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The Role of Experts in a Democratic Society

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Abstract

Democratic procedures are characterized by the equal status of all citizens participating in the decision-making process. This procedural fairness represents one of the central aspects of democracy's legitimacy-generating potential and should not be rejected or weakened. However, citizens specialize in different areas and inevitably some citizens become more competent (i.e. become experts) regarding some political issues. Democratic procedure would loose much of its appeal if it would be unable to take advantage of the experts' knowledge. In this paper I follow Kitcher and Christiano in embracing a form of division of epistemic (and political) labour - citizens and their political representatives should deliberate and set aims the political community is to pursue, while experts and policy-makers should devise means (laws, public policies and political decisions) needed to achieve the aims set by citizens. However, citizens should not blindly trust the experts - their epistemic authority is derivative and social and academic networks and structures should be employed in order to enable citizens to assess and evaluate experts' competence, but experts' impartiality regarding the issue at hand as well. Consequently, the process should not be unidirectional: experts should be able to help citizens select feasible and coherent aims, while citizens should be able to help experts in creating policies and decisions. Deliberative democracy is an appropriate political setting for this kind of bidirectional communication.

Key words: division of epistemic labor, Expertism, Epistemic democracy, Authority.

Introduction

John Dewey (1987) took an optimistic view of democracy - he saw it as a 'method of organized intelligence', or as a method by which information dispersed throughout the political community can be assessed and used to make better decisions about issues of public interest. Similar views are held by many other defenders of pragmatist deliberative democracy, including Robert Talisse (2009a; 2009) and Cheryl Misak (2000; 2009). Citi-

zens should present the arguments, reasons and evidence for their political claims, they should engage each other in public deliberation and evaluate the presented reasons and evidence, and finally they should collectively decide what should be done. Dewey and other pragmatists believe that decisions produced by this deliberative process will have greater instrumental epistemic value than decisions produced by other fair decision-making procedures (like aggregative democracy or equal lotteries), but also greater instrumental epistemic value than decisions produced by some unfair decision-making procedures (like epistocracy and other forms of the rule by experts).

One of the problems of this approach is the fact that politics regards many complex issues, many of which we know very little (or virtually nothing) about. Political decisions regarding genetically modified organisms, climate change or the consequences of joining the Eurozone are so complex that we cannot have informed and critical judgments about these issues without receiving extensive education. Of course, some people (those who have received such an education) will be able to make informed and critical judgments (this is why I think that the knowledge tenet should be granted), but we will not be able to understand and evaluate the reasons, arguments and evidence they use to support their claims. As John O'Neill (2002, p. 259) puts it, "[...] the arguments pass me and most other citizens by. I simply would not know how to appraise the evidence even if you gave me all the detail. I want to know not if the evidence supports this or that conclusion, but whether I have good reasons to trust those who offer it". It turns out that we are not as independent epistemic agents as it was thought during the Enlightenment - we heavily rely on others when we form, justify and defend our beliefs. Furthermore, because of the division of epistemic labour, we cannot expect every citizen to be equally able to make informed and critical judgments regarding different political issues: owing to their extensive education, some will be able to present better reasons and evidence, and those who have not received such an education will not be able to evaluate or even understand these reasons and evidence. If we want to have a decision-making procedure that can make decisions of decent epistemic quality, we should acknowledge the fact of epistemic inequality and find a way using superior knowledge of the few.

I hold that the knowledge tenet should be granted - there are some people who, with respect to some issues, know more than others. Furthermore, I argue that the authority tenet should be rejected - even if someone is an expert, this fact does not make one a boss. Finally, I believe that the legitimacy-generating potential of collective decision-making procedures should partly depend on their ability to produce correct or true decisions. This brings us to a difficult question: if there are those who know better and the legitimacy-generating potential of decision-making procedures depends in part on their ability to produce correct decisions, but those who know better should not have greater political authority than those who

know worse, what should then be the role of those who know better? What should be the role of experts[1] in a democratic society?

