Conspiracy Theories and Reasonable Disagreement

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This paper will discuss some of the epistemological problems that conspiracy theories present.

KEYWORDS: conspiracy theories, burden of proof, disagreement, independence principle, uniqueness of evidence

1. INTRODUCTION

On the 40th anniversary of moon landing in 2009, Time magazine published a list of what they thought were the most enduring conspiracy theories. While one might quibble about the expression 'most enduring,'[1] the list certainly noted theories that most of us have heard or seen circulated, and it is still relevant a decade later. According to the list, the moon landings were faked, the CIA assassinated JFK, the 9/11 was a cover-up, Paul McCartney died 1966 and a replica took his place, and various secret societies or even alien reptiles control the world. Just this little sample indicates the great variation these theories exhibit. Some deal with individual events or agents, some with larger collective bodies and agents, and some can be characterized as total, taking into their scope of explanation the world as we know it. While we have good reason to be sceptical of many pieces of information that get to the public sphere, the surprisingly common phenomenon of conspiracy theorizing still seems puzzling: why are people attracted to them? Is there something special about their epistemic or inferential structure? A sceptically oriented citizen might ask if we really know that even the wacky-seeming ones are false. Who should we trust?

In this essay, I will first make some conceptual remarks about the term 'conspiracy theory.' This is necessary to set the scene for three epistemic problems that appear relevant in the context of conspiracy

[1] For example, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a book detailing an alleged Jewish master plan for world dominion, was first published in 1903 in Russia. It had roots in much earlier works, and its claims keep resurfacing in different places.

theories. The first one of these problems is their general epistemic characteristics: can we, from the point of view of applied epistemology, say anything general about conspiracy theories? I hold we can: we are, with some contextual limitations, justified in putting the burden of proof on conspiracy theories.[2]

The second problem is a strategy sometimes used to defend conspiracy theories, called the expanding strategy, where the defender of a particular conspiracy theory infers that a given source conflicting with the conspiracy theory must be "in on it." I claim this strategy can be seen as a violation of the principle called the Independence, debated in the epistemology of disagreement. According to this principle, roughly, when you evaluate the epistemic worth of your opponent, you ought to do it in a way that is independent of the point of contention. I argue that the context of conspiracy theories can contribute to the discussion on the epistemology of disagreement.

The third problem is the nature of evidence. We are often willing to make the assumption that evidence is unique: there is just one possible rational attitude to take to what any given body of evidence shows: either accept, reject, or withhold judgment. This assumption means that when we have our evidence-base fixed, there should be no possibility of rational disagreement. I will discuss this from a very broad perspective: I will try to show that if we do not assume uniqueness to be a quality of evidence, we struggle to understand the concept of justification. Finally, I will discuss the argument that Ballantyne and Coffman (2011) have presented, an argument that seems to show this assumption is mistaken. I argue there is a crucial flaw in the argument.

2. WHAT IS A 'CONSPIRACY THEORY'?

A conspiracy is a fairly common thing, and most of us can name one without hesitation. They seem as much an integral part of history books (for example, the assassination of Julius Caesar) as they are of modern news coverage (for example, the Volkswagen emission scandal). However, when 'conspiracy' is coupled with 'theory,' the connotations are completely different. They seem something that are, well, out-there. Perhaps this is the reason that the philosophical interest in them is quite recent, starting with Brian Keeley's 1999 paper 'Of Conspiracy Theories' in *The Journal of Philosophy*.[3] This paper discussed unwarranted

[2] While this claim has been made by various authors, I should note my particular intellectual debt to the work of, and discussions with, Juha Räikkä on this and the conceptual question.

[3] Karl Popper famously discussed the conspiracy theory of society in his *Open Society and Its Enemies*, but that had more to do with the general issue of intentional explanation in social sciences than with conspiracy theories as such.

conspiracy theories, claiming that such theories typically run counter to some received or obvious account; assume nefarious intentions[4]; seek to tie seemingly unrelated issues; the truths behind them are well-kept secrets; their chief evidence is errant data, left unexplained by the official accounts but which actually require explanation conflicting with the official account (Keeley 1999, pp. 116-118). However, Keeley also noted that these criteria do not distinguish between conspiracies we are justified in believing (1999, p. 118). Since then, the topic has attracted new authors and there is now a bourgeoning literature on the topic, with new titles and articles appearing every year.[5]

Regardless of whether we could come up with necessary and sufficient conditions for a conspiracy theory, I think a crucial difference between a conspiracy, a run-of-the-mill term of historical and social explanation, and a conspiracy theory, is that the former, but not the latter, are explanations that enjoy the support of epistemic authorities. What, then, are the epistemic authorities? In broad terms, they are the mainstream media, investigative journalists, state and local authorities and agencies, and the academic community.[6] Yet, the fact that an explanation is in conflict with the received view does not imply that it does not receive support from powerful agents.

