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THE PROCEDURAL VALUE OF EPISTEMIC VIRTUES**

Abstract: The longstanding tension between the procedural and instrumental justification of democracy has been challenged by the theories that try to combine both approaches. These theories portray epistemic features of democracy in an instrumental framework and then try to reconcile them with procedural values. In this paper, I argue that it is possible to incorporate an epistemic dimension into a justification of democracy, without resorting to instrumentalism. On the view that I advance, Peircean epistemology, when combined with intrinsically valued epistemic virtues, constitutes a purely procedural argument for democracy.

Keywords: proceduralism, instrumentalism, democracy, epistemic democracy, epistemic virtues, pragmatism.

Epistemology and democracy are often thought of as being at odds with one another. Democracy tends to simultaneously embrace and violate certain epistemic ideals. Institutions of equality, free press, and fair elections should pave the way for well-informed, deliberate, and reasoned decision-making processes. Yet, the very same institutions can become a breeding ground for propaganda groups (Stanley, 2015), demagogues (Roberts-Miller, 2017), or strategically minded voters (Moser & Scheiner, 2009), who nullify the epistemic benefits of public opinion. However, even the authors who attempt to provide a non-epistemic justification of democracy (cf. Richardson, 2003; Shapiro, 2016) agree that epistemic ideals are an important factor in democratic legitimacy – or, at the very least,

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they do not try to claim that uninformed and incompetent citizens will benefit democracy (Talisie, 2019).

Despite this apparent tension, a growing amount of literature suggests that the reconciliation between epistemology and democracy is both possible and desirable. My paper is another small step towards that goal. It is divided into three parts. In the *first* part, I describe the central debate in democratic theory, the one between proceduralism and instrumentalism. Each of these conceptions, taken in a strict sense, faces its own problems, which is why some authors opt for a middle way between them. I will present two such views: David Estlund's epistemic proceduralism (Estlund, 2008) and Elizabeth Anderson's experimentalist model (Anderson, 2006), as well as their critiques of these two opposing conceptions. I will claim that, although most of their criticisms are in place, neither Estlund nor Anderson manages to successfully mediate between the two opposed lines of argumentation, and that both of their accounts are leaning towards instrumentalism. In the *second* part of the paper, I will present a tripartite argument against instrumentalism which (more or less) directly affects Estlund's and Anderson's views as well. Here, I will draw heavily on the criticisms put forward by Fabienne Peter (2008). The purpose of this argument is to show that the epistemic benefits of democracy, when placed inside an instrumentalist framework, are either untenable or become a dangerous tool for anti-democratic arguments. In the *third* part, I will present a procedural way of incorporating the epistemic dimension into a justification of democracy. This view combines three theoretical approaches: Peter's pure epistemic proceduralism, Peircean epistemology, and the idea of intrinsically valuable epistemic virtues.

1. Walking a Tightrope: Between Proceduralism and Instrumentalism

Main results of the social choice theory (Arrow, 1963), and the subsequent interpretations that these results show that collective decision-making is essentially devoid of meaning (Riker, 1982) posed a challenge to democratic theorists of all persuasions. Ever since these results appeared in the literature, advocates of democracy have been looking for suitable counterarguments. The current trends of deliberative and epistemic theories of democracy emerged partially as a response to this challenge. Two distinct lines of argumentation became prominent in the literature. Authors who start from the central assumption of social choice theory – that voting is the expression of individual *preferences* – have several strate-

gies at their disposal: they can try to weaken the rationality conditions presupposed by Arrow's impossibility theorem (Black, 1998 [1958], pp. 363–367); they can use the results of descriptive social choice theory to show that these negative consequences are rarely (if ever) practically realized (Regenwetter, et al., 2009); or, they can advance the view that voting should be replaced or complemented by public deliberation (Cohen, 1989).¹ Other authors chose to abandon this starting assumption, and endorse the view that, in democratic decision-making, citizens express their *beliefs* about which option is the best one, according to some procedure-independent criterion (Cohen, 1986; Goodin & Spiekermann, 2018).

These two approaches shaped the debate between two different ways of justifying democracy – procedural and instrumental. While authors on both sides of this debate claim that democratic governments are superior to non-democratic ones, they disagree about why this is so. According to proceduralism, the political outcomes are supposed to be *fair*, while in the instrumentalist view they ought to be *right* (List & Goodin, 2001). The central claim behind the proceduralist approach is that democracy is justified intrinsically, that is, without appealing to any external criteria by which we judge political outcomes. Substantive claims are to be made about procedures themselves, rather than their outcomes. If the procedural standards are met, any possible outcome is equally desirable – at least according to proceduralism. Instrumentalism claims the opposite: an advantageous feature of democracy is that it shows a tendency to produce better outcomes when compared to alternative ways of political decision-making. However, whether we should consider the outcome to be good or bad depends on the external standards which are independent of the decision-making procedure.²

1 It is, of course, possible to combine all of these approaches (e.g., Mackie, 2001, 2003, 2011).

2 A short note on terminology. The same central distinction is sometimes made between *epistemic* and *procedural* justification of democracy (cf. List & Goodin, 2001). Although epistemic democracy is traditionally framed in instrumental terms (Schwartzberg, 2015), I believe that equating “instrumentalism” with “epistemic democracy” is not feasible, especially after Estlund's theory of “epistemic proceduralism” gained prominence. Such terminology is even more misleading when we take into account positions like Peter's, which are resolutely non-instrumental, yet epistemic at the same time. For this reason, some recent papers (cf. Fuerstein, 2019) refer to these opposed lines of argumentation as “pure epistemic” and “pure procedural” conceptions of democracy. Instrumentalism, for its part, sometimes entails a *broader* conception of democracy, where both democratic procedures and some additional institutions contribute to the correctness of outcomes (Mladenović, 2020, p. 4). The upshot is that neither every epistemic theory of democracy has to be instrumental, nor do instrumental approaches have to appeal to epistemic standards. In this paper,

However, the two views are not as mutually exclusive as they may seem. Many ways of justifying democracy include both procedural and instrumental merits, although in different proportions. In fact, theories of democracy form a spectrum in terms of epistemic demands that they put before the citizens.³ On one end of this spectrum are the theories that attach little or no importance to the correctness of individual judgments. Here, the social choice theory is a prime example. On the opposite end of the spectrum are Condorcetian theories (e.g., Goodin & Spiekermann, 2018) and what Estlund calls correctness theories. These theories claim that democracy is a mostly or completely reliable method of arriving at the correct outcomes, and they count on the epistemic prowess of individual citizens (Kelly, 2012).

Between those opposing ends are various theories that lean towards the procedural or instrumental side of the spectrum, without being fully committed to either approach. Some theorists, however, claim that neither purely instrumental nor purely procedural justification of democracy is plausible and that it is possible to justify democracy on both grounds simultaneously. In this section of the paper, I will present two such theories, Estlund's epistemic proceduralism and Anderson's Deweyan model of democracy. My aim is to explore how each of these theories finds its way between the two opposing ends of the spectrum. Although I accept the idea that justification of democracy must include both procedural and epistemic components, I will conclude that, despite their promising and influential approach, neither of the two theories manages to position itself on the middle of this spectrum.