There are two straightforward answers to this question. One extreme way to solve this problem is to deny the plausible suggestion of unequal knowledge (Peter, 2012) or to deny that unequal knowledge matters (Talisse, 2009a), i.e. to reject the knowledge tenet. Another extreme way to solve it is to deny the plausible idea of political and moral equality (Plato, 2000; Mill, 1977), i.e. to endorse some form of the authority tenet. I have discussed and rejected both polar alternatives in my earlier papers (Cerovac, 2016a; Cerovac, 2016b), and now I want to argue in favor of some form of a middle ground, i.e. in favour of *some* division of epistemic labour.

Technical vs. moral knowledge

To claim that, regarding *some* issues, there are those who know better what should be done is not to claim that for *every* issue there is a group of people who are experts. Thomas Christiano (2008) introduces a useful differentiation between technical and moral knowledge. *Technical knowledge* regards crafts, skills and disciplines like engineering, medicine, carpentry, physics or computer sciences. Most people can see this knowledge as useful and some educational institutions can be publicly seen as reliable sources of this knowledge. We can agree that we want to be medically treated by doctors (and not engineers) and that we want our bridges to be designed and built by engineers (and not doctors). Regarding these crafts, skills and disciplines we can publicly agree (at least to a certain degree) whether someone is an expert. However, there is another kind of knowledge, one that regards what is right and what is wrong. This *moral knowledge* is not public as technical knowledge is, and we have a widespread disagreement on both the moral issues and the experts in morality. While we can publicly agree that we want to be medically treated by doctors, we cannot publicly agree on who should make our laws regarding euthanasia or abortion. Some will favor ethics professors (though they will also disagree since some are Kantians, some utilitarians and some might employ virtue ethics), others will favor their religious leaders (who might also disagree depending on the religion they represent), and yet some might favuor scientists (doctors, evolutionary biologists, sociologists) or even other public figures (singers, actors, football players).

Though Christiano's differentiation can be useful, it can hardly be applied to most political issues. Namely, political questions usually ask what should be done regarding a certain problem or state of things, which inevitably

1 Alvin Goldman (1987) defines an expert in an area as someone who has (1) an amount of true beliefs that is considerably greater than ordinary people and that meets a threshold with respect to: (i) the subject matter in a domain; and (ii) the ideas and arguments within the community of persons who have a lot of true primary beliefs concerning the subject matter in the domain; and (2) a set of skills that enable that person to test the ideas and arguments as well as extend the ideas and arguments of the community to new problems and objects within the domain.

invokes the normative approach and the moral knowledge. Climate change, genetically modified organisms and nuclear energy might at first seem to be purely scientific issues (technical knowledge), but as soon as we ask what should we, as a political community, do about them, we are introducing the political dimension (moral knowledge)[2]. Namely, these policies bring costs that some citizens have to bear, but also bring benefits that some citizens will probably enjoy more than others. How should these costs and benefits be distributed is definitively not a purely scientific issue.

This brings us to an interesting position: we can publicly agree that someone is an expert in nuclear physics (technical knowledge), but cannot publicly agree that the same person is an expert regarding whether we should build a nuclear power station (moral or political knowledge)[3]. However, we still believe that the knowledge in nuclear physics somehow helps us make better decisions on nuclear power stations and better energy policies. If all members of a political community gained the relevant technical knowledge in nuclear physics, it is reasonable to expect that the decisions on nuclear power stations would improve. Having this technical knowledge would help us to formulate and pursue our freely chosen projects more effectively. However, since we do not have this technical knowledge, but some people (experts) do, our deference to experts might be appropriate since experts help us overcome the limitations of our own knowledge (Kitcher, 2001; Kitcher, 2011; Zagzebski, 2012).

How can we reconcile the former idea that experts with technical knowledge cannot be (publicly) considered experts with moral or political knowledge with the latter idea that certain form of deference to experts might be appropriate? To understand how this can be done, we should look more closely into different stages of the decision-making process.