The idea of taking this difference in the epistemic support as a central feature is to approximate the popular use of the term, and then study that phenomenon, without thereby taking a stand on their objective epistemic quality. An alternative strategy proposed in the literature (see for example Pigden 2007, p. 230; Dentith 2016, p. 587; Basham 2018) is to revise the term so that all explanations that refer to conspiracies are called conspiracy theories. The motivation is that it might remove the stigma involved with the term. Putting explanations perceived as legitimate under the same term might help to expose schemes, which the relevant agents are keen to hide, and thus serve public interest. After all, we know that governments and other powerful agents have engaged in dubious plots, so we should not naïvely believe that powers that be are always to be trusted.

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[4] 'Nefarious' must be relativized to speakers; for example I do not think the Reagan administration did themselves think they were involved in something nefarious.

[5] A quite comprehensive literature list, put together by an interdisciplinary Cost Action project 15101: "Comparative Analysis of Conspiracy Theories," can be found in https://conspiracytheories.eu. For a conspiracy theoretic -view on the motivations and aims of that project, see for example https://allunreal.com/blog/controlled-academic-opposition/#more1363.

[6] This list is neither clear-cut nor immutable. We can lose trust in some agents on it, and agents can gain/regain trust by some actions. Also, various private citizen groups can become part of it by building a respectable track-record.

However, I do not think it is clear that philosophers could affect such a change in the use of an established term.[7] Ideally, conspiracy theories should get a fair review anyway, but of course, we do not live in an ideal world, and sometimes people voicing legitimate concerns are ridiculed, even smeared, publically. Yet, the proposed shift in the meaning of the term would hardly prevent that or empty languages of terms for character assassination.

3. EPISTEMIC ISSUES WITH CONSPIRACY THEORIES

A conspiracy theory, then, is an explanation of some events that lacks the backing of sources on which we are used to relying. But if we pause to consider them just a little longer, we might notice that they really are a worthwhile subject. Just consider the way one source of the received view in philosophy, *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, divides the field of social epistemology into three broad topics: testimony and trust, social/collective knowledge, and the reliability of institutions and systems. The issue of conspiracy theory touches on all these topics. Also, to mention one popular topic in modern epistemology: the contents of some of these theories are topics on which I have often disagreed with my epistemic peers. Let me now try to show their intrinsic interest by considering some individual epistemic questions.

3.1 Generality and the burden of proof

The first issue concerns the general nature of the conspiracy theories.[8] As noted in the beginning, conspiracy theories exhibit a great deal of variation, ranging from the explanation of one single event to total theories that aim to explain the state of the world *in toto*. The amount and type of evidence varies greatly, and while some of them have premises requiring leaps of faith and inferences defying known canons, some of them may make us wonder if we know the full story quite yet. We know that governments have engaged in all kinds of dodgy plans. This leads to the question whether there really is anything general that one can, or should, say about them. In my view, there is. I would argue that:

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[7] But perhaps such pessimism is not warranted. After all, some philosophers, and also other scholars, have long expressed doubts whether terms like 'truth,' 'validity,' or 'justification' have any substantial content, and that attitude has surfaced in the public sphere.

[8] A more detailed version of the argument in this section is in Räikkä and Ritola (forthcoming).

1. Conspiracies are typically revealed by epistemic authorities, helped by leakers.
2. In (W*NC)[9], the epistemic authorities have earned their position and reputation through their epistemic efforts.
3. Conspiracy theories are explanations of social events that contradict the explanations of the epistemic authorities.

This lends support to:

4. Typically, a given conspiracy theory has the burden of proof.

Not everyone in the field finds this argument cogent, especially when they place it into their own context. The view purporting to say anything general about conspiracy theories has been termed 'generalist.' (Buenting and Taylor 2010), as opposed to 'particularism,' which avers that every conspiracy theory needs to be examined in their own right (see for example Pigden 2007, Dentith 2018).

