

## ARTICLE

# Epistemic Partialism

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Most of us are partial to our friends and loved ones: we treat them with special care, and we feel justified in doing so. In recent years, the idea that good friends are also *epistemically* partial to one another has been popular. Being a good friend, so-called epistemic partialists suggest, involves being positively biased towards one's friends – that is, involves thinking more highly of them than is warranted by the evidence. In this paper, I outline the concept of epistemic partiality and its relation to non-epistemic partiality and explore some considerations that speak in favour of and against such partialism in friendships. I finish by suggesting some directions in which this debate could go next.

How ought we to assess evidence about how good, nice, funny, or skilled our friends are? Typically, we assess evidence on epistemic grounds, asking how strong it is, whether it might be outweighed by other evidence, whether it is from a reliable source, and so on. However, when it comes to evidence concerning our friends, our reasoning is often influenced by our relationship with them. We often think generously about them, and end up with beliefs about them that are more positive than is really warranted by the evidence. That is, we are often epistemically biased towards our friends. To some, this kind of bias seems problematic. Epistemic partialists, however, have argued that it is an important part of being a good friend.

In this article I explore epistemic partiality and the considerations for and against epistemic partialism. I begin by locating epistemic partiality within the wider literature on partiality (§1). I then explain the core claims of epistemic partialism, and distinguish direct and indirect versions of it (§2). I then (§3) examine some of the considerations in favour of epistemic partialism concerning one's friends. Following that (§4), I explore some ways in which sceptics about epistemic partiality have responded. I finish (§5) by suggesting some avenues for further discussion.

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## 1 | NON-EPISTEMIC PARTIALISM

The moral standpoint, many have thought, is an impartial one. From such a perspective, my personal relationships – like my tastes – are irrelevant. The fact that I get along with one person and enjoy their company whilst finding another a total bore may legitimately lead me to value the former's *company* more highly than the latter's, but something has gone wrong if I take this to impinge on their *moral value*. Such considerations find no footing in the moral perspective. Similarly, the duties that arise from within this perspective are universal – they apply to anyone who is relevantly situated, regardless of one's personal ties. What makes saving someone from drowning morally good has to do with the value of human life, for example, not with anything specific to any personal relationship.

This *impartial* attitude which often characterises moral deliberation could not be further from the attitude which we generally take towards our friends. We typically care much more about our friends than about strangers, even strangers who are more accomplished or altruistic than our friends. From the embedded, human standpoint, we are *partial*. We care about some people much more than others, and we typically take ourselves to have good reasons to behave differently towards friends than towards strangers. A good friend will help their friend when they are in need, and be emotionally moved by their triumphs and setbacks. One doesn't typically have a duty to give feedback on a philosophy paper merely because it would be helpful to the author, for instance, but one might think that if the author is one's close friend, the case is somewhat different: being a good friend to them might require that one helps them out. (See Nagel (1991) for more on the partial and impartial points of view.)

There is, then, a kind of tension here: from the one point of view, the duties we have are importantly impartial, whereas from the other we are thoroughly partial and also subject to partial duties. What should we do about this tension? One response would be to hold that, given the unarguable importance of the impartial standpoint, it must be the dominant one. Insofar as our partial practices cannot be accommodated within the impartial point of view, they should be rejected. William Godwin (2001), for example, suggests that if one were able to save only one person from a burning building, one ought to save the person whose life has the highest impersonal value – even if the alternative were saving a loved one. Partial considerations, he suggests, have no force when measured against the weight of impartial moral ones: 'What magic is there in the pronoun "my," that should justify us in overturning the decisions of impartial truth? My brother or my father may be a fool or a profligate, malicious, lying or dishonest. If they be, of what consequence is it that they are mine?' (Godwin, 2001, p. 82). More recently, Peter Singer (1979) has defended a similarly stringent form of impartialism.

However, many have felt that this is too high a price to pay for the impartial point of view. If a conception of morality cannot accommodate partiality towards those we love, they suggest, then so much the worse for that conception of morality: it should be rejected. Bernard Williams' (1981) discussion of saving one's wife, for example, is sometimes interpreted as giving us reason to reject impartialist conceptions of morality. In this case, we might use the seeming correctness of certain partial actions as a reason to reject an impartialist conception of morality. (See also Jeske (1997), Cottingham (1983, 1986), and Jollimore (2000)).

