

Deflationary Pluralism About Reasons (Epistemic or Otherwise)

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Given the increasing prominence of reasons in normative theorizing, it's only natural for there to be increasing interest in what (normative) reasons *are*. In this paper I argue for a deflationary form of pluralism about reasons. It's a form of pluralism insofar as it denies that reasons form a unified ontological category. But it's deflationary insofar as it minimizes the theoretical importance (both normative and metaphysical) of reasons. I begin by investigating the relationship between the use of 'reason'—in its normative sense—as a count noun and as a mass noun, arguing that we should take (mass-y) facts about reason to be normatively prior to (count-y) facts about reasons. I then present new data concerning the contextual variability of our judgments about reasons which shows they are, at best, a partial and highly defeasible guide to what really matters, both normatively and metaphysically.