I think there is mistake here. As Räikkä (2018) has noted, a generalist may well admit that every case needs to be judged on their own merits, but it does not follow that nothing that can be said about conspiracy theories in general. The general rational believability (or acceptability) is dependent on the general reliability of the relevant epistemic authorities. At least in Finland, the authorities work tolerably well.

The issue of general rational believability of the sources is directly related to the nature and extent of testimonial knowledge10. Our knowledge is deeply dependent on others, and it is almost automatic. If we cannot rely on others, the number of things we know drops drastically. The traditional, startling example is that we do not know even our own name, if we try to exclude from the things we know, the things we know based on testimonial knowledge. This deep epistemic dependency on others is present from the mundane pieces of knowledge to expert knowledge. In modern academia, also experts are dependent on other experts, and the specialization of scientific and scholarly knowledge is ever increasing. Naturally, it is not the case that we always know, because others know; error and deliberate misinformation can spread because of this dependency.

In undemocratic, closed, and badly corrupt societies people do not trust the media, or the official sources. But it is worth bearing in

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[9] By (W*NC) I mean the actual world, Nordic countries. I need to stick to what I know.

[10] For an introduction, see Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, s.v. "Epistemological Problems of Testimony.'

mind that in those cases, it is also common knowledge why the official sources cannot be trusted. And wherever one's surroundings stand on the Corruptions Perception Index11 or something to that effect, we have reason to be critical of our epistemic authorities. But it is important to note that lists of errors by epistemic authorities are provided by those very same epistemic authorities. They are evidence of their general reliability.

Matthew Dentith has argued that

> [i]t is possible that we live in a society which merely looks open […] but that apparent openness might be the product of those very same conspiracies. […] Our judgments about the prior probability of conspiracies in the past make claims of conspiracy […] worthy of consideration […] (Dentith 2018, p. 7)

David Coady has argued that

> [i]t may be that in an ideal society official stories would carry an epistemic authority such that it would almost always be rational to believe them. But that is not our society, nor, I suspect, is it any society that has been or ever will be. (Coady 2007, p. 199)

To reiterate, the generalist need not hold that it is always rational to believe the official story. Even large-scale conspiracies are possible, and we have no reason for complacency about the official stories. Claiming anything beyond this logical possibility depends on what you have reason to believe. But it is essential to ask how do we get the prior probabilities about the conspiracies (i.e. established historical facts)? It seems we are at the mercy of the official stories. If we take the sceptical scenarios that Dentith and Coady play with seriously, we lose, not only knowledge of our names and personal origins, but our general knowledge of history and general knowledge of our surroundings. This includes the bulk of our knowledge, including the knowledge of there ever being conspiracies!

A third objection to the generalist position is that some conspiratorial scenarios "are too 'toxic' for our usual institutions of public information to disseminate to the public" (Basham 2018, p. 73). Yet, it seems that quite a few conspiracies about for example political

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[11] Provided by Transparency International. The reports can be found at https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview.

corruption, targeted killings, and questionable military campaigns, have been made public. 'Toxicity' does not seem to work all the time.

Still, I agree with a number of authors (for example Basham 1999, 2003, 2006; Hagen 2018) that we should not think that conspiracy theories are automatically false or always produced by questionable inference mechanisms. The issue of human rationality is complex, and though it seems that the failings of human inference cannot be explained away, they are not specific to conspiracy theories.

3.2 The expanding strategy

The expanding strategy refers to an argumentative/inferential move in which the defender of a particular conspiracy theorist argues or infers that a source providing information conflicting with the theory must be "in on it." The claim that this strategy is common among conspiracy theorists was discussed already in Keeley's seminal article (see 1999, p. 122). The idea there is that a given conspiracy theory can initially involve a small circle of actors, but as positive evidence for the theory fails to obtain, more and more actors are implicated by the theory, and eventually, this ever increasing scepticism makes the theory irrational.

