

Gender, Race, and Group Disagreement

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Abstract

This paper has two aims. The first is critical: it argues that our mainstream epistemology of disagreement does not have the resources to explain what goes wrong in cases of group-level epistemic injustice. The second is positive: we argue that a functionalist account of group belief and group justification delivers (1) an account of the epistemic peerhood relation between groups that accommodates minority and oppressed groups, and (2), furthermore, diagnoses the epistemic injustice cases correctly as cases of unwarranted belief on the part of the oppressor group.

1. Introduction

A hotly debated question in mainstream social epistemology asks what rational agents should believe when they find themselves in disagreement with others.¹ Although special attention has been paid to disagreement between *individuals*, recent developments have opposed this trend by broadening the focus to include cases of disagreement between *groups*.² We argue that this shift is interesting because the phenomenon of inter-group disagreement (such as e.g. the disagreement that occurs between opposing political parties, or countries) raises some distinctive challenges for our methodological choices in the epistemology of disagreement. To do that, we look at two cases of group disagreement, one involving gender discrimination, the other involving the marginalisation of racial and religious minorities, and argue that mainstream epistemology of peer disagreement essentially lacks the resources to explain

¹ Lackey (2010), Christensen (2009), Feldman & Warfield (2010), Matheson (2015), Kelly (2005) and Elga (2007).

² Carter (2016), Skipper & Steglich-Petersen (2019).

what is going wrong in these cases. In this paper, we advance a two-tiered strategy to tackle this challenge by drawing on an inflationist account of group belief and an externalist account of the normativity of belief in the face of disagreement.

Here's the structure of this paper. We start off the discussion by presenting two examples of discrimination in cases of group disagreement, and then offer a diagnosis of the distinctive form of epistemic injustice at play (#2). We then proceed to examine the prospects of extant views in the epistemology of peer disagreement to address the problem raised in the first section, and conclude that they have difficulties accounting for what went wrong in these cases (#3). We suggest that the problem lies at methodological level, and advance a two-tiered solution to the problem that relies on an externalist epistemology and a functionalist theoretical framework (#4).

2. Gender, Race, and Group Peer Disagreement

Consider the two following cases:

SEXIST SCIENTISTS: During a conference on the impact of climate change on the Arctic Pole, a group of male scientists presents their most recent result that p : 'the melting rate of ice has halved in the last year'. In the Q&A, a group of female scientists notes that p doesn't take into account the results of a study published by them, which supports not- p : 'it is not the case that the melting rate of ice has halved in the last year'. Not- p is, as a matter of fact, true, but the group of male scientists continue to disregard this option solely on the grounds that her research group was entirely composed by female scientists.

RACIST COMMITTEE In a predominantly Christian elementary school, the RACIST committee convenes to discuss what food should be served for lunch the incoming semester. As it turns out, white schoolteachers of Christian faith exclusively compose the committee. After a brief discussion, the committee comes to believe, among other things, that q : 'Children should be served pork on Wednesdays.' A small group of non-white Muslim parents, informed of the outcome of the meeting,

raise a number of independent formal complaints against the RACIST committee on the grounds that the decision doesn't respect the dietary restrictions of their religion and arguing for not-q: 'It is not the case that children should be served pork on Wednesdays.' Due to racial prejudice, however, the RACIST committee ignores the complaints, and no action is taken to amend the decision.

In the first case, the group of male scientists dismisses a relevant piece of evidence based on their prejudice against women. Because of their gender, the women's team fails to be rightly perceived as a peer. In the second case, the group formed by the parents of the school kids is discriminated against because they constitute a racial and religious minority.

It is crucial to note that, although moral harm is definitely at stake in these cases as well, the kind of harm perpetrated is distinctively *epistemic*, in that both discriminated groups are harmed in their capacity as knowers (Fricker 2007). What is common between the two cases is that both manifest some form of *epistemic injustice*— i.e., the discriminated groups fail, due to their hearers' prejudices, in their attempt to transmit a piece of information they possess. Moreover, the epistemic harm at stake here is the result of a fundamental epistemic failure on the part of the oppressive groups. The group of scientists and the school representatives don't simply *happen* to fail to notice some relevant piece of information, nor it is the case that they aren't in a position to easily access it. Instead, upon being presented with the relevant piece of evidence, they discount it for no good epistemic reason; in this, the oppressor groups fail to be properly responsive to evidence (Simion 2019a).

