

Holding points of view does not amount to knowledge

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Abstract

I argue that knowing and having points of view are fundamentally different epistemic states if we assume that having justified true beliefs is necessary for knowledge. Knowers necessarily possess justified true beliefs, but persons holding points of view may, for example, lack justification, have false beliefs, or both. I examine these differences and expose other crucial differentiating patterns between the structure of knowledge and points of view that make the latter more likely to lead to disagreements. I hypothesize that these patterns remain invariant in alternative views of knowledge like contextualism as long as we preserve the classical structure. Yet there is much research to be done on the multiple and contrasting properties that emerge if we consider non-classical analyses of knowledge and points of view.

KEYWORDS

belief, contextualism, disagreement, knowledge, points of view

1 | INTRODUCTION

When we are ill or our car needs maintenance, we usually seek the help of a health professional and an auto mechanic, respectively. Our daily activities depend on the knowledge of many experts. Without them, we would have a hard time repairing our cars, healing ourselves, or trying to figure out how to generate the energy needed to charge our computers and mobile phones. But what is so special about knowledge? We often see that many experts engage in endless discussions. But if all possess knowledge, why do they seem to disagree?

Oceanographers and fisheries scientists disagree, for example, on whether the reduction in fish stocks is a consequence of climate change or fishing (see Section 3). Oceanographers argue that environmental effects are to blame for this reduction. Fisheries scientists claim that this reduction is a consequence of fishing. Do they possess

knowledge or are they only expressing their points of view? Is not knowledge just a point of view? Situations like these pose a lot of questions about the very nature of knowledge, disagreement, and points of view.

There is a vast literature about the nature of knowledge but few studies about points of view and even fewer studies on the relationship between them and knowledge. Some exceptions are Bschr (2020), Crețu and Massimi (2020), Dietrich (2008), Giere (2001), Massimi (2018), and Nagel (1979). More research on this topic could improve our understanding of knowledge and other epistemic positions that, although superficially similar to knowledge, do not possess the valued characteristics we often associate with genuine knowers.

In this paper, I analyse the nature of knowledge and points of view and show how the internal structure of knowledge is different from that of points of view and how we can distinguish them. I have organized this paper as follows. First, in Section 2, I explain what I understand for *knowledge* and *points of view*. Their internal structure is different. In Section 3, I show that individuals do not tend to disagree when they possess knowledge. By contrast, disagreement is pervasive when individuals manifest their points of view. I show that the internal structure of knowledge and points of view determines whether the parties disagree or not. I close with the following hypothesis: even if we adopt a non-standard view of knowing that preserves the classical structure of knowledge like contextualism, the relationships between knowledge and points of view will remain invariant.

2 | KNOWLEDGE VERSUS POINTS OF VIEW

Let us start with the analysis of knowledge and points of view. The classical tripartite view of knowledge (knowledge as justified true belief) is a necessary, though not sufficient, set of conditions for knowledge. Because justified true belief is not sufficient for knowledge, I adopt a quadripartite view of knowledge as justified true belief plus another non-specified element: the element *k*. This quadripartite structure of knowledge can help us determine the characteristic properties of points of view and show the marked differences between knowing and merely adopting a particular point of view.

2.1 | Preliminaries

Before discussing the nature of knowledge and points of view, let me put a few issues aside and clarify the scope of this paper. Although there may be different kinds of knowledge (knowledge by acquaintance, know-how, and know-that), I focus on the most studied kind of knowledge: knowledge-that. We find it in sentences of the form “such-and-such-is-so.” There are several sources of knowledge and all are compatible with the analysis of the following sections. We might have some innate knowledge about basic logical and mathematical principles. We also acquire knowledge through our senses and rational capacities. But whether there are more kinds of knowledge or not—maybe one of these does not exist, or there are hybrids—does not threaten the following analysis because the general definition is all we need.

Although it may not be necessary to adopt a realist position, I employ it for ease of exposition. Indeed, various approaches like Bschr (2020), Crețu and Massimi (2020), and Nagel (1979) try to preserve realism in the face of diverse points of view. I regard objects as objective entities in the real world that are independent of the mind. Properties are features of objects that are also mind-independent. And propositions are true if they correctly depict the facts or objects they are about (they are false otherwise).

