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## THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF DEMOCRACY: THE EPISTEMIC VIRTUES OF DEMOCRACY

### ABSTRACT

The new and vibrant field of the epistemology of democracy, or the inquiry about the epistemic justification of democracy as a social system of procedures, institutions, and practices, as a cross-disciplinary endeavour, necessarily encounters both epistemologists and political philosophers. Despite possible complaints that this kind of discussion is either insufficiently epistemological or insufficiently political, my approach explicitly aims to harmonize the political and epistemic justification of democracy. In this article, I tackle some fundamental issues concerning the nature of the epistemic justification of democracy and the best theoretical framework for harmonizing political and epistemic values. I also inquire whether the proposed division of epistemic labour and the inclusion of experts can indeed improve the epistemic quality of decision-making without jeopardizing political justification. More specifically, I argue in favour of three theses. First, not only democratic procedures but also the outcomes of democracy, as a social system, need to be epistemically virtuous. Second, democracy's epistemic virtues are more than just a tool for achieving political goals. Third, an appropriate division of epistemic labour has to overcome the limitations of both individual and collective intelligence.

### KEYWORDS

epistemology of democracy, epistemic justification of democracy, social epistemology, virtue epistemology, epistemic value pluralism, the division of epistemic labor

### 1. The Epistemic Justification of Democracy

To immediately dispel any uncertainty about the philosophical discipline or research field where my book, *Democracy and Truth: The Conflict Between Political and Epistemic Virtues*, belongs, I must say it is epistemology: my research focuses on the question of the epistemic value of different doxastic attitudes, such as beliefs, decisions, or opinions. However, since we aren't dealing with the epistemic properties of the beliefs held by individuals, which traditional (individual) epistemology used to do, but with the features of democracy as a system, it is clear this topic transcends the boundaries of traditional epistemology. The research field in question is social epistemology, which has legitimized inquiry into the epistemic features not only of individuals, but of groups, institutions, and systems (Goldman 1999; 2010). Up until recently, this topic was shunned as foreign to "real" epistemology, and as a question

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that we, eventually, ought to assign to some social sciences. Due to this attitude, many have concluded that “real” epistemology does not need to exist, have proclaimed the death of epistemology, and embarked on the journey of post-modern philosophy and sociology of knowledge, which focus primarily on the social conditions of forming beliefs and knowledge (Rorty 1979, Hollis and Lukes 1982, Foucault 1991). In contrast to these trends, I hold that epistemology is very much alive and that the epistemic analysis of democracy is a legitimate and relevant epistemological question. At the very least, if we have epistemology of testimony and the epistemology of disagreement, domains that have already extended the traditional epistemological approach, then we can legitimately speak also about the epistemology of democracy.

Since the justification of democracy is a topic that was tackled primarily by political philosophy, the epistemology of democracy and any inquiry about the epistemic justification of democracy necessarily encounter concepts and theories that don’t belong to the epistemological vocabulary, but to that of political philosophy. Such encounters can result in confusion and misunderstandings that arise from specific disciplinary presumptions, aims, and terminologies. These disputes are precisely the reason why such interdisciplinary endeavors can alarm both epistemologists and political philosophers. Political philosophers were the first who, within their discussions in political philosophy, assumed attitudes related to the epistemic features of democracy, such as epistemic proceduralism (Estlund 2008a; 2008b, Peter 2008, 2013). Within the field of epistemology, philosophers assumed their position much later, locating their discussion in the space of the epistemic theory of democracy. This new category emphasized they weren’t offering a political theory and avoided delving deeper into the political justification of democracy (Goodin and Spiekermann 2018). Cognizant that the field of epistemology of democracy is cross-disciplinary and (still) somewhat ambiguous, I nonetheless hold that, from the perspective of epistemology, it is both valuable and vital to attempt to offer not only an epistemic justification of democracy as a political system but to explain the relationship between the epistemic and the political justification of democracy. Political justification alone, a rationale that neglects the epistemic, but also epistemic justification alone, cannot provide a comprehensive answer to the question of whether democracy can be justified as a system of solving problems through collective decision-making and collective belief, i.e., to the question what forms of collective decision-making/collective beliefs best solve the citizens’ issues. In real life, and concerning real issues, democracy is either good, or it is not; it is either justified, or it is not – if we are seeking real benefits, it is worthless to say it is politically justified but not epistemically, and *vice versa*.

