

Promotor Prof. dr. Johan Braeckman
Vakgroep Wijsbegeerte en Moraalwetenschap
Copromotor Prof. dr. Luc Crevits
Vakgroep Inwendige Ziekten

Decaan Prof. Dr. Freddy Mortier
Rector Prof. Dr. Paul Van Cauwenberge

Nederlandse vertaling:

De bruggen tussen 'zijn' en 'behoren'. Individuele verschillen in morele cognitie en hun relevantie voor de moraalfilosofie

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Faculteit Letteren & Wijsbegeerte

Katinka Quintelier

The bridges between 'is' and 'ought'

*Individual differences in moral cognition and
their relevance for moral philosophy*

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Introduction: The pacifist and the pope

Not all moral issues have the same moral weight as abortion and euthanasia. For example, if a Catholic were to be at odds with the Holy Father on the application of capital punishment or on the decision to wage war, he would not for that reason be considered unworthy to present himself to receive Holy Communion. While the Church exhorts civil authorities to seek peace, not war, and to exercise discretion and mercy in imposing punishment on criminals, it may still be permissible to take up arms to repel an aggressor or to have recourse to capital punishment. There may be a legitimate diversity of opinion even among Catholics about waging war and applying the death penalty, but not however with regard to abortion and euthanasia.

- Ratzinger, 2004

Moral diversity – this is, diversity in the moral views people have– is widespread (e.g., Robinson & Kurzban, 2007). The existence of moral diversity is not without problems (e.g., Haidt, Rosenberg, & Hom, 2003): Attitudes towards those holding other moral views vary from the outwards hostile and distrustful, over toleration to enthusiastic curiosity. How we react to moral diversity might depend on cultural and individual factors – such as one’s capacity for disjunctive thinking (Goodwin & Darley, 2010), level of education (Nichols, 2004a) or cultural background (Forsyth, O’Boyle, & McDaniel, 2008) – and, at the same time, on the kind of moral diversity at hand (Wright, Cullum, & Schwab, 2008). Thus, pacifists will not condone disagreement about the legitimacy of warfare but they may think of diversity in views about euthanasia as legitimate; the current pope though declares it should be the other way around. Nonetheless, the pacifist and the pope seem to agree that some moral diversity is legitimate.

This attitude towards moral diversity does not tell us much about defensible reasons for this view, or about the philosophical and behavioral implications. Can we reasonably hold that different, incompatible views can both be legitimate at the same time? Can we consider this diversity beyond discussion, or do we need to see this approach as a matter of benign patience, waiting for an occasion to give rise to feisty debate or punishment? Certain philosophers defend the claim that features of morality, such as the nature, cause and extent of individual differences in moral cognition, suggest that some moral disagreements are fundamental, viz., they will remain unresolved after all rational and factual arguments have been deployed (e.g., Doris & Plakias, 2008), or that these features of morality lead to the conclusion of toleration (Wong, 1984) – for example, the idea that we should not interfere with certain, not all, morally diverging lives – or moral relativism (Hales, 2009; Prinz, 2007) – for example, the idea that there is more than one moral truth. Others are skeptical about the existence of fundamental moral disagreement (e.g., Moody-Adams, 1997/2001) or about moral relativism (e.g., Williams, 1972; 1996).

In this dissertation, we defend certain philosophical consequences of moral diversity. When discussing the theme of moral diversity, we focus on individual differences in moral cognition, as opposed to individual differences in morally relevant behavior. When discussing the theme of philosophical relevance, we focus on moral relativism and practices of toleration. We argue that toleration can be a feasible option for groups that do not interact and when we can relativize our judgments. However, more has to be said about the conceptual link between tolerant attitudes and non-relativism, and more empirical research is needed to establish the causal link between moral relativism and practices of toleration.

These themes are situated against the following background. On the one hand, most contemporary philosophers and scientists are convinced that there is a difference in meaning between descriptions of the world and how the world ought

to be – there is a gap between ‘is’ and ‘ought’. Thus, the fact that we disagree about what right and wrong does not imply that different moral views are equally true or that we are permitted to do different things, and, relevant to this context, the existence of individual differences in moral cognition is not a sufficient reason to support moral relativism or toleration. On the other hand, it is not really clear how broad this gap is, and what exactly does or does not follow from it. Tellingly, recent findings about moral cognition are constantly being used to argue for or against theories in moral philosophy, most often by researchers who incessantly pledge their alliance to the is/ought gap. Still, they are also often accused of committing fallacies, of collecting irrelevant data or of misconstruing philosophy (for a discussion, see Knobe & Nichols, 2008). Thus, we will need to introduce some clarity on the is/ought gap.

This dissertation consists of eight chapters, six of which are revised versions of papers written in collaboration with other researchers. In the first chapter, we situate this research in a broader context that is presupposed in the following chapters. We introduce the philosophical issues of the universalizability of moral judgments and the idea that there is a gap between ‘is’ and ‘ought’. We subsequently go into relevant findings about individual differences in moral cognition, how they had a legitimate impact on moral philosophy despite the gap and how they create apparently irresolvable moral disagreements. These topics set the stage for more elaborate discussions in later chapters.

The second chapter describes more individual differences in moral cognition. We focus on individual differences in moral condemnation, viz., moral judgments about others’ behavior. This chapter reports on the findings of an empirical study – conducted in collaboration with psychologist Keiko Ishii, evolutionary psychologists Jason Weeden and Robert Kurzban, and my supervisor Johan Braeckman – in which we compared two explanations for individual differences in moral attitudes towards sex and recreational drug use (Quintelier, Ishii, Weeden, Kurzban, & Braeckman, under review). We found that sexual attitudes predict views towards recreational drug use, irrespective of one’s ideological background. These findings support the theory that evolved reproductive strategies can account for individual differences in moral attitudes towards recreational drug use. However, this does not offer us very much insight into philosophical questions. For this, we need to have a background theory and method that clarifies how moral norms do and do not follow from empirical data.

We defend such a theory and method in the third chapter. While certain scholars are quick to question any moral claim that relies on empirical data, naturalistic ethicists assert that science can guide and constrain ethics. Crucial in such a naturalistic ethics is that no moral statement irrevocably follows from descriptions. Instead one has to guide and constrain moral theories in the light of new empirical

evidence, but also in the light of their normative implications and practical outcomes. One reasons back and forth between the descriptive and normative sides of the debate. We argue that this view has upending consequences: It implies that one starts with existing varieties of moral lifestyles that are all legitimate, even though they might need to be constrained and polished (and even though they can still be rejected if untenable), rather than starting from a universal moral principle or even from the idea that moral prescriptions *should* hold universally. Select fragments of this chapter have been written in collaboration with my colleague Stefaan Blancke; the greater part of this chapter is a collaborative effort with my colleague Lien Van Speybroeck, and my supervisor Johan Braeckman (Quintelier, Van Speybroeck, & Braeckman, 2011).

Chapter four brings together various advisable reactions towards moral disagreement. Here we review certain naturalistic arguments for and against versions of moral relativism and toleration. All discussed arguments either make empirical assumptions or make empirically testable predictions. We therefore peruse the empirical literature and ask if these assumptions and predictions are upheld. In doing so, we take into account that different versions of moral relativism and toleration populate the philosophical literature. Normative and empirical considerations suggest that some versions are preferable over others. This chapter is an extended version of a paper written in collaboration with anthropologist Daniel Fessler (Quintelier & Fessler, 2011).

Chapters five and six report on an empirical study conducted in collaboration with Daniel Fessler and my colleague Delphine De Smet (Quintelier, Fessler, & De Smet, under review; Quintelier, De Smet, & Fessler, under review). Some naturalists insist that moral rules are irredeemably perceived as non-relative. Therefore, we should not advise individuals to relativize their moral judgments. In the fifth chapter we tackle this set of arguments. We report findings that question that people think of morality as non-relative. This study is situated in the debate surrounding the moral/conventional distinction. The here presented study replicates previous work that questions the existence of such a distinction and it criticizes the methodology that is commonly used by moral/conventional proponents.

Some naturalists insist that moral relativism is behaviorally inconsistent. Much however depends on what kind of moral relativism one is talking about. In chapter six, we discuss the distinction between agent and appraiser relativism. We report findings that this distinction is not only relevant for philosophers, it also exists in people's minds as some individuals employ agent relativist language while others employ appraiser relativist language.

As an argument against moral relativism and toleration one can bring up that most morally relevant behaviors impact the lives of others as well as one's own.

Moral relativism and toleration thus run into problems of coordination. In chapter seven, we explore the issue of commitment, a phenomenon that requires moral evaluations to be generalized over a range of individuals and situations. This chapter is a revised version of a book chapter on commitment (Fessler & Quintelier, forthcoming); it informs the topic at hand because moral attitudes can often be described as commitments.