I put aside non-standard ways of constructing the notion of knowledge. I discard the suggestion that knowledge could be mere true belief. Few philosophers think that these elements alone are sufficient for knowledge (but see Sartwell, 1991, 1992). The possibility that we can base our beliefs upon fault justification (fault reasoning or false beliefs) is a threat to knowledge as mere true belief (but see Hetherington, 2001, 2011). I distance my exposition from non-factual notions of knowledge: those that consider that knowledge is only justified belief. I stick to the standard notion of knowledge as necessitating justified true belief.

Finally, I proceed on the assumption that the agreeing or disagreeing parties understand that justified true belief are the necessary conditions for knowledge and that knowledge is justified true belief plus another element. Call it element "k." Analysing other ways to conceive of knowledge may be worthwhile, but it would excessively complicate the explanation that follows and then we need to treat it elsewhere.

2.2 | Knowledge

My assessment of the relationship between knowledge and points of view starts from the classical characterization of knowledge as justified true belief. There is substantial consensus that the common understanding of knowledge as justified true belief (JTB) captures the necessary conditions for knowledge and that these conditions plus a yet unknown element, element *k*, is sufficient for knowledge.¹ Knowledge is JTB + *k*. The nature of *k* is a live issue and I do not intend to offer a solution, but, as we will see, we only need to be aware of its existence and how it illuminates the relationship between knowledge and points of view. Justification, truth, and belief are also a subject of controversy, but there is some agreement about their chief characteristics.

An individual *S* possesses knowledge in case *S* believes that *P*, *P* is true, and *S* is justified in believing that *P*. Peter has been friends with John for a long time, and it has always been evident that John is over six feet tall. Peter himself tested his belief by measuring his friend's height with a tape measure. That being the case, as with many of our typical beliefs, we are willing to say that (1) is true.

(1) "Peter knows that John is over six feet tall."

Peter's belief matches reality (is true) and has good reasons (is justified) for believing. Peter has justified true belief.

Most epistemologists accept that belief is a necessary component of knowledge (Ackermann, 1972; Audi, 2010; Chisholm, 1989; Feldman, 2003; Williams, 2001). And they usually take beliefs to be representational mental states accompanied by the attitude that the representation (be it about a fact, object, property, or a proposition) is true (Burge, 2010; Cummins, 1996). These internal mental states picture what is going on in the external world (Markman & Dietrich, 2000). The individual who holds them believes that his beliefs are true or is confident that they probably are (accurately represent the world). They manifest themselves as sentences with propositional content. I believe that *P*. That is, I believe that there is a tree in front of me because a representational mental state about that object is running in my head.

The second element of knowledge is truth. Beliefs aim at truth.² An individual holding the belief that *P* is sure or thinks that it is probable that *P* is true. He believes that *P* is an accurate representation of reality. Peter holds that John is over six feet tall because he thinks that proposition (a) depicts its object and properties: (a) accurately represents the fact that John is over six feet tall.

(a) "John is over six feet tall."

In the same way, the belief that the car is red is true only if it is red, and believing that the earth exerts a force of attraction on objects is true only if it correctly describes what is happening in the world. But our true beliefs could be the product of faulty evidence. That is why the third element (justification) is crucial.

¹Although this analysis has been widely challenged (especially since Gettier's paper), the majority of philosophers still agree that these three elements are necessary for a correct understanding of knowledge.

²Philosophers like Lynch (2009), McHugh and Whiting (2014), and Wedgewood (2002) argue and explain why this is so.

Justification is the evidence that an individual possesses for believing that P is the case. There are many suggestions about the source of this justification (internal or external) and how it justifies beliefs (foundationalism, coherentism, infinitism, etc.), but the present analysis is sufficiently general to work with any of those alternatives. Peter's evidence comes from several sources: his friend John has told him so; his cognitive abilities are not impaired; he has an ordinary capacity to estimate the height of persons and has seen his friend John countless times. In addition, he measured his friend's height with a tape measure. Peter is justified in believing (a) and his belief that John is over six feet tall amounts to the necessary set of conditions for knowledge. That is, it amounts to justified true belief.³