The above cases represent instances of disagreement between groups, whereby the disagreement is resolved in a bad way: the oppressor group ignores or dismisses the information the oppressed one attempts to transmit, and this happens in virtue of the social dynamics that are particular to the two types of case: it is the prejudiced belief that the male group of scientists have towards women, and the RACIST committee has towards minorities, that prevents them from perceiving their interlocutors as their peer.

We strongly believe that the epistemology of disagreement should be able to account for what is going wrong in these cases. Furthermore, we think that if our epistemology is not able to do so – i.e., if we don't have resources to explain the arguably most ubiquitous and harmful among epistemic failures, of which these cases are prime examples of – our epistemology requires a swift and radical methodological change. For this reason, an important question that such examples raise is the following: are extant accounts in the epistemology of disagreement sensitive enough to actual social dynamics to be capable of explaining what went wrong in these problem cases?

3. A (Problematically) Narrow Methodological Choice

Epistemology at large is concerned with what is permissible to believe;³ given this, it is a matter of surprising historical contingency that the vast majority⁴ of the literature in the epistemology of disagreement concerns itself with a much narrower question, i.e.: 'What is rational to believe in the face of disagreement with an epistemic peer?' (henceforth, the question).⁵ The question is narrow in two crucial ways. First, in that it is explicitly conceived as concerning an internalist accessibilist notion of rationality⁶: the version of the question that the vast majority of the literature concerns itself with is: 'Given all and only reasons accessible to me, what is rational for me to believe in the face of disagreement with an epistemic peer?'

A second crucial way in which the question is narrow is in that it is not primarily concerned with real cases of everyday disagreement, but rather restricts focus to highly idealised cases in which one disagrees with one's epistemic peer. The thought is that if we answer the

³ See Step and Neta (2020).

⁴ But see e.g. Broncano-Berrocal & Simion (2020) and Hawthorne & Srinivasan (2013) for exceptions.

⁵ Lackey (2014)

⁶ Internalist accessibilism is the view that epistemic support depends exclusively factors that are internal to the subject and accessible through reflection alone (e.g. Chisholm 1977, 17)

question for perfect peerhood, we can then ‘upload context’ and figure out the right verdict for cases of real-life disagreement as well. Here is how David Christensen puts it:

The hope is that by studying this sort of artificially simple socio-epistemic interaction, we will test general principles that could be extended to more complicated and realistic situations, such as the ones encountered by all of us who have views—perhaps strongly held ones—in areas where smart, honest, well-informed opinion is deeply divided. (Christensen 2009: 231).

One notable difficulty for these accounts concerns how to define the notion of peerhood at stake in the question. In the literature, epistemic peerhood is typically assessed along two main lines: cognitive or evidential equality.⁷ Agents are taken to be evidential peers if they ground their confidence in a proposition *p* on pieces of evidence that are epistemically equivalent, while cognitive peers are typically taken to have the same cognitive abilities⁸. No matter the correct account, though, it is crucial to note that, *as a matter of principle*, on pain of normative misfit, the notion *cannot* feature externalist elements. After all, if the question regards a purely internalist notion of rationality, the corresponding notion of peerhood should follow suit: it should concern perceived peerhood rather than *de facto* peerhood. To see this, consider the following case:

EXPERT CHILD My six-year-old son (weirdly enough) disagrees with me about whether the closure principle for knowledge holds. Intuitively, it seems fine for me to hold steadfast: after all, discounting him as an epistemic peer on the issue seems like the rational thing to do.

⁷ Lackey (2010).

⁸ There is still ongoing debate on how to spell out the notion of cognitive or evidential equality. The former is typically understood in terms of sameness of reliabilist (i.e., a well-functioning cognitive system) or responsibilist (e.g., open-mindedness, humility) virtues. The latter is sometimes taken to require ‘rough sameness’ of evidence and mutual knowledge of the relevant differences (Conee 2010). However, neither route is fully satisfactory. For a useful discussion of the prospects and problems of this problem see Broncano-Berrocal & Simion (2020).

Surprisingly, however, my son is, as a matter of fact, and unbeknownst to me, my epistemic peer on this topic (he is extraordinarily smart and he's been reading up a lot on the matter).

If we allow this unknown fact in the world to matter for our peerhood assignments, on conciliatory views of disagreement we're going to get the implausible result that I'm internalistically irrational to discount his testimony. That seems wrong. An internalist question about peer disagreement requires an internalist notion of peerhood.

