

Three stories about capitalism: The moral psychology of economic life and strife

Abstract: Economic issues are often moral issues. In the United States, the culture war has shifted in recent years away from social issues such as abortion and obscenity, toward economic issues such as income inequality, taxation, regulation, and the role of corporations. In Europe and America, economists and politicians debate whether austerity or stimulus is the proper response to an economic downturn. On all of these issues, if you know where a person stands on the left-right spectrum, you can predict that person's economic views, even on factual matters such as whether raising the minimum wage will increase unemployment. In this talk I will present the research that I and my colleagues have done on the moral foundations of political disagreements and then apply this framework to economic disagreements. In particular, I'll describe the two diametrically opposed narratives about capitalism that animate the left and the right.

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