But he still lacks knowledge. Besides justified true belief, he needs k . Philosophers have not yet found what the characteristics of this fourth element are. Given that we do not know its nature, we cannot tell whether it is present or not in sentences like (1) or (2). But assume for the sake of the argument that it is present. These sentences are for illustrative purposes only, and one can substitute them with others that seem more appropriate. A complete analysis of knowledge needs to rebuke all sceptical hypotheses and arguments, but this is beyond the reach of this paper. Yet, for all we know, the definition of knowledge as $JTB + k$ is one of the best, and we can gain a substantial understanding if we compare its epistemic structure with that of points of view. We do not need to know the nature of k to carry out this analysis. That said, (1) is true because the four elements are present even if we cannot specify the exact nature of the fourth element.

A little more scientific but simple cases like (2) also possess the four elements.

(2) "Peter knows that water boils at lower temperatures at higher altitudes."

Peter believes (b). Water indeed boils at lower temperatures at higher altitudes. He is justified in his belief because he has recently earned a master's degree in fluid mechanics. And he has element k .

(b) "Water boils at lower temperatures at higher altitudes."

But why are not Peter's beliefs just mere opinions or points of view? Are not some instances of knowledge also points of view? To notice the differences between knowledge and points of view, we need to examine more closely the components of the second.

2.3 | Points of view

We do not ordinarily have a clear notion of the nature of points of view and how they relate to knowledge, but we commonly think of points of view as opinions that are dependent on our conceptual, cognitive standpoint (Hautämaki, 2016, 2020), and social position (Sammur & Gaskill, 2010). They depend on culture (Nisbett & Masuda, 2003; Putnam, 1981) or on our social roles like working on a specific job (Moline, 1968; Rose, 1997). We speak about the points of view of a fisher, a firefighter, a physicist, the president, and a child, and we assume that they imply interests, purposes, as well as taking something to be the case. We intuitively know that some are not instances of knowledge and that others are not. And that is right.

Not all points of view are different from knowledge. A subset of points of view amount to knowledge: those that are $JTBs + k$. If we have $JTB + k$ that a house has nine windows, that it is red on the inside, blue on the outside, and that it is very old, from different points of view, then they are not mere perspectives but genuine cases of knowledge.

³Moreover, the necessary set of conditions for knowledge is present or absent, no matter the kind or amount of justification.

Only points of view that are JTBs + k amount to knowledge. The remaining cases lack one, two, or three of the four essential elements of knowledge. Since points of view are cognitive standpoints (they are not necessarily justified ways of looking at reality; they may not adequately depict reality, or may lack k), they only necessarily share with knowledge its representational component: belief. When one or more persons express their points of view, they are expressing their beliefs about one fact or object of reality and think that those beliefs are true or probably true. They look at facts and objects from different angles and express their beliefs about one or more aspects before them. Those beliefs need not be true, justified, or possess k . Peter believes that John has black hair, Sophie is confident that John is very generous, and Mark thinks that John usually wears blue shirts. All of them have beliefs about different properties of the same object; they are points of view about John.⁴

Points of view need not all four components of knowledge. Peter's point of view about John amounts to knowledge because (a) is a justified truth (John is over six feet tall and has good reasons to believe it) and has k . But he might adopt this point of view without being that sentence true, having any justification at all, or possessing k . There are four possibilities. The first possibility is that Peter's belief is false and unjustified if he believes that John, who was born in February, is over six feet tall because Peter remembers that he had read somewhere that people born in February tend to be over six feet tall. Second, his belief is justified but false if he believes that John is over six feet tall because a mutual friend has told him so. Third, his belief is true but unjustified if he believes that John is over six feet tall because he had a dream about it.⁵ Finally, he may have a justified true belief without k . The first three possibilities are points of view that fall short of even making up the necessary compound for knowledge: justified true belief.

One possesses knowledge when one has k and is justified in believing a true sentence about an aspect of the external world. A point of view is a belief but does not need to be justified, true, or include k .⁶ Knowledge is a stronger epistemic position than points of view. One common thought is that points of view are sufficient for agreement. But is that so? Can individuals agree even if they see the world from different points of view?

