Episteme (2026), 1–21
doi:10.1017/epi.2026.10159

episteme

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Recognition as an Intellectual Virtue

Kazi A. S. M. Nurul Huda[1,2]

[1]Department of Philosophy, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh and [2]Jepson School of Leadership Studies, University of Richmond, USA
Email: huda@du.ac.bd

(Received 4 March 2026 UTC; revised 7 September 2026 UTC; accepted 24 September 2026 UTC)

Abstract

Virtue epistemology has richly theorized the traits that regulate belief, inquiry, and epistemic responsibility, but it has largely neglected a more basic condition of epistemic life: how agents come to count as epistemic participants at all. This paper argues that *recognition* constitutes a distinctive intellectual virtue that governs this condition. I develop an account of intellectual recognition as a threshold-governing virtue concerned with epistemic standing, understood as an agent's intelligibility as a reason-giver, visibility as having epistemic needs and capacities, and eligibility for uptake within shared epistemic practices. Failures of recognition help explain why epistemic injustice, exclusion, and epistemic oppression persist even in contexts oriented toward truth and fairness, since some agents are never fully taken up as participants in inquiry in the first place. Recognition is not reducible to epistemic justice or to familiar intellectual virtues such as open-mindedness or intellectual autonomy. Rather, it plays an architectural role by regulating entry into epistemic participation and thereby conditioning the successful exercise of other intellectual virtues. Treating recognition as an intellectual virtue clarifies how epistemic communities are sustained and why epistemic failure so often begins not with error, but with epistemic invisibility under conditions of structural distortion.

Keywords: Virtue epistemology; intellectual recognition; epistemic standing; epistemic participation; epistemic injustice; epistemic exclusion

1. Introduction

Virtue epistemology has made substantial progress in theorizing the character traits that enable epistemic agents to inquire well, form beliefs responsibly, and contribute to shared epistemic practices. Traits such as open-mindedness, intellectual humility, intellectual courage, and epistemic justice are now standardly recognized as intellectual virtues, understood as dispositions that regulate how agents pursue epistemic goods such as truth, knowledge, understanding, and inquiry. Yet one structural feature of epistemic life remains undertheorized within virtue epistemology, namely *how epistemic agents become visible to one another as epistemic agents at all*, especially under conditions of social power and structural distortion.

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https://doi.org/10.1017/epi.2026.10159 Published online by Cambridge University Press

This paper argues that the concept of *recognition*, already central in moral and social philosophy, names a distinctive intellectual virtue that addresses precisely this lacuna. Very roughly, recognition concerns our orientation to others as bearers of epistemic needs, rights, abilities, and achievements and thereby shapes their *epistemic standing* and participation within shared inquiry. Failures of recognition help explain familiar forms of epistemic injustice, marginalization, exclusion, and invisibility, while successful recognition enables epistemic agents to participate in inquiry on more equal terms by securing the epistemic standing necessary for such participation. Although the focus here is intellectual recognition, this should not be taken to imply that epistemic and broader social forms of recognition are wholly independent. Under conditions of structural distortion, failures of social recognition frequently affect agents' epistemic standing and their ability to participate in inquiry on equal terms.

This interconnection is unsurprising given recognition's longstanding role within moral and social philosophy. It has been extensively theorized as a normative orientation, most influentially in Axel Honneth's account of recognition as structured by care, respect, and esteem, and in related work connecting misrecognition to epistemic injustice and marginalization (Congdon 2017; Fricker 2007; Giladi 2018; Giladi and McMillan 2018, 2022; Honneth 1995). Despite this rich body of work, recognition has not been explicitly theorized as an *intellectual virtue* within the virtue epistemology literature.[1]

At first glance, however, this omission may seem unsurprising. There are at least three powerful reasons to resist treating recognition as an intellectual virtue. First, recognition appears to be moral rather than intellectual. Recognizing others' needs or standing looks like a matter of ethical concern, respect, or justice, not a trait governing belief, inquiry, or understanding. Second, recognition seems too broad to qualify as a distinct virtue. Orienting oneself appropriately to others' epistemic features appears to be something that *all* intellectual virtues require. Open-mindedness, intellectual charity, epistemic justice, and intellectual humility all seem to presuppose some sensitivity to others' epistemic standing and participation. Third, recognition appears redundant with already recognized intellectual virtues, most notably epistemic justice. If epistemic justice governs the fair distribution of credibility and epistemic goods, it is natural to wonder what independent work recognition could possibly do.

Taken together, these considerations motivate a compelling denial position. Recognition is either a moral virtue, a component of epistemic justice, or a background condition presupposed by intellectual virtues generally. On this view, recognition is not itself an intellectual virtue deserving independent theoretical attention.

This paper takes that denial position seriously. Its central aim is not merely to highlight the importance of recognition in epistemic life but to show that the above

[1]This paper does not engage the extensive literature criticizing recognition-based political frameworks, most notably Coulthard's (2014) critique of the colonial politics of recognition. Coulthard argues that relations of recognition can reproduce domination when the authority to confer recognition remains asymmetrically structured. The present account addresses a different aspect of recognition. Rather than examining how relations of recognition may reproduce political domination, it develops an account of recognition as an intellectual virtue concerned with epistemic standing and participation. Nevertheless, the two projects are not necessarily in tension. Many of the failures discussed by Coulthard may be understood as instances in which social and institutional arrangements systematically distort the conditions under which agents are able to participate as epistemic peers. Indeed, Coulthard's critique may be interpreted as identifying forms of structural distortion that undermine parity of participation by leaving the authority to recognize asymmetrically distributed.

https://doi.org/10.1017/epi.2026.10159 Published online by Cambridge University Press

reasons for excluding recognition from the list of intellectual virtues are ultimately mistaken. More specifically, I argue that recognition is neither reducible to epistemic justice nor exhaustible as a moral disposition or background sensitivity. Instead, recognition should be understood as a threshold-governing intellectual virtue, namely a standing disposition to track and respond appropriately to others' epistemic standing under conditions of structural distortion. In doing so, it helps secure parity of epistemic participation by regulating whether agents are taken up as contributors to inquiry, sources of testimony, and recipients of epistemic uptake. By governing who counts as a participant in inquiry, who is intelligible as a reason-giver, and whose contributions are eligible for uptake within shared epistemic practices, recognition operates prior to, and partly conditions, the successful exercise of other intellectual virtues.

On this view, recognition does not compete with familiar virtues such as open-mindedness or epistemic justice. Rather, it plays a distinct architectural role within epistemic life by governing the conditions under which those virtues can be meaningfully exercised and by helping determine who can participate in epistemic practices as a peer. Without appropriate recognition, epistemic agents may be formally treated justly while remaining effectively invisible, unintelligible, or marginalized within epistemic practices. Conversely, recognition can succeed even where justice fails, and vice versa. This explanatory asymmetry provides the basis for treating recognition as an intellectual virtue in its own right.