Others have sought ways in which to make the impartiality of certain aspects of moral thought compatible with some degree of partiality towards our friends. An adequate moral theory, it might be thought, must leave space for elements of both partiality and impartiality, and some have sought to make space within the impartial point of view for some partiality. (See Nagel (1991), Stroud (2010), Um (2021), and Baron (1991)).

Finally, some have suggested that the tension between the two points of view is not something that can or should be resolved. There is no point of view, they think, that does full justice to both. Instead, they have suggested that we are simply faced with genuinely important norms and genuinely valuable ideals which we cannot simultaneously live up to; the ideals of being a morally good person and ideals of being a good friend do not converge. (See Wolf (1992) and Cocking and Kennett (2000)).<sup>1</sup>

Recently, the debate about partiality has been extended into the epistemic sphere. Traditional debates about partiality concern how one might justify partial *actions* and *attitudes*, or even have duties to perform them. But philosophers have more recently been interested in whether we might have reasons to have certain partial *beliefs*,

or partial belief-forming dispositions. *Epistemic partialists* suggest that being a good friend can require not merely helping one's friends out and caring about them, but also having positive beliefs about them (or a disposition to have positive beliefs about them).

For the purposes of this paper, I will speak of epistemic partialism as a phenomenon within *friendship*, as this has been the focus in the literature. However, many have thought that non-epistemic partiality towards one's partners, children, and those with whom one has other loving kinds of relationship is also permissible, and for similar reasons. (See, for example, Brighouse and Swift (2009), Arneson (2003), Douglas (2019)). It is easy to see how discussions of epistemic partialism could be extended to such relationships, as discussed by Piller (2016).

## 2 | EPISTEMIC PARTIALISM

Epistemic partialism, as I mentioned above, is the view that the general and justifiable partiality which we show to our friends often rightfully extends into the epistemic domain. Good friends, that is, care about one another and help one another out, but they also typically *think* well of one another. Most of us would be disappointed in our friends if they failed to be there when we needed them. But we might also be disappointed if we found out that they thought badly of us: we'd be hurt if they thought we were boring, unkind or ungenerous, for instance. One can be a good friend to someone, partialists suggest, not only by helping them out when they need it, but also by having generous positive beliefs about them. More specifically, epistemic partialists suggest that good friends sometimes count as such *because* they have beliefs about their friends that are more positive than is warranted by the evidence itself, and more positive than the belief they would form if they were forming a belief about a stranger, even given the same evidence.

Sarah Stroud (2006) and Simon Keller (2004, 2007, 2018, 2013) propose the canonical form of epistemic partialism. Stroud writes in a way that fairly summarises Keller's view as well:

[F]riendship involves, if not a blind spot, at least less than perfect vision where your friends' sins and flaws are concerned; the good friend's set of beliefs is to that extent necessarily out of kilter. As a good friend, your belief set is slanted: you actually believe your own spin. (Stroud, 2006, p. 513)

Consider what you'd say if you heard an unflattering rumour about your friend's behaviour (Stroud, 2006, pp. 503–6). As a good friend, you'd try to point out alternative explanations of your friend's behaviour that are more favourable to them and to present their actions in a more flattering light. You'd perhaps highlight their good qualities and try to skip over their bad ones, look for reasons to question the evidence, and end up presenting a much more positive image of them than you'd have presented if you didn't know who was being discussed. Stroud's suggestion is that the good friend would not merely *say* these things to others; they'd also *think* them. As she puts it, the good friend 'believes their own spin'.

It can often be epistemically valuable to consider alternative explanations of one's evidence before opting for a given interpretation of it, and it can also be epistemically valuable to consider the narrow evidence one has in the light of wider evidence. It is epistemically acceptable (and often judicious), for example, to weigh negative behaviour reports against the character-knowledge one has of someone. It is epistemically responsible, perhaps even necessary, to take such evidence seriously in regard to anyone, even complete strangers. However, epistemic partialists claim that good friends sometimes do and should go far beyond this. Epistemic partialists claim not merely that within the limits of what it is (standardly considered) epistemically reasonable to believe we should have the most positive beliefs it's reasonable to hold about our friends. (See Hawley, 2014, Paul & Morton, 2018.) Rather, they claim that one can be a good friend by believing in ways that would standardly be considered epistemically *unreasonable*.