The strict division of epistemic labour

There are some theories of democracy that rely on strict division of epistemic labour. They recognize the need for laws and policies to be authorized by all reasonable (or qualified) citizens, and want to bring quality of outcomes by including only the experts in the decision-making process. This is still a democratic rule since laws and policies are democratically authorized, but the content of laws and policies is shaped by experts, selected by

2 Carl Schmitt (2007) writes that scientific claims are incomprehesnible if one does not exactly know who is affected, combated, refuted or negated by such claims. Since scientific claims affect, refute or negate someone or some groups of persons (e.g. proclaiming the truth of Darwinism refutes the Christian view of creation, claims about the human contribution to the climate change refute those who think that government should not regulate the economiy). Making someting scientific does not make it non-political (Turner, 2007).

3 Note that this does not imply that there are no experts regarding moral or political issues, as Peter (2012) would have it. There might be experts regarding these issues. The only problem is that we cannot publicly agree on who the experts are. There is no such group of experts regarding moral and political issues that can be seen and recognized as such by every member of political community.

people to represent them and to make decisions for them. This is (to a certain degree) the case with most modern western democracies - those participating in the process of shaping the laws and policies are usually experts and politicians, and not ordinary citizens. However, some scholars tend to overemphasize the division of labour, basically dividing citizens into two groups: those who make laws and policies (politicians and experts) and those who do not participate in the decision-making process, but only in the process of authorization. Joseph Schumpeter (2008) and Anthony Downs (1957) thus portray citizens as rationally ignorant of the facts of the society and lacking the knowledge necessary to make reasonable policies. There is nothing fundamentally wrong with the citizens in general - they simply decided to specialize in other fields (engineering, philosophy, carpentry, etc.) and not in politics. We cannot be experts regarding everything. Since there are those who specialize in politics (i.e. politicians), they should make laws and public policies, and their right to make these decisions does not come from their expertise (that would call for the authority tenet and some form of epistocracy), but from our choice that these experts in politics should rule. Of course, if we are not satisfied with their performance, we can remove these experts from power in the next elections, and select new experts in politics - those we believe will perform better and produce better decisions. While Schumpeter requires that the citizens evaluate the performance of politicians directly (by evaluating the quality of the results their rule has produced), Downs allows that citizens can use cognitive short cuts (like party affiliation) for determining how their interests and concerns can be advanced. Both positions, however, perceive society as divided into two groups: those who make decisions (politicians) and those who authorize them (citizens).

The problem with this approach is that it gives us an oversimplified account of what is going on in a democratic society. Their accounts omit group associations, media, universities, think tanks and lobbying and interest groups. Many of the groups are devoted to political issues, and usually they make certain differences in the policies and laws that are enacted in a political community (Christiano, 2012). For instance, trade unions usually have strong opinion on minimum wage policies or labour laws in general, and workers organize in trade unions because thus they can influence the decision-making process. Schumpeter and Downs embrace too strong an interpretation of the division of epistemic labour, dividing society into two groups and failing to explain the role of many other political actors in a political community. Their accounts seem to be epistemically flawed - too strong a division of epistemic labour can lead to the loss of the value of diverse perspectives (Bohman, 2006), but can also turn out to be incompatible with political equality (Christiano, 2012). We should try to find a different model of decision-making, one that also rests on the division of epistemic labour, but is nonetheless able to include political equality and the epistemic value of diverse perspectives in the decision-making process.

