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Culture, evolution and the puzzle of human cooperation

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Abstract

Synthesizing existing work from diverse disciplines, this paper introduces a culture-gene coevolutionary approach to human behavior and psychology, and applies it to the evolution of cooperation. After a general discussion of cooperation in humans, this paper summarizes Dual Inheritance Theory and shows how cultural transmission can be brought under the Darwinian umbrella in order to analyze how culture and genes coevolve and jointly influence human behavior and psychology. We then present a generally applicable mathematical characterization of the problem of cooperation. From a Dual Inheritance perspective, we review and discuss work on kinship, reciprocity, reputation, social norms, and ethnicity, and their application to solving the problem of cooperation.



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Keywords

Cooperation; Culture-gene coevolution; Reciprocity; Reputation; Punishment; Norms; Ethnicity; Cultural transmission; Dual inheritance theory

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