Estlund's Epistemic Proceduralism

Estlund presents the conflict between proceduralism and instrumentalism in the form of the Euthyphro dilemma: are good democratic decisions good because they are democratically made, or are they democratically made because they are good? Criticizing the first horn of the dilemma – a view that the value of democratic decisions lies in the mere fact that they are democratic – Estlund claims that a common feature of all forms of proceduralism is the “flight from substance” (Estlund, 2008,

by “instrumentalism” I mean those epistemic conceptions of democracy that presuppose a procedure-independent standard of correctness. This technically makes it a case of *epistemic* instrumentalism (Peter, 2016, p. 138); but since I will not take into account any broader notion of it, just “instrumentalism” will suffice.

3 Jamie Terrence Kelly (2012) is the first to propose the term “spectrum of epistemic demands”, but the general idea was introduced by Estlund (1997, p. 182).

p. 65), i.e., the idea that democratic procedures have an intrinsic value, independent of any substantive standards that lie beyond the procedure itself. Estlund distinguishes between three variants of this view – fair proceduralism, normative social choice theory, and (procedural account of) deliberative democracy – and offers a series of criticisms aimed to show why such a flight is impossible.

Firstly, Estlund is critical of insistence on majority rule as a *fair procedure* that gives all citizens an equal right to vote. If that is enough to make a procedure fair, he claims, it would be equally fair to choose between the possible options by tossing a coin, since that procedure would also give everyone the same amount of say (Estlund, 2008, p. 82). Estlund, however, points out that this is an absurd proposal in a political context; and one that would hardly be acceptable to the theorists of proceduralism who would nevertheless insist that voting is a preferable way to make decisions. But in that case, their position no longer flees from substance, as they acknowledge that fair proceduralism must include some non-procedural values that make voting fundamentally different from random selection (Estlund, 2008, pp. 82–83). Estlund admits that this is a very “thin” version of proceduralism that is easy to refute, but he finds it important to immediately lay bare what a theory that completely rejects procedure-independent standards look like (Estlund, 2008, p. 83).

Estlund subjects the *social choice theory* to a similar line of criticism. The crucial aspect of this theory is what Estlund calls the condition of aggregativity: if a collection of individual preferences (understood in a broad sense as a set of ends, aims, or choices) leads to some procedural outcome, then individual changes in preferences should result in a change of the final outcome (Estlund, 2008, p. 73). It is intuitively clear how majority voting fulfills the condition of aggregativity – if some citizens had voted differently, the outcome could have been different. Random selection, on the other hand, violates this condition. Estlund, however, makes an interesting point here: the aggregativity condition says nothing about whether the correlation between individual preferences and the final outcome should be positive or negative. If we imagine a situation in which an option gains popularity among individual voters, but then scores poorer in the elections, the condition of aggregativity is still met. Moreover, the normative social choice theory is often aimed precisely at studying and interpreting such cases. Claiming that the correlation *should* be positive requires additional non-procedural reasons. Thus, Estlund concludes, although nominally focused on procedural conditions, the social choice theory includes additional substantive standards independent of the procedure itself (Estlund, 2008, pp. 74–75).

When criticizing the deliberative theory of democracy, Estlund combines the previous two arguments. He distinguishes between two proceduralist forms of deliberative democracy: deep deliberative democracy and fair deliberative proceduralism.⁴ *Deep deliberative democracy* arises with the rejection of the basic assumptions of social choice theory. Social choice theory revolves around the idea that it is possible to aggregate individual preferences into a coherent choice of an entire group but ignores the fact that preferences themselves can arise as a product of false information and manipulation. Therefore, deep deliberative democracy focuses on idealized hypothetical procedures of public deliberation, but it (presumably) rejects any standards independent from the procedure, just as social choice theory does (Estlund, 2008, p. 88). However, as Estlund believes, this theory runs into the same problem as a social choice theory – by asserting that there is a correspondence between outcomes and ideally understood individual interests, deep deliberative democracy cannot avoid invoking any substantive standard (Estlund, 2008, p. 92). *Fair deliberative proceduralism* (which Estlund considers an unstable hybrid theory), in turn, rests on the view that the advantage of public deliberation is that it allows a large number of people to express their views, whatever they may be. This theory claims that it puts no emphasis on the epistemic value of deliberation, just on a fair representation of citizens' views. Estlund, however, considers this claim to be unsustainable: if the purpose of deliberation is to transform brute preferences into informed ones, then it plays an epistemic role nevertheless (Estlund, 2008, p. 94). Although this is *a different kind* of epistemic role when compared with theories that claim that deliberation allows better outcomes (from a procedure-independent point of view), Estlund still regards this as a substantive claim. Otherwise, fair deliberative proceduralism, just like its non-deliberative counterpart, could not explain why deliberation is a superior tool for decision-making when compared with randomly chosen outcomes (Estlund, 2008, pp. 94–95). Therefore, in Estlund's view, all standard forms of proceduralism are incoherent. Although proceduralism calls for a flight from substance, procedural accounts of democracy either explicitly make substantive claims or cannot explain why democracy does better than a coin toss without resorting to substantive claims.⁵

4 Although the deliberative theory emphasizes the social process by which individual attitudes are formed (in contrast to the social choice theory which takes preferences as simply given), Estlund posits that it is still strictly proceduralist in its original forms (Estlund, 2008, p. 87).

5 The continuing problem with Estlund's analysis of proceduralism is his failure to distinguish between two different notions of proceduralism. Ivan Mladenović argues that proceduralism can be understood in a narrower and wider sense. A narrow sense of proceduralism deals with the normative conditions that a democratic decision-

The second horn of Eutyphro dilemma presupposes non-proceduralist epistemic approaches to democracy which Estlund calls *correctness theories*. According to them, political decisions are legitimate only if they are correct by some procedure-independent standard, and democratic procedures are considered sufficiently accurate to make collective decisions correct (Estlund, 2008, p. 102). Here the *locus classicus* is Rousseau's notion of general will. For Rousseau, outcomes are legitimate because they are correct – and when they are incorrect, they are illegitimate – but this legitimacy has nothing to do with any procedural reason; it is the general will that gives legitimacy to political decisions. Estlund does not object to Rousseau's view that the outcomes should be obeyed. What he finds problematic in Rousseau's theory is the claim that those who are in minority must admit that they were wrong and that their notion of general will was a faulty one. This is what Estlund calls “the problem of deference”, and it is his main reason for rejecting correctness theories (Estlund, 2008, pp. 103–104).

Estlund introduces epistemic proceduralism as an alternative to both (purely) procedural and instrumental justification of democracy. It is the theory that combines some elements of both lines of argumentation. Epistemic proceduralism is epistemic since it asserts that democracy tends to produce correct decisions (Estlund, 2008, p. 8); but it is at the same time procedural since it claims that legitimacy (its coercive power) and authoritativeness (its moral commitments) of democracy stems from the fact that democratic procedures are acceptable to all qualified points of view (Estlund, 2008, pp. 41–42). Correctness theories have a too strong epistemic claim: every legitimate decision must be correct. According to epistemic proceduralism, the outcome is legitimate even if it is incorrect, given that procedural reasons are met.