On the other hand, a purely internalist notion of peerhood obstructs the prospects of coming to account for the phenomenon of disagreement between groups. For consider again the problem cases presented at the outset, SEXIST SCIENTISTS and RACIST COMMITTEE. By stipulation, in both cases the oppressor groups are not taking the oppressed groups to be their peers in virtue of sexist, respectively racist prejudice. As such, views on how to respond to peer disagreement internalistically conceived will not even straightforwardly apply to the cases above, since they will not count as cases of peer disagreement to begin with.

Recall, though, that focusing on the narrow question was not supposed to be the end of the road in the epistemology of disagreement. After all, cases of perfect peer disagreement are rare, if not even non-existent. The thought was that, as soon as we figure out the rational response in these idealized cases, we could upload context and get the right result in real-life cases as well. So maybe once we do that for the cases at hand – i.e., upload context - things will start looking up?

Unfortunately, there is reason to believe otherwise. There are two broad families of views in the literature on peer disagreement: *conciliationist views*⁹ and *steadfast views*.¹⁰ Conciliationists claim that disagreement compels rational agents to decrease their confidence about p when faced with peer disagreement; steadfasters deny this

⁹ Bogardus (2009), Christensen (2007), Elga (2007), Feldman (2006), Matheson (2015).

¹⁰ Kelly (2005), Bergmann (2009), van Inwagen (2010), Wedgwood (2010), Weintraub (2013), Weatherson (2013), Decker (2014), Titelbaum (2015).

claim, and argue that, in such situations, rational agents are entitled to hold on to their beliefs.

What is the verdict these views give us on the examples discussed at the outset? The case is quite straightforward for steadfasters: if a rational agent (in this case, a group) is entitled, in the face of disagreement with a *peer*, to stick to their guns, then, *a fortiori*, they are also entitled to do so when they disagree with someone whose epistemic position they take to be *inferior* to theirs. Such is indeed the case in both examples above. In *SEXIST SCIENTISTS*, the team of female scientists is not perceived as a peer by the group of male scientists in virtue of gendered prejudice; similarly, in *RACIST COMMITTEE*, the school representatives judge the complaint not worth of consideration precisely because it is made by a group they take to be epistemically inferior to them in virtue of racial prejudice. Steadfasters then would conclude that both the group of male scientists and the school representatives are entitled to hold on to their beliefs and discount the minority groups' testimony on the grounds that such testimony isn't recognised as being produced by a peer group.

According to conciliationism, in the face of disagreement with a peer, one should revise one's beliefs. What ought one to do, epistemically, when one doesn't take the disagreeing party to be their peer, though? The question remains open: Conciliationism does not give any prediction: peerhood is sufficient for conciliation, we don't know, though, whether it's also necessary.

In conclusion, then, it looks as though the two main accounts of peer disagreement in the literature aren't able to explain what is going wrong in the two examples presented at the outset. Even worse, in fact, we have identified two major, interrelated methodological problems that prevent the vast majority of our epistemology of disagreement to explain what is going wrong in garden-variety group epistemic injustice cases. First, in virtue of solely asking a question pertaining to internalist standards of rationality, the oppressor groups come out as justified to discount the testimony of the oppressed groups. Second, in virtue of employing an internalistic account of peerhood moulded out of disagreements between individuals, the literature fails to account for the intuition that the oppressed groups are,

intuitively, the epistemic peers of the oppressor groups on the question at hand irrespectively of their social features.

We take these two problems to motivate the corresponding two desiderata for any satisfactory account of group peerhood and group disagreement. Here they are:

Peerhood Constraint: Accounts of the relation of epistemic peerhood among groups should be able to account for peerhood in cases of minority groups and socially oppressed groups.

Normative Constraint: Accounts of peer disagreement should be capable of providing the normative grounds on which the beliefs of oppressive groups in cases of epistemic injustice can be negatively evaluated (namely, that they be capable of recognising that the oppressive groups believe something they should not).

The two desiderata are independent, in that they concern different spaces in theory: the first desideratum sets a minimal requirement for accounts of group epistemic peerhood, in that it asks that they be capable of identifying minority groups and groups discriminated against as epistemic peers when they are so. The second desideratum, in turn, asks that accounts of group disagreement possess the required normative toolkit to identify the epistemic harm at play in frustrating the attempt of a peer group to transmit a piece of information in virtue of prejudice against them.