We seem to have an interesting dilemma here. On the one hand, this kind of a move can protect a theory to such an extent that it is unfalsifiable, on the other hand, as many authors have noted, if an effective conspiracy is actually taking place, you should expect false evidence[12]. Keeley's arguments have faced criticism of varying quality, but we cannot cover that here.[13] The expanding strategy is not specific to defence of conspiracy theories: one can apply the same dubious strategy to dismissing evidence about a conspiracy. To me, the dilemma is about sailing between the Scylla of extreme scepticism and the Charybdis of naivety.

Say, then, that you disagree with your epistemic peer about some conspiracy theory. For example, you believe that the Holocaust did happen, and the six million dead –claim is roughly correct.[14] Faced with this disagreement, what should you do? The epistemology of

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[12] For example, "if powerful actors are trying to hide something it only stands to reason that confirming evidence will be hidden and red herrings will abound." (Uscinski 2018, p. 5)

[13] See Räikkä 2009 for review and development.

[14] The modern conspiracy theory on the Holocaust does not claim that there were no concentration camps, but that the 'official' number of people dead is a gross exaggeration. See for example http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1860871_1860876_1861026,00.html.

disagreement –literature presents, roughly, two main positions.[15] First, you can hold your view in the face of disagreement. After all, if you are in possession of the evidence and reviewed it carefully, you should hold your own. This known as the steadfast –position. Alternatively, you could think that since you are disagreeing with your peer, you have no reason to believe that you are more likely to be right than your peer. This could lead you to reduce your confidence in the claim, or even suspend judgment. This is known as the conciliatory –position. A partial motivation here is that you would need at least some reason to discount you peer's opinion as we want to align our beliefs with our reasons, and peer's opinion is a reason.

An essential part of the conciliatory position has been a principle called Independence, which states that when deciding what to do in a disagreement, the reasons because of which you discount your peer's opinion must be independent of the disagreement. The motivation is that it would seem question-begging to reason: I have reasoned that p. My peer disagrees with me on whether p. Therefore, she must be wrong. Or, alternatively, to reason: I have reasoned that p. My peer has reasoned that not-p. Therefore, he is not my peer. Further, were one to repeat such inferences, there is no number of people disagreeing with you that you could not dismiss. But that is unintuitive.

Thomas Kelly (2013) has criticized the principle forcefully, and a central counterargument he brings to bear on it is the case of a Holocaust denier. He first formulates independence as:

(I): In evaluating the epistemic credentials of another person's belief about P, in order to determine how (if at all) to modify one's own belief about P, one should do so in a way that is independent of one's assessment of those considerations that led one to initially believe as one does about P. (Kelly 2013, p. 40)

As Kelly (2013, p. 39) notes, in many cases, where the evidence-base is quite large, this is impossible: I am not aware of all the things that led me to believe some historical account, so how do I actually conduct the evaluation independent of it?

Suppose I defend my position by referring to history books, my visit to Auschwitz, documents containing, and films referring to, first-person accounts and so on, and my friend counters: "Sure, there is all that evidence, but it is actually misleading: the conspiracy about the

[15] Very few would now defend these major positions as described, but the discussion proceeds as responses to, and developments of, them. For an introduction and references, see https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/disagreement/.

Holocaust has produced it. Surely you don't think they would try to pass a lie this big without a lot of misleading evidence? In situations like this, it is all the more important that you conduct your evaluation of our disagreement independently of those considerations that led you to believe that it did occur."

Kelly argues the problem with straightforwardly discounting everyone who disagrees with you is that it is dogmatic (2013, pp. 43-49). But the case of the extreme conspiracy theorist makes even worse use of the Independence –principle. It is not obvious she is being dogmatic: if there is such a conspiracy, you should expect misleading evidence. In the Holocaust –case, (I) seems unacceptable, but we lack an explanation of just what is wrong with it.

I propose that one aspect of the relevant evaluation of conspiracy theories is the amount of damage done to my overall evidential-base and belief-acquiring methods, outside the issue on which I disagree with my peer. This idea gives some credit to the Independence –principle, but not quite in the original sense. The idea is that if in order to believe the theory, I must discredit my beliefs and belief-acquisition methods overall, I should be epistemically entitled to ignore either the official version or the conspiracy theory (whichever case we happen to be dealing with).[16]