In the final chapter, we review and discuss the arguments that we put forward. Allying with naturalistic ethics, we explored the consequences of individual differences in moral cognition. We conclude that there is fundamental moral disagreement and we defend a moderate form of normative moral relativism. Depending on one's values, one has good reasons to tolerate diverging moral views and behavior in accordance with these views. However, certain features of morality constrain the extent to which we can and want to tolerate different moral views and according lifestyles. Most of these proposed constraints are open to empirical investigation. As such, empirical findings can suggest when and how to tolerate diverging moral views. Previous work in naturalistic moral philosophy mainly discusses *meta-ethical* implications of individual differences in moral cognition. We think that the empirical issues surrounding *normative* implications of individual differences in moral cognition are underexplored. We hope that this work will show that their study is worth pursuing.

Chapter 1

Drawing lines in moral philosophy

Never let your sense of morals get in the way of doing what's right.

- Asimov, 1944

1.1 Introduction

When, and how, should we tolerate moral diversity? Is moral relativism an advisable consequence of the extent and nature of individual differences in moral cognition? In order to investigate these questions, we examine three topics which play important roles in answering this question: the is/ought gap, empirical findings about individual differences in moral cognition and moral relativism and toleration. This chapter introduces the first two topics and moral universalism, which is the antithesis of moral relativism.

These topics are crucial for the rest of this dissertation in the following way. In chapters three and four, we use some recent findings about individual differences in moral cognition to argue for moral relativism and toleration. Moral relativism runs counter to existing arguments which attempt to show that moral judgments by definition apply universally and thus non-relatively. In this chapter, we therefore

Parts of this chapter are adapted from:

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Quintelier, K. (2010). Feiten en normen in het moreel relativisme debat. *Algemeen Nederlands Tijdschrift voor Wijsbegeerte*, 102(1), 26-37.

critically evaluate the notion of the universalizability of moral judgments. The is/ought gap limits the extent to which one can reason from descriptive theories to normative theories. However, there are various interpretations of this constraint, and these are often vague. In this chapter, we aim to sketch a general image of the range and limits of the is/ought gap. We therefore introduce some recent and prevalent interpretations of the is/ought gap. We also give an example of the way empirical findings can have an impact on moral philosophy despite, and also by virtue of, the is/ought gap. Thus, the is/ought gap does not preclude the relevance of empirical findings for moral philosophy, whatever the exact implications of the is/ought gap may be. We put forward our own specific defense of the relation between 'is' and 'ought' in chapter three. We end this first chapter with a discussion of the nature and extent of individual differences in moral cognition, and ensuing problems for moral agreement.

1.2 Gaps and bridges

1.2.1 Ethics, the study of morality

In this dissertation, the notion of moral relativism frequently pops up. One version of moral relativism suggests that the truth of moral statements is relative to the context of assertion, but there are other kinds of moral relativism (see Chapter 4). In any case, some prominent philosophers and psychologists have argued that moral relativism is a contradiction in terms: Speaking of morality necessarily implies speaking of universalizability, by virtue of the meaning of morality. By this they mean that a judgment can only be a *moral* judgment if it is an application of a rule with universal application. In order to remove this potential objection, we have to take a closer look at the meaning of morality.

Morality is a set of evaluative statements, statements that are not about how the world is, but about the way it ought to be. These statements are action-guiding: they function to guide behavior, either our own or the behavior of others. 'Moral' is not the same as 'morally good'; moral judgments, statements, issues, thoughts, and so on, are considerations (etc.) that are action guiding, but they can be wrong.

This description is not exhaustive: not all action-guiding statements are moral statements. We will give reasons for not trying to give an exhaustive description further on (this Section, and Section 1.2.4). Throughout this dissertation, we hold to

this minimal description because it fits the purpose of this work – not because we think this captures the essence, nature or truth about morality.

When discussing morality, some philosophers have been keen to present additional features that are sometimes taken to be part of the ‘substantial materials’ of morality (Williams, 1993/1972, p. 4). Often these philosophers have an authoritative definition in mind, viz., they dismiss dissimilar uses of the word ‘morality’. One recurring feature is the supposed universalizability of moral evaluations or the universality of the moral viewpoint, moral rules or moral truths. This universalizability of moral judgments means that moral judgments follow from general moral rules that apply to everyone, everywhere, unless there are relevant differences between the relevant individuals or their contexts. Adhering to universalizability means that when moral philosophers devise a normative moral theory, they think of it as a theory that decides on right and wrong for everyone, everywhere, *pace* relevant moral differences. This is compatible with the existence of individual differences in moral attitudes or variation in contemporary normative theories: If moral evaluations are universalizable, the existence of individual differences in moral attitudes or theories just means that some people and some theories are wrong. Moral relativism on the other hand allows for the existence of moral rules that are not meant to apply to everyone or everywhere, even when there are no differences in moral circumstances.

What are some of the arguments that have been used to defend a view of morality as universal? According to Hare (1954), moral evaluations can *by definition* be universalized. In his terminology, moral evaluations are U-type evaluations and U-type evaluations are universalizable in the sense that they are applications of a universal rule: When the rule applies to you, it also applies to anyone else unless there are relevant differences between you and the other person.

Hare considers his thesis as being part of the *very meaning* of morality. By this he means that it is analytically true in virtue of the meaning of the word ‘moral’ (Hare, 1954, p. 299). Analytic truth (assuming that there is such a thing) can be known to competent users of a language, when they find themselves in optimal epistemic conditions. They can find out what the meaning of a word is by consulting their own intuitions. As a consequence, when trying to find the analytic definition of a word, we can refer to ordinary usage of the term by competent users of that language (Wallace & Walker, 1970, p. 5). Hare accordingly defends his view by referring to his readers’ use and understanding of moral terms. He asks us to imagine a conversation between a Kantian (K) and an Existentialist (E) (Hare, 1954, p. 304-305):

E.: “You oughtn't to do that.”

K.: “So you think that one oughtn't to do that kind of thing?”

E.: “I think nothing of the kind; I say only that you oughtn't to do that.”

K.: “Don't you even imply that a person like me in circumstances of this kind oughtn't to do that kind of thing when the other people involved are the sort of people that they are?”

E.: “No; I say only that you oughtn't to do that.”

K.: “Are you making a moral judgment?”

E.: “Yes.”

K.: “In that case I fail to understand your use of the word ‘moral’.”

Now Hare asserts that “most of us would be as baffled as the “Kantian”; and indeed we should be hard put to it to think of *any* use of the word “ought”, moral or non-moral, in which the “Existentialist's” remarks would be comprehensible” (Hare, 1954, p. 306).

Thus ordinary language is taken to constitute an argument for or against a specific meaning of a word. MacIntyre referred to other examples of moral speech acts by ordinary competent users of the English language in order to argue that not all moral evaluations are universalizable. Notable cases he refers to are instances of moral dilemmas, such as Sartre's example of a pupil who had to decide between joining the fight against the Nazis or caring for his sick mother. In this case, whatever the pupil decides to do need not necessarily rest upon a universal rule, but it may still be a moral decision. In addition, a morality based on private duties would still be a morality (MacIntyre, 1957/1970).

There is no consensus on this in analytic moral philosophy, but the idea of moral universalism is a recurring view: Williams lists universalizability as an aspect of moral evaluations when he says that “the appeal to the consequences of an *imagined* universalization is an essentially moral argument” (Williams 1993/1972, p. 6). He proclaims that “the element of universalization [...] is present in any morality” (Williams, 1993/1972, p. 23). Taylor (1978) lists two characteristics of standards and rules that are necessary (but not sufficient) to impart them the status of moral standards and rules. A moral rule must be general in form, meaning that it contains no terms referring to particular agents, actions or circumstances. It specifies only *kinds* of actions that any agent is to do or refrain from doing. A moral rule must also be universal, meaning that its intended range of application includes the actions of all moral agents of the same kind or having the same role. Taylor seems to refer to how people understand the notion of a moral rule to support this view. It is however not clear who he is referring to when he speaks about “*our* understanding of what it means to take the moral point of view [...]” (Taylor 1978, p. 35, *our* emphasis): whose understanding is he talking about – his readers', fellow philosophers', Anglo-Saxons' understanding?

We will speak of universalizability in a broad sense, entailing both generalizability (kinds of actions, agents, etc.) and universalizability *sensu stricto* (scope). According to the previously mentioned analytic philosophers, moral universalism is not compatible with moral relativism. Universalizability is postulated as an essential feature of moral evaluations by virtue of the definition of morality; therefore the possibility of moral relativism is ruled out a priori.

Likewise, moral universalism and closely related views have been repeatedly defended in the field of moral development. In his earlier work, Lawrence Kohlberg (1982) insists that all moral principles – even those we use when we are acting from care – are universalizable (impartial in his words): what is wrong for you is also wrong for me. He famously backs up such claims with empirical data. According to his theory of moral development, individuals indeed come to perceive moral rules as impartial; in fact, moral development is characterized by several stages of increasing impartiality.