4. A Functionalist Solution

In what follows, we make the case for a functionalist theoretical framework that, with the resources made available from an inflationist account of group belief and an externalist account of the normativity of belief in the face of disagreement, can deliver both goods. In previous work (Miragoli 2020, Simion 2019b, Broncano-Berrocal & Simion 2020), we have independently developed (1) a functionalist account of the nature of group belief, and (2) a functionalist account of the normativity of belief in the face of disagreement. In the following sections, we will

show how our functionalist accounts deliver on both the desiderata identified above.

4.1 The Peerhood Constraint: A Functionalist View Of Group Belief

To begin with, it is important to note that, even if we move away from an essentially internalist overall notion of the peerhood relation – i.e. targeting perceived peerhood – to an externalist one – targeting *de facto* peerhood –, the latter might not yet be fitting to capture the epistemic dimension of the social dynamics at play in the examples above. We want minority groups – which, by definition, are smaller groups, numerically – to be able to count as epistemic peers – i.e., we want that groups that are *numerically* inferior are not thereby also considered inferior *epistemically*.

Furthermore, the disagreement might occur between different types of groups: it must be possible, on the account at stake, to recognise cultural minorities that do not form established groups (either because their structure isn't sufficiently sophisticated or because they are not recognised to be such) as being the epistemic peers of more highly organised collectives. We can take this as suggesting that it must be possible for the relation of peerhood to hold between different group-types.

The debate surrounding the epistemology of groups features two main camps: *deflationism*¹¹ and *inflationism*¹². The former argues that the belief of a group is nothing more than the sum of the individual beliefs of the group members. To say that Swedes believe that Volvos are safe is equivalent to say that all (or most) Swedes believe so¹³. According to deflationism, then, group belief obtains when individuals are held together by the principle of composition of aggregation. Although other sociological principles are available to explain how

¹¹ Quinton (1975), List & Pettit (2011)

¹² Gilbert (1987), Lackey (2016), Tuomela (2013) and Tollefsen (2015)

¹³ The number of individuals that suffices to make up a group belief differs depending on the aggregation function adopted by the group. For instance, in a dictatorial state the belief of the group corresponds to the belief held by a single individual (see List & Pettit 2011).

according to different formulations of deflationism. For instance, if the aggregation function

individuals get together to form collective beliefs, deflationists claim that genuine group beliefs are those and only attributed to aggregates - i.e., groups of people that share a common trait (such as, in this case, a common belief).

In contrast, inflationists argue that group belief is independent of the beliefs of the group members. The jury's belief that the defendant is guilty, for instance, is typically taken to hold irrespectively of the individual belief of its members¹⁴. There are two main inflationist views available on the market: on these views, groups form beliefs either by the joint acceptance¹⁵ of a common view, or distributively, by collaborating organically to the production of a belief.¹⁶ The former generalises over instances of beliefs formed in established groups such as juries, committees, institutions and so on, and rely on the sociological principle of acceptance of common norms or sanctions. So for instance, according to the Joint Acceptance Account (or JAA), we have a genuine group belief when the European Commission representatives agree that the member states will halve the CO₂ emissions by 2025, and their agreement is conditional on the acceptance of the other members. The latter, instead, takes as paradigmatic the beliefs formed by organic groups, such as teams, agencies, crews, cooperations. Proponents of the Distributive Model (or DM) argue that genuine group belief is the result of the group members' collaboration, and rely on the sociological principle of division of labour. Take for instance a team of scientists working together: the work is divided among the group members according to their expertise, in such a way that the final belief is the product of their organic cooperation.

It is easy to see that deflationist views will have trouble meeting the Peerhood Constraint. After all, deflationism suggests that the belief of a group *deflates to* the individual beliefs of (some of) its members. This means that, when we compare the beliefs of two groups that are equal on every other respect (i.e., cognitively or evidentially), we are still comparing two unequal sets of

¹⁴ Take for instance a case where, due to their prejudice, none of the jurors can form the belief that the defendant is innocent. However, based on the evidence brought to light in the trial, they collectively judge that she is innocent.

¹⁵ Gilbert (1987)

¹⁶ Bird (2010)

beliefs. That is because, according to deflationism, group belief *just is* the sum of individual beliefs (plus some aggregation function, in some formulations). This means that when there are two groups that disagree with each other, the clash between two group beliefs is, in deflationary terms, a clash between two sets of individual beliefs, each constituted by the sum of the individual beliefs of the group members.