Epistemic proceduralism does not face the problem of deference, since it does not claim that the democratic outcome constitutes a rea-

making procedure should satisfy to be considered justified. The broader understanding of proceduralism takes a decision-making procedure *in a general sense* as the basis of the justification of democracy (Mladenović, 2019, pp. 166–167). Some authors, like Riker (1982), may use procedural claims in a narrow sense to draw broader conclusions about the procedural justification of democracy, but we must keep in mind that two senses of proceduralism deal with different normative problems. With that distinction in mind, we can see that substantive standards which Estlund attributes to proceduralists are procedural claims in a narrow sense which he interprets as a broader claim about the justification of democracy (Mladenović, 2019, p. 175). Furthermore, Estlund thereby undermines his own position: if epistemic proceduralism is, as Estlund claims, a form of proceduralism, then it too must deal with normative conditions that the decision-making procedure must satisfy (Mladenović, 2019, pp. 179–180).

son for a belief about the correctness of the said outcome. According to Estlund, democracy gives its citizens *moral* reasons to comply instead of epistemic reasons to believe (Estlund, 2008, p. 106). Thus, epistemic proceduralism can generate more legitimacy with less demanding epistemic claims. It is important to note that epistemic proceduralism differs from fair proceduralism only in cases where *there are* independent moral standards (more on this later) according to which some outcome is correct. In such cases, epistemic proceduralism is the view that democracy can be procedurally impartial among citizens' opinions, and tend to produce correct decisions at a better-than-random rate (Estlund, 2008, p. 107–108). Therefore, Estlund believes that epistemic proceduralism occupies a perfect place between the theories that are not epistemic enough (since they ignore moral standards even when they should not be ignored), and those that are too epistemic (and thus face the problem of deference) (Estlund, 2008, p. 102).

Anderson's Experimentalist Model

Just like Estlund, Anderson is not satisfied with the prevailing dichotomy between proceduralism and instrumentalism. She claims that such dichotomy is neither desirable nor plausible. Proceduralism, in her view, merely requires that the decision-making process is fair for democracy to be justified. However, if fairness is the only standard we should adhere to, we cannot draw a meaningful difference between a coin flip and other decision-making procedures. Justification of democracy needs more than that: we believe that citizens confer legitimacy to a certain decision with their very participation in decision-making, thus proclaiming that a given problem is of public interest. However, we are thereby complying with external criteria (Anderson, 2006, pp. 9–10). On the other hand, whether a particular problem is of public interest or not becomes clear only when citizens (or their representatives) put it into consideration through procedurally fair decision-making, which is determined internally. So, as Anderson concludes, an adequate conception of democracy must include both internal and external criteria (Anderson, 2006, p. 10).

Anderson views democracy as a process of collective problem-solving, the success of which depends on the criteria stated above. Additionally, the satisfactory model of democracy has to incorporate three constitutive features of democracy. It needs to take advantage of the epistemic *diversity* of individuals; it must model *discussion* as an epistemically productive process; and it must be *dynamic*, which means that it must provide feedback mechanisms for improving its epistemic results; I call this the DDD

conception of democracy. Anderson aims to determine the most adequate account of democracy by comparing three competing models of epistemic democracy: Condorcet's jury theorem (CJT), the diversity-trumps-ability (DTA) model by Lu Hong and Scott Page, and Dewey's experimentalist model.

CJT fails to satisfy any of the three components of DDD conception. Firstly, the main result of CJT holds regardless of the group's internal diversity. What is more, Condorcet's original formulation of the theorem (1976 [1785]) presupposes homogenous groups. While having diverse groups will not necessarily *harm* the theorem's optimistic result (Grofman, et al., 1983), diversity plays no role in CJT whatsoever. Secondly, CJT supposes that group members vote independently of one another. As with diversity, there are extensions of CJT that claim that pre-voting discussion is not necessarily harmful to the theorem (Goodin & Spiekermann, 2018, pp. 67–73). However, Anderson rightly points out that it is unclear whether CJT holds under the actual modern democratic practices, where free press and public discussions are constitutive, and not merely accidental features of democracy. Lastly, CJT cannot capture the dynamic features of democracy. Since this model suggests that the majority of voters are (nearly) infallible from the start, there is no need to revise any of the previous decisions (Anderson, 2006, pp. 11–12).

Things look brighter with the DTA model. In Hong and Page's (2004) computational experiment, diversity plays a crucial role in collective problem-solving. Additionally, Anderson claims that this model presents discussion, not as a hindrance, but as an epistemically productive factor. She finds this approach much more promising in comparison to the limited assumptions of CJT. The DTA model explicitly states that the problems agents are trying to solve are complex, which is important for the democratic interpretation of the model. As Anderson notes, one of the shortcomings of autocratic regimes is that they can solve only the simplest of problems – like catching a murderer – but perform far worse than democratic governments when the problem is politically complex. Nevertheless, the DTA model cannot comply with the last element of DDD conception – dynamics. Just like CJT, the model does not support any feedback mechanisms that could alter the decisions regardless of their consequences (Anderson, 2006, pp. 12–13).

Anderson claims that the only model of democracy which succeeds in grasping all three components of the DDD conception is Deweyan experimentalist account of democracy. According to this view, deliberation should be conceived as a type of thought experiment which aims to predict the consequences of implementing proposed solutions (Anderson,

2006, p. 13; Dewey, 1922). When citizens reach a decision, they act upon the agreed solution to see its actual consequences. If the results are unfavorable (e.g., the problem was not solved, or its solution produced some additional problems that could not be foreseen), the implemented solution is refuted, as in science, and the problem-solving process returns to the deliberative phase. Anderson asserts that Deweyan model is the only one that manages to provide a satisfactory feedback mechanism: its dynamism encourages the institutions of regular elections, free media, petitions, protests, and public reaction to proposed legislation. Moreover, this model envisages that diversity and discussion are fostered through institutions of civil society where members of certain social groups can work collectively to address common concerns (cf. Dewey, 1946, pp. 206–210) and those institutions are parties and civic associations (Anderson, 2006, p. 14). The Deweyan account is, therefore, a model of democracy that, according to Anderson, manages to fulfill both procedural and instrumental criteria.

The Persisting Dichotomy

Previously, I have introduced a view that different theories of democracy can be presented as particular positions on the spectrum of epistemic demands. On this view, the social choice theory is the least epistemically demanding account of democracy, while the correctness theories sit on the other end of the spectrum. The question is not whether one can endorse a theory that is positioned close to the middle of this spectrum. Such theories are well known (two of them are outlined above) and, I believe, are more plausible than any of the “extremes”. The real issue is whether any theory of democracy can claim that it has found its place *precisely* on the middle of this spectrum.

However, two now-classical theories that I have presented claim exactly that. Despite the differences in their approaches, Estlund’s and Anderson’s views share some general assumptions. As both authors remark, the accounts of democracy on either end of the spectrum are unsatisfactory, which is why they try to reconcile the two approaches, and I consider that a remarkable endeavor. But they consequently endorse the view that the dichotomy between proceduralism and instrumentalism cannot be sustained, and this is where I disagree.