A democratic system can be politically justified without generating epistemically valuable decisions. Another arrangement could be epistemically efficient while entailing unacceptable political consequences for the democratic rationale. In the first case, we can imagine a fair system where all citizens are treated as free and equal but lack epistemic maturity and valuable beliefs, so these perfectly politically justified democratic procedures would result in low-quality

decisions that would harm everyone. Such a democratic system of collective decision-making cannot be justified. The experience of populist forms of collective reasoning gives us the right to question the exclusivity of political justification precisely because, due to the poor quality of its decisions, it generates humbling effects on human rights, freedoms, the level of democratic values, and public equity. On the other hand, within the democratic context, it is possible to assign the right to decide to academic groups of experts who are epistemically efficient and rarely make mistakes but do not care about solving citizens' problems, and do not deal with applied research, but, instead, with their research priorities, which do not affect citizens. Or, even worse, experts who use their epistemic reputation for personal gain, harming civic interests. Either way, to be justified, democracy must be both politically and epistemically justified. Despite possible complaints that the discussion is not epistemic enough, or that it is not political enough, I have embarked on this project with the explicit aim of harmonizing the political and epistemic justification of democracy.

By endorsing the stance that democracy is a system, to be legitimate, must be both politically and epistemically justified, I advocate for a hybrid view and, consequently, for hybrid justification: democracy must be, to the broadest possible extent, both politically and epistemically justified. The hybrid perspective allows for harmonization by, under specific circumstances, letting us optimally calibrate political and epistemic gains (Fricker 2007). Despite the fact this endeavor – due to its cross-disciplinarity and hybrid perspective – might be challenging, we have attained the final goal of philosophical analysis if we have created the preconditions of a (thorough) review and evaluation of real phenomena, and for their improvement. That is precisely the reason why I characterize this project as applied, and my philosophy is a real-world epistemology. Moreover, we can embrace Wolff's vocabulary, and speak not only about real-world philosophy but about engaged philosophy: a philosophy that transcends existing theoretical and disciplinary boundaries, and that, aiming for social improvement, deals with real relationships, systems, and phenomena (Wolff 2019).

Finally, within the research that I have dubbed the epistemology of democracy, I endorse the stance of reliability democracy, as opposed primarily to epistemic proceduralism or consensualism (Estlund 2008, Peter 2008, Kitcher 2011). In my opinion, despite its label of being "epistemic", epistemic proceduralism lacks the tools to, among different procedures of fair collective decision-making, select that which is epistemically better, primarily because it rejects the existence of procedure-independent epistemic value. If we reduce the epistemic justification of democracy to the stance that fair procedures have the tendency to generate epistemic quality, we are left with the question of whether epistemic justification is reduced to the political, the procedural. Consensualism, on the other hand, further sacrifices the epistemic value of decision to the goal of resolving disagreements and attaining consensus that, despite its political significance, entails no inherent epistemic value. By themselves, procedures and agreements do not generate epistemic quality unless some other

preconditions have been met. Only if we assume the beliefs we are harmonizing and introducing into fair procedures are already sufficiently epistemically valuable, their results can be epistemically justified. On the contrary, if the beliefs have no initial epistemic value, neither the fairest procedure nor the most unified consensus will provide a final decision of any epistemic quality. Epistemic justification is not just a supplementary and welcome side-effect to the fundamental political quality (a procedure or consensus), but it must be an integral part of our evaluation. With the goal of harmonization, we are seeking the best balance of epistemic and political quality, which allows us to, in particular contexts, callibrate the final benefit or reduce the political for the epistemic, and *vice versa*.