The paper proceeds in stages. It begins by clarifying what it takes for a character trait to qualify as an intellectual virtue within a broadly responsibilist framework and by explaining why recognition might initially appear to fail these criteria. It then develops an account of recognition as a disposition concerned with epistemic orientation, standing, and participation, and argues that it is not reducible to epistemic justice, since justice presupposes recognitional uptake. The central sections establish recognition as a distinct intellectual virtue by showing how it regulates epistemic standing and helps secure parity of epistemic participation, addressing redundancy and subset objections, distinguishing it from neighboring virtues, and identifying its characteristic vices and their context-sensitive calibration by practical wisdom. A subsequent section argues that recognition is an intellectual rather than merely moral virtue by locating its primary function in epistemic participation. The conclusion draws out what virtue epistemology gains from treating recognition as a threshold-governing virtue and considers its implications for epistemic communities.

By situating recognition within virtue epistemology in this way, the paper aims to show that an important feature of epistemic agency has remained conceptually underdescribed. Recognition, understood as an intellectual virtue, helps explain how epistemic agents come to possess the epistemic standing necessary to participate in inquiry in the first place and why failures of epistemic life so often begin not with false belief or poor reasoning, but with epistemic invisibility and exclusion.

2. What an intellectual virtue must be (and why recognition might fail)

Before arguing that recognition is an intellectual virtue, it is necessary to clarify what counts as an intellectual virtue in the first place. Virtue epistemologists disagree about the nature of intellectual virtues, but there is broad convergence on several core features that any plausible candidate must satisfy. This section briefly situates the discussion within a responsibilist framework and articulates minimal conditions for intellectual virtue that will guide the remainder of the paper.

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Virtue epistemology is often divided between virtue reliabilist and virtue responsibilist approaches. Virtue reliabilists understand intellectual virtues primarily as reliable cognitive faculties such as perception, memory, and reason, whose epistemic value lies in their tendency to produce true beliefs (Battaly 2008; Greco 2010; Sosa 1991). Virtue responsibilists, by contrast, conceive intellectual virtues as acquired traits of cognitive character that involve motivations, dispositions, and patterns of responsible epistemic agency (Baehr 2011; Battaly 2008; Zagzebski 1996). On this view, intellectual virtues regulate how agents inquire, deliberate, form beliefs, revise commitments, and engage with others in epistemic practices.

This paper adopts a broadly responsibilist framework. The focus on recognition as an intellectual virtue concerns agents' orientations toward one another, motivations, and dispositions in epistemic life rather than the reliability of their cognitive faculties. That said, I do not aim to adjudicate between rival camps within virtue epistemology, nor do I deny that faculty virtues play an important role in epistemic success. My aim is instead to examine whether recognition can plausibly be understood as a virtuous character trait that governs epistemic agency in a manner consistent with responsibilist accounts.

Against this background, several minimal conditions emerge for a character trait to count as an intellectual virtue. First, an intellectual virtue must govern epistemic agency. It must play a role in the formation, revision, retention, abandonment, or distribution of epistemic states such as beliefs, knowledge, understanding, and inquiry (Battaly 2017: 671). Second, it must be a character-based and action-guiding disposition. Intellectual virtues are not mere capacities or episodic behaviors but stable traits that dispose agents to act, feel, and deliberate in epistemically appropriate ways across contexts (King 2014: 3781). Third, an intellectual virtue must not be reducible to another already recognized intellectual virtue. While overlap and interdependence are common among intellectual virtues, a proposed virtue must make a distinctive contribution to epistemic agency in order to merit independent theoretical attention.

Recognition appears, at least initially, to face difficulty with this third condition. Orienting oneself appropriately to others' epistemic needs, rights, abilities, and achievements seems to be something that many intellectual virtues already require. Open-mindedness, intellectual humility, intellectual charity, and epistemic justice all involve sensitivity to others' epistemic perspectives and standing. From this perspective, recognition may appear to be merely a background disposition presupposed by intellectual virtues generally, rather than a distinct virtue in its own right. Alternatively, recognition may appear to collapse into epistemic justice, understood as the virtue governing fair credibility attribution and resistance to identity-prejudicial epistemic wrongs (Fricker 2007: 1–8; Medina 2011: 15–22).

This apparent failure of non-reducibility gives rise to a natural skepticism about recognition's status as an intellectual virtue. If recognition is simply a moral sensitivity, a component of justice, or a generic feature shared by intellectual virtues across the board, then it does not warrant separate treatment within virtue epistemology. This concern helps explain why recognition has not yet been explicitly theorized as an intellectual virtue within the literature.

The remainder of the paper argues that this apparent skepticism rests on a mischaracterization of recognition's role in epistemic life. Although recognition overlaps with other intellectual virtues, it performs a distinct function by regulating epistemic standing and, thereby, participation in inquiry, rather than the distribution or evaluation of epistemic goods. In doing so, recognition governs the conditions under which other intellectual virtues can be successfully exercised. The following sections develop this

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claim by clarifying the nature of epistemic standing and participation, distinguishing recognition from epistemic justice, and showing that recognition functions as a threshold-governing intellectual virtue rather than a mere background condition.

3. Recognition and epistemic standing

Recognition is a familiar feature of social life: we stand in relations in which we expect others to register our needs, rights, abilities, and achievements, and we respond negatively when those expectations are violated (Honneth 1995; see also Huda 2021, 2022, 2026). These expectations are not merely moral; they structure how persons become intelligible to one another as participants in shared practices. When such expectations are unmet, failures of recognition often generate forms of wrong and injustice. Offering a person due recognition therefore amounts to a form of virtuous activity connected with a recognizer's character. A virtuous recognizer provides recognition appropriately, contributing to others' fulfillment and preventing herself from becoming a source of epistemic and other injustices. In what follows, I bracket recognition's general moral sense and focus instead on intellectual recognition, understood as an orientation that regulates epistemic standing within shared inquiry.

That orientation shows up most clearly in the ordinary mechanics of epistemic interaction, namely in how epistemic agents are taken up as knowers, heard as contributors, and rendered intelligible within inquiry. When we recognize an epistemic agent, we orient ourselves to her epistemic features, including epistemic needs, rights, abilities, and achievements, and we take these features to matter normatively for how she ought to be treated in epistemic contexts. This notion of orientation warrants further clarification.

An epistemic orientation is a standing disposition to register others' epistemic features and to regard those features as normatively relevant for how they ought to be treated within epistemic practices. Such an orientation is more than the mere awareness of another's epistemic capacities, needs, or contributions. It involves taking such features as reason-giving for epistemic conduct. Recognition, as understood here, is a form of epistemic orientation because it directs agents to others as participants whose epistemic features matter for their standing within inquiry.