A justification of democracy that combines procedural and epistemic elements is superior to those which are, as Peter puts it, *monistic*. The instrumentalist approaches that reduce democratic legitimacy to a single dimension of correctness are monistic; but equally monistic are the proce-

duralist views that reduce democratic legitimacy to the dimension of political fairness (Peter, 2008, p. 35). Neither Estlund's nor Anderson's theory is monistic in this sense, which makes them much more appealing. Hence, I accept that both procedural and epistemic components are necessary for a robust justification of democracy. Nevertheless, I believe that any particular line of justification *must* fall into one of the two general categories.

To put it bluntly, I do not believe that it is possible to walk this tight-rope without falling to either side of the chasm. The threshold is this: a justification of democracy either makes an appeal to procedure-independent standards or it does not. If it does, it is instrumental – even though its instrumentalism may vary in degrees. Estlund believes that the “gray area” between proceduralism and instrumentalism is big enough to fit an entire theory there; but any theory that accepts that democratic outcomes should be (fully or partially) judged according to some external standard of correctness is, at its crux, instrumental. Thus, despite being labeled “proceduralism”, I consider Estlund's theory to be a moderate form of instrumentalism.⁶ For Estlund, democracy is still (at least in certain cases) a truth-tracking process.

In Anderson's view, democracy is not a truth-tracking, but a problem-solving process. On the Deweyan account that she endorses, we cannot know things as they exist independently of our inquiry. This view is thus not veritistic, unlike Estlund's. But it is, nevertheless, equally consequentialist, since it assumes some shared goals that direct the problem-solving process and gives judgment about the consequences of different proposals (Peter, 2008, pp. 42–45). Thus, Anderson's theory is also a form of weak instrumentalism since democratic outcomes are subject to external criteria of evaluation.

Even if, as Anderson believes, every internalist justification of democracy must include some external criteria and *vice versa*, it does not follow that dichotomy itself is non-existing or misleading. Justifications of democracy can include internal and external criteria in varying degrees, in such a way that every particular theory is either (slightly) more procedural or instrumental. The latter is the case with Estlund's and Anderson's theories. I consider this their biggest weakness, which I will address in the second part.

6 Of course, there are commenters (cf. Prijic Samaržija, 2020, p. 58) who claim that, despite being called “epistemic”, epistemic proceduralism is still a form of proceduralism. While I disagree with that particular verdict, such comments nevertheless show just how close Estlund's theory is to the demarcation line between procedural and instrumental accounts. But it also speaks in favor of my view that the middle ground is practically unattainable.

2. A Gorgian Argument against Instrumentalism

In this section of the paper, I present what I call a *Gorgian argument*⁷ against instrumentalism. It is not a conclusive argument by any means; but it is a set of objections that, when taken together, I consider sufficient for rejecting epistemic instrumentalism. This sort of argument is primarily aimed against fully-fledged instrumentalists like Robert Goodin and Kai Spiekermann (2018) who defend epistemic democracy in the CJT framework, or H el ene Landemore (2013) who makes use of a wider variety of such models. However, I believe that it consequently compromises Estlund’s and Anderson’s positions, since they are committed to the very same basic assumptions. The argument goes as follows:

1. There is no procedure-independent standard of correctness.
2. Even if there is such a standard, we cannot distinguish between correct and incorrect decisions.
3. Even if we can make that distinction, what decisions are correct is known only by a select few.

1) In denying the existence of any independent standard of correctness, one ostensibly invokes the old objection that has its roots in Hume’s sharp division between facts and values (2011 [1748]). According to this notion, value judgments (that form the core of religious, aesthetical, ethical, and, presumably, political views) cannot be true in the same sense as scientific facts are. In the context of democratic decision-making, the very same objection was raised by social choice theorists (Black, 1998 [1958], p. 196; Little, 1952, p. 427). Delving too deep into this problem exceeds the aims and scope of this paper.⁸ I believe, however, that one can reasonably deny that there is an independent standard without full commitment to this dichotomy.

While commenting on the fact/value dichotomy (2018, pp. 39–42), Goodin and Spiekermann introduce the idea of *moral majoritarianism* (which they tend to reject). According to this view, political statements can neither be true nor false according to any external standard. Instead,

7 Ancient Greek sophist Gorgias famously defended skepticism with a tripartite argument. He claimed that 1) nothing exists; 2) even if something exists, it cannot be comprehended by anybody; 3) even if it is comprehensible, it is still incapable of being communicated to others (DK 82B3). By “Gorgian” here I mean the argument which shares the general form with this type of reasoning. Even if we accept some questionable statement to be true (for the sake of argument), it just opens another difficulty for the position we are arguing against. Thus, to defend against criticisms, one must address all of these objections concurrently.

8 See Putnam (2002) for an exhaustive discussion.

different people hold different values within the community, and thus different answers are “correct” from these different points of view. If a solution is to be adopted for the community, this view holds that from a democratic standpoint it should be the one that is “correct” from the perspective of the larger segment of the people (Goodin & Spiekermann, 2018, pp. 41–42). While I personally find this outlook promising⁹, Goodin and Spiekermann are right to claim that it is not very suitable within the CJT framework. Instead, they simply opt for views like moral realism or moral conventionalism. This is tantamount to what Peter calls “naïve instrumentalism”, which is the assumption that there is a way of identifying the ideal outcome that does not require any democratic participation. Deweyan account of democracy, which emphasizes the constructive functions of democracy, does better in this regard, but Estlund’s theory is on the brink of being naïvely instrumental too (Peter, 2008, p. 37).

Similar to Goodin and Spiekermann, Estlund asserts that *there are* true procedure-independent standards by which we judge political outcomes and claims that this position is very difficult to deny (2008, pp. 30–31).¹⁰ Those who nevertheless claim that there are no (even minimal) standards, Estlund accuses of political nihilism. A nihilist stance is dangerous, he maintains, because it calls into question any kind of political activism (Estlund, p. 25–26). However, I believe that the morally majoritarian view does not entail political nihilism (nor the claim that value judgments cannot be true), while it still rejects procedure-independent standards. I think that procedurally inclined citizens may nonetheless be very politically active. For example, protestors who claim that an election was rigged are not necessarily appealing to any procedure-independent standard; their attitude about political life is far from nihilistic, and yet they may still reject any such standard.¹¹

Let us, however, assume that naïve instrumentalism is right and that *there is* a procedure-independent standard of correctness. It is one thing

9 There is the obvious concern that this view might entail tyranny of the majority. However, most of the potential issues (like putting to vote who should have the right to vote, or depriving certain minority groups of their rights) can be countered on purely procedural grounds, for they undermine the very idea of political participation.

10 Here, Estlund introduces the idea of a “minimal” kind of moral truth, where “ x is F ” is true in at least the minimal sense if x is indeed F (2008, pp. 5; 25). Gerald Gaus objects that by this implicit committing to redundancy theory of truth, Estlund does not solve any problems, since this definition of truth is either too broad or too narrow for the purposes it is supposed to fulfill (2011, pp. 275–276).