I propose reliability democracy as an approach that contains the essential epistemic criteria that allow us to, among different kinds of democratic collective decision-making, procedures, and conciliations, detect those that will most reliably generate epistemic quality and, consequentially, best solve the citizens' problems (Goldman 2010). We can attain the highest degree of reliability that a system will make epistemically valuable decisions/beliefs through the division of labor between citizens and experts (Kitcher 2011, Christiano 2012). Although experts are conventionally excluded from democratic procedures out of fear of epistocracy, or of undemocratic elite privilege, I hold that the exclusion of experts is a conscious sacrifice of epistemic quality, and, consequently, of the best democratic decisions. If epistemic justification is required for justifying democracy, then excluding experts is just as undemocratic as excluding citizens.

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The questions and comments raised by my esteemed colleagues refer precisely to the aspects of my book I have briefly reviewed. They question the nature of the epistemic justification of democracy, the best theoretical framework for harmonizing political and epistemic values, and the question of whether the proposed harmonization of epistemic labor and the inclusion of experts, can indeed improve the epistemic quality of decision-making without threatening political justification. Each article has its integrity and complexity, and, with its relevance and value, transcends the aim of commenting on my book. My reply will focus on those aspects of their articles that contribute to furthering the debate, leaving further and broader discussions about some of the questions raised for another occasion.

## **2. Democracy, as a Social System, Needs to be Epistemically Virtuous**

Ivan Mladenović (2020) valuably refers to the difference between justifying democracy as a procedure of collective decision-making and justifying democracy as a system that solves citizens' problems. Equally important is the assertion that the justification of democracy as a system presumes a broader definition of democracy as a set of institutions and practices, rather than just

as a procedure of collective decision-making. He calls the other (broader) kind of justification – the justification of democracy as a system that solves problems – instrumentalist, to differentiate it from the first, which is procedural. Moreover, Mladenović stresses that the instrumentalist approach, as a consequence, reasonably includes the question of the level of expertise and competence required for solving problems. In contrast, from the procedural perspective, such issues are not only secondary, but it is immediately apparent that any distinction between citizens (and particularly the practices of privileging experts or groups who get to decide for others) will be qualified as antagonistic to democratic procedures. Mladenović classifies my approach to justification, due to my focus on epistemically justifying deliberative democracy as a system, as deliberative epistemic instrumentalism. While he acknowledges the need for epistemic justification, he, unlike my approach, deems the position of epistemic proceduralism better suited for justifying democracy. The critical feature of epistemic proceduralism is the attitude that the focus of justification is on democratic procedures, and that justified democratic procedures of public deliberation in collective decision-making will also generate epistemic quality. Epistemic quality, in this sense, is not something external and procedure independent, but an inherent feature of democratic processes.

I have to agree that, within such a classification, Mladenović is entirely correct regarding several points: (i) my research indeed focuses on *the epistemic features of democracy as a social system* (institutions and practices), and questions the potential of a deliberation-based democratic system to generate epistemically valuable beliefs or decisions, (ii) the *epistemic value of democracy is not reducible to the political fairness* of the collective decision-making procedure, which is central to the political justification of democracy, (iii) democracy will be epistemically justified in virtue of the epistemic value of its beliefs/decisions/solutions to problems, i.e., in *virtue of its consequences and results, rather than its procedure*. Resolving citizens' issues is a manifestation of "truth," a concept that I do not use in its strict epistemic meaning, but, instead, explicitly use as a "shortcut" or a mark of epistemic value. As a generic concept of epistemic quality, "truth" does not only refer to solving problems, but also to other epistemic accomplishments such as truth-conduciveness, truth-sensitivity, empirical adequacy, accuracy, understanding, correctness, or like. It is these particular stances that determine my attitude within the epistemology of democracy, and they stem from the assumptions of social epistemology, virtue epistemology, and the pluralism of epistemic value (according to which truth monism does not register other notable epistemic accomplishments).

