility at contesting the epistemic state due to being denied access to any epistemic labour, and thus their different and disagreeing normative strategies cannot offer any contribution to breaking the consensus. The system build on attainment of truth as comparative standard has no means of *contesting its optimality*[3].

2. 2. 1. Strong Political and Weak Epistemological Objection to Epistocracy

The authoritative argument in institutional epistemology against the delegation of epistemic labour to those agents who are more likely to attain truth is Estlund's objection to epistocracy not being "generally acceptable in the way

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3   Truth is a controversial concept (particularly, of course, within epistemology). So controversial, in fact, that it appears ill-advised to use it for the robust design of a social epistemic system. Another objection to attainment of truth as comparative standard, therefore, could be that it would lead towards too much controversy as to the nature of this particular concept, and therefore the assessment could not even begin. However, it could be argued that the design of the social epistemic system need not proceed according to any particular controversial theory of truth, but, following Estlund's "minimal" conception of truth (Estlund 2008: 25), merely posit that the best social epistemic system is the one which produces the claim "X is f" when X is f. The systematic approach to institutional epistemology, thus, need not deal with truth in the manner the first objection implies. It may merely posit truth-conduciveness (very roughly, the ability to produce "X is f" when X is f) as a formal feature of a certain procedure. I will concede this point. Attainment of truth as the comparative standard need not be defined substantially as to settle the discussions with regards to theories of truth. The problem I will focus on is that the attainment of truth as comparative standard leads to defining the substantial agent trait of being more likely to attain truth as the definitive reason to delegate the totality of epistemic tasks to those agents that feature this trait.

that political legitimacy requires." (Estlund 2008: 7; Estlund 2003: 58) I will not presently engage with the majority of the particularities of his complex and so-phisticated work, but will solely focus on the aspects relevant for this inquiry.

Estlund's account is focused on endorsing what he calls the Truth Tenet, claiming that "there are true (at least in the minimal sense) procedure-inde-pendent normative standards by which political decisions ought to be judged" (Estlund 2008: 30), and Knowledge Tenet, claiming that "some (relatively few) people know those normative standards better than others" (Estlund 2008: 30), while rejecting what he calls Authority Tenet, a claim that "(t)he norma-tive political knowledge of those who know better is a warrant for their hav-ing political authority over others" (Estlund 2008: 30). Estlund rejects the Authority Tenet on political grounds, and argues democracy is epistemolog-ically justified because it is "better than random and is epistemically the best among those that are generally acceptable in the way that political legitimacy requires." (Estlund 2008: 7) Democracy is the best social epistemic system be-cause it is most likely *to attain the truth* among those social epistemic systems which can have political legitimacy.

Estlund is concerned exclusively with political and moral epistemic materi-als – whereas I am concerned with epistemic materials in general. More impor-tantly, Estlund's argument is concerned primarily with political authority, and only secondarily with epistemological value. He proceeds to argue against the Authority Tenet on political grounds – Authority Tenet cannot hold, because the authority of "those who know better" cannot be held politically legitimate.

Estlund's larger understanding of attainment of truth as the institutional epistemic comparative standard allows for expertism to reign supreme in in-stitutional epistemic labour for epistemological reasons albeit forbidding it for political. In "Why Not Epistocracy?", for instance, Estlund appreciates "Mil-lian" scholocracy epistemologically but finds it politically problematic, and effectively concedes general epistemological labour to experts and retains the political-epistemological labour as a domain of the democratic. From this, it follows there is an ought *simpliciter* (Case 2016) which is known to few and should be followed in the design of a social epistemic system which lacks *po-litical* decision-making.

Estlund does make a particular epistemological objection to Authority Ten-et-Demographic Objection (Estlund 2008: 215 – 219) – which states that contin-gent groups of experts may "carry" epistemic vices or suboptimal traits which override their relative epistemic superiority to other agents in the population. This is the case – however, not for any contingent reason of suboptimal indi-vidual epistemic traits, but for the necessity of a less likely revision of subop-timal epistemic state in cases of normative centralization. Estlund's objection is too weak and, moreover, cannot withstand the *philosophical* definition of experts as those who are more likely to attain the truth, and thus remain rel-atively epistemically superior despite any suboptimalities they may "carry". From the standpoint of the division of epistemic labour both of these claims can be accounted for. It is the nature of knowledge that it is conditioned on

redundant normative pluralism – experts themselves can attain the truth if and only if operating under the conditions of a redundant normative pluralism.

The Authority Tenet may then be rejected on epistemological grounds. There may be an ought *simpliciter* and it may be known to the few, but they cannot *know* it without epistemic input from the redundant diversity of inquirers. Thus comparing the social epistemic systems according to the likelihood of knowing ought *simpliciter* is at best uninformative in design due to its trivial claim of there being an ought *simpliciter* and some agents being more likely to know it, and at worst epistemically distortive if improperly interpreted to have no epistemic reasons why not to delegate epistemic labour exclusively to experts. I will now present this objection to attainment of truth as a comparative standard in some detail.