There is no reason, Keller suggests, to expect that the norms of friendship and of epistemic agency must be consistent, since our (partial) reasons deriving from our friendships have a very different source to (impartial) epistemic norms (Keller, 2018, p. 32). As such, good friendship can demand things that are not in keeping with good

epistemic agency. Epistemic partialists thus suggest that the demands of friendship clash with widely accepted epistemic norms:

Friendship positively demands epistemic bias, understood as an epistemically unjustified departure from epistemic objectivity. Doxastic dispositions which violate the standards promulgated by mainstream epistemological theories are a constitutive feature of friendship. (Stroud, 2006, p. 518)

[S]ometimes, the norms of friendship clash with epistemic norms... [T]here are cases in which an agent cannot meet both the highest standards of friendship and the highest standards of epistemic responsibility. (Keller, 2004, p. 330)

Friendship, partialists think, can require a kind of positive bias in favour of our friends: as someone's good friend, you sometimes ought to think a bit more positively about them than is supported by the evidence. But epistemic agency is standardly thought to demand a total lack of bias; so, as standardly conceived, the two can clash.

Epistemic partialists, then, believe a combination of two claims. First, they think that friendship can demand some kind of positive epistemic bias in favour of our friends. Second, they think that this positive epistemic bias is epistemically impermissible (according to standard epistemic norms) because it goes beyond what is in keeping with the evidence itself.

More generally, there are two ways in which a positive epistemic bias towards our friends might be realisable, leading to two distinct variants of epistemic partialism. *Direct* partialism is the idea that friendship can provide direct reasons for believing one way rather than another. Epistemic partialists sometimes claim that the fact that someone is one's friend can be a direct reason to form a belief about them that is more positive than the belief to which evidence points. This is at times suggested by Keller (e.g. 2004, p. 330). *Indirect* partialism, on the other hand, is the idea that friendship can provide us with reasons to cultivate positively biased doxastic dispositions. These in turn will generally yield positively biased beliefs. This is suggested by both Stroud (2006, p. 518) and at times Keller (Keller, 2018, p. 32).<sup>2</sup>

It is worth noting here how this parallels wider debates about non-epistemic partiality. Here, as with non-epistemic partialism, epistemic partialists note that people do in fact tend to be partial, and argue that this is a good thing. However, epistemic partialists do not suggest that we should necessarily reject the impartial conception of epistemology as a result, nor that epistemic partiality might in fact be compatible with our extant epistemic ideals. Instead, their line of thinking is parallel to the final suggestion outlined above – namely, they suggest that there is conflict between two legitimate values and ideals here which may be irresolvable at the general level.<sup>3</sup>

### 3 | CONSIDERATIONS IN FAVOUR OF EPISTEMIC PARTIALISM

Epistemic partialism has been very popular within philosophy in recent years.<sup>4</sup> Why is it appealing? One rough initial reason, already mentioned in passing, is that it seems intuitive that we'd be hurt and disappointed if we found out that our friends thought badly of us. It also seems to map on to how we in fact think about our friends: it seems plausible that we do tend to think positively of our friends. Epistemic partialism would explain both these intuitions.<sup>5</sup> However, in the face of scepticism about epistemic partialism (i.e., scepticism about the justifiability of epistemic partiality), the partialist may want to be able to say more than this. In the following, I summarise three further reasons why epistemic partialism has been thought to be attractive: that it retains the esteem and liking central to friendship; that it avoids dissonance between what we demand of friends' actions and their beliefs; and to promote certain 'goods of friendship'.

The first reason begins from the thought that friendship involves thinking well of one's friends: we *like* our friends. Indeed, it seems plausible that if we found out that our friends thought very badly of us, we might wonder whether they were really our friends at all, and it can seem impossible to imagine a case of genuine friendship where

one party thinks very badly of the other. One possible explanation of this is that it is a constitutive part of being a good friend to like, value and appreciate the other person. Moreover, one might think that the good friend does not merely like and esteem their friend in the present moment: they are *committed* to them. As such, they may have to ensure that such liking and esteem will continue. Stroud writes:

[F]riendship is in some important sense based on your friend's character and on esteem for his merits... On this conception of friendship ... it makes sense that we need, as it were, to maintain a favorable opinion of our friend's character. (Stroud, 2006, p. 511)

It seems plausible that friends, as such, like and esteem one another. If that is the case, then maintaining a friendship with someone may require an epistemic bias in their favour in order to ensure the continuation of the esteem on which the friendship is based. Stroud thus suggests that being a good friend can require epistemic partiality, a bias in our friends' favour which will shore up our esteem for them.<sup>6</sup>

One might worry here that this is the wrong ordering of explanations: as Katherine Hawley (2014) points out, we tend to only form friendships with those whom we like and admire in the first place. Nonetheless, we typically have a very incomplete understanding of people when we initially form friendships with them, so we are likely to continue to come across new information about them. But once those friendships are formed, we may have reason to desire the continuation of the friendship – to be *committed* to our friends. And such commitment may require some positive epistemic bias.