From the perspective of deflationism, then, it is hard to see how the two groups can qualify as peers. To see why, note that numbers do matter, epistemically: if one reliable testifier tells me that p , while four other reliable testifiers tell me that not- p , all else equal, it is intuitive that I should lean towards believing not- p . As such, if we reduce group belief to the beliefs of individuals, it is mysterious how the Peerhood Constraint can be met.

Inflationism, on the other hand, seems, at first glance, to fare better than deflationism on this score. Inflationists take group belief to be irreducible to individual belief. For them, it is by relying on some distinctive principle of composition (joint acceptance or organic labour) that the group members *collectively* (i.e., *as one epistemic agent*) form a belief. So, while for deflationists the believing subjects are as many as the *believers* in each group, for inflationists they are as many as the *groups* involved in the disagreement, irrespectively of the group-size. As a result, all else equal, on an inflationist reading, beliefs formed by minority groups won't be considered epistemically inferior to majoritarian ones simply by virtue of being backed by an inferior number of believers.

However, on a closer look, not just *any* inflationist account will do the work. To see this, recall that, in RACIST COMMITTEE, the group of the parents don't file a collective complaint, but rather each family raises the issue with the school individually. Here, you have an example of disagreement between a formalised group – the committee – and a mere aggregate (the sum of individual parents). If our account doesn't recognise that different group-types can host genuine group beliefs, it will also fail to recognise that such groups can be epistemic peers on the matter at hand. On the Joint Acceptance account, for instance, since the parents do not

get together to ‘shake hands’ on the issue, they don’t count as being a believing group to begin with. As such, an account that cannot accommodate aggregates delivers the result that what is at stake in RACIST COMMITTEE is, once more, a series of disagreements between a group and separate individuals. It is easy to see how the peerhood relation might not obtain under such circumstances: after all, it seems intuitively right that, if I disagree with my entire group of friends on a topic of common expertise, it is I that should lower my credence in the relevant proposition. Clearly, however, it must be possible to recognise minorities that do not form established groups (either because their structure isn’t sufficiently sophisticated or because they are not recognised to be such) as peers. What we are looking for, then, is an inflationist account that is versatile enough to accommodate different types of groups.

In previous work, one of us has developed a functionalist view of the nature of group belief (Miragoli 2020). In a nutshell, Group Belief Functionalism (henceforth, GBF) defines group belief in terms of the role the belief plays in the agent host. On this view, a group believes something when the belief attributed is individuated via a Ramsey sentence by a set of inputs - e.g., perception or reflection - and outputs - typical corresponding behaviour - that identify the role it occupies in the group host¹⁷. The principle of composition of such agent (aggregation of individual beliefs, joint commitment or organic labour), then, imposes restrictions on the way in which the role is implemented. As a result, for example, mere aggregates will generate group beliefs via simple belief aggregation, and established and organic groups will do so via more elaborated systems involving some sort of mechanic or organic collaboration among group members.

A special advantage of relying on a functionalist framework is the versatility it affords. GBF licences that beliefs are attributed to each group-type according to the belief forming mechanism that is most suitable to their

¹⁷ A ramsey sentence is a sentence that includes a collection of statements that quantify over a variable. In the case of group belief, the variable corresponds to the mental state of the group, and the collection of statements includes terms that refer to external stimuli, other mental states, behaviour, and to causal relations among them.

sociological structure. For example, if the sociological principle of composition of a group is the acceptance of a certain system of norms or sanctions, then GBF allows that such group can naturally form beliefs via the joint acceptance of a common view. On the other hand, where the sociological structure of the group is such that its members are held together by a common goal and the fact that they work together to achieve it, in this case GBF allows that the group will be able to form beliefs via organic collaboration. On this view, it is sometimes the case that a group forms beliefs via a ‘deflationist’ mechanism, meaning that the main condition the group has to satisfy in order to count as a believing subject is that all group members have the relevant belief. Sometimes, the belief will be formed in an inflationist way, meaning that other more sophisticated conditions will have to be met (i.e., as noted earlier, that all group members jointly commit to the propositions at hand, or that they cooperate organically).