11 This is another instance of Estlund failure to distinguish between two senses of proceduralism (see footnote 7).

to assert that such a standard exists *in principle*, but it is a completely different feat to put your finger on what it is. Whether this standard is conceived as general will (Cohen, 1986), public reason (Estlund, 2008), or truth (Prijic Samaržija, 2020), there is bound to be a disagreement about what outcomes are supposed to be considered “correct”. Liberal argues that the priority is to avoid coercion; Marxist argues that the priority is to eliminate structural injustices in the economy; pacifist argues that correctness means avoiding war no matter what, etc. There is simply no way to apply a correctness standard without giving priority to a certain set of moral commitments, which themselves are legitimately contested (Fuerstein, 2019, p. 381).

For Peter, this is the biggest drawback of instrumentalism.¹² She claims that instrumentalism fails to respect Rawlsian “fact of reasonable pluralism” (Rawls, 1996, pp. 66–67). Instrumentalists, however, do not deny this fact – they choose to ignore it, hoping against hope that it will not come back to haunt them. Nonetheless, it matters not how deep the pluralism of values is; the real issue with instrumentalism is its inability to recognize that the respect of reasonable pluralism implies that people’s possibility to participate in deciding between alternative social states is a constitutive part of democratic legitimacy (Peter, 2008, p. 36).¹³

Estlund’s response to this type of objection is a strong one. By focusing on the list of “primary bads”¹⁴ (an inversion of the Rawlsian theory of primary goods) Estlund reconciles the value pluralism with the general instrumentalist approach. He limits the situations where the correctness standard may be applied to a short list of (presumably) universally accepted beliefs. By defining the standard negatively, he avoids any positive claims about standards of justice or public goods, thereby respecting the pluralist argument (Estlund, 2008, p. 163–165).

That being said, I am not entirely convinced that Estlund’s endeavor is successful. First, it is surprising that, after claiming that democratic legitimacy lies in the fact that democracy achieves correct answers at better

12 “Here is why I think that we ought to reject instrumentalism. First, I take it as a premise that the interests and perspectives of the members of the democratic constituency inevitably diverge and that they have different views – with good reasons – about what social state is best” (Peter, 2008, p. 36).

13 Peter also claims (and I agree) that Estlund’s theory is not guilty of this misconception. He explicitly denies that a decision has to be correct in order to be legitimate (this is the feature of correctness theories). Thus, Estlund’s theory can explain why procedures are constitutive for legitimacy (Peter, 2008, p. 40). It is Anderson’s Deweyan approach that fails in this regard (Peter, 2008, p. 45).

14 The list goes as follows: “war, famine, economic collapse, political collapse, epidemic, and genocide.” (Estlund, 2008, p. 163).

than random rate (Estlund, 2008, p. 98), Estlund admits that the core of the shared goals is simply avoiding bad outcomes (Gaus, 2011, p. 293). This is not a very encouraging outlook, since it tells us nothing about everyday political decisions that do not entail wars or famines; here we are supposed to fall back to purely procedural grounds (Estlund, 2008, p. 107). Second, even if such a list is possible it is bound to cause disagreement about a) which primary bads are to be included and b) avoidance of what bads has a lexical priority over avoidance of others. Estlund is aware that sometimes even primary bad must be allowed for the sake of avoiding even greater evil (2008, p. 163). This hierarchical relationship between primary bads opens up a second objection that I address in this argument.

2) Let us assume that there is a procedure-independent standard of correctness *and* that we can unambiguously determine what that standard is. How do we apply such a standard to judge the actual decisions and label them to be “correct” or “incorrect”? Since the correctness is determined externally, it cannot depend on the outcome. Yet, in one important aspect, I will argue, it must be either determined internally, or not determined at all, and both readings are undesirable from an instrumentalist point of view.

Whether we think of democracy as a (moral) truth-tracking (Estlund, 2008; Goodin & Spiekermann, 2018) or a collective problem-solving (Anderson, 2006; Landemore, 2013), we are obliged to claim that some options/decisions/solutions are better than others in that particular regard. The question is: *what others?* Is any conceivable option/decision/solution a subject of a comparison, or only those existing on the agenda?¹⁵ To illustrate my point, I will use the following imaginary case of decision-making. Suppose the voters¹⁶ are considering two options, *A* and *B*, where *B* is the correct one according to the independent standard. Now imagine that a third option is added to the agenda, but everything else remains the same. The new option, call it *C*, represents an even more superior candidate/policy/social state according to the very same standard. Would, in the revised scenario, option *B* still be the correct choice? There are two possibilities, and in my view both are untenable.

Possibility 1: B is the correct option in both scenarios. According to this view, the correctness of an option is completely exogenous, and cannot depend on the correctness of any other option. In this case, we must admit that there is some kind of “threshold of correctness” that options either

15 Similar objections are raised in: Gaus, 2011; Fuerstein, 2019.

16 For simplicity's sake, I will presume the case of majority voting; however, any standard decision-making procedure faces the same issue.

pass or not. There are two issues with such an interpretation. First, who determines where the threshold is? Suppose that, in terms of correctness, option *A* is as far from option *B* as option *B* from option *C*. What are the reasons for the threshold being placed between one pair of options rather than the other? It follows that if an independent standard determines the relative “correctness” of two options, it requires *yet another standard* for distinguishing correct options from those that are incorrect.

Second, what if *all* available options are above, or they are all below the threshold of correctness?¹⁷ While the first case might sound like the best scenario ever, it faces us with the unpleasant Orwellian conclusion: all options are correct, but some are more correct than others. And if the threshold of correctness is comparably low, then instrumentalism is, well, *instrumental* only in a very limited number of cases. But wherever the threshold is, there are no guarantees that the correct answer will ever be present on the agenda. Thus, it is much likelier that we might face a pessimistic case, where all the options are incorrect. In that case, we must either accept that no good decision is available, or we are forced to treat the “least incorrect” option as “the correct one”¹⁸. But, if we follow that line, we are abandoning the first possibility.

Possibility 2: B was the correct option in the first scenario, but not in the second. In this case, the correctness of an option depends on the entire set of options it is compared with. In other words, correctness is agenda-sensitive and there is no exogenous threshold of correctness. Yet, this makes correctness the subject of *internal* evaluation. In that case, we can always visualize a scenario where another (slightly) more correct option is added to the agenda, rendering the previously correct option incorrect. If we follow this interpretation, we are forced to admit that, strictly speaking, there are no correct options.¹⁹ Agenda-sensitive correctness thus gives rise to a sorites paradox that can only be resolved by a fixed threshold; but in

17 There is also a third undesirable possibility, and that is the case when there are multiple correct options, and only one (or significantly smaller number of) incorrect. This is especially troublesome for Condorcetian framework of Goodin and Spiekermann. In such case, the “competent” voters may spread their votes among the correct options, thereby allowing incompetent voters to win the day. The counterargument offered by the authors is that this scenario is unlikely since “there are usually a great many more ways to be wrong than to be right” (2018, p. 45), but they admit that this is not much of a solution.