Unlike Mladenović and other epistemic proceduralists (Estlund 2008, Peter 2008; 2013), I do not think that ensuring that a procedure is fair will necessarily lead to epistemic quality. Such a stance strikes me as some kind of epistemic optimism, or even an epistemic idealism, a groundless hope that political virtue will somehow generate the epistemic. Of course, regarding the proceduralist position, there is the question of what we consider the target of epistemic quality – the procedure, or the final decision. In either version, I hold those

epistemic proceduralists, who negate the existence of procedure-independent epistemic value, also deny the autonomy of epistemic value and epistemic virtues, reducing them to the political value of the procedure. I consider Estlund's epistemic proceduralism, which Mladenović mentions as an acceptable position, inconsistent because he negates procedure-independent epistemic value, but still speaks about some kind of tendency in procedures to generate correct decisions. How can we call a decision correct if there is no epistemic value to define what correctness is? More consistent is Fabienne Peter's pure epistemic proceduralism, where all epistemic value is explicitly reduced to the fairness of the procedure. However, I consider both versions of epistemic proceduralism unacceptable because they neglect the intrinsic epistemic virtue of democracy. This consequence is precisely the reason why I characterized epistemic instrumentalism as a politically instrumentalist position, which instrumentalizes or sacrifices epistemic values to the political. I criticize both political and epistemic instrumentalism, which, on the other hand, instrumentalizes and sacrifices autonomous political virtue to the epistemic. Moreover, I hold that epistemic proceduralism is an elitist and undemocratic position. It is evident that I assign the term "instrumentalism", a different meaning than Mladenović, which might give rise to possible confusion.

However, regardless of terminology, I acknowledge the importance of Mladenović's objection that insisting on epistemic value or the quality of outcomes already somehow privileges epistemic justification. Simply put, he objects that I might have fallen into the trap of sacrificing the political rationale for democratic procedures to the epistemic quality of their outcome. I hold that the value of political justification, understood as the act of justifying democracy as a collective decision-making procedure where all citizens are treated equally, is beyond dispute. Even so, I simultaneously hold that the question of the epistemic quality of the outcomes of democracy is legitimate if we are interested in the desirability of democracy as a system. The appropriateness of democracy, however, is not just a question of political philosophy, but the much broader question of civic interests – who care equally about the fairness of the system as about its capacity to generate correct decisions that resolve their problems. By inquiring about the justification or desirability of the outcomes of democracy, I might transcend the disciplinary field of political philosophy and political justification, but I do not bring it into question. I am certainly not trying to uproot political justification nor the democratic rationale. But neither will I sacrifice the epistemic rationale of outcomes.

### **3. The Epistemic Virtue of Democracy is more than an Appropriate Tool for Political Goals**

Elvio Baccharini (2020), like Mladenović, endorses the stance that epistemic justification is crucial to the justification of democracy, but also the stance that we ought to find the correct balance between political and epistemic justification. However, instead of the epistemic proceduralism that Mladenović located as

the optimal option for harmonizing political and epistemic justification, Baccarini proposes Rawls' conception of the legitimacy of democracy (Rawls 2005). Although he states that Rawls focuses primarily on political justification, Baccarini firmly endorses his sensitivity towards the epistemic rationale, which can be found in his stances regarding "reasonable persons", "valid public reasons", and "burdens of judgment", which refer to the epistemic virtues of epistemic agents. In Baccarini's view, it is virtue epistemology, which shifts the normative focus onto the epistemic agent, that allows us to understand the properties of reasonableness and the validity of public reasons as epistemic virtues: in doing this, virtue epistemology enables us to fully apply Rawls' proposal to the epistemic justification of democracy. If we fulfill certain preconditions – such as public deliberation among reasonable persons who respect valid public reasons and the state of reasonable plurality – Baccarini holds that a democratic system will be epistemically justified, and its generated decisions of the highest epistemic quality. Setting the truthfulness of decisions/beliefs as the criterion of epistemic quality, according to him, is not only unnecessary but can threaten reasonable pluralism. Namely, there is generally no need to subject the epistemically desirable state of reasonable disagreement to a pointless quest for the ostensible truth. What is more, disputes about moral doctrines, theories of social justice, or ethical arguments (about abortion, medically assisted suicide or moral enhancement) are inevitable, and every attempt to force the resolution of these disagreements is, according to Baccarini, a politically and epistemically unjustified attack on reasonable pluralism.

