

Fitting Attitudes, Reasons for Action, and the Rejection of Consequentialism

Abstract:

We argue that consequentialism may seem attractive, despite the well-known case intuitions against it, primarily due to the idea that it is clear how we have reason to bring about good states of affairs but entirely mysterious how we could have reason to do anything else. We show that a deep theoretical connection between good states of affairs and reasons to bring them about can indeed be vindicated by the conceptual connections between good states of affairs, fitting desires that they obtain, and reasons to act out of them. We argue, however, that the conceptual connection between fitting attitudes and reasons for action equally vindicates reasons to do things other than bring about the best states of affairs. The fittingness of motives other than desires for good states of affairs – some more intimately related to morality than such desires - undermines consequentialism whether as a theory of rationality or morality.