2. 2. 2. Epistemological Objection to Attainment of Truth as Comparative Standard

Attainment of truth, or tracking of truth, is obviously an epistemic task of primary importance. Knowledge is at least a justified normative commitment to a true belief. However, this claim does not necessarily translate into the attainment of truth being the proper comparative standard of social epistemic systems – it would leave us with an uninformative or confusing standard. The inquiry on "Which of these two systems are closer to truth?" would merely return us to the original question of "How do you compare which is closer to the truth?" We are concerned with the *epistemological* comparative standard, and thus the standard according to which access to the commitment to a justified *true* belief may be more available to the population. As I will argue, it will be more available to the population which is more likely to revise a suboptimal epistemic state.

The other available answers to the question "Which of these two systems are closer to truth?" could be "Which system has more agents who are more likely to know the truth?" or "Which system is run by those who are more likely to know the truth?" Thus, expert-governed social epistemic system may result from the comparative standard of attainment of truth, if we were not to understand it trivially.

There is a wealth of empirical evidence (Hastie, Dawes 2001; Kahneman 2011; Gaus 2008) that experts can and do tend towards suboptimal epistemic state lock-ins. However, the case here involves experts understood much more stringently as those agents who are more likely to attain the truth at the assessment point t1. Therefore, the claim is not that experts tend to get stuck at suboptimal epistemic states, but that the social epistemic system which delegates the epistemic labour to experts has no institutional mechanism to prevent them from arriving at and retaining indefinitely the suboptimal epistemic state.

The epistemological problem with delegation of epistemic labour to those more likely to attain the truth is as follows. Note that "being *more likely* to attain truth at assessment point t1" does not translate into "*necessarily* attaining the truth at t1". Therefore, the experts will not necessarily attain the optimal epistemic state – they might attain and indefinitely conserve a suboptimal

epistemic state. Having delegated the totality of epistemic labour to experts, however, the social epistemic system has no means of contesting *whatever* epistemic state the experts have attained.

Experts could be understood more or less as one really smart person, both in its skillful excellence *and* in its cognitive limitations – namely, the lack of conceptual and computational resources *if* working with the same normative strategy (Page 2008). Adding agents to the expert community may improve the speed of computation and introduce some cognitive diversity (as exists within any given population of agents [Landemore 2012]), but will not prevent it from getting stuck at the local optimum – save adding *normatively different* and thus *non-expert* agents. Normative pluralism is a condition of the discovery of the ought *simpliciter*.

If the social epistemic system delegates the epistemic task to those epistemic agents who are more likely to attain the truth, it denies itself any *systematic* ability to recognize (and revise) suboptimal epistemic state, and thus denies itself the *hedging* mechanism against such a state – if "hedging" is understood as minimization of risk of a bad epistemic "bet" on a particular strategy for overcoming the suboptimal epistemic state.

The superior social epistemic system, of course, still needs and should welcome experts – just as it needs and should welcome really smart people. They bring *individually and relatively* superior (but *system-level suboptimal*) epistemic material into the epistemic pool. The division of epistemic labour in the superior social epistemic system *does not deny expertize nor does it deny the possibility of hierarchical relations within which experts hold higher social and epistemic "positions"* – it merely does not fully reduce the epistemic labour necessary for the superior social system to epistemic labour done exclusively by experts.

The central objection to the attainment of truth as comparative standard is thus the same as the one to agent development – it runs the problematic risk of suboptimal epistemic state lock-in.

3. Revision of a Suboptimal Epistemic State as the Comparative Standard

In the analysis so far the suboptimal epistemic lock-in, the inability of populations of epistemic agents to revise suboptimal epistemic states, has been shown to be the primary threat the social epistemic system faces. Thus, the ability of the system to revise suboptimal epistemic states appears to be the quintessential epistemically superior feature. The system which exhibits this feature is more likely to succeed in the search for knowledge. This ability of the social epistemic system to revise the suboptimal epistemic state should therefore be regarded as the comparative standard of social epistemic systems. I will call it Modest Epistemic Comparative Standard, MECS for short.

MECS is a *regulative* standard which tracks the ability of the social epistemic system to *learn* and allows for the development of minimal conditions

for satisfaction of the justification criteria of knowledge. It is regulative as opposed to *positive* comparative standards of agent development and attainment of truth because it does not posit or depend on a substantial epistemic doctrine of agent traits (either in order to develop them or to identify those agents most likely to attain the truth) but designs the system able to withstand their *worst* suboptimalities. It doesn't ask how excellent are its agents – it asks whether the system can escape the deepest ignorance of its best agents. Doing so, it advances primarily a social epistemic system which is capable, in the most robust manner, of *moving away from epistemic ills*, of *upgrading its epistemic state*, and thus a system which is capable of *learning*.

