
Can Altruism be Unified?

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Abstract

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Abstract:

There is clearly a plurality of altruism concepts. Classically, biological altruism is distinguished from psychological altruism. Recent discussions of altruism have attempted to distinguish even more concepts of altruism. The question I am concerned with here is what the connection is between these concepts. In particular, is it best to consider ‘altruism’ to be polysemic, and that one should merely treat the various meanings as different in kind and focus on avoiding conflation? Or is there a way to place all of the concepts into a common framework—an altruism space—that could lead to new questions about how this space can be filled?

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