The second reason in favour of epistemic partialism draws on (the previously-mentioned) *non*-epistemic partiality. If friendship can provide one with reasons to *act* and *feel* partially, then perhaps it can also give us reason to *think* partially about them. Christian Piller (2016) writes, 'Social relationships ... shape our lives. Thus, it would be a surprise if the epistemic sphere were completely isolated from such influence' (Piller, 2016, p. 335). This is especially so if friendship can give us reasons to act in ways that clash with *other* kinds of norms, as some have suggested.<sup>7</sup>

This thought can be strengthened by considering which kinds of action we demand of friends. As Stroud notes, we plausibly expect our friends to defend us and our reputation in public, and to advocate on our behalf. This kind of loyalty is plausibly an important part of friendship. It would be disconcerting if good friends externally did this whilst being filled with silent internal judgement and negativity. Stroud writes:

A good friend does not defend her friend outwardly (which we earlier agreed a good friend would do) while inwardly believing the worst of her friend. We do not conceptualize the good friend as manifesting a split of this kind between behaviour and belief when it comes to her friend. Rather, the good friend is prepared to take her friend's part both publicly and, as it were, internally. (Stroud, 2006, p. 505)

In other words, allowing that verbal loyalty to our friends is important but not epistemic partiality would create a strange internal dissonance or inauthenticity within the good friend.<sup>8</sup> This seems like an undesirable state, and as such we have some reason not to demand it of our friends. But if we are confident that we are right to demand verbal loyalty from our friends, then the only way of avoiding such dissonance may be to sometimes also demand epistemic partiality of them.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, a third and very different line of thinking is suggested by Keller (2004, 2018). He suggests that we can have reasons to have biased positive beliefs about our friends because doing so can promote key goods of friendship. Support, openness and encouragement, he suggests, are distinctively valuable goods of friendship, and thus the good friend would act so as to promote them. We have general partial reasons to support and encourage our friends (or at least, many people think so); if one is engaging in a difficult or tiring project a word of support or encouragement from a friend can mean a lot. But support and encouragement, Keller suggests, are not only matters of outward speech and behaviour. Simply thinking that your friends *think* well of you can be cheering or reassuring and can help motivate you to continue engaging in difficult tasks. In fact, he suggests that knowing that your friends are 'on your

side' and think well of you can contribute to your wellbeing (something friends should be keen to promote). This, he suggests, is the case whether or not such positive beliefs are accurate or wholly justified. Keller thus regards positive beliefs as promoting goods such as support, encouragement and openness, and on this basis he suggests that good friends can have reasons to be epistemically partial.<sup>10</sup>

## 4 | WORRIES ABOUT EPISTEMIC PARTIALISM

Epistemic partialism has, however, been controversial, and worries about it have arisen from a number of different directions. In the following, I will explore four main lines of response to epistemic partialism. The first is that friendship is the wrong kind of reason for belief. The second is that partialists ignore the value of accurate negative beliefs. The third is that our partiality to our friends is best explained in terms of attitudes other than belief. And the final worry is that partialists have a mistaken view of friendship, that friendship requires relating to the other person as they really are and not merely as it would be good for them to be.

The first worry specifically concerns direct partiality, the view that friendship itself provides us with reasons for having positive beliefs about our friends. One possible problem with this is that friendship seems to be the wrong kind of reason for the resultant beliefs: evidence provides a reason to believe that something is the case, but friendship does not in and of itself provide any evidence of positive features in our friends. (See Enoch (2016) and Arpaly and Brinkerhoff (2018)). It is thus unclear that friendship could provide *reasons* for belief. What's more, there are questions about whether it's even *possible* to directly believe for this kind of non-evidential reason, since we can't just form beliefs at will.