Despite this role, intellectual recognition is not commonly mentioned among the list of intellectual virtues that epistemologists often discuss. This omission is striking, given that recognition structures many of the most basic practices through which epistemic agents engage one another. Recognition may involve positively esteeming epistemic contributions, respecting epistemic rights, or offering supportive care, but it may also involve confronting error or appropriately challenging overconfidence. Working to secure fair access to educational resources for marginalized groups and pointing out overconfidence in a student are both intelligible as forms of intellectual recognition.

What is at stake in these orientations is not merely responsiveness or concern, but whether an agent is intelligible to others as an epistemic agent *at all*. This brings into view the notion of epistemic standing. Epistemic standing refers to an agent's position within epistemic practices as someone who can meaningfully participate in inquiry and related epistemic activities. To have epistemic standing is, minimally, to be taken up as intelligible as a reason-giver, eligible for uptake, and visible as having epistemic needs and capacities.

Epistemic standing should not be confused with epistemic agency. While epistemic agency concerns an individual's capacity to engage in epistemic activities such as

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reasoning, inquiry, belief-formation, and knowledge-sharing, epistemic standing concerns an agent's status within shared epistemic practices as someone whose epistemic capacities and contributions are taken to matter. The distinction is important because an agent may possess epistemic agency while lacking epistemic standing. Members of marginalized groups, for example, may possess the capacities required to contribute to inquiry while nevertheless finding their contributions excluded from curricula, research agendas, or other shared epistemic resources through which inquiry proceeds. In such cases, what is impaired is not epistemic agency itself but the agent's standing within the epistemic community and, consequently, her ability to participate in inquiry on equal terms. Recognition, as understood here, is concerned primarily with this latter dimension. It governs whether epistemic agents are visible and intelligible as participants in inquiry rather than whether they possess epistemic capacities in the first place.

Once the distinction between epistemic agency and epistemic standing is in view, many familiar forms of epistemic injustice can be understood as failures at the latter level, where agents are denied standing as reason-givers or credibility bearers within epistemic practices (Fricker 2007; Giladi 2018; Medina 2011). When an agent's testimony is dismissed, when her interpretive resources are ignored, or when her epistemic needs are rendered invisible, she is not merely treated unfairly. She is denied standing within the epistemic community. These failures are often better described as *misrecognition*[2]: knowers are not taken up as participants in the production and circulation of epistemic goods, or they are taken up only in distorted ways that undermine their participation (cf. Giladi 2018: 145).

Recent work on epistemic oppression further illuminates the stakes of recognitional failure (e.g., Dotson 2014; Medina 2013; Pohlhaus Jr. 2012). Dotson's account is especially useful because it develops the notions of epistemic invisibility and negative socio-epistemic space. Although Dotson does not frame these phenomena in terms of recognition, her account helps illuminate what I characterize here as failures of recognition, particularly cases in which agents are rendered unintelligible as participants in inquiry. Dotson characterizes epistemic oppression as "a persistent and unwarranted infringement on the ability to utilize persuasively shared epistemic resources that hinder one's contributions to knowledge production" (Dotson 2014: 116). Unlike accounts focused primarily on credibility deficits, this framework highlights how agents may be excluded from participation in shared epistemic practices altogether. This emphasis on exclusion and participation complements the account developed here. Recognition governs whether agents are taken up as epistemic participants in the first place, and failures of recognition can therefore contribute to forms of epistemic exclusion. When agents are not appropriately recognized as epistemic contributors, knowers, or participants in inquiry, they may become effectively invisible within epistemic communities, occupying what Dotson describes as *negative socio-epistemic space* (Dotson 2017: 422). In such cases, agents may lack the *positive socio-epistemic status* necessary to be registered as knowers and participants within shared epistemic practices (Dotson 2013: 17; see also Dotson 2018).

Invisibility, on this view, is not merely a matter of receiving insufficient credibility or suffering a credibility deficit. Rather, it consists in a failure to be taken up as an epistemic participant whose contributions register as relevant within shared inquiry. Participation is impaired not because agents lack epistemic abilities or achievements, but because

[2]Usually, to refer to any recognition failure, the term *misrecognition* is predominantly used in the general literature on recognition.

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those features fail to secure the epistemic standing necessary for uptake by others. Dotson's (2012: 31–35) account of contributory injustice provides a useful illustration of this kind of failure. Contributory injustice occurs when epistemic agents, relying on structurally prejudiced hermeneutical resources, refuse to recognize or acquire alternative hermeneutical resources available to them. In such cases, marginalized knowers may possess alternative hermeneutical resources through which they can readily articulate their experiences, yet their articulations fail to receive appropriate uptake. The resulting failure of uptake thus does not arise from an inability on the part of marginalized knowers to render their experiences intelligible but from the refusal of others to engage the hermeneutical resources through which those experiences are articulated. Recognition therefore bears directly on forms of epistemic exclusion that arise prior to, and independently of, more familiar forms of credibility injustice. From the perspective developed here, I interpret such cases as instances of epistemic exclusion rooted in failures of recognition. Recognition thus bears directly on the epistemic standing that makes participation in inquiry possible.

Failures of recognition have consequences not only for the standing and participation of particular epistemic agents but also for the epistemic community as a whole. Failure to recognize others' epistemic attributes adequately may result in an epistemic community marked by epistemic egoism and individualism, unable to form and sustain the interdependent epistemic relations required for intellectual flourishing. This underscores the moral and epistemic significance of recognition in creating and maintaining an epistemic community. When I recognize someone else's epistemic features, such as a student's need for support in developing mathematical skills if I am her teacher, I am compelled to act in specific ways that support her development. Recognition provides reasons not to act in ways incompatible with an epistemic agent's features, thus imposing constraints on behavior and preserving the integrity of the epistemic community.

Recognition can therefore be characterized more narrowly as an intellectual disposition concerned with and responsive to epistemic standing. Intellectual recognition is a standing disposition to track and respond appropriately to others' epistemic standing, especially under conditions of structural distortion that predictably undermine parity of epistemic participation (cf. Fraser 2001, 2003). Parity of epistemic participation characterizes epistemic practices in which agents are able to participate as epistemic peers: as contributors to inquiry, sources of testimony, users of shared interpretive resources, and recipients of epistemic uptake.[3] Whether agents can participate in this way depends on their epistemic standing within the community. To track epistemic standing is to attend to others' epistemic needs, rights, abilities, and achievements insofar as these bear on whether they are taken up as participants in inquiry rather than merely on whether they possess the capacities required for participation. In this sense, recognition governs the conditions under which agents count as participants in epistemic practices prior to questions about how credibility or other epistemic goods are distributed.

[3]The notion of parity of epistemic participation draws inspiration from Fraser's (2003, 36) account of participatory parity, according to which justice requires social arrangements that permit persons to interact as peers. My concern here is narrower. Rather than participation in social life generally, the focus is participation in epistemic practices such as inquiry, testimony, interpretation, and knowledge-sharing. Fraser's framework is useful insofar as it highlights how patterns of exclusion and subordination can prevent agents from participating on equal terms and thereby undermine epistemic standing.