The appropriate division of epistemic labour

Kitcher (2011) and Christiano (2008; 2012) present a different account of the division of epistemic labour. This account of division of epistemic labour should be "compatible with the idea that citizens are essentially in the driver's seat with regard to the society and equals in the process of driving the society" (Christiano, 2012, p. 33). Citizens are "in the driver's seat of the society" as long as they, as free and equal, choose the basic aims that society should pursue. Citizens select basic values and the trade-offs among those values, and they select their political representatives respectively. In other words, citizens choose in what kind of world they want to live (i.e. they choose a package of political aims), and political representatives offer different end states that citizens can vote for. Of course, citizens have different values and will set different aims, and political representatives (as well as citizens and interest groups) can deliberate and negotiate to form workable majorities in the legislature. Deliberation and (in part) negotiation are activities performed by the representative government (e.g. the parliament). After the majority in the representative government has defined the aims society should strive for, the first step in the decision-making process is over. The next step is the process of making laws and public policies that will enable the realization of the selected aims. Finding the best means to meet the desired and defined aims is the function of the executive and administrative parts of government (Christiano, 2012; Mill, 1977).

I follow Christiano (2012, p. 34) in claiming that "the rationale for this division of labour is that expertise is not as fundamental to the choice of aims as it is to the development of legislation and policy". Citizens are able to deliberate on values and to understand their own interests, often better than the experts can, and if we want political decisions to promote interests of all citizens equally (Christiano, 2008), we should favour a decision-making system in which citizens (as free and equal) select aims the society is to pursue[4]. If citizens choose the aims of the society (through representative bodies with a legislative role), and if the executive and administrative parts of government properly perform their function, we can say that citizens are (in a large part) in control of the society. Of course, since politicians and civil servants in the executive and administrative parts of government need not necessary be experts in all the relevant issues they have to make decisions about, experts from universities, political parties, interest group associations and parts of the administration are invited to participate in the deliberation and the policy-making process. It is important to emphasize, however, that their role is

4 There are two arguments in favor of citizens chosing aims the society is to pursue. First is the moral argument, claiming that the interests of all citizens can be publicly equally improved only if the political aims are selected by a procedure that gives everyone an equal chance to participate in the process of selecting these aims (Christiano, 2003; Christiano, 2008). Second is the epistemic argument, claiming that a wise and benevolent despot would be unable to perceive and understand everyone's interests (and thus to make a correct political decisions), so we should favour an aim-defining procedure that gives everyone a chance to participate in the process of choosing aims the society is to pursue (Mill, 1977a; Mill, 1977b).

no longer defining valuable aims the society is to pursue, but devising means and trade-offs necessary for achieving the already defined aims.