We find a similar view in the works of thinkers who defend a distinction between the moral and the conventional: Elliot Turiel (1983) proposed that individuals come to perceive moral rules as different from conventional rules: While the latter are perceived to apply only in specific social situations, depending on the prevailing convention, moral rules are intended to be generally and universally justified. They hold generally, this is, over a wide range of situations and independent of the social conventions. They are justified by reference to universal principles of harm, justice and rights. Turiel argues that “moral prescriptions [...] are *universally applicable* in that they apply to everyone in similar circumstances. They are *impersonal* in that they are not based on individual preferences or personal inclinations” (Turiel, 1983, p. 36). This view is backed up by empirical data. An entire research tradition is dedicated to corroborating that individuals indeed distinguish moral from conventional rules along these dimensions (see Chapter 4).

Recently, the very idea of a single correct meaning of morality has come under severe attack and pressure. Many analytic philosophers assume that moral language is used in a more or less uniform manner, if only by moral philosophers. Philosophers (Gill, 2009; Sinnott-Armstrong, 2009), psychologists and experimental philosophers (Knobe & Nichols, 2008) criticize this view of linguistic behavior for assuming uniformity in the field of morality. Indeed, when the linguistic behavior of a greater range of individuals is documented, there appear to be substantial differences in the use and meaning of moral and other philosophical terms: these differences correlate with religiosity (Goodwin & Darley, 2008), educational level (Nichols, 2004a), or gender (Buckwalter & Stich, 2010). Moral terms are not always or by everyone used as applicable to every person or in every situation (Sarkissian, Park, Tien, Wright, & Knobe, forthcoming; Quintelier, De Smet, & Fessler, under review; Quintelier, Fessler, & De Smet, under review; see also Chapter 5 and Chapter

6). Also when constraining the set of relevant users of a language to experts, in *casu moral* philosophers, it is clear that different philosophers have different intuitions about the meaning of moral terms. Granted, the extent to which individuals or philosophers relativize their moral statements is still under investigation, but we cannot presuppose agreement on the universalizability of moral judgments.

Earlier moral psychologists assumed that morality is a natural kind, or a concept that carves nature at its joints, *viz.* a feature that develops in the same way in most individuals and across cultures. But the idea of morality as a natural kind has been refuted by many psychologists, neuroscientists, anthropologists and philosophers alike (Verplaetse, 2006; Verplaetse, De Schrijver, Vanneste, & Braeckman, 2009; Casebeer, 2003a). The neural correlates of moral cognition are scattered across several functional networks, and none of these functions is in itself exclusive for moral cognition (Verplaetse, 2006). The features of individuals' moral psychology vary between (Shweder, Much, Park, & Mahapatra, 1997) and within cultures (Nisbett, 1996). There might be core moral issues (Nichols, 2004b): Harm and justice concerns are moralized by most individuals and across cultures, but it is an open question what other features (e.g., universalizability), if any, are generally agreed to be part of moral evaluations.

Nevertheless, the idea of universalizability is quite persistent – although not as an essential feature of morality. Certain philosophers are guided by the idea that their normative theories should be as general as possible. In the study of well-being (e.g., Tiberius & Plakias, 2010), the focus is on finding those values that increase everyone's life satisfaction, not on, for example, what enables individuals to find and pursue their personal values. Casebeer (2003b) suggests that more general and more universal moral rules are better in an extra-moral sense (*i.e.*, they are not morally better, but maybe more practical). However, none of these philosophers thinks of universalizability as a necessary feature of moral evaluations. As such, relative rules can exist alongside universal rules.

The idea of moral evaluations as universalizable has been used by skeptics to argue against the possibility of relative moral evaluations (see Chapter 4). This however assumes that there is such a thing as a 'nature' or 'very meaning' of morality and that universalizability is part of it. This view is usually crucially dependent on a minimal degree of uniformity in people's moral psychology, moral language, or moral development. While it is plausible that certain core issues are understood as being part of morality by almost everyone, very recent studies suggest that universalizability is not 'uniformly' or 'naturally' part of the intended meaning of moral evaluations. This does not mean that all aspects of morality are inherently relative either. Universalizability can be acknowledged as a good, valuable or useful principle, or as a feature of some moral rules, while other rules are relative. Thus, it may be a good thing to pursue universality in a normative

theory, but there is as yet no reason that this should be done to the exclusion of relativist moral evaluations. As things stand now, relativism in moral theories is a possibility that needs to be investigated.

1.2.2 Normative ethics, meta-ethics, descriptive ethics

Ethics, the study of morality, can be subdivided into normative ethics, meta-ethics and descriptive ethics. In this dissertation, the focus is on normative ethics and its relation to descriptive ethics.

Normative ethicists try to defend a specific morality (a set of moral statements). Normative ethics is not about how the world *is*, but about how it *should* be. It concerns questions about right and wrong, the criteria to distinguish right from wrong and theories that systematize these criteria. It makes use of action-guiding or prescriptive terms such as ought, value, good, should, duty, obligation, right, wrong, permissible or forbidden. It is also called first-order ethics because normative ethicists engage in moral thinking or operate from within a moral point of view. *Moral norms, moral judgments and moral evaluations* are here used broadly to denote normative moral statements that prescribe how to behave in order to be morally good. These statements can be in the form of 'X is good, valuable, right' or 'we should do X', 'we ought to do X', etc. *Moral principles and moral rules* are general moral norms (e.g., 'things are good in virtue of their consequences').

Equally important for our purposes is *meta-ethics*. Meta-ethics is not about what we ought to do but about statements about what we ought to do; it is about moral norms or normative moral statements – it is accordingly called second-order ethics. Inquiries about the ontology, epistemology or meaning of moral statements belong to meta-ethics. For example, instead of saying that 'happiness is good', we can say that 'it is true that happiness is good'; 'that happiness is good' means that I like happiness', or 'it is an objective fact that happiness is good'. The same holds for normative theories: Instead of saying that 'things are good in virtue of their consequences' (a normative moral statement) we can say that consequentialism is true, a fact, etc.

Finally, morality can also be studied descriptively. Some descriptive ethicists describe the morality (the set of moral norms) that prevails in a society. *Descriptive ethics* is here very broadly conceived as the empirical study of people's moral language, their moral statements, meta-ethical statements, morally relevant behaviors and traits. It is a form of scientific inquiry, thus it draws from empirical observation and scientific theories in order to describe, systematize and predict how individuals will use moral concepts and exhibit behavior or traits that are amenable to such moral evaluations. Most often in this dissertation we use

descriptive statement or *description* to denote all statements concerning the nature of things in the realm of the natural sciences.

As mentioned, in this dissertation we will explore normative consequences of empirical findings about lay people's moral cognition. But how do these subdivisions relate to each other? At first sight, the boundaries between these approaches are blurry. For example, it seems that, if a meta-ethical theory concludes that 'happiness is good' is a true statement, it follows that happiness is good, which is a normative moral statement. Moreover, it might seem that if descriptive ethicists observe that we all agree that happiness is good, then happiness must be good. However, philosophers are adamant that one cannot directly reason from one division to the other. The boundary between normative and descriptive ethics deserves a section of its own (see Section 1.2.3). Let us first see if we can go from the descriptive domain to meta-ethics and from there to normative ethics.

According to certain branches of analytic philosophy, the meanings of moral terms and the truth values of moral statements can be inferred from their patterns of use by lay people (Wallace & Walker, 1970, p. 5). Experimental philosophers accordingly collect the linguistic behavior of lay people and ask if they indeed use a certain concept in the way intuited by philosophers (Knobe & Nichols, 2008). As such, meta-ethics can build on descriptive ethics, albeit not directly. One needs a theory that explains why lay people's use of moral concepts would say something about the meaning of these concepts. This theory though may well follow from other descriptive endeavors.

Is meta-ethics relevant for normative ethics? It may seem that the relevance of meta-ethics for normative ethics is somewhat lacking. Certain philosophers complain that meta-ethics has been studied at the expense of normative ethics, implying that the former bears hardly any relevance to the latter. This may have been a problem of the past, when meta-ethics was dominated by the analytic approach. Williams suggests this in the preface of the 1993 edition of *Morality*, originally published in 1972:

In one respect at least the book may seem dated, to the extent that it starts by complaining of a situation which no longer exists, one in which moral philosophy addressed itself to meta-ethical questions about the nature of moral judgment, the possibility of moral knowledge, and so forth, at the expense of discussing first-order ethical questions. (Williams, 1993/1972, xii)

But is this complaint really dated? Recent meta-ethical theorists do not seem to lament this divide at all. They are often quick to point out that their theory does not have any straightforward bearing on normative ethics: Kahane (2011) for example states that meta-ethical theories "should leave our first-order evaluative beliefs

exactly as they are.” Others argue that meta-ethical relativism does not give reasons to prefer one normative theory over another, but they are willing to suggest a moral value (Wong, 1984; Harman & Thomson, 1996), extra-moral values (e.g. Hales, 2009) or a combination of extra-moral and moral values (e.g., Prinz, 2007) in order to morally evaluate the set of true moral statements. For example, in *The Emotional Construction of Morals*, Prinz (2007, p. 288-308) suggests that if we value consistency, universality, ease of implementation, conduciveness to well-being, etc. as features of moral theories, then we can evaluate moral theories according to these evaluations and make moral progress. These values are additional assumptions that do not follow from the meta-ethical theory proposed by Prinz (2007) in the remaining part of his book.