3 | DISAGREEING

In this section, I show how the possession of knowledge typically leads to agreement and how holding different points of view often leads to disagreement. Unless we admit various kinds of knowledge and leaving aside verbal disputes, if two or more individuals possess knowledge about one property or aspect of reality, then they would tend to agree. Let me clarify a little the relation between properties and belief. Beliefs are always about properties like red, height, and sharper-than, or more specific ones like crimson red, seven feet tall, and sharper than a steel sword. General and specific properties are attributed to objects because they are attributed to their properties.⁷ If there were different points of view about the same property, they must be about some meta-properties (Peter knows that gold's yellowness is brilliant and Sophie knows that gold's malleability is high), meta-meta-properties, and so on.

⁴We can look at the same entity from different levels of reality. We can look from micro and macro levels in physics and economics, respectively. But it means that we are referring to different properties: micro and macro properties.

⁵This possibility is the most controversial because a case can be made that mere true belief could be a weaker form of knowledge. As I said above, I am concerned with the standard notion of knowledge as necessitating justified true belief. But note that if we were to take this option seriously, one could also identify the differentiating characteristics between points of view and knowledge with the corresponding adjustments. Points of view could be justified beliefs or simple beliefs but not true beliefs.

⁶I am specifically addressing individual points of view, but there are also social points of view (Sammut & Gaskill, 2010).

⁷Properties are "determinates" and meta-properties are "determinables" in the work of Antti E. Hautamäki (2016) and Liz and Vazquez (2011). We can speak of "more fine-grained determinates," which would be more specific properties in my terminology.

3.1 | Knowledge tends to produce agreement

Knowledge typically produces agreement as the sentences (a) and (b) show.⁸

- a. "John is over six feet tall."
- b. "Water boils at lower temperatures at higher altitudes."

If Peter and Sophie know that (a) and (b), then they share the same justified true belief plus *k*. Both share the same belief, and that is sufficient for both to agree. When Peter claims that "John is over six feet tall," Sophie agrees. She also believes that John is over six feet tall. In the same way, they agree when one of them claims that "water boils at lower temperatures at higher altitudes" because both believe that (b). If they know that (1), (2), and they share the same belief, they will also agree at the metalevel. The metalevel is the level of epistemic evaluation where the parties evaluate the epistemic structure of the other party: whether the other has knowledge or not or any of the other epistemic combinations between belief, truth, justification, and *k* (unjustified false belief, justified false belief, unjustified true belief, and justified true belief without *k*).

- (1) "Peter knows that John is over six feet tall."
- (2) "Peter knows that water boils at lower temperatures at higher altitudes."

Yet disagreement can take place. One way it can happen is when the parties have knowledge about different entities or properties and therefore have different beliefs. Peter knows that gold is yellow and Sophie knows that it is malleable (beliefs about the same entities); Peter knows that gold's yellowness is brilliant and Sophie knows that gold's malleability is high (beliefs about the same properties). Disputes arising from these situations would be merely verbal disputes. These cases are mostly trivial and some of them are of genuine interest, but for the sake of ease of exposition, I will not examine them here. Except for clarification, I will set them aside in the following discussion.

A more interesting form of disagreement can appear at the level of epistemic evaluation. An external observer can recognize that both share the four components of knowledge: they have the same belief, it is true, both have justification and *k*. But they may lack access to the justification or *k* of the other party or consider them inappropriate and then harbour doubts about the existence or sufficiency of each other's justification or *k*. Thus, their assessment of the epistemic status of the other party might lead to disagreement. Sophie might think that (1) and (2) are false because perhaps she has some independent evidence that Peter lacks or has insufficient justification or *k*. Peter, in turn, may think that (3) and (4) are false because perhaps he has some independent evidence that Sophie lacks or has insufficient justification or *k* for knowing (a) and (b).

- (3) "Sophie knows that John is over six feet tall."
- (4) "Sophie knows that water boils at lower temperatures at higher altitudes."

Peter and Sophie agree at the base-level of discourse ([a] and [b]), but they can disagree at the level of epistemic evaluation ([1] and [2]). It is sufficient that one party lacks access to or regards as insufficient the other party's justification or *k* for disagreement to emerge. Leaving verbal disputes aside, when people possess knowledge, they can only disagree at the metalevel. On the other hand, holding different points of view is more fertile ground for disagreement.