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Understanding recognition in terms of epistemic standing helps distinguish it from several nearby notions. Recognition is not mere general responsiveness. An agent may be responsive to others' beliefs or utterances while still failing to register them as full epistemic participants. Recognition is not benevolence. While recognition may involve care or support, benevolence can be exercised without regard to epistemic agency. One may act kindly toward another while still denying her epistemic standing. Recognition is also not equivalent to epistemic concern in general. One may care deeply about epistemic goods such as truth or knowledge while remaining indifferent to who is included in inquiry and who is excluded. What distinguishes recognition from these notions is its role in orienting agents toward others as participants within shared epistemic practices and thereby making their epistemic standing visible and actionable.

Building on Honneth's (1995) account of recognition, an analytic-philosophy-friendly framework distinguishes three modes through which recognition responds to epistemic standing*: loving care*, *respect*, and *esteem* (Huda 2021). These should be understood as modes of recognitional response rather than as constituting recognition itself.

Loving care in epistemic contexts involves recognizing epistemic needs and supporting the development of capacities, including through appropriate challenge. Respect involves recognizing epistemic rights and treating agents as autonomous participants in epistemic practices. Esteem involves valuing epistemic abilities and achievements and confronting barriers that prevent these from being acknowledged. Each mode presupposes that the agent already counts as someone whose epistemic standing matters. They specify how recognition is expressed in different contexts, not what recognition is.

Recognition contributes to intellectual flourishing by creating a network of normative expectations through which epistemic agents become visible and intelligible to one another as participants in inquiry and, thereby, as epistemic peers capable of participating on equal terms in shared epistemic practices. In epistemic contexts, this network structures who is seen, heard, challenged, supported, and taken seriously as a knower. This other-regarding orientation aligns with accounts of epistemic virtue that emphasize responsibility for others' epistemic flourishing rather than mere individual epistemic success (Kawall 2002). Seen in this light, recognition is neither an all-purpose intellectual virtue nor a background condition shared indiscriminately by all virtues. It is a threshold-governing intellectual virtue that regulates epistemic standing and thereby conditions the successful exercise of other intellectual virtues. In this respect, recognition functions analogously to other enabling virtues discussed in responsibilist accounts, such as open-mindedness and intellectual humility, which regulate the conditions under which inquiry, understanding, and the exercise of epistemic agency can succeed (Baehr 2011; Riggs 2019).

With this account of recognition and epistemic standing in place, the next section addresses the objection that recognition collapses into epistemic justice. I argue that justice presupposes recognitional uptake rather than constituting it, and that this asymmetry explains why recognition merits independent treatment within virtue epistemology.

4. Why recognition is *not* epistemic justice

At this point, one might reasonably suspect that intellectual recognition is simply another name for epistemic justice. After all, both concepts are invoked to explain epistemic wrongs such as testimonial injustice, credibility deficits, credibility excesses,

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forms of epistemic marginalization, and epistemic exclusion. Moreover, both appear to be centrally concerned with fairness in our epistemic practices. If this suspicion were correct, then recognition would be redundant as an intellectual virtue, collapsing into an already well-theorized virtue within epistemology. This section argues that this suspicion is mistaken.

Epistemic justice, as developed most influentially by Fricker (2007; see also Beeby 2019), concerns the fair distribution of epistemic goods, especially credibility, within epistemic exchanges. One form of epistemic justice is testimonial justice, which requires that a hearer correct for identity-prejudicial credibility deficits so that speakers receive the credibility they deserve as knowers (Fricker 2007: 86–98). Later developments in the literature extend this framework to include credibility excesses and broader structural forms of epistemic injustice (Davis 2016; Huda 2019; Medina 2011). Across these accounts, justice functions as a normative constraint on how epistemic goods are allocated and assessed once agents are already situated as participants within epistemic practices and positioned to receive epistemic uptake.

Recognition, by contrast, operates at a different level. It governs whether and how agents come to count as epistemic participants in the first place. To recognize someone intellectually is not merely to assess their testimony fairly but to orient oneself to their epistemic needs, rights, abilities, and achievements in a way that renders them intelligible as reason-givers, visible as contributors to shared epistemic life, and eligible for credibility assessment. Recognition, understood in this way, is an intellectual virtue concerned with epistemic orientation rather than with distributive fairness. It regulates epistemic standing and thereby helps secure parity of epistemic participation rather than the distribution of epistemic goods.

This difference becomes clear once we attend to cases in which justice and recognition come apart. An agent may be formally treated justly while remaining insufficiently recognized. For example, an institution may apply identical credibility standards to all speakers, yet operate against a background of structural norms that render certain speakers effectively invisible, unintelligible, or peripheral. In such cases, justice is ostensibly satisfied at the level of distribution, but recognition fails at the level of epistemic standing. The affected agents are not denied credibility so much as denied full participation in the epistemic community. As a result, parity of epistemic participation is undermined even when distributive norms appear to be respected. Importantly, such failures of recognition need not involve any misallocation of credibility at all. Rather, they consist in forms of epistemic exclusion that prevent agents from entering the space in which credibility assessments would even become applicable.

Conversely, recognition can occur without justice. A speaker may be acknowledged as a knower, treated as intelligible and worthy of engagement, yet still be subjected to unfair credibility assessments or unequal epistemic burdens. For instance, a marginalized agent may be recognized as having epistemic authority within a discussion while still being required to provide excessive justification or face disproportionate skepticism.[4] Here, recognition succeeds while justice fails.

[4]Related phenomena are discussed in Berenstain's (2016) account of epistemic exploitation and Pohlhaus Jr.'s (2020) account of pernicious forms of epistemic inclusion. Marginalized knowers may be acknowledged as possessing relevant epistemic experience or expertise and thereby included as contributors, while the terms of their participation impose disproportionate epistemic labor or asymmetrically serve the epistemic interests of dominantly situated knowers. Such cases reinforce the point that acknowledging an agent's epistemic standing does not by itself ensure just conditions of epistemic participation.

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This priority relation is easiest to see once epistemic injustice is understood not only as misallocated credibility but also as disrupted or blocked epistemic participation, an emphasis repeatedly foregrounded by structural approaches to epistemic injustice and epistemic oppression (Dotson 2014; Medina 2011, 17–28). Justice presupposes that agents are already positioned as participants in epistemic practices to whom distributions can meaningfully apply. Recognition secures that very positioning. More specifically, recognition directs agents toward one another as epistemic participants and thereby helps establish the epistemic standing necessary for participation on epistemically equal terms. Recognition is therefore not a motivational substitute for justice but a constitutive condition of its applicability.