This divide between meta-ethics and normative ethics is not simply a feature of meta-ethical *relativism*. In Taylor’s view, universality is a feature of moral principles but does not inform us about whether a statement is morally right or wrong: “A norm belonging to the class of moral principles as defined here, then, may be [...] valid or invalid” (Taylor, 1978, p. 39). Thus, saying that ‘women must not be ordained in the Catholic church’ might be a moral norm, but that does not mean it is a eu-moral or morally good norm. Another example is prescribing that every woman should wear a headscarf. This may be a moral prescript even though it is open to question if this is a morally good prescript. It might be wrong even when it is a moral issue. Conversely, in Taylor’s view a principle may be valid but not in a moral way, simply because it is not a universal principle. Thus, ‘I should now keep my friend company’ might be a right action-guiding statement but it is not a moral evaluation because I do not intend this as a universalizable evaluation. In Taylor’s view, moral principles that satisfy the six criteria for moral norms which he set forward (those including generality and universality) only inform one about right and wrong if one is willing to accept another commitment, namely that a principle is a value if “it would be for the good of everyone alike that the norm be adopted as an overriding principle applicable to everyone” (Taylor, 1978, p. 53) – this is the mutual acknowledgment view. (For the sake of completeness, we must note that in Taylor’s view, the mutual acknowledgment view follows from the six criteria for moral norms. In other cases though (e.g., Prinz, 2007), the criteria that separate morally good from morally bad views in a set of true normative moral views do not follow from the meta-ethical view at all.)

The present situation is thus similar to the boundary between descriptive ethics and meta-ethics: meta-ethics is relevant for normative ethics only if we accept additional assumptions. We need a theory that explains how descriptive statements relate to meta-ethical statements. We need normative assumptions that explain how meta-ethical statements relate to normative statements. In each case though, we

need to ask where those additional assumptions come from. We will argue in chapter three that these normative assumptions are also informed by science.

1.2.3 The 'is-ought' gap and the naturalistic fallacy

Nervousness increases when the links between descriptive ethics and normative ethics are discussed. It seems that there is not just a guarded boundary between them: there appears to be at least a gap, and only a mythical bridge. How would empirical findings about individual differences in moral judgments then ever be relevant to normative ethics? In this Section we will illustrate various uses of the is/ought gap and the naturalistic fallacy. The aim here is to introduce a short history of its expanding use.

Historically, the is/ought gap and the naturalistic fallacy are related to each other. The is/ought gap is famously introduced by David Hume (1711-1776). In his *Treatise of Human Nature* he observes that:

the author proceeds for some time in the ordinary ways of reasoning, and establishes the being of a God, or makes observations concerning human affairs; when all of a sudden I am surprised to find, that instead of the usual copulations of propositions, *is*, and *is not*, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an *ought*, or an *ought not*. This change is imperceptible; but is however, of the last consequence (Hume 1739-1740, Book III, Part 1, Section 1)

This is a problem, he says:

for what seems altogether inconceivable, how this new relation can be a deduction from others, which are entirely different from it. (ibidem)

So according to Hume, it is not clear how we can deduce propositions linked by 'ought' from propositions linked by 'is', because 'is' denotes a different relation than 'ought'. It is quite obscure how exactly to interpret this statement but there is an intuitive appeal to the idea that 'what is the case' is different than 'what ought to be the case'. This (unclear though useful) assertion is what is now commonly known as the is/ought gap.

Through Henry Sidgwick (1838-1900), George Edward Moore (1873-1958) came to know about the 'is-ought' gap. He dubbed mistakes against this principle the 'naturalistic fallacy'. His reasoning supposes that the adjective 'good' is the subject-matter of ethics (Moore, 1993/1903 §2-5) and that how this quality 'good' is to be defined is "the most fundamental question in all Ethics." (id., §5) What Moore denounced was defining 'good' in any other terms, for example in natural terms.

This is wrong because 'good' always means something different than whatever defining term you come up with, just as for example 'yellow' always means something different than anything else one comes up with (Tanner, 2006). Therefore, you cannot define 'good' as something else. The version that became most famous is that, whenever someone defines 'good' as something natural, that person is committing the naturalistic fallacy. Again, this conclusion has a very intuitive appeal to it.

Both Hume's and Moore's fallacy have been subject to a broad secondary literature. This will not concern us here as we are more interested in present day invocations of this fallacy. Though Moore's and Hume's fallacy are not entirely the same, they are often used interchangeably, and in a variety of subtly different uses (see, e.g., Curry, 2006). Nonetheless, these can all be said to deal with a difference in meaning between 'is' and 'ought', and for our purposes both notions can also be used interchangeably.

The naturalistic fallacy has most often been invoked against evolutionary ethics. In most cases, the criticism that evolutionary ethicists commit a fallacy is warranted. Moore particularly aimed his critique at the evolutionary ethicists of his time (though his net is cast wider, see Chapter 3). Nineteenth century evolutionary ethicists indeed built normative theories by first defining normative terms by reference to a certain aspect of 'evolution'. In so doing they not only neglected lay people's and philosophers' understandings of moral terms but also misrepresented the theory of evolution. Evolutionary ethicists often proposed or assumed a very specific and fixed definition of right, good, or 'the moral sense'. Spencer for example assumed that happiness is good and that happiness can be acquired if one has the liberty to exercise one's faculties. He then assumed that evolution went in the direction of more freedom (liberty), ergo, more evolution is better. Nonetheless, Spencer's system rests on shaky ground because it is open to question if happiness is indeed the same as 'good', and we can certainly find counterexamples. Thus, Spencer's system had not proven what it set out to prove.

At the end of the twentieth century, there was a very short upsurge of this kind of evolutionary ethics, most notably by Richards (1986), who was subsequently accused of committing the naturalistic fallacy (Ferguson, 2001). Richards (1986, p. 272) assumed that the moral sense is "a set of innate dispositions that, in appropriate circumstances, move the individual to act in specific ways for the good of the community." Again, this definition is open to question.

These definitions of moral terms are all open to question, and this is precisely one of Moore's principal arguments against such attempts. Most of us can come up with examples of morally good things that do not fall under 'happiness', 'freedom to exercise one's faculties' or 'acting for the good of the community', thus bringing into question the validity of these propositions.

In recent times, the naturalistic fallacy is also invoked to refute arguments that do not intend to postulate a definition of moral terms. For example, Tanner (2006) suggests that the following arguments are instances of the naturalistic fallacy: the argument that something is good because it is akin to a principle of evolution, e.g. capitalism is right because it promotes the survival of the fittest; something is good because it is normal, e.g. homosexuality is not good because it is not normal; and something is good because it is natural, e.g. meat eating is good because it is natural. In each case, we can say that this is a bad (because incomplete) argument, or fallacious thinking. However, it is questionable that anyone was trying to postulate a definition of a moral term or that anyone was trying to deductively infer 'ought' statements from 'is' statements. Nonetheless, the is/ought gap or naturalistic fallacy might be a useful tool to refute such arguments, despite expansion of its application beyond its original meaning.