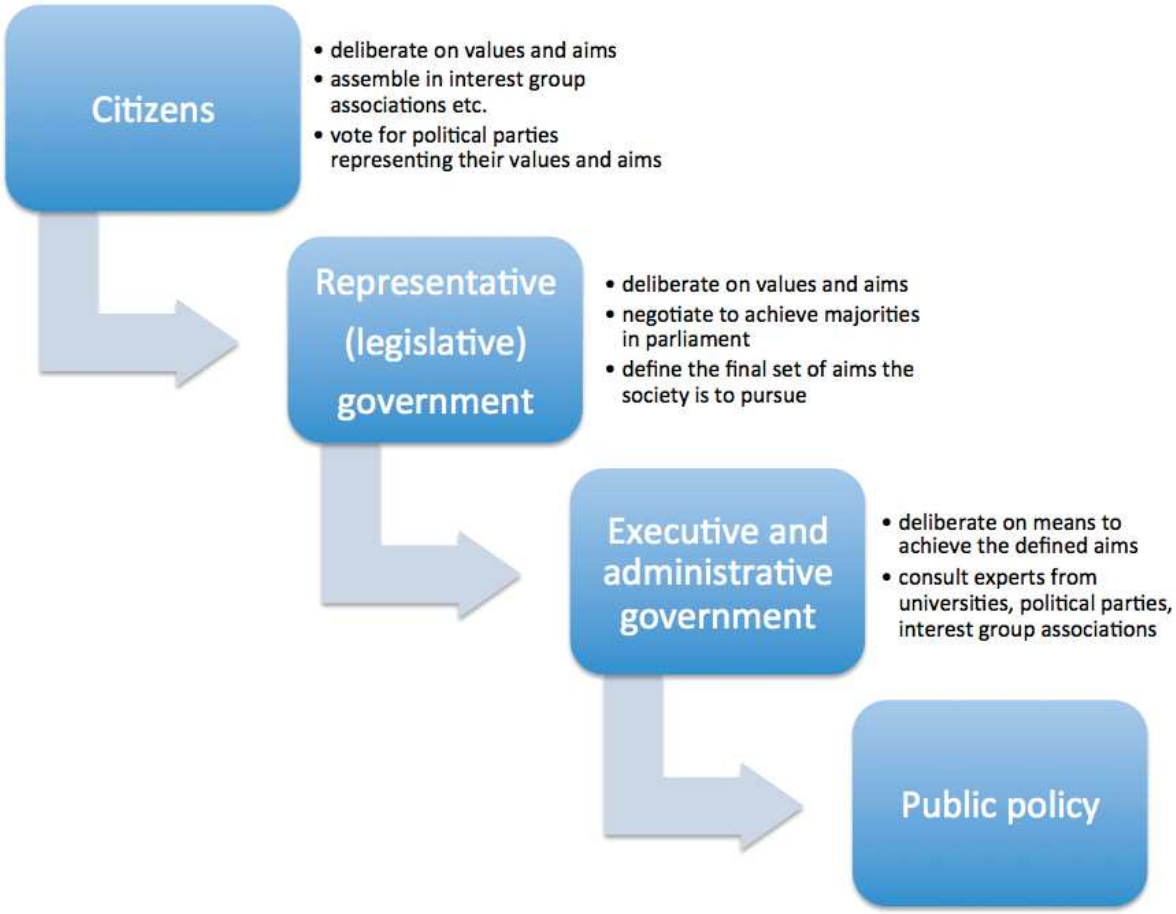

Fig. 1. The appropriate (but unidirectional) division of epistemic and political labor

The model of democratic decision-making presented above seems to be able to incorporate both the moral demand for equality of all citizens (which enters in the first stage of the process) and the epistemic demand for quality of results (which enters partly in the second and mostly in the third stage of the process). If we apply this model to Plato's ship analogy[5] (Plato, 2000), we are no longer facing a problem of democracy corresponding to the rule of passengers who lack the necessary knowledge about navigation, but still want to command the ship. Instead, the passengers now choose the destination they want to arrive at, and the passengers (or their representatives) select

5 „[Men ignorant of navigation] don't understand that a true captain must pay attention to the seasons of the year, the sky, the stars, the winds, and all that pertains to his craft, if he's really to be the ruler of a ship. And they don't believe that there is any craft that would enable him to determine how he should steer the ship, whether the others want him to or not, or any possibility of mastering this alleged craft or of practicing it at the same time as the craft of navigation. Don't you think that the true captain will be called a real stargazer, a babbler, and a good-for-nothing by those who sail in ships governed in that way?" (Plato, 2000, p. 19-20)

experts (the captain and his crew) who will take them to the destination they have chosen earlier.

Although I endorse the solution described in the previous paragraph, I acknowledge that it faces a serious challenge. I have granted that citizens lack relevant technical knowledge to directly make public policies and to devise methods (laws, policies, decisions) for realizing desired aims. But if they lack technical knowledge to directly make public policies, can they have sufficient technical knowledge to determine who are (and who are not) the relevant experts in the field? Or should they trust experts blindly?

Do experts have fundamental or derivative epistemic authority?

To trust someone is simply to treat him or her as a source of knowledge (Faulkner, 2002). We often tend to evaluate our sources of knowledge to see how reliable they are and whether they should be considered sources of knowledge at all. This is where we face a serious challenge: arguments and reasons offered by experts are often so complex that we cannot comprehend them, or at least we cannot evaluate them properly. If we cannot evaluate the reasons and arguments experts use to defend their claims, can we evaluate their expertise?