It is precisely social epistemology (Fricker 1998, Goldman 2010) and virtue epistemology (Zagzebski 1996, Greco 2002, Sosa 2007, Roberts and Wood 2007) that provide us with an appropriate theoretical framework for assessing the epistemic features of a system such as democracy. We can inquire whether a democratic system – and its institutions, practices, and procedures – have epistemic virtues in addition to the political, whether they solve the citizens' problems, whether they generate beliefs/decisions that are truth-conducive, truth-sensitive, correct, accurate, empirically adequate, or like. Baccarini endorses a certain simplification and relaxation of epistemic demands and ties them exclusively to the virtue of reasonableness. Given the pluralism of epistemic values that I support as an alternative to truth monism, the proposal that reasonableness is a kind of generic epistemic virtue can be acceptable. There are epistemic accomplishments – such as reasonableness, the reliability of processes, understanding, problem-solving capacity, and epistemic responsibility – that can be considered an indication of epistemic quality. As I have already noted, I use the concept of truth as a generic marker of epistemic quality, because I want to stress that, although we are talking about a plurality of epistemic values, I nonetheless assume the existence of objective epistemic value. In doing this, I distance my approach from post-modern and other theories that negate the objective, trans-historical, and universal value of truth, and which I consider a certain kind of epistemic revisionism or nihilism (Rorty 1979, Hollis and Lukes 1982). In other words, although social epistemology and virtue

epistemology, and my rejection of truth monism, allow us to evaluate different epistemic accomplishments (Kvanvig 2005), I still distance myself from all kinds of relativism concerning objective epistemic quality, or the stance we can have various equally valuable truths, or that opposing stances can have equal epistemic value. Although virtue epistemology focuses on the epistemic virtues of the epistemic agent, and only derivatively concerns the concept of truth, it is certainly not an approach that endorses relativism, revisionism, or nihilism regarding truth.

The reasonableness and validity of reasons, therefore, can only be epistemically justified if it refers to an objectively valuable epistemic property. Reasonable pluralism is undoubtedly methodologically epistemologically helpful because it relates to epistemic diversity, inclusiveness, openness to opposing attitudes, perspectives, evidence and arguments, and mutual respect. These are procedures that can enhance the final epistemic quality. If, however, we set reasonable pluralism or reasonable disagreement as our final epistemic aim or the ultimate epistemic value, then this entails a relativization and rejection of the notion of objective epistemic value. Although states of disagreement are natural and even conducive to the better quality of final decisions, beliefs, or solutions to problems - they cannot be deemed an epistemic accomplishment, because this would mean that conflicting attitudes can be of equal objective epistemic value. In that vein, I hold that reasonable disagreement and reasonable pluralism, as I note in my book, are certainly a political value since they establish respectful stability between disagreeing parties. However, political value does not automatically generate epistemic value, and endorsing this attitude is a political instrumentalization of epistemic virtues.

The epistemic value of reasonable disagreement is, as I have noted, procedural or methodological, and includes the notion of truth as a regulative epistemic aim. In that sense, Rawls' proposal, even in the manner Baccarini enhances it, is still primarily in the realm of political justification, or at least still prioritizes the political to the epistemic. The epistemic virtue of reasonableness is in the function of valuable and long-lasting political stability, which is undoubtedly very important. From the perspective of political radicalization and the deteriorating quality of civic agency, which is how Baccarini opens his article, the value of reasonable persons, valid public reasons, reasonable plurality, and the state of reasonable disagreement, cannot be disputed. However, from my perspective, it is not sufficient for an appropriate balance between political and epistemic virtues. Epistemic quality requires beliefs/decisions/solutions that do not only tame present tensions and prevent political disasters, but that also solve problems, and are correct, truth-sensitive, and truth-conductive. Finally, I ought to stress that, in the goal of harmonizing the highest political with the highest epistemic quality, it is possible to "negotiate" or to sacrifice "truth" to urgent political values. It is possible, in critical situations, to achieve to mere political functionality of democracy, to endorse reasonable disagreement as a satisfactory epistemic value, but it cannot be the ultimate epistemic virtue of democracy.