Very recently, Elqayam and Evans (in press) applied the understanding of descriptivity and normativity as two different domains to the study of human rationality instead of morality. Thus, they expand the is/ought gap to divide 'how we ought to reason' from 'how we do reason'. They insist that human thinking has been subject to *normativist research biases*, and these research biases are caused by either interpreting normative theories as descriptive theories, or the other way around. Since Elqayam and Evans' view plays an important role in the next section, we will also highlight these authors' reasoning. First of all, as Elqayam and Evans (in press) point out, there are various normative theories that prescribe correct reasoning. For example, certain authors adhere to logicism, the idea that the rules of logic are the proper norms for seeking knowledge. Others suggest that the rules of Bayesian probability are far more apt, if one wants to reason correctly. These theories however do not necessarily *describe* how human beings reason, in fact, there is little reason to think they do. They have not been developed by studying human thinking but by developing rules that, for example, yield accurate predictions or that follow from very basic widely accepted principles. Thus, if the aim is to give an accurate description of human thinking, normative theories are not the best starting point. We can find a similar point in Kurzban (2010):

The mind is the product of modules working together, often managing to look so good that, yes, they can be confused under certain conditions for something that conforms to some definition of rational. But it's best not to be confused by this illusion. There is no reason, in principle, to start with monolithic perfection and rationality when studying human cognition and behavior. The mind is not a machine that evolved to some sort of idealized neo-classical economic perception, with a few wrenches in the works. The mind evolved, bit by bit, over time, and the scientific study of the mind ought to respect this fact." (Kurzban, 2010, p. 185)

When studying human thinking however, instead of testing whether a specific *descriptive* theory is correct, cognitive scientists often ask whether human thinking accords with some specific *normative* theory. This leads to biased research assumptions such as the *prior rules bias*. This is the mistaken assumption that certain rules of a certain normative theory are built into people's heads in some innate and a priori manner. Again, while it might make sense to hypothesize that the corollaries of a descriptive theory about human cognition are built-in functions of our mental capacities (if it is an accurate theory), there is not much reason to think that the corollaries of normative theories 'carve nature at its joints.' As a consequence of this prior rules bias, when researchers study human thinking, they only use non-trained subjects (because they assume the rules are innately built into people's heads) and do not study how the participants learn to think according to the 'rational' framework. When participants do not reason according to the proposed normative framework, their reasoning patterns are merely classified as 'wrong' without further investigation of the exact heuristics that people use. This leads to the *interpretation bias*: Participants' responses are classified as either in accordance or not in accordance with the rules of a proposed normative theory. As a consequence, researchers classify mental processes as either 'correct' or 'incorrect' and are then tempted to theorize that these two (artificial) categories of reasoning refer to two different mental processes: for example, reasoning in accordance with logic is supposed to be implemented by one cognitive function (maybe akin to a logical faculty) while reasoning that is discordant with logic is supposed to be implemented by some 'illogical' faculty – very often an emotionally biased one. The third research bias is the *clear norms bias*. When some of participants' answers are somewhat in accordance with a normative system, it is thought that the participants strictly follow that specific normative system. However, there is no reason to assume that participants' reasoning is exactly in accordance with a normative theory as normative theories were never developed with the aim of describing the workings of the human mind. Perhaps unsurprisingly, such research biases also occur in the study of moral psychology. We can think of the tendency to attribute correct moral reasoning to non-affective mental processes, while affective mental processes are then classified as 'biased' moral reasoning (see Berker, 2009, for a discussion). We will see another example of this kind of attribution in Section 1.2.4.

In order to avoid these research biases, Elqayam and Evans (in press) suggest a descriptivist approach to the study of human thinking. Their proposal entails "identifying which terms are descriptive and which are deontic, and concentrating on the former" (Elqayam & Evans, in press, Appendix). They contend that "evaluative considerations need *only* be invoked (...) where the object is to improve human thinking and performance" (id., sect. 8, §5, our emphasis). Moreover,

evaluative considerations are fine so long as norms *precede* research rather than follow from it. In line with this, they prefer to entirely avoid inferences from descriptive to normative terms.

A broad interpretation of the is/ought gap would indeed have the upshot that no inference can be made from descriptive to normative theories, or the other way around. However, this could have detrimental consequences as it would preclude descriptive theories from evaluating normative theories. In such cases, the focus in psychology is on normative terms, while the aim is *not* to improve human thinking. Moreover, in this dissertation we reason back and forth between descriptive and prescriptive theories in order to evaluate normative moral theories. But to do so, we need a theory about how normativity is related to descriptivity – instead of presupposing a strict division between descriptive and normative theories. Thus, while most contemporary uses of the naturalistic fallacy and the is/ought gap are aimed against sloppy reasoning, the danger of this expanding use is that every interaction between ‘is’ and ‘ought’ is deemed fallacious. We need a more nuanced view of ‘is’ and ‘ought’ and how they relate to each other. Such a view will be provided in chapter three.

In the next section, we will argue that previous conceptions of morality were overly narrow. This provides a good reason for not trying to give an exhaustive description of morality. Moreover, the example we use shows how the is/ought gap and the naturalistic fallacy have already proven very useful in the wake of claims about individual differences in moral cognition.

1.2.4 Gender differences in moral orientation and normativist research bias

In 1982, Gilligan wrote an infamous critique on Kohlberg’s moral psychology, claiming that it excluded the moral psychology of women. She asserted that men and women differed in their general moral orientation: While women’s moral orientation is personal, directed towards relationships, caring and empathy, men’s moral orientation is impartial, directed towards autonomy, universal rules, rights, and non-interference. In short, women’s moral orientation can be characterized as ‘care ethics’ while men’s moral orientation can be characterized as ‘justice ethics’. Her criticism wasn’t only scientific. Among other things, she reproached Kohlberg for excluding the care orientation from morality itself. Indeed, in his earlier work, Kohlberg (1981) insisted that, even though care concerns are important, they are not moral concerns but merely personal concerns.

Many psychologists and philosophers (including Kohlberg in some of his later work (Kohlberg, 1984; see Blum, 1988) have accepted Gilligan's criticism about the scope of the moral domain. Are these developments defensible, and if so, on what grounds? We will argue that a broader conception of morality is indeed warranted but mostly because Kohlberg's conception of morality was too narrow from the start. While Gilligan's research might have catalyzed the idea of a broader conception of morality, this conception is ultimately not justified by her findings but by the research bias that was present in Kohlberg's work.

First of all, Gilligan's theory rests on a shoddy scientific basis. While Gilligan tested her claims with surveys, none of her studies have been published and she never made her raw data available (Sommers, 2001). Moreover, Gilligan's theory was in fact never clearly corroborated. Women score as high or higher on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview, the most commonly used instrument to measure justice reasoning (Walker, 1984; Jaffee & Hyde, 2000). It is also a point of contention how to interpret 'moral orientation' (Jaffee & Hyde, 2000; Sherblom, 2008; 2009), and each gender can reason according to both orientations when prompted to do so.

In Gilligan's favor, a small majority of participants is usually found to speak predominantly from one moral orientation (Sherblom, 2009). When participants had to make up their own moral dilemmas, Gilligan's predicted differences were found, but only because women chose different dilemmas than men (Sherblom, 2008). Of course, this might mean that women have different sensitivities as to what constitutes a moral problem. This either moves the gender difference to another cognitive moral function than moral orientation, or it suggests we should interpret 'moral orientation' differently. In sum, while there are probably gender differences in moral cognition, it is unclear if and how they have to do with moral orientation.

However, we do argue that expanding the scope of the moral domain was a good thing, irrespective of the existence of gender differences. The reason is that Kohlberg's conception of morality can be seen as an example of findings which are based on a research bias. How is that?

Kohlberg's theory of moral development was inspired by Kantian moral philosophy according to which morality was characterized by impartiality, universality, and (a form of) reasoning. Kohlberg's idea of morality as impartial was an a priori hypothesis (he assumed it before empirical observation). He subsequently did find a developmental increase in impartial reasoning in reaction to moral dilemmas. However, even if there is a development of impartial and Kantian-like thinking in the human mind that captures aspects of moral reasoning, this is not an argument to conclude that morality is always characterized by impartiality. Maybe Kohlberg only used impartiality-inducing dilemmas, maybe he only classified impartial reasons as moral reasons, or maybe his participants had been raised in the

same culture as he was raised, having learned the same impartial outlook on morality.

There are various other normative theories around, each of which highlight different aspects of morality. Any of these theories might also capture certain mental processes that are associated with moral judgments. Which mental processes are associated with moral judgments, however, is an empirical question. Kohlberg presupposed that, if impartiality could be found in human cognition, moral thinking was necessarily impartial. In this way, he confused a normative theory for a descriptive theory and committed something akin to the clear norms bias. There is no good reason to think that any *normative* moral theory would be an accurate and exclusive *description* of how individuals come to make moral judgments. Gilligan's merit is that she pointed to this overly narrow conception of morality. Even though gender differences in moral orientation are not clearly corroborated, the question whether personal care concerns are part of human morality should have been an empirical question instead of being ruled out from the start.

In the meantime, it has become clear that care concerns are core moral issues: care issues are moralized by most individuals and across cultures (Haidt & Joseph, 2007; Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009). This is thus an empirical argument for not excluding care from the moral domain. However, there seems to have been less work on the moral relevance of personal concerns.

In sum, it seems that clearly distinguishing normativity from descriptivity might have led to the rejection of overly narrow conceptions of morality in the past. We can concur with Casebeer (2003a, p. 842) when he points out that: "Given that the domain of what constitutes a moral judgment is itself in contention, we would be best served by casting our nets widely, narrowing them appropriately as the neurobiological, psychological and normative aspects of morality co-evolve". This is another reason not to prematurely narrow morality down to universalizable norms.

1.3 Individual differences and moral sentiments

The last topic we need to introduce concerns the nature and extent of individual differences in moral cognition. We argue that recent findings in moral psychology suggest that there are many intricate problems in solving moral disagreements. These intricacies are sometimes used to argue for moral relativism and practices of toleration (e.g. Wong, 1984; Chapter 4).