Expertise is a position that claims that we, as non-experts, cannot possess enough evidence to evaluate an expert's testimony as credible or non-credible. Furthermore, since we lack the relevant knowledge and experience in the field, we are not only unable to assess the truth of the expert's testimony, but unable to assess the expert's reliability as well. All we can do is to blindly trust experts, and that need not be epistemically inappropriate: blindly trusting experts can be seen as desirable epistemic behaviour or even as an epistemically virtuous behavior. After all, the majority of our beliefs (including our beliefs about medicine, geography, history, astronomy, biology, physics, etc.) are based on the testimony of experts (Lehrer, 2006). According to this position, experts' epistemic authority is fundamental, and (since we depend on their knowledge) we have an epistemic right to trust them without evidence. Expertise thus takes a form of social foundationalism, a position that takes experts' beliefs to be a basic and fundamental[6] (Goldman, 1987).

Evidentialism, on the other hand, claims that we should have some form of evidence of experts' reliability - we should not trust experts blindly, even though we cannot directly evaluate experts' reasons and arguments. Experts thus have a derivative authority, which requires the hearer to give his reasons for thinking that the source of information is reliable (has relevant knowledge and skills, or is acting under favorable conditions) and is in a good position to make an accurate claim (Foley, 1994). One does not have an

6 Social foundationalism is in this case analogous to foundationalism in individualist epistemology.

epistemic right to trust experts without adequate evidence of their expertise, but also adequate evidence of experts' impartiality towards the issue at hand (Festenstein, 2009). In order for an expert to have (derivative) authority, a hearer must have evidence that there is a particular standing practice in a community to trust experts, that there are some epistemic reasons why this is standing practice in a community, that this very expert has special expertise in this very domain, that in these very circumstances an expert has no interest to deceive us (Prijić-Samaržija, 2011).

I believe that expertise should be rejected: while I agree that we often cannot possess enough evidence to qualify experts' testimony as credible or non-credible, I do not think that this undermines our ability to assess a expert's reliability. Many negative effects can influence the experts' ability to produce correct beliefs, and we can assess experts' reliability by checking whether some of these effects were in place when the experts made their belief. Furthermore, experts' beliefs are often confronted by opposite beliefs by some other experts (e.g. beliefs regarding climate change, genetically modified organism and nuclear energy[7]) and eventually we are those who have to decide which group of experts shall we follow.

We (or members of representative government) cannot directly assess whether the means suggested by experts and the administrative and executive government will achieve the desired end, i.e. whether the laws and policies that are about to be enacted will lead our society toward the aims we have collectively put forward through a democratic procedure. However, we can assess the reliability of the experts who have created these laws and policies, and we can decide whether or not to authorize them. Consider another jury analogy: members of a jury are not experts in forensics and are unable to properly assess the evidence found at the crime scene. However, one or more experts in forensics are called to testify before the court, and the members of a jury assess experts' reliability, and not directly the evidence presented by experts.

It is a feature of juries that they do not for the most part if at all consider the truth or falsity of the evidence directly, but the trustworthiness of those who present it. Thus it is with the citizens' jury: often, it is character of those on whose testimony we call, their capacity to speak on the issue in question, their reliability, independence and disinterestedness that is at issue. The model provides the best we can hope for in the institutional dimension to answerability (O'Neill, 1998, p. 100).

The process I have described thus far puts a heavy emphasize on the role of experts in decision-making: citizens (and their representatives) choose the basic aims that society is to pursue, and citizens (and their representatives) decide who will be entrusted with the task of creating public policies and

7 One way of assessing the expert's reliability is checking whether the expert is biased or has an interest to deceive us. This can, among other things, be done by checking who is founding the research the expert is working on. If an expert is claiming that climate change is not happening, we will rightfully tend to trust him less if he is financed by petrol industries than if he is financed by the state.

laws that are to realize these aims. People recognized as experts (regarding the moral and the technical knowledge) then use their superior knowledge and skills to create policies and laws, which are authorized by the citizens (or their representatives). It is important to notice that this is not a form of epistocracy (since those who make laws are chosen by citizens, and the laws are authorized by citizens, and not by the mere fact of expertise of those who made them). Furthermore, deliberation among citizens and various interest groups regarding the aims the society is to pursue is encouraged, and citizens are essentially in the driver's seat with regard to the society (Christiano, 2012). I find this model of the division of epistemic (and political) labour appealing, though I believe that it can be improved further by introducing deliberation between the experts and the citizens.