For this reason, recognition should not be understood as a component or subset of epistemic justice. Nor is it a rival virtue that competes with justice for explanatory dominance. Rather, recognition plays a prior and enabling role. It establishes the conditions under which epistemic justice can be exercised at all. Without recognition, the demands of justice may be formally satisfied while epistemic exclusion persists. Without justice, recognition may acknowledge agents while failing to secure fair epistemic outcomes.

Understanding this distinction allows us to see why recognition deserves independent theoretical treatment within virtue epistemology. Recognition governs who counts as an epistemic agent, while justice governs how epistemic agents ought to be treated. The former is not reducible to the latter, even though the two are deeply interdependent. Recognition is therefore not merely an outcome of just epistemic practice, nor a moral add-on to epistemic justice, but a distinct intellectual virtue that structures epistemic life at a more fundamental level. As an epistemic orientation concerned with standing and participation, recognition helps determine who is positioned to take part in epistemic practices before questions of fair epistemic treatment arise.

5. Recognition as a distinct intellectual virtue

Having shown that recognition cannot be reduced to epistemic justice, the next task is to determine whether it qualifies as a distinct intellectual virtue, rather than collapsing into other familiar virtues. What must now be shown is not merely that recognition is important or normatively attractive, but that it satisfies the criteria for intellectual virtue while performing a role not reducible to other well-established virtues. This section argues that recognition earns independent status by governing epistemic standing rather than epistemic performance, thereby structuring the conditions under which other intellectual virtues can be exercised.

Following standard practice in virtue epistemology, it is helpful to distinguish between possessing an intellectual virtue, exercising it, and acting characteristically in accordance with it (cf. King 2014: 3785). This distinction is especially important in the present case, since recognition, like other intellectual virtues, is a dispositional character trait that exists in degrees and need not be exercised on every occasion.

An agent possesses the intellectual virtue of recognition when she is characteristically disposed to orient herself appropriately to others' epistemic features, including their epistemic needs, rights, abilities, and achievements, in pursuit of intellectual goods. More specifically, she is disposed to register such features as normatively relevant for others' epistemic standing and for how they ought to be treated within epistemic practices. An agent exercises this virtue when she successfully manifests this disposition in a particular epistemic context. An agent acts characteristically of intellectual

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recognition when she responds to others' epistemic standing in the way that a virtuous recognizer typically would under similar circumstances. As with other intellectual virtues, possessing the trait does not guarantee flawless performance, nor does occasional failure imply the absence of the virtue.

This framework already places recognition squarely within the responsibilist tradition. Recognition is a character-based, action-guiding disposition oriented toward intellectual goods such as belief, knowledge, understanding, learning, and inquiry. It involves both motivational and behavioral components, and it is sensitive to context, structural obstacles, and the epistemic environment. In these respects, recognition clearly qualifies as an intellectual virtue in the formal sense. Before turning to the question of its distinctiveness, however, it is worth clarifying whether it should be understood as an individual or a collective intellectual virtue.

The account developed here is concerned with recognition primarily as an individual virtue. It is a dispositional trait of epistemic agents that governs how they orient themselves to others' epistemic standing within shared practices. Whether recognition should also be understood as a collective virtue is an important question, particularly given the role that institutions and epistemic communities play in shaping recognitional practices.[5] At the same time, the exercise and development of recognition are profoundly shaped by collective and institutional conditions. Epistemic communities, social norms, and institutional arrangements can facilitate or impede recognitional uptake, and many failures of recognition are patterned rather than merely individual. These structural influences do not alter the status of recognition as an intellectual virtue of persons. Rather, they help explain why the successful exercise of the virtue is often dependent upon the epistemic environments in which agents are situated.

With this clarification in place, the more difficult question is whether recognition is a distinct intellectual virtue. One might suspect that recognition collapses into other familiar intellectual virtues, such as open-mindedness, inquisitiveness, intellectual autonomy, or practical wisdom. However, this suspicion rests on a failure to appreciate the specific role recognition plays in epistemic life.

Recognition is not open-mindedness. Open-mindedness governs how agents engage with alternative viewpoints, evidence, and reasons once those viewpoints are already taken seriously as candidates for belief or consideration (cf. Baehr 2011; Riggs 2010, 2019). Recognition, by contrast, governs whether agents or perspectives are taken seriously enough to enter the epistemic space at all. It regulates the epistemic standing that makes participation in such engagement possible. An agent may be impeccably open-minded in evaluating arguments presented by recognized participants while remaining blind to the epistemic standing of those whose voices are structurally marginalized, rendered unintelligible, or excluded from participation altogether.

Nor is recognition reducible to inquisitiveness or intellectual curiosity. Inquisitiveness concerns an agent's characteristic motivation and ability to engage sincerely in good questioning aimed at improving her epistemic standing (cf. Watson 2019). Recognition, by contrast, concerns how agents orient themselves toward other epistemic agents as bearers of epistemic capacities and claims. An inquisitive agent may actively and skillfully seek information while systematically failing to recognize whose knowledge counts,

[5]I do not address the question of whether recognition should also be understood as a collective intellectual virtue. My concern here is recognition as a dispositional trait of individual epistemic agents. Nevertheless, the role of institutions and epistemic communities in facilitating or impeding recognitional practices suggests that collective forms of recognition warrant further investigation.

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whose needs warrant attention, or whose epistemic contributions are intelligible within a shared inquiry.

Recognition is also not intellectual autonomy. Autonomy governs an agent's capacity to think for herself, to appropriately rely on or resist epistemic dependence, and to regulate her own belief-forming practices (cf. Battaly 2022; Carter 2020). Recognition, by contrast, regulates how agents stand in epistemic relations to others. While autonomy concerns the management of epistemic dependence, recognition concerns the acknowledgment of epistemic standing that renders such dependence intelligible and normatively constrained in the first place.

Finally, recognition is not identical to practical wisdom. Practical wisdom is required to judge how, when, and to what extent recognition should be exercised, especially in environments shaped by structural injustice and unequal power. But practical wisdom calibrates recognition; it does not constitute it. An agent may possess excellent judgment about epistemic contexts while lacking the standing disposition to orient herself to others' epistemic features at all. In such cases, the absence is not a failure of judgment but a failure of recognition.

These contrasts reveal the distinctive function recognition performs. Recognition governs the entry conditions of epistemic life, including whether agents become visible and intelligible as participants in inquiry at all. It regulates who counts as an epistemic participant, who is intelligible as a reason-giver, who is eligible for credibility assessment, and whose epistemic needs and capacities register as normatively significant. In doing so, it helps secure the conditions under which agents can participate as epistemic peers. Other intellectual virtues presuppose this recognitional uptake. They operate on the assumption that agents are already visible, intelligible, and included within epistemic practices.

This point directly addresses the subset objection. While some virtues concern how agents ought to respond within already established domains of practice, recognition operates at a more fundamental, architectonic level. It does not regulate a specialized subset of epistemic behavior but the conditions under which epistemic agency itself becomes possible. More precisely, it governs whether agents are taken up by others as participants in inquiry, acknowledged as having epistemic standing, and rendered visible as knowers within shared epistemic practices. Without recognition, agents are excluded not from particular epistemic benefits, but from participation in inquiry as such.