⁸A disagreement trivially follows if Peter believes that (a) is true and Sophie believes that (a) is false.

3.2 | Points of view are more fertile ground for disagreement

As we saw in the previous subsection, there is a subset of points of view that are justified true beliefs that also include *k*. They are instances of knowledge. There cannot be disagreement between points of view like (a) and (b) if Peter and Sophie have knowledge (except at the metalevel). Trivially, people cannot disagree if they have knowledge (and therefore hold different beliefs) about different properties either. Points of view usually are ways of accessing the world that present us with some properties, depending on the point of view adopted (Charro & Colomina, 2014; Colomina-Almiñana, 2015; Liz & Vazquez, 2011). Fishers know the impact of seasonal movements, habitat preferences, feeding behaviour, and abundance dynamics on fish and that fisheries scientists tend to overlook (Mackinson & Nottestad, 1998).⁹ On the other hand, scientists have statistical and quantitative knowledge of the fish population that fishers lack. They cannot disagree because one person has beliefs about the seasonal and habitat properties of fish. The other has beliefs about its statistical properties. In the same way, oceanographers argue that change in fish abundance results from environmental effects and fisheries scientists claim that the cause of the reduction in fish stocks is fishing (Rose, 1997). Oceanographers and fisheries scientists analyse the same fact (reduction of fish stocks) from different points of view and see how different factors (environmental change and fishing) cause a decline in fish stocks.

Leaving points of view that are knowledge aside, the common assumption is that points of view lead to disagreement, but sometimes that is not the case. Two or more individuals may agree on (a) and (b) insofar as they have the same belief *about the same object or property*. If they share their belief (the same belief) about the same object, their beliefs are about the same property. If their belief is about the same property, their belief is about the same metaproperty, and so on. (The parties can have the same belief about different properties or objects and agree, but they will disagree when they find out what they are talking about. They will find that they were in a merely verbal dispute).¹⁰ Peter and Sophie believe that John is over six feet tall and that water boils at lower temperatures at higher altitudes. Therefore, they agree on the sentences "John is over six feet tall" and "water boils at lower temperatures at higher altitudes," even if they only have points of view instead of knowledge. Their agreement is based on their shared belief. Even if they were wrong and their beliefs are false, the justification of one or both is insufficient, or lack *k*, they would still agree. The same occurs at the level of epistemic evaluation. If they share the same beliefs about (1) and (2), they will agree at the metalevel.

Yet disagreement is more pervasive among points of view than among knowledge states. There are four kinds of disagreement. The first occurs when the parties hold different beliefs about the same object or property.¹¹ Peter and Sophie obviously disagree when Peter believes (a) and (b), but Sophie does not.¹² It does not happen when both possess knowledge. If they know that (a) and (b), they will have the same beliefs about the same objects and properties: John's tallness and water's ebullition point at higher altitudes. But points of view are different beliefs about the same properties or objects. Peter believes that John's height is over six feet and that water's ebullition point is lower at higher altitudes, but Sophie believes the contrary (she thinks that John's height is under six feet and that water's ebullition point is higher at higher altitudes).

The other three kinds of disagreement emerge at the metalevel when one or two of the parties makes an epistemic assessment of the sentences (1)–(4). The second kind of disagreement occurs when the parties hold different beliefs at the metalevel. Peter believes (1) and (2), but Sophie does not. It is irrelevant whether their beliefs are true, false, justified, unjustified, the justification is not sufficient, or *k* is absent. They will disagree.

⁹Note that the example only requires different beliefs but not knowledge, but suppose for the sake of the argument that the parties have justified true belief and *k*.

¹⁰Indeed, "the critical condition for comparison of points of view, however, is that they are 'talking about' the same entities, at least partly" (Hautämaki, 2016, p. 503).

¹¹If the beliefs are about different properties, the parties, upon hearing their respective beliefs, will realize that their beliefs differ.

¹²It is beside the point whether these two sentences, or only one of them, express or not a true proposition. The parties will disagree. Justification and *k* are irrelevant as well.