18 Goodin and Spiekermann argue for this strategy: “[T]he object of the CJT exercise is not really one of finding the needle in the haystack of the ‘one truly correct option out there in the world’. Rather, the object of the exercise is then to select the best alternative among the alternatives offered for choice.” (2018, p. 44)

19 Perhaps the very usage of the terms “correct” and “incorrect” entails that *the* correctness, in the strict sense, is unattainable (cf. Unger, 1971).

that case, we are going back to the first possibility.²⁰ Thus, whatever the supposed procedure-independent standard of correctness is, it cannot be used to determine the (in)correctness of any particular decision. It matters not if we are talking about different policies, social states, or simply electoral candidates; it is also irrelevant what particular decision-making procedure we have in mind, be it voting or public deliberation – the result is the same: correctness is not a binary case. Instead, it comes in a gradable form; and with it come several tangled issues, none of which is satisfactorily resolved.

3) Even if we grant that there is a reliable method of resolving these issues *and* that there are indeed undeniably correct decisions, one glaring problem remains. What if the correctness of a decision is better discerned by a small number of citizens who possess the necessary knowledge? In that case, good outcomes will be achieved more reliably if we concede political decision-making to those citizens. This makes democracy inferior to “epistocracy”, i.e., the rule of the experts. Epistocrats can (and do) use the general results of models like the CJT or the DTA and turn their results upside-down (Brennan, 2016). The mere fact that these models come with a built-in peculiarity that they, whenever interpreted as a mechanism of democracy, simultaneously become a mechanism of epistocracy, speaks for itself.²¹ This is the unavoidable consequence of the uncomfortable reality: epistocracy and epistemic instrumentalism share the same commitment to correctness standards.

Estlund, who coined the term “epistocracy”, agrees that both epistocracy and his account of democracy begin with this same basic assumption (2018, p. 30). Yet, at the same time, he holds that the alleged authorita-

20 It may seem that Estlund’s view is compatible with the first possibility. For Estlund, the threshold is avoiding primary bads. Thus, if we are facing multiple decisions where none entails any of the primary bads, then the epistemic approach can only get us so far. From there on, we must appeal to procedural values. But at the same time, Estlund admits that there must be some kind of hierarchy between primary bads: “For example, famine, epidemic, and genocide are evidently always great disasters. On the other hand, I assume that war, economic collapse, and political collapse might be necessary evils in some extreme cases” (2008, p. 163). Let us return to my hypothetical example and suppose that the options relate to the primary bads in the following way: *A* – entails greater primary bad; *B* – entails lesser primary bad; *C* – entails no primary bad. In that case, Estlund would be compelled to admit that *B* is correct in the original, but incorrect in the revised scenario.

21 The belief that the CJT can easily lead to pessimistic results if we allow mass participation was held by Condorcet himself. Some experiments show that if we try to apply the DTA model in a less abstract sense (precisely in order to capture the notion of expertise which is supposedly beaten by diversity) the results might prove the opposite; that, in fact, the ability that trumps diversity (Grim et al., 2019).

tiveness of epistocracy can be refuted on epistemic grounds. While discussing Mill's epistocratic proposal of plural voting (2001 [1861], pp. 174–183), Estlund offers the *demographic objection* towards such policy.²² This objection states that the educated citizens may nevertheless possess epistemically damaging features which disproportionately affect the epistemic benefits of education. Education was (and still is) the privilege of certain demographic groups. Giving extra votes to those groups gives them more leeway to act on their biases, thereby damaging the epistemic quality of political decisions (Estlund, 2008, p. 215).²³ Estlund could have easily made a similar counterclaim on moral grounds, or by pleading to procedural fairness. Yet, he insists that the demographic objection is an epistemic argument against epistocracy. Since he realizes that his partially instrumental approach favors epistocracy (at least) as much as democracy, a relevant *epistemic* advantage of democracy must be put forward.

However, I believe that with epistemically framed demographic objection Estlund confuses correlation with causation. Cyril Hédoïn objects that the “epistemically damaging features” that Estlund writes about have nothing to do with epistocracy as such.²⁴ Epistocratic institutions (such as plural voting) only reflect the preexistent social injustices and non-legitimate domination relationships within the society (Hédoïn, 2021, p. 510). Since those institutions are not a *cause* of those injustices, they may still be preferable from a purely epistemic perspective. In other words, they cannot make an already bleak situation any worse, from an epistemic point of view. Thus, demographic objection, understood as an epistemic objection, completely misses its intended mark.

22 Before he introduces a demographic objection, Estlund considers the *deference objection*, that is, the claim that people might reasonably refuse to submit to the rule of the educated. Yet, Estlund realizes the threat that such a claim might simultaneously undermine the view that a good education promotes wise rule in a democracy. He concludes that: “If Mill's plural voting loses on these grounds, perhaps the whole epistemic dimension of political argumentation loses, too” (2008, p. 213). I wholeheartedly agree that this and similar epistemic attacks on epistocracy backfire dreadfully. However, I disagree with the verdict that the *whole* epistemic dimension is lost. It is only its instrumental component that comes under fire.

23 Note that Estlund does not claim that diversity *per se* is desirable for instrumental reasons (cf. Landemore, 2018). He only suggests that the lack of it may be epistemically harmful: “Exactly what is meant by bias here, and how it leads to increased collective error, would need more careful explanation, but I accept this as a powerful objection.” (2008, p. 215).

24 Hédoïn claims that mechanisms of epistemic avoidance and epistemic domination are the actual threat that Estlund alludes to. Epistemic avoidance refers to the fact that persons who belong to socially advantaged groups (willingly or unwillingly) avoid engaging with the problems of socially less-advantaged groups (2021, p. 509). This circumstance may lead to epistemic dominance, where the policies that favor disadvantaged groups are mostly ignored.

This is just one example of a general viewpoint that I subscribe to. The viewpoint is this: all instrumental arguments for democracy are implicit arguments for epistocracy (Gunn, 2019), and all epistemic arguments against epistocracy are inevitably arguments against (instrumentally devised) epistemic democracy. To avoid falling into this trap, we should always make a case against epistocracy on moral/political grounds (Hédoin, 2021). Estlund's theory, for the most part, does exactly that. But its unfortunate commitment to independent standard causes this particular argument against epistocracy to fail.

* * *

The purpose of a Gorgian argument was to offer what I believe are compelling reasons for rejecting (both naïve and not-so-naïve) instrumentalism. Proceduralism, however, comes through all these objections unscathed. Since it presupposes no procedure-independent standard, it is compatible with the fact of reasonable pluralism and does not turn the political arena into a breeding ground for epistocracy. As for the particular theories of Estlund and Anderson, I consider Estlund's epistemic proceduralism to be a step in the right direction, as I believe that an adequate theory of democracy must include both epistemic and procedural values. It is, however, a step too long, since it also included some problematic instrumental claims which made this theory, to use Estlund's own words, "an unstable hybrid". A Gorgian argument also affects the last "D" of Anderson's DDD conception, since the dynamism of a Deweyan account rests solely on its consequentialist outlook which does not acknowledge the fact of reasonable pluralism. In the next section, I will offer a different justification of democracy which does better in this regard.

