Seminario

Tópicos de Epistemología:
Epistemología do Desacordo e Racionalidade

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Salvador - Noviembre 2014
Disagreements

A disagreement arises whenever two or more people have different attitudes toward a proposition.

For example, Ann and Bob might have different attitudes toward the proposition "Barack Obama is the greatest U.S. president ever."

Ann thinks it is true; Bob thinks that nothing could be more ridiculous.
A disagreement is reasonable if it does not seem to arise from any cognitive or evidential flaw or error.

In other words, nothing seems to have gone wrong in the process that led to Ann and Bob forming their different attitudes. This may result in the parties agreeing to disagree.
Peers

People are *cognitive peers* if they have equal cognitive ability, i.e. they are equally good at perceiving, remembering, inferring and so on.

It is also possible for people to be cognitive superiors or inferiors.

When talking about cognitive superiority/parity we may only be talking about specific domains of knowledge.
People are **evidential peers** if they have access to the same evidence, i.e. they are equally well informed about a given topic. Again, it is possible for them to be superiors or inferiors as well.
A "belief" can be understood in two different ways. Either (i) an all-or-nothing attitude toward a proposition (true/false); or (ii) a graded attitude toward a proposition (e.g. "55% true"). The graded conception.
One of the main goals of the epistemology of disagreement is to discover the rational response to disagreement between doxastic peers. "Rationality" here is understood as a normative standard of belief revision.
Books

- disagreement
- The Epistemology of Disagreement
- Disagreement

Authors:
- Richard Feldman
- Ted A. Warfield
- Bryan Frances
Suppose Jan and Dan are college students who are dating. They disagree about two matters:

(1) whether it’s harder to get A grades in economics classes or in philosophy classes and
(2) whether they should move in together this summer.

The first disagreement is over the truth of a claim: is the claim (or belief) “It is harder to get As in economics classes compared to philosophy classes” true or not?

The second disagreement is over an action: should we move in together or not (the action = moving in together)?

Call the first kind of disagreement belief-disagreement; call the second kind action-disagreement.
Case 1: the recognized extreme peer

S and S* are epistemic peers. S and S* have seen all the evidence and have evaluated that common body of evidence for about the same length of time and with the same care. S also knows that S* is about as clever, thorough, and open-minded as she is, both generally and with respect to the issues at hand. The same relevant biases. At this point, before you find out her opinion on P, you fully admit that you cannot think of any epistemic advantage you have over her when it comes to the topic in question; you admit that she is just as likely to get P’s truth-value right as you are.
Case 1: the recognized extreme peer

Case 2: the recognized superior genius

Case 3: the recognized inferior epistemic situation.

Case 4: a colleagues case

Case 5: an important colleagues case

Case 6: a group of colleagues case
I die, knowingly come face to face with the infallible and truth-telling God, and He says that the truth is definitely ~ P.

At this point only an idiot would retain his belief in P.

Surely at this point I have to admit I was wrong—or at least withhold judgment!

Am I epistemically permitted to not at all alter my confidence in my belief in P?
When I am not epistemically permitted to retain my confidence level in P?
How is my confidence level supposed to change in response to the discovery of disagreement?
Have I to suspend judgment on P entirely or can I merely lower my confidence in P a bit?
If the latter, what factors dictate what my new level of confidence in P must be?
When I am epistemically required to alter my confidence in P, am I also required to alter the way I behave regarding whether P is true?
For instance, can I still act on the assumption that P is true or must I do something different?
Does it matter what topics the disagreement is about?
Are the principles governing how we need to react to disagreements in science different from those regarding morals, religion, philosophy, or art?
Views about Disagreements

Truth

Different attitudes toward p

Believe  Split the difference  Disbelieve

False
How much should your confidence in your beliefs be shaken when you learn that others – ‘epistemic peers’ who seem as well-qualified as you are – hold beliefs contrary to yours?

1. **Conciliationism**--In a peer disagreement, one must revise one's belief/credence in the direction of one's peer's. Some philosophers believe that when epistemic peers disagree, each has an obligation to accord the other’s assessment the same weight as her own.
   2. - Total Evidence View (Kelly, 2010)

2. **Steadfast View**--In a peer disagreement, one need not revise one's view.
   1. -Dogmatism-
   2. -Right Reasons View-One need not revise provided one is at the right belief/credence on the evidence
Disagreements and suspension of judgment


Consider those cases in which the reasonable thing to think is that another person, every bit as sensible, serious, and careful as oneself, has reviewed the same information as oneself and has come to a contrary conclusion to one's own . . . An honest description of the situation acknowledges its symmetry . . . In those cases, I think, the skeptical conclusion is the reasonable one: it is not the case that both points of view are reasonable, and it is not the case that one's own point of view is somehow privileged. Rather, suspension of judgment is called for.
For any persons A and B, proposition p, and time t, if A and B know that
(1) They are epistemic peers about p at t, and
(2) They have different credences about p at t, then it is reasonable for A and B to revise their prior credences by adopting the credence obtained by averaging their prior credences.
Disagreements: EWV

Equal-Weight View:

For any subjects A and B and for any p, if... 

(Credence) A’s credence in p on her evidence E relevant to p is \( n_1 \), and B’s credence in p on E is \( n_2 \),

(Disagreement) \( n_1 \neq n_2 \), and

(Full Disclosure) A learns these three things, and

(Peerhood) A believes that she’s as reliable as B on this issue in the circumstances of evaluation, excluding the assessments themselves and any reasoning by which A and B arrived at them, then

A should give B’s assessment of p on this evidence the same weight as her own.
Equal-Weight View:

In case of disagreements, the most important is the peers opinions.

So,

The rational attitude is split the difference (or suspend of judgment)
Motivating the Equal-Weight View:

**Restaurant Check**

Suppose that five of us go out to dinner. It’s time to pay the check, so the question we’re interested in is how much we each owe. We can all see the bill total clearly, we all agree to give a 20% tip, and we further agree to split the whole cost evenly . . . I do the math in my head and become highly confident that our shares are $43 each. Meanwhile, my friend does the math in her head and becomes highly confident that our shares are $45 each. (Christensen, p. 193)

Christensen and Elga think that, after full disclosure, each should give the other’s assessment the same weight as her own.
Motivating the Equal-Weight View:

Feldman’s Quad

“Suppose that you and I are standing by the window looking out on the quad. We think we have comparable vision and we know each other to be honest. I seem to see what looks to me like a person in a blue coat in the middle of the quad. (Assume that this is not something odd.) I believe that a person with a blue coat is standing on the quad. Meanwhile, you seem to see nothing of the kind there. You think that no one is standing in the middle of the quad.” (p. 223)
First order evidence: informations
- Higher-order evidence: Evidence about evidence
- The reason higher order evidence is important for the topic of disagreement has to do with testimony.
- If you come to believe something on the basis of some body of evidence, and then you learn that a great many intelligent people believe the exact opposite, that testimonial fact – that they are so intelligent and yet disagree with you – is evidence E that you may have missed something in coming to your belief
- ... what is reasonable to believe depends on both the original, first–orden evidence as well as on the higher order evidence that is afforded by the fact that one’s peers believe as they do. For this reason, it seems appropriate to call the view on offer. (Kelly 2010, p.33)
Conciliatory or Steadfast?

Christensen, David (2007) – “Epistemology of disagreement”
Elga (2007) – “Reflection and disagreement”

Overviews:

Frances, B. (2014) – Disagreement, leer completa la Parte 1 (p 1-105)