In response to this worry, epistemic partialists might instead support indirect partiality, the idea that good friends sometimes have positively biased belief-forming *dispositions* regarding their friends. This avoids the wrong kind of reasons problem, but faces a different problem, namely, that positive beliefs about our friends do not seem to be uniformly or even generally desirable or valuable. (See Kawall (2013) and Arpaly and Brinkerhoff (2018)). There are many instances in which having an accurate negative belief about one's friend can be valuable for the friend and good for the friendship. For example, accurate negative beliefs about one's friends can be important in order to recognise when they are struggling and need support, or in order to offer them reliable advice. General dispositions to think positively about a given friend would not be suited to distinguishing between the situations in which such beliefs are desirable for the friend and those in which they are not. At the level of dispositions, we are unable to pick and choose whether or not to be positively biased.<sup>11</sup> But it is far from obvious that a generic positive bias in any given friend's favour would be overall desirable.

Thirdly, some sceptics about epistemic partialism have suggested that our partiality to our friends is best explained in terms of attitudes other than belief. (See Hawley (2014), Kawall (2013) and Arpaly and Brinkerhoff (2018)). Once these other attitudes are taken into account, they suggest, the partialist's case for thinking that specifically our *beliefs* about our friends must be positive looks much weaker. Attitudes like trust and hope, for example, do not depend on outright believing in the hoped-for or trusted thing. Hopes in and for one's friend's success, for example, seem to express care for them and commitment to them just as much as (or perhaps even more than) outright beliefs that they will be successful, and one can trust those whom one has less than full belief in. In fact, Jollimore (2021) suggests that even certain kinds of anxiety about our friends can be part of being a good friend.

Finally, some sceptics about epistemic partialism have suggested that it goes wrong from the start, by accepting a mistaken view of friendship. (See Badhwar (1993), Kawall (2013), Yao (2020), Mason (2021) and Dormandy (2022)). Friendship, these sceptics suggest, importantly involves relating to the other person as they really are. It requires seeing the other as they are, and loving them for who they are. We want to be *seen* by our friends, to be loved and accepted for who we are, not ignored in favour of a positive fantasy. Mason (2021) thus proposes a conception of friendship in which it inherently involves knowledge of the other, or a progressive movement towards such knowledge: '[F]riendship is an epistemically involved, knowledge-involving, state' (Mason, 2021, p. 2449). Such a conception of friendship, she suggests, rules out the possibility that acting epistemically irresponsibly could make

one a better friend. Dormandy (2022) similarly suggests that having an accurate view of one's friends and loved ones promotes an excellent love for them in which one is appropriately responsive to them.<sup>12</sup>

## 5 | FURTHER DIRECTIONS FOR DEBATE

Debates about epistemic partiality have thus far remained fairly confined to whether the central partialist thesis is correct. But there are many underexplored directions for further discussion, often derived from parallels with wider debates on partiality. In this section, I outline some further directions for exploring epistemic partiality.

Firstly, epistemic partialists have thus far considered only the positive side of epistemic partiality: whether there can be reasons to think more positively about our friends than we would about strangers given equal evidence. This follows the general trend in the wider literature on partiality to focus on friendships and positive relationships. However, there has been a recent movement in the wider debate about partiality towards considering the opposite, negative partiality. (See Brandt (2020) and Lange (2020)). This is the idea that it can be justified to treat our enemies in worse ways than are generally required towards strangers. If epistemic partialists are willing to think that we can acceptably diverge from epistemic norms in the positive case, might they be willing to allow it in the negative case? This seems like a somewhat alarming possibility but, nonetheless, plausibly conforms to our actual practises, where we are often notably uncharitable to those we dislike.

Secondly, and in a very different direction, we might wonder whether epistemic partialism should really be about a narrow selection of cases involving friends and loved ones. Instead, perhaps the kind of epistemic generosity discussed regarding friends in this debate is owed to all people, simply as such. That is, we might think that epistemic partialists identify appropriate standards for our beliefs about our friends, but only because these are *also* appropriate for beliefs about strangers. Perhaps, that is, we should be slower to judge strangers negatively, too, more willing to give them the benefit of the doubt, more likely to consider generous interpretations of their behaviour and so on. (Of course, if this is the case then we would no longer be discussing a kind of *partiality* at all).

With this in mind, one might think that the generosity of mind which epistemic partialists recommend in the case of friendship is actually an ideal in all human relationships, or at least the default position. Preston-Roedder (2013), for example, suggests that having faith in humanity (faith in others' basic moral decency) is central to our moral lives, despite the fact that such faith may sometimes be epistemically unwarranted. If that's correct, a certain kind of epistemic partiality may be warranted towards everyone, not only towards those with whom we share special relationships.