GBF meets the Peerhood Constraint nicely precisely in virtue of its functionalist details. Since it denies the deflationist claim that group belief reduces to the sum of individual beliefs, GBF enjoys the inflationist advantages with respect to the group-size. Furthermore, since it offers a functionalist analysis of group belief, it accommodates multiple realizability, which allows that genuine group beliefs can be formed by the aggregation recipe peculiar to any group-type (aggregates, categories, established and organic groups).

Going back to our examples, then, we can see how GBF gives the right verdict in both cases. As we noted, in *SEXIST SCIENTISTS* and *RACIST COMMITTEE*, the belief of the oppressed group was discounted on the grounds that it was formed by a racial or gender minority. According to GBF the doxastic status of a group agent is determined independently of its numerical and sociological characteristics (i.e., the size and the type of the group). As such, granted that the symmetric epistemic conditions are in place, GBF can accommodate our peerhood intuitions in the cases above.

4.2 The Normative Constraint: A Functionalist View of the Epistemology of Disagreement

In previous work, one of us has developed a functionalist account of the normativity of belief in cases of disagreement, the Epistemic Improvement Knowledge Norm of Disagreement (Broncano-Berrocal and Simion 2020, Simion 2019b). In a nutshell, the account looks into what has been left out of the equation so far in the epistemology of disagreement and what, arguably, defines the subject matter: the fact that the doxastic attitudes of disagreeing parties never have the same overall *epistemic status*: *one of them is right and the other one wrong*. This *fundamental asymmetry* present in all cases of disagreement is an asymmetry concerning evaluative normativity – i.e., how good (epistemically) the doxastic attitudes of the disagreeing parties are. In this way, by accounting for the rational response to disagreement in terms of what all cases of disagreement have in common, the account can easily address all possible cases of disagreement, independently of whether they are instances of peer or everyday disagreement. Indeed, that a given case is a case of peer or everyday disagreement is orthogonal to the distribution of epistemic statuses.

On this view, knowledge is the function of the practice of inquiry. Social epistemic interactions such as disagreements are moves in inquiry, therefore their function is to generate knowledge. If that is the case, in cases of disagreement one should make progress towards achieving knowledge.

On the Epistemic Improvement Knowledge Norm of Disagreement (EIKND), one should (i) improve the epistemic status of one's doxastic attitude by conciliating if the other party has a doxastic attitude with a better epistemic status and (ii) stick to one's guns if the other party's doxastic attitude has a worse epistemic status. In turn, the quality of the epistemic status at stake is measured against closeness to knowledge: given a value ranking R of epistemic states with respect to proximity to knowledge, in a case of disagreement about whether p , where, after having registered the disagreement, by believing p , S is in epistemic state E_1 and, by believing not- p , H is in epistemic state E_2 , S should conciliate if and only if E_1 is lesser than E_2 on R and hold steadfast iff E_1 is better than E_2 on R . The view has several crucial advantages over extant views in the disagreement

literature, e.g.: a. it accounts for the epistemic significance of disagreement as a social practice, i.e. its conduciveness to knowledge; b. it straightforwardly applies to everyday disagreement rather than to idealised, perfect-peer disagreement cases, and thus does not face the transition problem exemplified above.

It is easy to see that the view will also give the right results in the cases of gender and race group discrimination we are looking at: by stipulation, both of the above cases are cases in which the asymmetry in epistemic status favours the oppressed groups: the epistemic status of their beliefs is closer to knowledge than the epistemic status of the beliefs of their oppressors. After all, by stipulation, the oppressed groups are wrong about the matter at hand. As such, in these cases, EIKND delivers the right result that the oppressors should conciliate in order to improve the epistemic status of their beliefs.

5. Conclusion

This paper has put forward a two-tiered functionalist account of group peer disagreement. This strategy is primarily made possible by a radical methodological shift: *contra* extant accounts, that rely on internalist notions of epistemic peerhood and belief permissibility, we have advanced an externalist approach motivated by cases of epistemic injustice in group peer disagreement (SEXSIST SCIENTISTS and RACIST COMMITTEE). We have shown that such cases set two desiderata (what we called the Peerhood and Normative Constraint) that can be elegantly met by appealing to a functionalist view of group belief (GBF) and group justification (EIKND). GBF guarantees that minority groups are considered epistemic peers despite the social prejudices to which they are systematically subject in real cases of disagreement. EIKND, in turn, provides the normative framework to evaluate the conduct of the disagreeing parties and to recognise instances of epistemic injustice.

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