The third kind of disagreement occurs when the parties have the same belief at the metalevel and *only* when they presume knowledge.¹³ Although Peter and Sophie lack knowledge, they have the same belief and presume knowledge—as it is usually done—about (a) and (b), and therefore, about (1)–(4). But, as soon as one or both begin to investigate the true epistemic state of the other party regarding (a) and (b), he or she will realize that the interlocutor has no knowledge and will, therefore, disagree about (1)–(4). Peter, Sophie, or both may find that the other has either of the following point-of-view structures: justified false belief, non-justified true belief, non-justified false belief, justified true belief without *k* (or justified true belief plus *k*, but it is an instance of knowledge and therefore is subject to the analysis of the previous subsection).

The fourth and last kind of disagreement between points of view occurs when one of the parties does not have access to or regards as insufficient *k* or the evidence supporting the belief of the other party. Peter thinks, based on independent evidence, that Sophie's point of view ([3] or [4]) lacks justification and *k* or regards one or both as insufficient (Sophie may think the same of Peter's about [1] or [2]).¹⁴ Peter's justification for believing (1) derives from his measurement of John's height, but he thinks that Sophie lacks or has insufficient justification for (3) because her evidence rests on the contents of an outdated medical report. Sophie may think that her justification is good and sufficient for her belief but regard Peter's justification with suspicion because she thinks that Peter's sight is not good enough.¹⁵ In the same way, one or both may think that the other party lacks *k* or that it is insufficient.

3.3 | Discussion: knowledge and points of view compared

The analysis above shows that the internal structure of knowledge and points of view is different. Their epistemic structure regarding disagreements is also different. The following principles summarize the epistemic structure of knowledge and points of view:

P1 The parties that have knowledge and hold points of view agree at the base-level and metalevel if they share the same belief about the same property (it is irrelevant whether their beliefs are true, false, justified, unjustified, the justification is insufficient or *k* is absent).¹⁶ There is an exception: the parties that presume knowledge and examine the structure of their points of view disagree at the level of epistemic evaluation. See (P2).

P2 If the parties have knowledge about the same property, there is only one form of disagreement: they disagree at the level of epistemic evaluation (metalevel) if one or both lack access to the other party's justification and *k* (or perhaps, from a non-standard view of knowledge, regard justification or *k* as insufficient because of independent evidence for being suspicious).

P3 If the parties hold points of view about the same property, there are four forms of disagreement. (i) They disagree at the base-level if their beliefs are about the same property and are different (it is irrelevant whether their beliefs are true, false, justified, unjustified, the justification is not sufficient, or *k* is absent). (ii) They disagree at the level of epistemic evaluation if their beliefs are about the same property and are

¹³If the parties consciously express their points of view as points of view, they will agree that "Peter *thinks* that John is over six feet tall" and "Sophie *thinks* that John is over six feet tall."

¹⁴They would agree if both have access to each other's justification and *k*, but only if they share the same justification and *k*.

¹⁵We need a third neutral and more knowledgeable party in cases like these or maybe suspend judgment.

¹⁶Having the same belief about the same property means that the parties do not see the same property from different points of view. One can, of course, adjust these principles to fit beliefs about different points of view about the same property, metaproperty, etc.

different (it is irrelevant whether their beliefs are true, false, justified, unjustified, or the justification is not sufficient). (iii) They disagree at the level of epistemic evaluation if they share the same belief about the same property and one or both parties begin to investigate the other party's presumed knowledge and find that it is only a justified false belief, non-justified true belief, non-justified false belief, or a justified true belief without *k*. (iv) They disagree at the level of epistemic evaluation if they share the same beliefs about the same property and one or both parties lack access to or regard the other party's justification and *k* as insufficient—and have independent evidence for being suspicious.

The general result is that points of view are more likely to cause disagreement than knowledge. Whereas different persons having knowledge could disagree only at the metalevel if they do not have access to the other party's justification and *k*, different persons having points of view could disagree in four different ways.

This result and points (P1)–(P3) expose the epistemic structure of knowledge and points of view regarding disagreements. This structure remains invariant if we preserve the standard quadripartite view of knowledge. Even if we adopt a non-standard view of knowledge that preserves its quadripartite nature, the structure remains invariant.