MECS cannot favour any group of agents – 1) experts and agents with recognized epistemic virtues are less likely to revise the attained suboptimal epistemic state because they can be expected to form a consensus on a particular betting strategy, and subsequently a particular epistemic state, without means of evaluating and contesting that particular strategy and state, and 2) other agents are less likely by default. Therefore, they are both less likely to revise a suboptimal epistemic state apart then they are together. Instead of favoring agents with certain properties, MECS favours *redundant normative pluralism* and disagreement as epistemically beneficial (and instrumental) developments within a population. Furthermore, redundant normative pluralism presents *minimal conditions for satisfaction of the justification criteria of knowledge* – social epistemic system featuring redundant normative pluralism opens the Epistemic Contributions of its members to *contest*, and thus makes it possible for them to be justified. As J. S. Mill observed with clarity, the ability to revise suboptimal epistemic states, "to be set right when it is wrong" (Mill 2003: 103) is the fundamental epistemic feature of epistemically suboptimal agents. For this ability to develop, and the deepest desperate epistemic state to be overcome, mere experience is insufficient and discussion is required (Mill 2003: 102).

The history of institutional epistemological thought thoroughly supports MECS. It is sound, as already shown, from the perspective of the division of epistemic labour – redundant normative pluralism is fully justified by the maintenance of the ability of the social epistemic system to revise suboptimal epistemic states. Friedrich Hayek posits the task of competition to be to show "which plans are false" (Hayek 1982: 117), to reveal bad epistemic "bets" agents make in the search for knowledge under conditions of irremediable and constitutional ignorance. The economists working with dynamic complex normative systems in polycentric governance studies and New Institutional Economics have long considered the ability of the system to learn and adapt to be of central importance for it epistemic performance (Ostrom 20015; North 1990; for the overview of the subject of institutional change, see Kingston and Caballero 2009). Pragmatism's key innovations in epistemology[4] are positing the testing and contesting of normative commitments as baseline epistemic

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4   For a more comprehensive understanding of the connections between Hayek and pragmatists, see Aligica 2014.

practices, *the experience of error as central to epistemic development* (Brandom 2001) and learning as the key feature of the superior institutional order. Finally, MECS is in line with Miranda Fricker's negative approach in epistemic institutional design (Fricker 2015). Elaborating the ideal epistemic institutional arrangement requires focusing on threats to the social epistemic systems, the diagnosis of and solution to the points of *failure* the population is *prone to*. "The ideal social organism will have a well-functioning immune system, and you cannot design one of those without a proper understanding of its susceptibility to disease." (Fricker 2015: 74)

The objection to MECS surely cannot rest on any argument against revision of the suboptimal epistemic states as a key feature of knowledge-acquisition. MECS however may be accused of being *too* modest. Revision of a suboptimal epistemic state does not imply reaching an optimal epistemic state – a suboptimal epistemic state may be revised into second suboptimal epistemic state. The response to this objection is two-fold: 1) given the agents are epistemically suboptimal, the attainment of the optimal state is never guaranteed, and there cannot be a social epistemic system which guarantees it, but 2) the revision of the *second* suboptimal epistemic state is possible only in the social epistemic system designed to be able to revise suboptimal epistemic states. If the objection would to lead towards the design of the social epistemic system such that it would be compared according to its ability to reach an *optimal* state, it would merely lead towards attainment of truth as the comparative standard, and is therefore subject to the same objection.

We should judge the social epistemic systems according to their ability to revise suboptimal epistemic states, the ability to get "unstuck" from worst ignorance. The epistemically best performing population needn't have the smartest members nor is led by the wisest ones. It must, however, be most likely to recognize when it is wrong.

4. Conclusion

Social epistemic system designed or assessed according to the comparative standard of agent development or attainment of truth give rise to the problematic risk suboptimal epistemic state lock-in. Lowering this risk should be regarded as the comparative standard of the institutional arrangement governing over a large and normatively complex population in its search for knowledge. The superior social epistemic system is the one which learns best.

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Komparativni standard u institucionalnoj epistemologiji

Apstakt

Koja epistemološka vrednost je standard prema kome se trebaju upoređivati, procenjivati i dizajnirati institucionalna uređenja s obzirom na njihova epistemološka svojstva? Dve klasične opcije su razvoj agenata (u smislu individualnih epistemoloških vrlina ili sposobnosti) i dostizanje istine. Opcije su predstavljene kroz dva autoritativna savremena iskaza – razvoj agenata kroz rad Roberta Telisija u *Democracy and Moral Conflict* (2009), te dostizanje istine kroz rad Dejvida Istlunda, najistaknutije u *Democratic Authority: A Philosophical Framework* (2008). Ovaj članak pokazuje da su obe opcije nezadovoljavajuće jer su podložne problematičnom riziku "zaglavljivanja" u suboptimalnom epistemološkom stanju. Članak argumentuje da je sposobnost sistema da revidira suboptimalna epistemološka stanja najbolja opcija za komparativni standard u institucionalnoj epistemologiji.

Ključne reči: institucionalni dizajn, podela kognitivnog rada, pragmatizam, upravljanje znanjem, epistemološke performance, socijalni epistemološki sistemi