During the last decades, cognitive scientists, psychologists, neuroscientists, evolutionary psychologists and psychopathologists converged on an affective intuitionist view of moral cognition. Everyday moral judgments are the result of (and emerge from) cognitive processes that are intertwined with emotions (Greene, Sommerville, Nystrom, Darley, & Cohen, 2001; Haidt, 2001). To put it even stronger, the capacity to experience certain emotions is necessary for normal social and moral behavior (e.g., Damasio, 1994; Blair et al., 1996).

Other features of this affective intuitionist view are that we seem to be unaware of what causes our everyday moral judgments (Wheatley & Haidt, 2003), and that the cognitive processes that we are aware of – viz. the reasons we give after we expressed our judgments – are usually not the cause of our moral judgments (Haidt, 2001; Wheatley & Haidt, 2003).

If people generally have the same affective intuitions giving rise to similar everyday moral judgments, then moral disagreements might be rare. If, however, individuals differ in their affective intuitions, giving rise to individual differences in moral attitudes, then we may ask how we could possibly reason our way to agreement. Namely, if we do not know what caused our judgments, we cannot know what we should change. If we do not have control over the causes of our moral judgments, then we might not be able to change them. A common view in moral philosophy is that we should use a ‘reasonable’ method to come to agreement (Wong, 1984; Daniels, 1996; Saunders, 2009). If however the reasons we give for our moral judgments really are post-hoc rationalizations that do not influence our judgments at all, then reasonable methods would be mute.

In this section we ask two questions: are individual differences in moral judgments widespread and important, and if so, can we resolve them in a reasonable manner? We first argue that moral disagreements are socially and philosophically relevant. We then argue that, even though the above picture needs to be substantially nuanced, it is very likely that not all moral disagreements can be resolved by reasonable arguments.

1.3.1 The extent of individual differences in moral judgments

Since human beings all share the same evolutionary background, it has been suggested that there is a core moral sense to which we can appeal in order to agree about moral issues (Ruse, 1986; Ruse & Wilson, 1986). Indeed, all cultures make a distinction between good and bad (Brown, 1991), prevent certain issues such as incest between mother and son (id.) and value care and justice (Shweder et al., 1997; Haidt & Joseph, 2007; Graham et al., 2009). Robinson and Kurzban (2007) showed that there is even extensive agreement about the *comparative* punishment that

certain offenses warrant: When asked to rank offenses on a scale from ‘no punishment’ to ‘maximum punishment’, participants demonstrated substantial agreement about the rank of each offense.

Nonetheless, the agreement is severely limited: There is much less agreement about the *absolute* amount of punishment one should give. Agreement in the Robinson and Kurzban (2007) study was mainly found for offenses concerning physical injury, taking without consent (stealing) and deception in exchanges (cheating). In contrast, there was substantial disagreement about sexual issues and drug use (see also Chapter 2). Graham et al. (2009) find disagreement about the moral importance of loyalty, respect for authority and feelings of disgust.

These differences have been linked to political ideology and specific politico-moral issues: American conservatives are more sensitive to disgust and more inclined than liberals to consider ‘disgust’, ‘loyalty’ and ‘respect for authority’ as a good basis for their moral views; the same holds for Dutch right-wing versus left-wing adherents (van Leeuwen & Park, 2009). Disgust sensitivity has been linked to intuitive disapproval of homosexuality (e.g., Inbar, Knobe, Pizarro & Bloom, 2009). Thus, while moral agreement is widespread, there is robust diversity in the moral attitudes towards other issues, and this diversity is related to ideological dividing lines within a culture – thus, moral diversity is at least socially significant.

A recent paper suggests that the existing patterns of moral disagreements are also philosophically relevant. Gustafsson and Peterson (2010, online first) adapted previous computer models in order to simulate what happens when individuals’ opinions about a single moral issue are influenced by a universal moral fact relevant to that issue. For example, what would happen if there was a true answer to the question whether abortion is permissible, assuming that all individuals would be affected by the truth (in addition to being affected by authorities, others’ opinions, random shifts etc.)? Gustafsson and Petersen find that, when all agents in the model are influenced by the moral fact, they quickly come to agree, or they converge to two extreme views on the matter (for example, either for or against abortion). However, moral disagreements are *persistent* and they cover a range of intermediate views (for example, ranging from ‘abortion is never permitted’, over ‘only in cases of rape’ to ‘abortion is always permitted’). Thus, it is not likely that there are moral facts that influence everyone’s moral opinions. This model can also explain why there is agreement about some moral issues: In cases where there is no moral fact of the matter, agents can *also* come to agree on moral issues, for example when they are influenced by an authority. However, it is *only* in the absence of a moral fact (that affects agents) that the model yields persistent disagreement, covering a range of intermediate opinions. Thus, given the observation that for some moral issues there is persistent disagreement covering a range of intermediate opinions, while

for other opinions there is moral agreement, the most plausible explanation is that there are no universal moral facts that influence individuals.

Nonetheless, that does not mean that there are no moral facts, or that we cannot resolve such moral disagreements. Maybe we need a proper education in order to be influenced by moral facts or in order to be influenced by good reasons. Maybe we would agree if we learned how to reason correctly? We explore this possibility in the next section.

1.3.2 The nature of individual differences in moral judgments

At first sight, the affective intuitionist view suggests that factual and reasonable arguments will not influence our attitudes nor help us in reaching agreement. However, the sketched view is too pessimistic. While our everyday spontaneous moral judgments might indeed be caused by affective intuitions that are beyond our control, we can also reach moral conclusions by conscious reasoning.

First of all, Haidt (2001) stresses that we do give reasons after we expressed our moral judgments. While these reasons are post-hoc rationalizations, there is ample evidence that they do influence other individuals' affective intuitions (Haidt, 2001). According to Sie and Wouters (2008; 2010), these post-hoc rationalizations are crucial to our everyday moral practices and make up the reasons that *justify* and *influence* our own moral behavior. Namely, we discuss these reasons (a.k.a. post-hoc rationalizations) in moral discussions when we are held responsible for our actions. We can reach agreement on these reasons. Upon agreement, we can adapt our future behavior in line with these reasons by adjusting our affective intuitions in line with our reasons. As a consequence, even though the reasons we give are not the direct causes of our behavior, they might come to guide our future behavior in line with what is deemed justified by others in our moral community.

Can we indeed adapt our affective intuitions and align them with our reasons? While everyday moral judgments need to be spontaneous, we can reason through a moral argument when we are in a more contemplative mood, not 'in the heat of the moment', or when we are 'offline'. This can change our moral conclusions, but it will not necessarily in itself change our affective intuitions. Thus we additionally need to reevaluate and change our moral intuitions and the sentiments that give rise to quicker, spontaneous moral judgments. We can do that by using our imagination. For example, moral dilemmas can be seen from a care or from a justice perspective (cf. Section 1.2.4; Jaffee & Hyde, 2000) and we could practice taking the perspective that coincides with our consciously accepted conclusions. We can also increase or decrease the strength of emotions by imagining ourselves as participants in a situation, or by mentally distancing ourselves from a situation; we can additionally

exaggerate or minimize the seriousness of a situation (Ochsner et al. 2004). Thus, even though our everyday moral judgments may need to arise automatically when we are 'online', when we are 'offline', we can reason through an argument and additionally practice our sensitivity for the moral conclusion we reached.

This, of course, is a slow and laborious process. Even worse, it does not satisfactorily solve the issue of moral disagreement. In order to show this, let us first assume that we only want to solve disagreements in a reasonable manner. This amounts to referring to facts and to examining the reasons that each of us gives for supporting or rejecting a moral view. There are individual differences in affective intuitions (such as sensitivity for disgust). Therefore, different individuals will reach different moral judgments. But maybe they will all use the same reasons to rationalize their judgments? We will give an example to clarify why this is not the case.

Assume that two disputants, K and M, discuss the case of marriage between cousins and come to find that K morally disapproves of cousin marriage and thinks it should be illegal. M thinks that it is morally permissible for cousins to marry and that this should be legal. They find out that K is highly disgusted by cousin marriage while M is not. However, K appeals to the increased chances of genetic disorders among the children from such marriages in order to drive his point home. M agrees that a child produced from cousins has an increased chance of genetic disorders, but she brings up that this risk is equally high for a 40-year old woman (Paul & Spencer, 2008). Both K and M think that there is nothing wrong with a 40 year old woman giving birth. In this case, we might be inclined to think that this will solve the disagreement. We might think that even though the disagreement is caused by differences in affective intuitions, K cannot uphold his reasons to disapprove of this kind of marriage and should reasonably change his judgment and try to lower his disgust.

