

Spite

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This page is about spite in the context of fair division, a branch of theoretical economics. The word is also used in psychology and in the study of social evolution.

In fair division problems, **spite** is a phenomenon that occurs when a player's value of an allocation decreases when one or more other players' valuation increases. Thus, other things being equal, a player exhibiting spite will prefer an allocation in which other players receive less than more (if the good is desirable).

In this language, spite is difficult to analyze because one has to assess two sets of preferences. For example, in the divide and choose method, a spiteful player would have to make a trade-off between depriving his opponent of cake, and getting more himself.

Within the field of social evolution, spite is used to describe those social behaviours that have a negative impact on both the actor and recipient(s). Spite can be favoured by kin selection when: (a) it leads to an indirect benefit to some third party that is sufficiently related to the actor (Wilsonian spite); or (b) when it is directed primarily at negatively-related individuals (Hamiltonian spite). Negative relatedness occurs when two individuals are less related than average.

See also

- Appeal to spite
- Hamilton's rule

References

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