Interaction between experts and citizens

The decision-making process I have described thus far seems to be unidirectional. The citizens discuss which aims the society should pursue and they select political representatives who also deliberate and negotiate until these aims are clearly defined. Then executive government proceeds to devise means (laws, public policies and political decisions) needed to achieve these aims, and it consults and rests heavily on the guidance of experts in various fields. Though I think that this scheme represents a decent depiction of the role of experts in a democratic society, I find it oversimplified and lacking the bidirectional character necessary for constituting the epistemic value of democracy. Namely, it seems that the experts should be able to contribute to the first stage of the decision-making process (selection of aims), from which they are normally excluded, and it also seems that citizens should be able to contribute to the second stage of the process (creation of laws and policies) from which they are normally excluded. A decision-making procedure that is able to integrate the epistemic value of bidirectional deliberation between citizens and experts, while simultaneously keeping the citizens in the driver's seat of the society, should be epistemically better than a unidirectional procedure.

Communication from experts to citizens. Since we live in a society characterized by the plurality of reasonable (yet often incompatible) doctrines, the aims advocated by citizens will be diverse and often incompatible. Sometimes the incompatibility of our aims will be clear to us and we will be aware that at least some aims should be changed in order to reach a compromise. However, sometimes the aims selected by the citizens can seem compatible to them, yet experts might know that in fact they are not. Citizens might agree that they want to live in a society characterized by full employment, some form of equality of wages and the fiscal discipline. All these aims can be considered valuable and consistent by the citizens, yet economic experts will rather quickly agree that the three aims are not compatible - they cannot

be achieved simultaneously (Iversen, & Wren, 1998; Hemerijck, 2013). If the experts cannot influence the process of selecting aims the society is to pursue, they might receive a task of creating laws and policies that serve to achieve incompatible political aims. Such laws and policies will be epistemically crippled (since laws and policies supporting one political aim will damage or jeopardize another) and the epistemic value of such decision-making procedure will be brought in question.

Furthermore, though citizens might advocate some aims categorically, many other aims will be advocated because they are seen as desirable, yet their desirability might change if the cost for achieving them is too high. One might hold that supporting traditional agriculture is a valuable aim that society should pursue, but one might also be ready to abandon this aim if the cost of achieving it are protectionist laws that lead to international isolation or substantial transfers (in form of taxes) from successful branches of the economy to agriculture practices with small cost-efficiency. In order for citizens to understand the cost of achieving some political aims, citizens should understand the means (laws, policies and decisions) necessary for the achievement of these aims. Since means are devised by experts, the communication between experts and citizens is essential for selecting eligible political aims. Deliberation should not persist only within separate stages of the decision-making process (e.g. the deliberation among citizens in the first stage and the deliberation among experts and policy-makers in the second stage), but between different stages of decision-making process as well.