3.3 Conspiracies and Uniqueness of evidence

The discussion in the previous section assumed that if we could agree on the evidence on a given conspiracy theory, we could come to a rational agreement on it. This assumption is based on the idea that any given body of evidence can justify at most one rational attitude towards some proposition: either affirmation, rejection, or suspension of judgment. This assumption is called the uniqueness of evidence, and it, while quite intuitive in its own right, seems necessary for conciliationism[17]: if a given body of evidence makes several attitudes justified, the appeal of conciliating based on disagreement disappears, and we can both remain steadfast in our position. I will first try to present some considerations how we should understand uniqueness

[16] This idea is very much in spirit of Christensen's (2011) account. He defends the Independence principle (2011, see especially pp. 15-16), and uses the difference between positive and negative undermining, which he defends by noting that the latter would require us to have non-question-begging response to the sceptic. But I think his account does not fully appreciate the seriousness of the charge of question-begging that both sides in a conspiracy debate can raise against each other. I discuss this more fully in "Disagreements in and about Conspiracy Theories" (forthcoming).

[17] But see Christensen 2007.

and then provide a sketch of an argument showing that one argument against it is fallacious.

Define uniqueness as:

(U) For any given proposition and total body of evidence, some doxastic attitude is the one evidence makes rational (justifies) toward that proposition.

We need to first set some assumptions to rule out some uninteresting counterexamples to the principle. We must assume that if two arguers disagree on what the evidence justifies, and we are to examine uniqueness, the difference of opinion should not be the result of different: a) credences placed on the premises; b) background theories; or c) methods of justification or ways in which the evidence is processed.[18]

But there are many theories of justification. Can we apply uniqueness to all of them? For example, take the following (mock) definition of a causal account of justification:

(CJ) S is justified in believing that p if and only if the fact p is causally connected in an "appropriate" way with S's believing p.

The difficulty here is that such an externalist theory grew out of the frustration to the persistence of the problem of scepticism. The idea was that it is the notion of justification that we need to get rid of, if we are to avoid scepticism. Still, bearing this complication in mind, note that if the proponents of (CJ) approved of (U), they would be keen to hold that it would not be possible for there to be two persons that had the exact same inputs to the causal processes, placed equal value to those inputs, applied the exact same causal processes, and ended up with different beliefs. Indeed, it seems that if that were to happen, we would wonder if causality was present. Be that as it may, we should note that uniqueness is stronger than (CJ), which does not rule out different outcomes.

Consider next an early, to-be-developed, version of reliabilism:

(R1) If S's believing p at t results from a reliable cognitive belief-forming process (or set of processes), then S's belief in p at t is justified. (Goldman 1979, p. 13

It would seem natural to doubt the reliability of a cognitive belief-forming process (or set of processes), if two exactly similar processes

[18] I discuss these assumptions, and the general argument, in more detail in a longer version of this paper that I am happy to provide upon request.

resulted in different results. But again, note that it could happen: for a process to be reliable, it would not have to be 100 % reliable.

But here lies a rub: the escape I just provided assumes that if identical process resulted in different results, we would doubt its reliability and try to explain it away by noting that it need not be 100 % reliable. But that assumes the idea we were supposed to be looking at: uniqueness. We want a theory of justification that avoids arbitrariness (i.e. different results from the exact same processes), but since the sceptical dilemma lies at the root of epistemological theorizing, we do not want to hold that the account of justification is infallible. Infallibility as a requirement for a theory of justification makes the theory vulnerable to the sceptic, who is keen to point out: "Well, you accept that we make mistakes. So, how can you be sure that you are not mistaken in things you consider knowledge?" The hinge proposition of much epistemological theorizing today is that we must not make the requirements of knowledge so stringent that no theory can pass the muster; there must be room for mistakes.

Now consider the idea of a mistake. If the exact same evidence (in the assumed sense), really could make different beliefs justified via identical processes, what would count as a mistake? I could not even posit the idea that less than 100% reliability, if I did not assume that there is chance of me being wrong. What do we mean by 'being wrong here?' Well, we mean exactly that I should have come to a specific conclusion, and the processes that do not come to that specific conclusion, are wrong. But why are they wrong? Well, because we assume that from that evidence, with those priors, and that process, I should have come to a different conclusion. But that is just the thing we were trying to study: that the evidence should mandate a specific conclusion, since it is unique, and when different results come about, we have to explain something. But we need not explain coming to different conclusions, if we just get rid of uniqueness. But now we have face the possibility that we have won the debate against the sceptic at the cost of losing the idea of justification; namely that justification is something that has the tendency to lead correct, i.e. not mistaken, results.