Relatedly, we might question whether the positivity of epistemic partiality is as straightforwardly epistemically problematic as has been assumed. Jollimore (2011), for example, suggests that whilst love does carry epistemic risks, seeing lovingly is also the only way to fully discern and appreciate another person's value. On this view, love is thus a way of recognising certain valuable features of other human beings, and in this respect it is extremely epistemically valuable. In important respects, he suggests, love is *epistemically* desirable, though there may be no way of gaining the epistemic benefits of love without also taking on certain epistemic risks.

Finally, it is worth considering the political implications of this debate, which have largely been sidelined. Who we think positively about is clearly a question with political significance but has been surprisingly little explored. Friedman (1991) discusses some political factors that complicate any defence of non-epistemic partiality, noting that any defence of general partiality will be a defence of the privileged further privileging their already-privileged friends. To those with egalitarian instincts, this may seem unpalatable.<sup>13</sup> Epistemic partiality seems to risk defending something similar and thus reproducing worrying epistemic injustices. (See Lee (2022)). Can epistemic partiality be defended whilst avoiding epistemic nepotism? This remains to be seen.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank Lucy McDonald, Matt Dougherty, and two anonymous reviewers for helpful comments and feedback.



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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> For a broader overview of the ethics of partiality, see Lange (2022).
- <sup>2</sup> Note that one could accept indirect partialism whilst rejecting its direct form. Crawford (2017), for example, rejects direct partialism whilst remaining open to the possibility of indirect partialism.
- <sup>3</sup> Those who think that epistemic norms should be adjusted to encompass moral considerations or considerations of friendship are instead described as defending 'moral encroachment', for example Moss (2018) and Basu (2019). Rioux (2021) argues that epistemic partialism *cannot* be explained in terms of moral encroachment.
- <sup>4</sup> See, for example Hazlett (2013, 2016), Piller (2016), Rinard (2019), Marušić (2015) and Harman (2011). Nussbaum seems to express sympathy for something along these lines when she suggests that loving vision involves 'a willingness to stop seeing, to close one's eyes before the loved one's imperfections' (Nussbaum, 2012, p. 154).
- <sup>5</sup> Although it is perhaps not *necessary* for explaining them. See Kwall (2013, p. 358) and Enoch (2016, pp. 41–42).
- <sup>6</sup> Goldberg (2019) points out that the need to maintain friendships (and the positive beliefs which they involve) itself changes the reasons confronting friends. He thus suggests that our reasoning about our friends should be different to that about strangers, but only because the reasons that confront them are changed by the friendship.
- <sup>7</sup> For possible clashes between norms of friendship and moral norms, see Cocking and Kennett (2000).
- <sup>8</sup> Keller similarly writes, 'You want a friend who's on your side, not one who's good at faking it.' (Keller, 2004, p. 335). This may be a false dichotomy, since public support of one's friends seems fully compatible with private critique of them. If this is the case, there may be nothing inauthentic about combining public support and negative beliefs about one's friends.
- <sup>9</sup> See Keller (2007) and Hazlett (2016) for discussions of loyalty. Baker (1987) suggests that trusting others may require resistance to accepting negative evidence about them.
- <sup>10</sup> One might question, of course, how encouraging we'd find our friends' positive beliefs if we were aware that they were biased in our favour. See Enoch (2016, pp. 41–2) and Kwall (2013, p. 358).
- <sup>11</sup> Though it may be possible to override dispositions on some occasions, these are usually rare cases.
- <sup>12</sup> Crawford (2017) makes the more limited claim that good friends' beliefs must be appropriately responsive to the features their friends *appear* to have. She suggests that what makes such beliefs 'appropriately responsive' is that they should be responses to object-given reasons (reasons to do with the properties the object has) rather than state-given reasons (reasons to do with the benefits of being in a given state). This leaves open the possibility of certain kinds of indirect epistemic partiality.
- <sup>13</sup> Others, such as Kolodny (2010) and Keller (2007), explore political dimensions to wider partialism regarding the question of *who* we can justifiably be partial to. However, they are largely concerned to limit partiality to friendship (rather than allowing for partiality to members of one's state, racial group and so on), and thus do not consider the political dimensions of friendship itself. Lintott (2015) gives an overview of some political dimensions of friendship.

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**How to cite this article:** Mason, C. (2023). Epistemic Partialism. *Philosophy Compass*, 18(2), e12896. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12896>