#### 4. The Division of Epistemic Labor, or how to Overcome the Limitations of Individual and Collective Intelligence

Once we inquire about the epistemic quality of democracy, or, precisely, about the epistemic quality of democratic outcomes, solutions to problems, beliefs, and decisions, it is natural to wonder about the best way of achieving them. In introducing the division of epistemic labor, which assigns a unique role to experts, there is the question of privileging a minority elite, which Mladenović had implied from the position of epistemic proceduralism (Peter 2016). However, on the other hand, there is the question of whether experts genuinely possess the necessary expertise to solve the citizens' problems, and whether there is a better way to resolve issues. Here, I defend the stance that a division of epistemic labor between citizens and experts best balances the preservation of democratic and epistemic values, by neutralizing the limitations of individual and collective intelligence. Kristina Lekić Barunčić (2020), Ivana Janković (2020), and Marko-Luka Zubčić (2020), each in their unique way question the efficiency of the proposed division of epistemic labor.

Janković and Zubčić, upheld by careful arguments, emphasize the epistemic potential of collective deliberation in resolving complex problems. Both hold that, under specific conditions, groups will provide better answers to problems than individual – or even conjoined – experts. Although they both respect the importance of expertise and factual knowledge in resolving issues, they simply ask whether the proposed division of labor and the inclusion of experts is indeed the best avenue towards attaining knowledge and solving problems. According to them, citizens can resolve complex problem, rather than only participate in defining the problems, choosing the experts whom they will trust, and overseeing whether the issues have been solved but in resolving the problems.

Janković quotes empirical findings that show the individual expertise of professionals is inferior to collective intelligence. Namely, the citizens' random diversity, due to a real and spontaneous combination of perspectives, interpretations, evidence, experiences, and like, guarantees more valuable decisions than those made by isolated experts constrained by their specific professional field. Even if they formed their own decision-making groups, experts cannot attain the level of diversity exhibited by random groups of citizens, because the very fact of their education, similar material status, and belonging to a group of peers, constrains their perspective. Janković does not dispute the fact experts exist, or that they possess superior factual knowledge, but still claims that – with the appropriate institutional framework of forming groups and informing citizens, while acknowledging their cognitive abilities and the capacity of diversity – a deliberative democratic process of collective decision-making would yield better results. Zubčić provides further evidence for the potential of collective intelligence and situational circumstances, and speaks of the institutional arrangements that can improve the reliability of citizens' decisions. He highlights the epistemic potential of social epistemic inequalities, and of free and redundant disagreement during decision-making. If our goal is the

highest possible epistemic quality, according to Zubčić, we need to empower our problem-solving expertise, which has thus far wrongly focuses on experts, rather than on the collective epistemic virtues of the people. Zubčić analyses the epistemic features of collectives or groups that insure civic expertise – epistemic inequality, diversity, inclusiveness, pluralism, and the freedom to form and remain in redundant disagreement. It seems that Janković and Zubčić's stance rests on Mill's idea of the free market of ideas, epistemic potential of *laissez faire*, or the free flow of ideas that trumps the epistemic strength of experts (Mill 1859, Goldman and Cox 1996). Both augment Mill's view by stressing the desirability and necessity of institutional regulation, acknowledging that the mere invisible hand of free public deliberation will not automatically derive quality from the pluralism and diversity of epistemically sub-optimal agents.

I almost completely agree with assumption that at the foot of their arguments: the key to epistemic quality is not in experts, but in finding a system of procedures that most reliably solve the citizens' problems. That is the very essence of reliability democracy. However, while I hold that experts are a necessary part of the procedures that satisfy the condition of reliably solving problems, Janković and Zubčić range from the strong stance that it citizens rather than experts, to the milder attitude that experts do not always deserve their role in the division of labor.