The epistemic structure (P1)–(P3) will remain invariant if we adopt, for example, a contextualist epistemological approach because we still contextually attribute the quadripartite structure of knowledge—and the corresponding structure of points of view—to the subject who asserts or denies that *P*. Contextualism is an epistemic approach for assessing contextual knowledge claims. If Olivia finds herself lost in a region of a city, but she knows that she is safe and has plenty of time, then she does a low-stakes assessment of the response of a bystander who asserts that (5). On the other hand, if John is lost in the same region of the city but is in a hurry to get home because he had received a call that it is on fire, then he does a high-stakes assessment of (5). For Olivia, the bystander knows that (5), but not so for John. Yet we make knowledge attributions in one context, not two or more: we choose Olivia's or John's context. And therefore the general result is the same: whereas different persons having knowledge could disagree only at the metalevel if they do not have access to the other party's justification and *k*, different persons having points of view could disagree in four different ways.

If we choose, for example, the low-stakes context, then John and Olivia know that (5). They only disagree about (6)—which is the metalevel—because they may lack access to the other party's justification and *k* or consider them insufficient. If they only have points of view, they can disagree in one way at the base-level about (5) because they have different beliefs. But they can disagree in three different ways about (6)—which is the metalevel. First, they disagree if their beliefs are different. Second, they disagree if they find that the other party's epistemic state is only a justified false belief, non-justified true belief, non-justified false belief, or a justified true belief without *k*. Third, they will disagree if they lack access or consider insufficient the amount of justification or the nature of *k* of the other party.

(5) “The bystander knows that the subway is two blocks north of the fountain.”

(6) “Olivia knows that the bystander knows that the subway is two blocks north of the fountain.”

This result should not come as a surprise because we make epistemic assessments from within only one context.

In the same way, a pragmatic approach (following Peirce, James, and Dewey) does not threaten the previous analysis of the relationships between knowledge and points of view. A pragmatic perspective implies that truth is not correspondence but what works (Brandom, 1982; Hetherington, 2011; Stanley, 2005; Zimmerman, 2018). Nevertheless, truth continues to be an essential element of knowledge. Although truth is not a representation but practical consequences, points of view are different from knowledge, as the epistemic structure (P1)–(P3) shows. Only beliefs are necessary for points of view to exist. One may adopt a neo-pragmatic consensual theory of truth (like Rorty's, 1979) and the result is the same. A consensual conception

of truth will leave intact the relationships between justified true belief plus k and point of view stances that do not require truth, justification, or k .

4 | CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, we saw that knowledge and points of view maintain a structural relationship ([P1]–[P3]) when the parties disagree. Some points of view are instances of knowledge, but most of them need not be justified or true beliefs plus k . People who know or have points of view about a fact or entity can agree or disagree, but those who have knowledge about the same property are much less likely to disagree than those who hold points of view about it. Besides, these patterns of agreement and disagreement remain invariant even if we rework our conception of knowledge to fit with other epistemological approaches like contextualism. The differentiating relationships (P1)–(P3) between knowledge and points of view remain constant by virtue of their different internal structure.

The standard analysis of knowledge plus k makes clear that only some points of view are knowledge, but the majority of them are not. Holding justified false beliefs, non-justified true beliefs, non-justified false beliefs, or justified true beliefs without k is not sufficient for knowing something. Knowing something to be the case means that disagreement will not arise unless we harbour doubts about the other party's possession of justified true beliefs plus k . But, were one party to know that the other has justified true beliefs plus k , the disagreements would vanish. Disagreement is more pervasive among points of view. Except when they share the same belief, the disagreeing parties holding points of view exist at the ordinary level and at the level of epistemic evaluation in many forms.

My analysis is limited to the classical analysis of knowledge plus k and can work with non-standard ways that preserve the quadripartite structure of knowledge like contextualism or pragmatism, but we need to spell this out in more detail. We also need to investigate the epistemic structure between knowledge and points of view if the first amounts to mere true belief or perhaps to only justified belief. Relativism about the notion of truth or justification can completely change the epistemic structure between knowledge and points of view. These and other approaches are worth investigating and can shed light on the subtle relationships between what is to know and what to hold a point of view. This paper is a small contribution to this broader research domain and an initial step in understanding knowledge, points of view, and disagreement.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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