3. Drawing the Target around the Arrow

So far, my paper has been mostly critical of the classical account of epistemic democracy which seemingly always includes at least some instrumental claims. In this section, I put forward an alternative way of reconciling procedural and epistemic features of democracy. This view rests on the idea that *epistemic virtues* have procedural epistemic value, in contrast to instrumental value that is usually ascribed to them (e.g., Landemore, 2018).

If we reject instrumental justification of democracy, but at the same time wish to retain the view that democracy must be (at least partially)

justified on epistemic grounds, we are left with some form of “pure epistemic proceduralism”, which is a position that Peter advances (2008, 2013, 2016). Although Estlund sometimes (quite misleadingly) calls his conception “purely procedural” (Estlund, 2008, p. 116), it should be noted that in Rawlsian terminology, a pure proceduralist conception is one that makes no reference to procedure-independent standards (Rawls, 1999 [1971], p. 75). In the case of Estlund’s epistemic proceduralism, these standards play their part in the selection of the legitimacy-generating procedure. As such, his conception has the structure of imperfect proceduralism²⁵ (Peter, 2008, p. 39). Since epistemic proceduralism claims that citizens may rationally believe that majority is mistaken but must nevertheless obey the mistaken law, Estlund makes an analogy to the judicial system: citizens obey the verdict of a fair trial, not because it necessarily produces correct decision, but because it shows a tendency to do so (2008, p. 108). However, this is the very Rawlsian example of an imperfect procedure (Rawls, 1999 [1971], pp. 76–77), which indicates that Estlund’s position is far from purely procedural. Peter develops an alternative to Estlund’s view, which she calls (for reasons just stated) *pure epistemic proceduralism*. For Peter, public deliberation has a procedural epistemic value, not because it leads to more or less accurate beliefs, but because it fosters mutual accountability among participants, provided that deliberation is properly conducted (Peter, 2013). In contrast to veritist or consequentialist views, proceduralist political epistemology drops the idea that procedure-independent standards are necessary to judge the quality of political decisions (Peter, 2008, p. 45).²⁶ Pure epistemic proceduralism differs from purely procedural non-epistemic accounts for it includes criteria of epistemic fairness. It also differs from Estlund’s view, and that of correctness theories, because it excludes the veritistic quality of outcomes (Peter, 2008, pp. 49–50). Finally, despite sharing multiple focal points with Anderson’s theory (like insistence on diversity and discussion), pure epistemic proceduralism diverges from Deweyan account by putting the process of deliberative inquiry in the center, rather than its outcomes (Peter, 2008, p. 51). Thus, on Peter’s view, deliberative democratic decision-making has epistemic value even in those cases where its effect diminishes the accuracy of the participants’ beliefs (Peter, 2016, p. 142).

25 Unlike correctness theories which, on this account, are an instance of perfect proceduralism.

26 Peter’s view relies on Helen Longino’s social epistemology which emphasizes the socially-realized criteria for scientific objectivity (Longino, 1990, pp. 76–79). On this view, knowledge-producing is a social practice and has no relation to procedure-independent ideas of truth. Peter expands on this theory and presents public deliberation as analogous to Longino’s account of scientific inquiry.

I believe that Peter's account of democracy successfully reconciles epistemic and procedural claims in justification of democracy, and at the same time avoids the biggest pitfalls of instrumentalism. However, since it focuses on knowledge-producing practices of public deliberation, pure epistemic proceduralism may still be vulnerable to some epistocratic counterarguments. That is, even if we abandon the veritistic view in favor of epistemic fairness as Peter suggests, the *quality* of deliberative inquiry may still vary, despite not being assessed by its truth-tracking potential. Thus, one may argue that a small community of experts is in a better place to arrive at high-quality decisions through their own internal deliberations (Fuerstein, 2019, p. 383). To address this last concern, I will propose, not an alternative, but what I consider to be an extension of Peter's view. This extension is based on two different sources: 1) Peircean justification of democracy advocated by Cheryl Misak (1999, 2008, 2009) and Robert Talisse (2005, 2011a, 2011b) and 2) James Montmarquet's intrinsic evaluation of epistemic virtues (1987).

Peircean pragmatist epistemic argument for democracy can be reconstructed in the following way: i) few fundamental epistemic principles cannot be denied and they ii) entail several epistemic commitments which iii) justify democracy in a deliberative sense (Erman & Möller, 2016). In line with Peter's view, Talisse claims that the biggest drawback of Deweyan democracy is its incompatibility with Rawlsian idea of reasonable pluralism (Talisse, 2011b, pp. 558–562). Due to its consequentialist and perfectionist nature, Deweyan democracy not only allows but *entails* state coercion in order to foster those values and attitudes that are deemed necessary for human flourishing. Talisse also remarks that Anderson chooses to gloss over the less pleasant parts of Dewey's theory, and instead adopts a restrained view of it; so restrained that it is questionable whether it should even be called Deweyan (Talisse, 2011a, pp. 518–519).

Talisse believes that Peircean justification of democracy permits the fact of reasonable pluralism while remaining distinctively pragmatist (2011a, p. 519).²⁷ Drawing on Peirce's methods of fixing beliefs (CP 5.377–5.387), he presents a set of norms that are internal to our beliefs.²⁸ In Peircean account, it is believing itself which motivates one to engage

27 Talisse is not bothered by the fact that Peirce never wrote *anything* on political theory. He believes that certain political claims are implicitly present in his writings; Misak adopts a similar view (Misak, 2008, p. 94).

28 Talisse's list of basic epistemic principles goes as follows:
 (1) To believe *p* is to hold that *p* is true.
 (2) To hold that *p* is true is to hold that *p* would be able to withstand the challenge of ongoing scrutiny as new reasons, arguments and evidence are brought to bear.

in inquiry. Thus, these cognitive norms are not imposed externally but are instead an articulation of cognitive commitments that “*we already endorse, regardless of the content of our beliefs*” (Talisse, 2011a, p. 520; original emphasis).

The crucial point is that, in Peircean view, any knowledge-seeking process requires the notion of *community* (CP 5.311). Yet, this community lives in an ever-evolving world; and even though a process of inquiry must necessarily converge on a specific point, that point is always just provisional. For Peirce, aiming for truth is not shooting at a fixed target, but a moving one (Burch, 2022, §4). Thus, in Peircean outlook, epistemic commitments must always be interpersonal. Talisse and Misak take this to mean that believers must be committed to different epistemic virtues, such as honesty, modesty, charity, integrity (Talisse, 2005, pp. 112–113), as well as open-mindedness, courage, willingness to listen to the others’ views, etc. (Misak, 2008, p. 103). Those who want their beliefs to be governed by reasons are required to expose their beliefs to different perspectives and arguments (Misak, 1999, p. 106). From here, an adherence to democracy follows naturally: if we are to live up to our epistemic commitments, we must endorse the only political order which allows us to do so. Thus, the Peircean process of inquiry requires the institutions of equality, free speech, freedom of information, open debate, and access to decision-making (Talisse, 2011a, p. 520).