So far so good, were it not the case that post-hoc rationalizations (reasons) are equally caused by our affects. Consider Graham et al.'s findings (2009): There is diversity in the perceived moral importance of loyalty, respect for authority and feelings of disgust. While liberals think disgust is not a relevant factor when deciding on the wrongness of an act, conservatives think it is. In this example, K can therefore adduce an additional reason, namely that cousin marriage is too disgusting to be permissible. M on the other hand will not think of disgust as morally relevant while K thinks it is morally relevant. Thus, the moral disagreement has not been solved by reasonable arguments.

Some may think this is a weird example: disgust seems particularly irrelevant for moral matters and no sensible person will defend K's view. However, Leon Kass (2001) has argued that disgust is morally relevant, just as liberals' reasons to approve or disapprove on a moral issue are morally relevant. Namely, liberals'

reasons are in the end equally justified by referring to their affects, or, more plastically:

Can anyone really give an argument fully adequate to the horror that is father-daughter incest (even with consent), or bestiality, or the mutilation of a corpse, or the eating of human flesh, or the rape or murder of another human being? Would anybody's failure to give full rational justification for his revulsion at those practices make that revulsion ethically suspect? (Kass, 2001)

Indeed, it is hard to argue why empathy would be a valid reason while disgust is not. The fact that disgust sensitivity is more variable than sensitivity to care issues will not work: Disgust sensitivity and perceived relevance varies between ideological orientations, but sensitivity to care issues varies between other groups, for example between sexes (Chapter 3). We might try to say that the fact that disgust is deemed morally wrong by K does not make it morally wrong, but the same can be said about any affectively-justified reason, including the perceived rightness of acting on empathy.

Thus, even though we can reason our way through a moral argument, our reasons are also shaped by certain sentiments, thus giving rise to individual differences in moral reasons. Therefore, no argument based merely on reasons and facts can resolve disagreements that are caused by differences in affective intuitions.

This argument started from a specific view about reasonable discussion, a view that is akin to, but still slightly different from, narrow reflective equilibrium (Rawls, 1971; Daniels, 1996). The method of narrow reflective equilibrium entails that we equilibrate our particular moral judgments with our general moral principles. In the process, we can either adapt a particular judgment or a moral principle until the moral system is coherent - a moral system is justified if it is coherent. In the previous example, we assumed that we only relied on reasons in order to resolve the disagreement. Here, we can refer to our shared particular judgments and our shared general principles in order to discuss a moral issue. However, different individuals have different moral judgments because of differences in affective intuitions. Again, this does not resolve all moral disagreements (see also Saunders, 2009).

Another possibility is that we proceed by equilibrating our moral reasons or general moral principles with our particular moral judgments, and cut down the resulting moral theories to those that are in accord with non-moral facts about the world. In short, we should apply broad reflective equilibrium (Daniels, 1996). However, Daniels (1996) argues that this too will not work. Note that reflective equilibrium comes to an end when we have a coherent system. When confronted with incoherence, we should either adapt a general moral principle or a specific

moral judgment, or both. Now consider the previous example, and imagine for the sake of argument that K* and M agree that the risk of genetic disorders is the only relevant reason for considering the moral permissibility of cousin marriage. Both agree on the appropriateness of 40-year old women getting pregnant but they disagree on the permissibility of cousin marriage. M's view is coherent but K*'s view is not. Now K* may possibly adapt his own moral judgment and perspective on cousin marriage. In this case, they would come to an agreement. However, it is equally possible that K adapts his view about the permissibility of 40-year old women reproducing. In this case, the disagreement has become deeper and it has intensified. Thus, reflective equilibrium does not guarantee agreement. (Suppose again that K thinks that disgust is a legitimate reason in moral consideration. As a consequence K does not change his mind about anything because his view is internally consistent. Cousin marriage is deemed morally bad because it is disgusting, 40-year old women can give birth because this does not disgust him. In this case as well, the disagreement is not solved.)

In a strange twist, we concur that according to our reasoning so far, it may still be possible to resolve these disagreements – but not in a traditionally reasonable fashion. Metaphors, stories and vivid descriptions are often powerful tools to elicit certain sentiments in others and these are indeed being used to proselytize one's moral convictions. The anti-abortion movement uses enlarged pictures of aborted fetuses, animal rights activists may point to the pain inflicted on animals and Christians elicit horrific stories of hell in order to scare each other into right conduct. A combination of reasoning through verbal argument and subjecting others to emotion-eliciting stimuli might be a good strategy to induce new moral attitudes. Kaliarnta, Nihlen-Fahlquist and Roeser (2011, online first) give a less extreme example: In the context of in vitro fertilization treatment, the emotional impact of a treatment could be taken into account when health care providers have to choose a specific optimal treatment. In order to do so, they can rely on first-hand anecdotes of couples who went through the process. We do not claim that this can solve all moral disagreements, but it is an interesting option to consider.

A huge variety of techniques opens up if we go on where reasonable discussion left us. We can hypnotize someone for the sake of agreement, or condition psychopathic mass-murderers, as in *A Clockwork Orange*. We can punish or threaten criminals until they at least agree that murder is bad. However, the question now becomes if, or when, interference like this is morally allowed. This is a question that cannot be answered here but will be revisited in chapter four.

So far, we have argued that there are fundamental moral disagreements. These are moral disagreements that we cannot resolve by referring to reasonable discussion. However, we may ask if some of these disagreements would not be resolved if we expanded our notion of reasonable discussion. Some convincing

'arguments' that may resolve this kind of disagreement seem to be morally and/or epistemically wrong. Other arguments entailing appeals to emotion provide promising avenues for further discussion. To date, it is an open question how far this will bring us.

1.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have set out the problems that will confront us throughout the rest of this work. First we made clear that morality need not be by definition universalizable. Then we introduced the is/ought gap and the naturalistic fallacy. There is a consensus that descriptive data do not simply translate into normative or meta-ethical moral statements. This consensus is very useful, as it showed us how previous empirical studies of morality had been biased by confusing normative theories for descriptive theories. However, following recent developments in moral psychology and in the face of overly diligent invocations of the naturalistic fallacy or is/ought gap, we run the risk of not being able to evaluate normative theories. This is a reason to support a theory that links 'is' and 'ought'. Finally, we gave an overview of the extent and nature of individual differences in moral cognition, and the problem of moral disagreement. It appeared that not all moral disagreements can be resolved. We may expand the range of accepted arguments, depending on what one considers epistemically or morally right. In chapters three and four we will discuss arguments for relativism or toleration in cases of moral disagreement. The next chapter first introduces some more differences in moral cognition.

Chapter 2

Individual differences in moral condemnation of recreational drug use are related to reproductive strategy

We have, in fact, two kinds of morality side by side; one which we preach but do not practice, and another which we practice but seldom preach.

- Russell, 1928

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter we explored the extent and nature of individual differences in moral cognition. It appeared that some moral disagreements are irresolvable, unless we extend our notion of reasonable discussion. This chapter further explores individual differences in moral cognition, how to explain them and what kind of arguments might have an effect on these moral attitudes. We will see that empirical studies may inform us about affective intuitions that shape our moral attitudes (judgments and behaviors) and that we would otherwise remain unaware of.

We can make a useful distinction between two kinds of moral cognition. On the one hand, moral attitudes may function to regulate one's own behavior. On the other hand,

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moral attitudes may function to influence others' behavior. This refers to the distinction, made by DeScioli and Kurzban (2009), between moral conscience and moral condemnation. They assert that the mechanisms guiding our own morally relevant behavior need not be the same as the mechanisms inducing moral behavior in others. For example, the moral attitudes that incur us to condemn an unfaithful partner need not function in the same way, or even be the same moral attitudes, as those making up our conscience about the right sexual behavior for ourselves. Evolution can explain aspects of both conscience and condemnation, but evolutionary explanations that pertain to the former do not always pertain to the latter. The evolved functions of conscience are different from the evolved functions of condemnation.

In this chapter, we discuss explanations of individual differences in moral condemnation of recreational drug use. We compare two explanatory models and argue that individual differences in these moral attitudes can be explained as the result of evolved reproductive strategies and that this is a better explanation than social learning or adherence to an ideology. Evolved reproductive strategies are implemented by sexual attitudes, such as the desire for monogamy versus promiscuity. We find that individual differences in attitudes towards recreational drug use correlate with one's attitudes towards sex rather than with one's ideological commitments, at least for students, and across cultures. A possible explanation is that recreational drug increases the chances of promiscuous sexual behavior. These findings are in line with previous findings: Kurzban, Dukes and Weeden (2010) found evidence in favor of their evolutionary inspired model in two US samples. We replicated their findings with students in Belgium, The Netherlands, and Japan.