For this reason, recognition cannot be dismissed as a mere subset of a broader moral disposition. It plays a constitutive role in epistemic life by shaping who can contribute to the production, circulation, and contestation of epistemic goods. That role is neither exhausted by epistemic justice nor duplicated by other intellectual virtues. Recognition therefore earns its place as a distinct intellectual virtue, one that operates at the level of epistemic standing rather than epistemic evaluation. Its distinctiveness does not rest merely on subject matter but on epistemic function: unlike moral recognition, which governs concern for persons as such, intellectual recognition governs epistemic standing and participation, thereby shaping who can count as a contributor to inquiry at all.

6. Vice counterparts: diminution and magnification

If recognition is a genuine intellectual virtue with a distinctive role, then it should also admit of characteristic vices that reflect distortions of that role. Like other intellectual virtues, recognition admits of characteristic failures. Because recognition concerns appropriate orientation to epistemic standing, its vices are best understood not as

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failures of belief accuracy or reliability, but as miscalibrations in how agents orient themselves to epistemic needs, rights, abilities, and achievements. These failures distort epistemic standing and thereby undermine parity of epistemic participation. More specifically, they involve failures to register and respond appropriately to epistemic features that bear on participation within shared epistemic practices. I call the corresponding vices *diminution* and *magnification*.

Diminution is the vice of deficient intellectual recognition. It occurs when an agent orients herself to others' epistemic features in ways that systematically understate, ignore, or denigrate those features. This can happen at the wrong times (for example, withholding epistemic support when it is needed), in the wrong ways (for example, failing to respect an agent's epistemic rights), or with respect to the wrong objects (for example, responding to structurally marginalized epistemic claims only superficially or selectively) (cf. Battaly 2022: 159).

One important manifestation of diminution is epistemic exclusion that arises independently of credibility assessment. Consider an educator, curriculum designer, or academic administrator who systematically overlooks scholarship produced by members of marginalized groups or by scholars working outside dominant intellectual traditions. The excluded scholars may possess the epistemic abilities required to contribute to inquiry, yet their work is not taken up as part of the shared epistemic resources through which inquiry proceeds. What is at issue in such cases is not merely credibility but epistemic standing itself. These agents become less visible as contributors, less intelligible as knowers, and less eligible for uptake within the community's shared practices of inquiry. Consequently, their exclusion undermines parity of epistemic participation and impairs their ability to participate as epistemic peers, even before questions of credibility attribution arise.

Diminution can also be self-directed. An agent may fail to trust her own reliable epistemic capacities, deferring excessively to dominant perspectives or prevailing epistemic norms. In such cases, the agent diminishes her own epistemic standing by treating her epistemic abilities as unworthy of confidence. For instance, members of marginalized groups may come to discount their own epistemic abilities and defer automatically to dominant perspectives, even when they possess the knowledge and competence necessary to contribute to inquiry on equal terms. The failure here is not merely one of poor reasoning but of misrecognition of one's own epistemic standing.

Magnification, by contrast, is the vice of excessive intellectual recognition. It occurs when an agent orients herself to epistemic features in ways that exaggerate their significance, again at the wrong times (for example, providing epistemic assistance that undermines the development of independent competence), in the wrong ways (for example, responding with forms of recognition inappropriate to the kind of epistemic contribution at issue), or with respect to the wrong objects (for example, elevating certain epistemic perspectives in ways that crowd out others within structurally unequal contexts) (cf. Battaly 2022: 156).

One important manifestation of magnification occurs when agents elevate certain epistemic perspectives in ways that crowd out alternative contributors to inquiry. Consider an educator, curriculum designer, or academic administrator who systematically privileges a narrow range of intellectual traditions or methodologies while overlooking other contributors to inquiry. The privileged perspectives may come to dominate the shared epistemic resources through which inquiry proceeds, not because they warrant greater uptake, but because they are accorded disproportionate standing within the epistemic community. What is distorted in such cases is not merely credibility

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but epistemic standing itself. Some contributors become hyper-visible and disproportionately eligible for uptake within the community's shared practices of inquiry, while others are rendered comparatively peripheral. Consequently, parity of epistemic participation is undermined as epistemic authority becomes concentrated in ways that crowd out alternative participants.

Magnification can also take self-regarding forms. Excessive reliance on one's own cognitive faculties, as in cases of epistemic egoism, paranoid skepticism, or cognitive isolation, involves overestimating one's epistemic abilities while discounting epistemic dependence on others (Carter 2020: 2939; Fricker 2006: 243; Roberts and Wood 2007: 259; Zagzebski 2020: 263). Such tendencies can be reinforced by epistemic environments that routinely privilege certain agents, perspectives, or forms of authority, encouraging agents to overestimate the significance of their own epistemic contributions while becoming less sensitive to the epistemic standing of others. The failure here, too, is not merely one of poor reasoning but of misrecognition of epistemic standing. By inflating their own epistemic standing while discounting the standing of others, agents distort the conditions of parity of epistemic participation. Such cases illustrate that magnification, like diminution, is a failure of recognitional judgment rather than merely a failure of reliability or rationality.

Importantly, neither diminution nor magnification is reducible to epistemic injustice as such. While both often manifest as injustices, their scope is broader. They concern how epistemic standing is constituted and negotiated within an epistemic environment, including who becomes visible, intelligible, and eligible for uptake as participants in shared epistemic practices, not merely whether epistemic goods are distributed fairly. An agent may avoid testimonial injustice while still magnifying certain epistemic agents or diminishing others in subtler ways that shape participation, intelligibility, and authority. Conversely, an agent may aim at justice while lacking the recognitional sensitivity required to discern whose epistemic standing is being distorted by structural conditions.

Moreover, whether diminution or magnification counts as a vice is sensitive to context. Epistemic environments shaped by structural injustice may require compensatory forms of recognition that would be excessive in other contexts. Excessive support, uptake, or attention may be epistemically virtuous when it contributes to parity of epistemic participation, while the same degree of recognition may be vicious in contexts where parity already exists. This context sensitivity does not undermine the vice–virtue distinction. Rather, it underscores that recognition, like other intellectual virtues, is calibrated by practical wisdom and indexed to epistemic environments (Battaly 2022: 164).

Seen in this light, diminution and magnification are best understood as diagnostic failures of the intellectual virtue of recognition. They identify characteristic ways in which agents can go wrong in orienting themselves to epistemic standing, thereby undermining intellectual flourishing and shared inquiry. Their role in this paper is not to shift the focus away from recognition but to clarify what successful recognition avoids. Recognition, when intellectually virtuous, steers between these vices by appropriately tracking epistemic standing in ways that promote parity of epistemic participation and sustain a healthy epistemic community. In doing so, it secures the conditions under which agents can participate in inquiry as epistemic peers. How this calibration works without collapsing recognition into practical wisdom is clarified in what follows.