Once deliberation is understood in terms of epistemic virtues, it can complement Peter’s view and overcome the possible epistocratic counterargument. Since everybody is a potential contributor to political deliberation, there is no identifiable pool of epistemic experts. There may be people who are *better* at exchanging reasons, but it is not obvious that any special education could make somebody trained to do so (Misak, 2009, p. 35). In other words, there is no epistocracy of the virtuous. Yet, at the same time, Misak’s justification of democratic legitimacy is distinctly instrumentalist: “Democratically produced decisions are legitimate because they are produced by a procedure with a tendency to get things right” (Misak, 2008, p. 95).²⁹ She endorses a reliabilist virtue epistemology, where virtue is justified if it is a constituent part of a reliable method that is likely to lead us to a true belief (Misak, 2009, p. 36). This strikes me as a step in

(3) To hold that a belief would meet such challenges is to commit to the project of justifying one’s belief, what Peirce called ‘inquiry’.

(4) The project of squaring one’s beliefs with reasons and evidence is an ongoing social endeavor that requires participation in a community of inquiry (Talisse, 2011a, p. 519–520).

29 However, she does not necessarily ascribe truthiness to the outcomes, only legitimacy (Misak, 1999, p. 7), which makes her view very close to Estlund’s.

the wrong direction, but one which has an easy remedy. Instead of sneaking instrumentalism in through the back door, I will adopt Montmarquet's account of intrinsically valued epistemic virtues.

Montmarquet accepts the view that the commitment to truth is the supreme epistemic virtue, yet at the same time explicitly denies that epistemic virtues require reliability. To defend this claim, he imagines a Cartesian evil demon who, without our knowledge, made our world in such a way that the truth is best achieved by demonstrating a wide variety of epistemic vices, such as dogmatism or epistemic laziness. Montmarquet's view is that traits like open-mindedness would still be considered virtues, even in a demonic world. Conversely, if the words of a mad prophet suddenly turned out to be completely true, that would not make those who blindly followed him epistemically virtuous (Montmarquet, 1987, p. 482–485). Thus, according to Montmarquet, some epistemic trait should be regarded as a virtue, not for its reliability, but because it is desirable for those who want the truth. Thus, the virtues are not valuable as instruments for attaining truths, but because the very motivation for the truth has an intrinsic value (Battaly, 2008, p. 649).

I believe that Montmarquet's account of epistemic virtues is a much better supplement to Peircean argument for democracy than a reliabilist view – it is the last piece of the proceduralist puzzle. To summarize, the most adequate way of defending democratic legitimacy is the position of pure epistemic proceduralism, where deliberative procedures are entailed by the set of intrinsically valued epistemic virtues. According to this view, democracy is neither a truth-tracking nor a problem-solving process. It is, in fact, a process of *truth-seeking*. On this interpretation, citizens are like archers who shoot, not even at a moving target, but at an empty wall. And whenever the arrow successfully lands, we can call it bullseye and draw the target around it. Thus, truth is both the source and the aim of our democratic concerns, and not just an elusive superficial entity.

The last major point of Peircean view is the fact that it invokes no moral claims. People can have all sorts of beliefs about the good life, or the meaning of human existence, or the value of community – but they will all have a reason to endorse a democracy simply because they hold some beliefs.³⁰ This is why Peircean version of pragmatist democracy, unlike Deweyan, acknowledges the fact of reasonable pluralism (Talisso, 2011a,

30 I believe that, on Peircean account, moral disagreements can be settled on the grounds of a morally majoritarian view without abandoning the notion of moral truthiness. It is Peirce's rejection of the correspondence theory of truth (CP 5.416) which, I believe, recommends his epistemology to a non-procedural justification of democracy.

p. 521).³¹ Because of this, Peircean model of democracy is the superior one according to Anderson's DDD conception. It embraces both epistemic *diversity* and the value of *discussion*. A Peircean believer has an epistemic motivation to actively seek out partners in inquiry who advocate different views from her own. And, on this account, to say "I believe that *p*, but have discussed the matter with no one" reveals an epistemic deficiency. But, most importantly, it can model the *dynamism* of democracy, since Peircean epistemology sees inquiry as an ever-ongoing process. Thus, democracy based on this model requires that channels of dissent and feedback are open after any collective decision is reached (Talisse, 2011a, pp. 522–523).³²

* * *

The ongoing trends in democratic theory reveal the prevailing view that epistemic justifications of democracy are superior to non-epistemic ones. However, most epistemic justifications tend to (fully or partly) justify democracy on instrumental grounds. This approach entails several theoretical problems and also makes an implicit claim for epistocratic governments. I, too, have advanced the view that the epistemic component is not only important but mandatory for an adequate justification of democracy, as the lack of such a component could only deepen the tense relationship between epistemology and democracy. Instead of an instrumentalist outlook, however, I have argued for a procedural justification of democracy. My view was that a virtue-oriented account of deliberative

31 One may argue that Peircean political epistemology is still monistic since it emphasizes the truth as the one and only epistemic good, while, in fact, the truth may be just one of the many epistemic goods that we want to be promoted by our political system. For example, we may prefer procedures that have the "ease of deliberative use" over those which foster the search for truth (Lever & Chin, 2017, p. 2). In that case, the problem of reasonable pluralism can be applied to epistemology quite as much as to morality (Lever & Chin, 2017, p. 3). However, this objection misses its mark since the epistemic virtues that make the core of Peircean democracy do not constitute any *distinct* comprehensive epistemology. They are instead, as Talisse points out, the commitments of any well-developed epistemology (Talisse, 2011a, p. 522).

32 Critics may object that, even if we accept that the epistemically virtuous process of truth-seeking requires some kind of democratic practice, it still does not entitle the citizens to participate in the process of political decision-making (Erman & Möller, 2019). I do not consider this objection to be particularly strong. First, as I aimed to defend a procedural and not purely epistemic view of democracy, I think that Peircean account of democracy can be accompanied by usual procedural appeals to fairness. Second, it seems to me that this objection rests on a superfluous distinction; a Peircean democrat can simply adopt a neutrally monistic view – for all intents and purposes, truth-seeking *is* decision-making.

democracy can overcome most of the problems that more traditional versions of epistemic democracy face. On this account, epistemic virtues that are valued for their truth-seeking instead of truth-producing potential are the required epistemic component that makes democracy intrinsically justified.

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Proceduralna vrednost epistemičkih vrlina

Apstrakt: Dugo prisutna tenzija između proceduralnog i instrumentalnog opravdanja demokratije dovedena je u pitanje pojavom teorija koje pokušavaju da objedine oba pristupa. Ove teorije predstavljaju epistemičke odlike demokratije u instrumentalnom okviru, a potom pokušavaju da ih pomire sa proceduralnim vrednostima. U ovom tekstu tvrdim da je moguće uključiti epistemičku dimenziju u opravdanje demokratije bez obavezivanja na instrumentalizam. Prema gledištu koje zastupam, persovska epistemologija spojena sa epistemičkim vrlinama kojima se pripisuje intrinzična vrednost daje čisto proceduralni argument u prilog demokratije.

Ključne reči: proceduralizam, instrumentalizam, demokratija, epistemička demokratija, epistemičke vrline, pragmatizam.