The division of epistemic labor that I endorse is not rooted in the stance that groups of citizens have no cognitive potential, or that they are incapable – even with the right education or information, the appropriate affective stance towards opposing opinions, and with a proper institutional arrangement – of making decisions as good as those of experts. I have tried to underline the circumstances where the potential of diversity, pluralism, and inclusiveness will generate the highest benefits for resolving problems, and concluded that these circumstances are the moment of detecting the urgency of the issues, of choosing the relevant experts, and of overseeing whether the proposed solution genuinely resolves their problems (Goodin 2006, Zollman 2010). These tasks are part of the epistemic labor of citizens. The inclusion of experts in the division of labor is based on empirical findings concerning the limitations of collective intelligence – not just during majority voting, but during deliberation (Ahlstrom-Vij 2012; 2013). These constraints include the *hegemony of common knowledge* (Prelec, Seung, McCoy, 2017), the *common knowledge effect* (Gigone and Hastie 1993, Sunstein 2006), the *Dunning-Kruger effects* (Dunning and Kruger, 1999) as well as the social conditions of the distribution of information, such as informational filters, echo chambers, informational bubbles, and like. Non-experts, who are not involved in a specific field, usually lack the time, maturity, and factual knowledge needed to absorb expert information, and there are no institutional capacities to neutralize these social and cognitive barriers to resolving problems. The wisdom of crowds, that Janković and Zubčić appeal for, rests on the idea that plurality and diversity can make up for the individual limitations of experts, but it does not acknowledge the fact experts can neutralize our collective weaknesses. My proposal of the division

of epistemic labor should – in the context of our search for epistemic quality – offset the limitation of both collective and individual decision-making. This reason is why I don't think that experts should assume the entirety of epistemic labor, but, instead, just those aspects that will generate the highest epistemic quality. Part of the work belongs to citizens because they can neutralize the individual limitations of experts, and even of groups of experts.

Janković and Zubčić argue we should neutralize these collective limitations through institutional interventions and regulations, but they also believe citizens can resolve complex problems without resorting to expert assistance. The role of experts, in this argument, needs to be as small as possible to ensure the most valuable result, and political justification. The form of reliability democracy I propose is neither expertism nor epistocracy, but a position that favors those decision-making procedures that most reliably lead to epistemic quality. Reliability democracy rests on five *veritistic* criteria that guarantee the epistemic quality of a procedure: (i) *reliability*, or the ratio of true and false decisions generated by this procedure; (ii) *power*, or the strength of the procedure that produces these decisions; (iii) *fecundity*, or the strength of the procedure to solve the problems of interest citizens; (iv) *efficacy*, or the cost-benefit ratio of the procedure; (v) *speed* or the duration/time required for the procedure to solve the problem (Goldman 1999, Prijic Samaržija 2000). In other words, according to reliability democracy, if a different division of epistemic labor, including the one that assigns everything to citizens, is a better fit for these criteria, then it should be implemented. My opinion is that in our sub-ideal epistemic circumstances, which do not meet the minimum epistemic and affective standards that would guarantee the quality of citizens' beliefs (Kitcher 2011), we need to entrust part of the labors to experts (Prijic Samaržija 2017). This proposal of the division of epistemic labor best combines the individual and collective epistemic virtues that guarantee the best solutions.

Finally, Kristina Lekić Barunčić raises the interesting question of whether the division of epistemic labor between citizens and experts can be implemented in real-world circumstances. The question is whether the model of reliability democracy, where citizens identify and define their problems, and oversee whether they are resolved efficiently, while experts address the issues, can function in real life. In her example, autism treatment policies showed that proponents of the neurodiversity movement did not trust the delegated experts, and concluded they could form better strategies by themselves. One of the reasons for this mistrust, and this refusal to accept the division of epistemic labor with experts, were their bad experiences derived from unsuccessful and discriminatory expert attempts to treat their illnesses. I hold that this discussion points to two essential challenges concerning the division of epistemic labor. The first is the question *when* citizens are justified in granting experts their trust. The second is the inquiry about whether citizens *can* assess when they should split their labor with experts.

