

Moral Disagreement, Anti-Realism, and the Worry about Overgeneralization

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Abstract of the Journal Article

According to the argument from moral disagreement, the existence of widespread or persistent moral disagreement is best explained by, and thus supports, the view that there are no objective moral truths. One of the most common charges against this argument is that it “overgeneralises”: it implausibly forces its proponents to also deny the existence of objective truths about certain matters of physics, history, philosophy, etc. (“companions in guilt” objections) or even about the argument’s own conclusion or its own soundness (“self-defeat” objections). My aim in this article is to provide a detailed clarification and assessment of this overgeneralisation charge. Various (mostly empirical) issues relevant to assessing the above objections have so far not been sufficiently investigated. Nevertheless, there are good reasons to believe that realists have exaggerated the significance of their overgeneralisation charge. Both its companions in guilt and its self-defeat versions likely fail.