

Friendship and Paternalism

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PLEP *TALK*

On a standard definition, paternalism is when an individual interferes with another person, against that person's will, on the basis of a claim that the person interfered with will be better off or protected from harm.

Paternalism is typically viewed as pro tanto wrong.

More recently, some philosophers have argued that intimate relationships, such as friendships, can change the deontic status of paternalism: instead of being pro tanto wrong, paternalism can be permissible or even required in friendships. Accordingly, we should interfere with our friends' affairs, even against their will, if this interference is in their best interest. After all, or so the assumption goes, this is what friends are for: acting with an eye towards the respective friend's good (even in cases where the friend might not consent).

In this talk, my aim is to provide a more nuanced view of the connection between paternalism and friendship. I will show that paternalism can sometimes be more benign in friendships, but also that sometimes it can be even more reprehensible to be paternalistic towards our friends.

For further information: www.philosophie.unibe.ch/plep/community

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