In my book, I endorse the idea of a *derived* authority of experts, rather than a *fundamental* authority, which would require the citizens' blind trust

or deference to experts. The experts' authority should be derived from their status of objective experts, rather than from their reputation. In other words, the experts' trustworthiness should be grounded in the fact the citizens have witnessed their authority, i.e., their ability to solve complex problems through truth-revealing situations efficiently. The stance the experts' authority is not fundamental and does not stem from their mere status rests on the demand for the citizens' political and epistemic autonomy, and on the conditions for justifying trust. If citizens lack the evidential basis that would support an expert's epistemic competence, their credulity would be neither justified nor epistemically responsible. Whether the citizens do possess sufficient evidence to recognize objective expertise in an epistemically responsible way is a separate problem that I talk about at length in my book. Still, my final stance is there are social mechanisms that do allow non-experts to recognize expertise (Goldman 2001). The division of epistemic labor between citizens and experts under the condition of rationality can function even in sub-ideal epistemic circumstances.

However, there are real social situations that do not satisfy the minimum epistemic and affective conditions of epistemic agents, nor the preconditions of the public use of reason. On the contrary, they exhibit a dominance of will over reason, and intellectual and moral egoism. It is possible that the citizens will decide there is no better expert on specific questions than themselves alone, that their truths – given they are theirs and based on their right to be treated as free and equal – are as epistemically valuable as those of experts, and that no expertise is neutral and objective, but, instead, is always tied to some non-epistemic goals, or is contaminated by their personal values and epistemic background. It is this resistance to expertise and experts, and to science and rational debate, sometimes referred to as the culture of ignorance or the cult of amateurism, that marks our time more than any time past (DeNicola 2017, Nichols 2017). Movements such as the anti-vaxxers are the most radical example. Should we, then, allow citizens and civic campaigns to make decisions about topics where there are people whose expertise surpasses theirs? Kristina Lekić Barunčić endorses the stance about improving communication to ascertain whether there are the conditions for establishing evidence-based trust. This approach is undoubtedly one of the ways to create the epistemic and affective preconditions for the public use of reason. However, what should we do when there is no such will, when extremist attitudes are born and developed within echo chambers that stifle all communication with their resistance to opposing beliefs, which they consider dangerous and harmful? It is a considerable challenge for the question of the feasibility of any division of epistemic labor. However, it must be said that the subject of the citizens' political and epistemic autonomy must not be confused with their political and epistemic egoism. While the first is desirable, the second is undoubtedly blameworthy, and is not a manifestation of democracy, in particular when it assumes the form of radicalism or extremism.

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## Snježana Prijić Samaržija

### Epistemologija demokratije: epistemičke vrline demokratije

#### Apstrakt

Novo i vibratno područje epistemologije demokratije ili istraživanje epistemičkog opravdanja demokratije kao društvenog sistema procedura, institucija i praksi nužno, kao interdisciplinarni poduhvat, povezuje epistemologe i filozofe politike. Uprkos mogućim prigovorima da ovakva vrsta diskusije ili nije dovoljno epistemološka ili da nije dovoljno filozofsko-politička, ovaj pristup upravo obeležava nakana usklađivanja političkog i epistemičkog opravdanja demokratije. U ovom se članku bavim nekim temeljnim izazovima vezanim uz prirodu epistemičkog opravdanja demokratije kao i pitanjem koji je najbolji teorijski okvir za usklađivanje političkih i epistemičkih vrednosti. Takođe, posebno važnim smatram pitanje može li predložena podela epistemičkog posla i uključivanje stručnjaka doista poboljšati epistemički kvalitet odlučivanja bez pretnje za političko opravdanje. U članku argumentujem u prilog tri teze; (i) ne samo procedura, već i ishodi demokratije, kao društvenog sistema, treba da budu epistemički vredni, (ii) epistemička vrlina demokratije više je od prikladnog sredstva za političke ciljeve, (iii) podela epistemičkog posla u demokratiji treba da nadiđe kako ograničenja individualne i kolektivne inteligencije.

**Ključne reči:** epistemologija demokratije, epistemičko opravdanje demokratije, socijalna epistemologija, epistemologija vrline, pluralizam epistemičkih vrednosti, podela epistemičkog posla