7. Practical wisdom and context-sensitivity

Recognition as an intellectual virtue requires sensitivity to context, but this should not be taken to mean that recognition collapses into *phronesis* or practical wisdom. The two

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play distinct roles. Recognition determines which epistemic features must be tracked, while practical wisdom determines how, when, and to what extent an agent should respond to those features in a particular epistemic environment. Keeping this division of labor clear is essential if recognition is to remain a distinct intellectual virtue rather than a mere application of practical wisdom.

As argued earlier, intellectual recognition is a standing disposition to orient oneself appropriately to others' epistemic standing. It directs the agent's attention to epistemically salient features such as epistemic needs, rights, abilities, and achievements, especially under conditions of structural distortion. More specifically, it involves registering such features as normatively relevant for others' epistemic standing and participation within epistemic practices. This orienting function is constitutive of recognition itself. An agent who fails to track these features at all, or who systematically overlooks them due to prejudice, bias, or social power, lacks the virtue of recognition regardless of how sound her judgment may otherwise be.

Practical wisdom, by contrast, governs the agent's judgment only once these epistemic features are in view, calibrating how, when, and to what extent recognition should be expressed. Its role is therefore regulative rather than generative: it helps agents avoid the vices of diminution and magnification in context-sensitive ways without supplying the recognitional orientation itself. An agent may thus be practically wise in many domains while lacking the disposition to recognize others as epistemic agents with standing in the first place. Such an agent may respond impeccably to epistemic claims once they are presented as eligible for uptake, yet systematically fail to register certain individuals or groups as epistemic participants at all, thereby rendering them effectively invisible within epistemic practices. The failure, in such cases, lies not in judgment but in the recognitional orientation that makes epistemic standing visible in the first place.

This distinction is already implicit in the structure of recognition as developed in this paper. Recognition identifies the epistemic features that generate normative reasons for action. Practical wisdom adjudicates among those reasons in light of contextual constraints, competing demands, and structural obstacles. Without recognition, practical wisdom has nothing properly epistemic to calibrate. Without practical wisdom, recognition risks being misapplied, excessive, or deficient.

Two brief examples illustrate this division of labor. Consider an agent who recognizes that certain participants in a discussion have been systematically overlooked as contributors to inquiry. Recognition directs the agent's attention to this fact as normatively significant for epistemic standing and participation. Practical wisdom then determines how, when, and to what extent this failure of uptake should be addressed. In one context, this may require creating additional opportunities for participation; in another, it may require revising existing deliberative procedures. The recognitional judgment that these participants possess epistemic standing is distinct from the practical judgment about how best to respond.

A second example concerns recognition of epistemic standing. Recognizing that members of a community have been systematically marginalized within shared practices of inquiry is a matter of recognition. Practical wisdom determines how and to what extent that marginalization ought to be addressed in particular circumstances, especially where structural inequalities are present. For instance, equal formal opportunities for participation may not suffice where background conditions systematically disadvantage certain agents. Practical wisdom may then recommend measures designed to promote parity of epistemic participation. Here again, recognition supplies the epistemic constraint, while practical wisdom determines the appropriate response. Recognition

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identifies the standing of the relevant agents as a matter of epistemic significance; practical wisdom determines how that standing should be taken into account in context.

Understanding this relationship helps explain why practical wisdom cannot replace recognition. Practical wisdom presupposes an agent's sensitivity to epistemically relevant features. It refines and guides that sensitivity, but it does not generate it. Recognition therefore remains a distinct intellectual virtue, one that operates alongside practical wisdom rather than being absorbed by it.

By keeping recognition and practical wisdom conceptually distinct, we can account for the context-sensitivity of recognitional judgments without reducing recognition to a generic capacity for good judgment. Recognition identifies whose epistemic standing matters and why; practical wisdom determines how, when, and to what extent to act on that recognition so as to promote intellectual flourishing, resist epistemic exclusion, and sustain parity of epistemic participation across diverse epistemic environments.

8. Why recognition is an intellectual (not merely moral) virtue

A natural worry at this point is that recognition appears to be a moral virtue rather than an intellectual one. Recognizing others' needs, rights, or standing is often associated with care, respect, or concern for their well-being. From this perspective, recognition may seem to belong to ethics or social philosophy, while epistemic injustice is better addressed by the virtue of epistemic justice. If this were correct, recognition would not merit independent treatment within virtue epistemology.

This worry rests on a mistaken assumption. Recognition, as developed in this paper, does not primarily govern moral concern for others but epistemic standing and participation. It regulates who counts as a participant in inquiry, whose contributions are intelligible as reasons, and whose epistemic needs and capacities register as normatively significant within epistemic practices. In this respect, recognition bears directly on questions of epistemic visibility, uptake, and participation. More specifically, it governs the epistemic standing that makes such participation possible. This role is epistemic rather than moral, even though it carries important moral implications, since it regulates uptake and inclusion, determines who is heard as a reason-giver and taken up as a contributor to shared inquiry, and thereby shapes what a community can inquire into and come to understand (cf. Fricker 2007; Riggs 2019).

To see this, it is crucial to distinguish recognition from moral care. One can care about others without recognizing their epistemic standing. A benevolent agent may sincerely wish to help members of a marginalized group while still failing to recognize their epistemic standing as contributors to inquiry. In such cases, moral concern coexists with epistemic misrecognition. Conversely, one can recognize others' epistemic standing without caring about them in any morally robust sense. A teacher, editor, or institutional gatekeeper may recognize someone's epistemic abilities, needs, or achievements because doing so is required for successful inquiry, collective understanding, or the pursuit of truth, even if the recognizer lacks sympathy or altruistic motivation. Recognition, in this sense, does not require benevolence. It requires epistemic orientation. That orientation consists in taking others' epistemic features to be normatively relevant for their epistemic standing and participation within epistemic practices.

The distinction between moral care and epistemic recognition should not, however, be overstated. The foregoing examples show that the two can come apart, but they are often closely intertwined in practice, especially under conditions of structural distortion. Social arrangements that deny agents equal respect, status, or inclusion frequently shape

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whose epistemic standing is acknowledged, who is heard and trusted, and who is treated as a participant in inquiry. Likewise, persistent forms of epistemic marginalization, invisibility, and exclusion from participation in inquiry can reinforce broader patterns of social exclusion. The present account therefore distinguishes moral and epistemic dimensions of recognition analytically without treating them as wholly independent domains.