Communication from citizens to experts. Can citizens help the experts in the process of making political decisions, laws and policies? Of course, citizens select aims the society is to pursue, but can their participation in the decision-making process (i.e. in the process of devising means to achieve the desired aims) improve the epistemic quality of decisions, laws and policies? There are many examples that point out instances when the experts would have produced a better decision had they listened to the reasons and arguments the citizens had to offer. Whyte and Crease (2010) analyze a case of radioactive material (including cesium) deposited by rain on portions of Great Britain after the Chernobyl meltdown in April 1986. Sheep ingested contaminated grass, and since the level of radiation found in samples of lamb meat was well beyond the maximum permissible level, the regulatory agencies ordered that the sheep should be slaughtered. Scientists, who did not consult with the sheep farmers, predicted that the grass would be radioactive for three weeks, but that led to several serious mistakes: they based their research on the absorption of cesium in the human digestive system (instead of the digestive system of sheep), they thought that the level of radioactivity would correspond to the level of rainfall (forgetting that, once the rain falls, the water is not evenly accumulated and thus some areas will receive much higher levels of radiation than other areas), and they conducted experiments regarding the cesium absorption in fenced lawns (disregarding the fact that sheep do eat equal amounts of grass when they are fenced and when they

are in the open, among other things because they do not have the same level of physical activity). Local farmers (who were, of course, ignorant regarding the nuclear physics) tried to warn scientists and experts about these negligences and errors, but the scientists were unwilling to consider the sheep farmers' knowledge. This was caused by some actors having too narrow a conception of scientific expertise: some actors with relevant knowledge and competences, but no formal credentials, were not recognized as potential contributors - credentialed scientists overlooked relevant types of knowledge and competences (Whyte, & Crease, 2010). This was an instance of epistemic (testimonial) injustice: a prejudice or bias caused a hearer (scientist) to give a deflated level of credibility to a speaker's (sheep farmer's) word (Fricker, 2007; Fricker, 2013). Furthermore, this practice jeopardized the trust the local population had in the credentialed experts - since scientists acted arrogantly and refused to even listen to what sheep farmers had to say, they were unable to produce decisions of adequate epistemic quality, but they also threw away the chance to demonstrate the (epistemic) value of experts' methods to the local population.

In order to have the desired epistemic value, the decision-making process should be bidirectional - though it is primarily the role of the people (and their representatives) to determine the aims the society is to pursue, experts should participate in the public deliberation and give insights on how difficult it is to achieve those aims, and though it is primarily the role of the experts (and executive government) to devise means (laws, policies, decisions) that will help us achieve the desired aims, citizens (and NGO's and other interest groups) should participate in the deliberation with experts and give their epistemic contribution regarding the decisions, policies and laws that will be enacted to promote desired aims. The role of policy-makers (executive and administrative government) is to moderate the deliberation between experts and citizens and to analyze the different kinds of epistemic contributions that different actors can bring into deliberation[8] (Douglas, 2005).

Conclusion

In this paper I have claimed that the epistemic individualist's view, typical for the Age of Enlightenment, is not appropriate for contemporary societies. Reasons, arguments and evidence supporting some scientific claims can be so complex that we cannot understand and evaluate them properly - we would need extensive education and specialization that would take years or even decades to understand and properly evaluate only a small set of political decisions. There are epistemic authorities and we should trust them, but this trust should not be blind. When we are unable to evaluate the experts' claims (or reasons and evidence supporting these claims), we should evalu-

8 Philosophers (and in particular philosophers of science) might be to help them moderate these discussions, and might thus be seen as interactional experts (Whyte, & Crease, 2010).

ate the experts' credibility instead. Scientists' impact factor, as well as their reputation within the scientific community, must be assessed in order to put our trust in them, as well as their interests regarding the issue at hand. In order for a decision-making procedure to have a satisfying level of epistemic value, it should incorporate the idea of division of epistemic (and political) labour. Citizens should select aims and values the society is to pursue, and experts should devise means (laws, policies and political decisions) that will help us achieve those aims. However, I have claimed that the process should not be unidirectional: experts can help the citizens to select better (more consistent or more feasible) aims, while the citizens can help experts by introducing new perspectives and missing information into the decision-making process. Finally, I have argued in favour of representative deliberative democracy as an appropriate decision-making procedure that can incorporate the appropriate division of epistemic and political labour, as well as bidirectional communication between citizens and experts. This paper does not try to establish the final account of the division of epistemic labour - it only sketches what should be the role of experts in epistemic democracy.

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