The two theories above belong to a group called externalism. The mortal enemy of externalism is internalism[19], but when it comes to uniqueness, it seems both camps are equally uncommitted. Consider one classic formulation:

D2. S is justified in accepting p at t on the basis of system X of S at t if and only if p coheres with X of S at t. (Lehrer, 1988, p. 341)

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[19] Cf, for example, *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, s.v. 'Internalist vs. Externalist Theories of Justification.'

This formulation does not require uniqueness. The traditional critique of coherentism is that many things can cohere with the system, which is thought to be unintuitive. Since Keith Lehrer aims at undefeated justification, i.e. knowledge here, he introduces:

D3. p coheres with X of S at t if and only if all competitors of p are beaten or neutralized for S on X at t. (Lehrer, ibid.)

So, again, uniqueness is a separate, stronger requirement than the basic theory of justification. Whether the sceptical competitors can be beaten or neutralized is a different issue. But arguably, the sceptic has different priors. [20]

Finally, a typical evidentialist theory holds that:

(EV) Doxastic attitude D toward proposition p is epistemically justified for S at t if and only if having D toward p fits the evidence S has at t. (Feldman and Conee 1985, p. 15)

We can see, again, that uniqueness is stronger than this theory of justification: different types of attitudes could fit the evidence. But we can certainly note an uneasiness in saying that having the exact same evidence, the exact same priors, and the exact same background theory does not rule out having different but equally fitting responses to the evidence. But (U) could added to (EV): the one attitude that the evidence made rational would be *the* fitting response.

Nathan Ballantyne and E.J. Coffman (2011) have presented a complicated argument against uniqueness, and this argument is based on the idea that since uniqueness implies evidentialism, but evidentialism does not imply uniqueness, uniqueness is stronger than evidentialism. As we just noted, this seems to be the case. Ballantyne and Coffman then use this to argue that (U) rules out almost all other theories of justification than evidentialism, which is absurd. But given that we have noticed that uniqueness is stronger than typical theories of justification, we have reason to be sceptical of the implication. If the fact that (U) is stronger than (EV) implies the account of justification given by (EV), then, in like manner, (U) implies all accounts of justification, which is absurd. What 'being stronger than' actually means is that if you buy into the given theory, uniqueness will have something to say about the results of that theory. Uniqueness is an assumption about the true

[20] I do not mean this as a general refutation of scepticism; I doubt it can be had. But this is one way of looking at the whole problem: the sceptic is overly worried about the possibility of us being completely wrong.

nature of evidence, not a theory of justification. If so, you might still have reason to debate with your disagreeing peer, or at least, search for differences in evidence, priors, or background theory.

4. CONCLUSION

In this essay, I first presented the topic of conspiracies, and then argued that in the context that this essay was written, it is reasonable to place the burden of proof on conspiracy theories. Next, I examined an interesting epistemic strategy that conspiracy theories bring to fore: the expanding strategy. Finally, I concluded with a discussion on the uniqueness of evidence.

The motivation for discussing the expanding was that it seemed like a violation of the principle of Independence, a principle that has been the topic of intense philosophical debate in the epistemology of disagreement. It seems to me that independence is an attractive principle that allows us to avoid some forms of begging the question. Yet, based on the discussion, it does not seem at all clear to me that it can be upheld. The question that made this discussion relevant in general is the idea that in order for us to debate rationally, we need some common starting points. But the expanding strategy, both in the case of the extreme sceptic and the naïve follower of official information, seems to threaten the possibility of there being common starting points in political discussions. I think discussing expanding with insights from the disagreement literature allows us to understand the epistemic situation better.

Finally, I discussed an argument to the effect that the evidence we bring to bear on disagreements might not be unique. This requirement, I argue, is essential to our cognitive efforts; to having justified beliefs in the first place. If we cannot assume that the evidence is unique, we seem to have little reason to even debate with our fellow citizens. I tried to show that while theories of justification typically do not take uniqueness as a requirement of being justified, the idea of justification seems threatened if we do away with it. Finally, I tried to show that one particular argument against is fallacious. This, of course, does not go far in proving that uniqueness should be accepted, but, as I argued, we seem lost without it too.

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