Even so, the practical entanglement of moral and epistemic recognition does not erase the distinction between their primary functions. This point aligns with accounts of other-regarding intellectual virtues, which show that a virtue can be outward-directed and socially oriented while remaining fully intellectual in aim. As Kawall (2002: 271) argues, some intellectual virtues primarily benefit others rather than the agent herself, yet remain intellectual because they are oriented toward epistemic goods such as knowledge, understanding, and learning. A teacher who helps students develop intellectual capacities necessary for participation in inquiry is a good epistemic agent even when her activity is largely directed at others. Similarly, intellectual recognition benefits others by enabling their epistemic participation, including their participation as epistemic peers, but its guiding motivation remains epistemic rather than moral.

The motivational structure of recognition further supports its status as an intellectual virtue. As virtue responsibilists emphasize, intellectual virtues are partly defined by their characteristic motivations toward epistemic goods (King 2014: 3792; Zagzebski 1996: 167). Intellectually virtuous recognition is motivated by the pursuit of belief, knowledge, understanding, inquiry, and learning, rather than by concern for others' welfare as such. Recognizing others' epistemic features is often necessary for abandoning false beliefs, acquiring new understanding, and gaining access to epistemic resources that would otherwise remain unavailable. In this way, recognition directly contributes to epistemic aims, even when it also produces moral or social benefits.

Recognition also plays a central role in the formation and maintenance of epistemic communities. Inquiry is rarely a solitary activity. It depends on networks of epistemic agents who share information, challenge assumptions, and contribute diverse perspectives. When recognition fails, epistemic communities fragment. Marginalized agents may be excluded from contributing to shared understanding, not because their beliefs are false, but because they are not treated as epistemic participants at all. They may become effectively invisible as knowers within shared epistemic practices. Recognition addresses this failure by securing parity of epistemic participation, which is a precondition for robust inquiry and collective understanding. In this respect, recognition operates by regulating epistemic standing in ways that enable participation on epistemically equal terms.

This explains why recognition cannot be replaced by epistemic justice alone. The role recognition plays in securing epistemic participation is not exhausted by distributive norms. Justice governs the fair distribution of epistemic goods among recognized participants. Recognition governs whether agents are participants in the first place. While justice corrects for unfair credibility attribution, recognition determines whose credibility is even assessed. Both are epistemically significant, but they operate at different levels.

Understanding recognition as an intellectual virtue therefore does not deny its moral importance. Rather, it locates its primary function within epistemic life. Recognition governs epistemic participation, intelligibility, and inclusion, all of which are necessary for inquiry, understanding, and the flourishing of epistemic communities. Its moral

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resonance is a consequence of its epistemic role, not a reason to exclude it from virtue epistemology.

9. Conclusion

This paper has argued that recognition should be understood as a distinctive intellectual virtue. More specifically, it has defended the claim that intellectual recognition is a threshold-governing virtue that regulates epistemic standing under conditions of structural distortion and thereby helps secure parity of epistemic participation. By governing who is intelligible as a reason-giver, who is visible as having epistemic needs and capacities, and whose contributions are taken up within shared epistemic practices, recognition determines the conditions under which other intellectual virtues can be meaningfully exercised.

This way of understanding recognition helps explain why epistemic failures so often persist even in contexts where agents appear committed to truth, fairness, and responsible inquiry. Epistemic injustice, marginalization, exclusion, and forms of epistemic oppression frequently arise not because agents reason poorly or distribute credibility unfairly, but because some individuals or groups are not adequately taken up as epistemic participants in the first place. Recognition captures this prior failure. It explains how epistemic agents can be formally included within epistemic practices while remaining effectively invisible, unintelligible, sidelined, or excluded from meaningful epistemic uptake. In this respect, recognition complements rather than replaces existing accounts of epistemic injustice by clarifying the recognitional conditions that make epistemic justice possible.

The account developed here further contributes to social epistemology by highlighting the role of recognition in sustaining epistemic communities. Intellectual flourishing is not merely a matter of individual belief formation or personal epistemic success. It depends on shared practices of inquiry, mutual uptake, and interdependence among epistemic agents. Recognition enables these practices by orienting agents to one another's epistemic features as normatively significant for participation within the epistemic community, thereby promoting parity of epistemic participation. Failures of recognition, by contrast, undermine the epistemic community itself, producing environments marked by exclusion, epistemic egoism, or distorted authority relations.

Finally, this paper has implications for the structure of virtue epistemology. Standard discussions of intellectual virtues tend to focus on traits that directly regulate belief formation, inquiry, or reasoning. Recognition shows that virtue epistemology must also account for virtues that govern the conditions under which those activities can occur. As a threshold-governing virtue, recognition plays an architectural role within epistemic life. It does not compete with virtues such as open-mindedness, intellectual autonomy, or epistemic justice but regulates entry into the space in which those virtues operate.

This account of intellectually virtuous recognition is offered as a first step rather than a final word. Further work is needed to explore recognition in relation to *liberatory virtue epistemology* and epistemic oppression and to clarify how recognitional failures are reproduced through institutional design and relations of epistemic dependency. Nonetheless, recognizing recognition as an intellectual virtue helps fill an important gap in virtue epistemology by explaining how epistemic agents come to acquire the epistemic standing necessary to participate in inquiry at all and why failures of epistemic life so often begin not with false belief or poor reasoning, but with failures of epistemic visibility and participation.

https://doi.org/10.1017/epi.2026.10159 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Data availability statement. Not applicable.

Acknowledgements. I am deeply indebted to a number of people for their support and guidance in the development of this paper. Many of the ideas articulated here would not have taken shape without the sustained intellectual mentorship of Professor Wayne Riggs. I am grateful to Zach Reimer for his generosity in discussion and for providing a space in which I could freely explore themes central to this work. I also thank Professor Sherri Irvin, Professor Brian Burkhart, Professor Linda Zagzebski, and the anonymous reviewer for their valuable comments and feedback on earlier versions of the paper.

Author's contribution. The author is solely responsible for the conception and writing of the manuscript.

Financial support. No funding was received for this research.

Competing interests. The author declares no competing interests.

Ethical standards. Not applicable.

Informed consent. Not applicable.

Research involving human participants and/or animals. Not applicable.

Use of AI tools. ChatGPT was used for language editing and grammatical polishing only. The substantive content, arguments, and references are entirely the author's own.

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https://doi.org/10.1017/epi.2026.10159 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Dr. Kazi A. S. M. Nurul Huda is an associate professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, and the Zuzana Simoniova Cmelikova Visiting International Scholar in Leadership and Ethics at the Jepson School of Leadership Studies, University of Richmond, USA. His research lies at the intersection of epistemology, social and political philosophy, and ethics, with particular interests in recognition, epistemic injustice, open-mindedness, trust, democratic legitimacy, and responsibility. His work examines how social and institutional structures shape epistemic agency, trust, and recognition in contemporary societies. Email: huda@du.ac.bd

Cite this article: Huda K.A.S.M.N. (2026). "Recognition as an Intellectual Virtue." *Episteme* 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1017/epi.2026.10159

https://doi.org/10.1017/epi.2026.10159 Published online by Cambridge University Press