

Enlightened Proceduralism: Democracy and the Role of Episteme

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Abstract: This paper aims to present episteme as a pillar of democratic proceduralism and an indispensable element to characterizing democratic legitimacy. The first section describes non-epistemic proceduralism, which understands democratic legitimacy as connected to the protection of equal liberty in the context of disagreement. The second section illustrates the exclusion of episteme from procedural interpretation under investigation and argues that this choice is based on the fear that episteme as “truth” endangers citizens’ equal liberty. The third section provides a procedural reassessment of “episteme” in the democratic process by presenting it as a body of “serviceable truths,” which allows citizens to articulate their positions in uncertain and open-ended deliberation. The final section describes democracy as “enlightened procedure.” According to “enlightened proceduralism,” democracy should be understood as a decision-making technique not only intended to safeguard citizens’ equal liberty in a context of persistent disagreement, but also aimed at institutionalizing the peculiar human capacity to understand reality and decide accordingly.

Keywords: Democratic proceduralism, Epistemic democracy, Epistemology of democracy, Political disagreement.

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