These findings have consequences for moral disagreement. They suggest that, to some extent, one's ideological background might be a post-hoc rationalization instead of a cause of one's attitudes towards recreational drug use. Moreover, sexual attitudes are also related to recreational drug attitudes and they are likely to cause these. Discussing one's ideological background will therefore have only a limited effect on attitudes towards recreational drug attitudes. Rather, appealing to the hypothesized link between drug use and sexual promiscuity might be a more convincing discussion strategy because for certain populations and for certain drugs it taps into the real cause of attitudes towards recreational drug use.

2.2 Attitudes towards sex and recreational drug use

What causes attitudes towards sex and recreational drug use? In the social sciences, individual differences in attitudes towards sex and recreational drug use are often explained as the result of social learning processes. Such processes cause one to internalize the ideological commitments prevailing in one's social environment. Alternatively, personality factors (with inherited and learned variation) cause one to affiliate with a general political or religious ideology. Again, specific moral attitudes are then seen as the downstream effect of this general ideological orientation. In both cases, we expect to find a relation between ideology and moral attitudes.

In this view, one's ideological leanings would thus shape attitudes towards drugs and attitudes towards sex, causing both attitudes to correlate with each other. Reasoning from this perspective, when attitudes towards drugs and attitudes towards sex are related in a cultural group, one would predict that this is the result of shared ideologies.

While ideological models suggest that general ideologies shape specific moral judgments, strategic interest models explain specific moral judgments as caused by one's strategic interests. For example, individual differences in attitudes towards policies that benefit certain minorities are found to relate to one's minority status (Erikson & Tedin, 2005). Also, despite a variety of approaches, ideological models are usually not informed by evolutionary theories. We present a strategic interests model that draws from evolved strategies: Recently, Kurzban et al. (2010) argued that evolved reproductive strategies, implemented by attitudes towards sex, can also shape individual differences in moral attitudes towards drugs. The reason is that drug use is causally related to sexual promiscuity. Promiscuous individuals therefore benefit from others' recreational drug use and will have more permissive attitudes towards recreational drug use.

In this view, contrary to the social science perspective, attitudes towards sex will correlate with attitudes towards drugs and this relationship is not the result of a more general ideology explaining both kinds of attitudes. Indeed, results from two American samples were in line with this prediction (Kurzban et al., 2010).

Both research traditions also yield different predictions concerning cross-cultural variety. According to the strategic interests model, we will find individual differences in reproductive strategies in a wide range of environments. We will then find a relationship between attitudes towards sex and recreational drug use across various cultures, and this relationship cannot be entirely explained by ideology. However, reasoning from an ideological perspective, we do not expect to find a widespread relationship between attitudes towards drugs and sex. In order to test these predictions and further evaluate both models, we replicated the study of Kurzban et al. (2010) with

student samples in Belgium, the Netherlands and Japan. These three cultures have quite different mores surrounding recreational drug use and sex.

In what follows we first evaluate the evidence for existing ideological models; where possible we highlight country-specific findings. Second, we elaborate on strategic interests models on individual differences in reproductive strategies, and these strategies' relationship with moral attitudes. In the main section of this paper we discuss the results of our study. As predicted, we found a relationship between attitudes towards recreational drug use and sexual attitudes in all three samples. This correlation is not explained by ideological variables in any of the samples. Moreover, we find cross-cultural differences in the relationships between, on the one hand, political, religious and personality variables and, on the other hand, moral attitudes towards sex and drugs. This suggests that attitudes towards drugs track attitudes towards sex across a range of cultural milieus. We discuss our findings in the light of country-specific ideologies. Overall, our results strongly suggest that evolutionary psychology and strategic interests can be successful in explaining individual differences in moral condemnation.

2.2.1 Ideological models

There is a substantial body of research about the relationship between ideology (especially religiosity) and attitudes and behavior. In this research tradition, attitudes are seen as an intermediate step between the prevailing ideology in the social environment and individuals' behavior. Drug use and sexual behavior is then explained as the result of internalized norms which are acquired from a social group's ideology. At first sight, the effect of religiosity on drug use seems well-established, as well as the effect of religiosity on attitudes towards sex, and the findings speak in favor of a mediating role of attitudes or moral norms.

In the U.S., the link between religiosity and moral attitudes and behavior is widely studied. Chitwood, Weiss, and Leukefeld (2008) systematically reviewed the findings of 751 empirical studies - mainly on American participants - that test for a relationship between at least one measure of religiosity or spirituality and at least one measure of drug use. They find that there is a well-established association between religiosity/spirituality and substance use, mainly alcohol and marijuana, and conclude that religiosity is likely to be a protective factor against drug use.

Recent studies corroborate these findings and suggest that social learning mechanisms are one of the causes of religion's protective effect. Adamczyk and Palmer (2008) find that, independent of one's own religious denomination, one's friends' born again identity is negatively related to marijuana initiation. They hypothesize that these friends' behavior or attitudes affect individuals' behavior. Allen and Lo (2010) find that

social bonding variables somewhat mediate the relationship between religiosity and substance use for a variety of substances (alcohol, marijuana, crack etc.). In their theoretical framework, social learning shapes one's values, which then shape behavior. Also Gryczynski and Ward (2011) found that religiosity was negatively linked with cigarette use, and that perceived disapproval of parents and close friends mediated the effects of religiosity on cigarette use. These authors equally suggest that proximity and exposure to norms shape internalized norms about cigarette use. Hence, *socially learned attitudes* are seen as the intermediate step between one's religious social environment and drug use.

Similar theoretical frameworks are applied in explaining sexual attitudes. In a 40-year period, more than 80 studies reported a relationship between religion and sexual attitudes and behavior (Cochran & Beeghley, 1991). Cochran and Beeghley (1991) likewise suggest that religious prescriptions and the group one identifies with influence an individual's attitudes. More recently, Ahrold et al. (2010) find that certain religious variables predict conservative sexual attitudes and they assume that the social environment can explain this effect. Petersen and Donnerwerth (1997) refer to exposure to religious norms in the social environment to explain individual differences in attitudes towards sex. Concretely, their findings are consistent with their theory that conservative religions inhibit the development of progressive opinions of those who regularly attend church.

However, most of these studies have been conducted with American participants. Prevailing ideologies in the U.S. are often either restrictive towards both sex and drugs or permissive towards both sex and drugs – they are generally not restrictive towards one and permissive towards the other. This begs the question why this is the case, if this is also the case in the rest of the world. Moreover, prevailing ideologies in the U.S. usually cover only a narrow spectrum on the restrictive-permissive continuum. We can expect permissive ideologies in the Netherlands to be more permissive than most ideologies in the U.S., and we can expect restrictive ideologies in Japan to be more restrictive than most ideologies in the U.S. Thus, we cannot simply extrapolate these findings to the rest of the world.

Findings on the relation between religion and attitudes regarding drugs and sex in Western Europe are less abundant, but generally comparable with American studies. Wicki, Kuntsche, and Gmel (2010) review work that investigates the determinants of alcohol drinking at European universities. They find a negative relation between religion and alcohol use. Link (2008) has found a relationship between social factors and illicit drug use, both in Germany and the US. This study (Link, 2008) is likewise inspired by the theory that attitudes mediate the relationship between social context and behavior.

Kraaykamp (2002) describes national changes in sexual attitudes in the Netherlands from longitudinal data. Similarly to Petersen and Donnerwerth (1997), he finds that

religious engagement, as indicated by church attendance, keeps individuals from developing progressive opinions concerning sexuality, and this especially among affiliates from conservative churches (here, the Dutch Reformed). Similar dynamics might be at work in Belgium regarding attitudes towards homosexuality. Hooghe, Claes, Harell, Quintelier, and Dejaeghere (2010) find that homophobic attitudes in Belgium (and Canada) are somewhat related to religious denomination, with Muslims being most restrictive. Moreover, regardless of denomination, those who more regularly attend a religious service are significantly more likely to show intolerance towards gay rights. Comparable results have been found by Adamczyk and Pitt (2009) in US samples, suggesting a possible congruence between Belgium, Canada and the US in this matter.

Studies on moral attitudes in relation to religion in Japan are relatively scarce. Existing work on drug use usually describes drug abuse as influenced by nation-wide developments and demographic factors such as the criminal justice system, economic growth, unemployment and socioeconomic status; though the importance of informal social control is also acknowledged (Vaughn, Huang, & Ramirez, 1995). Also for sexual attitudes, while views on divorce, premarital sex and marriage changed remarkably in the 1980's, religiosity and worshiping ancestors stayed relatively stable (Atoh, 2010). Most studies do not take up religion as a possible predictive factor of moral attitudes; where they do, religion does not have a convincing effect. This need not be surprising: If we follow the reasoning of social scientists, religion might not be a determinant of attitudes towards sex or drugs in Japan even though it is in Europe and the US. In the latter two, social learning of concrete moral norms that prevail among one's social network is supposed to mediate the relation between religion and attitudes. Adherents of the major religions in Japan, Buddhism and Shinto, do not teach very concrete norms about drug use, nor about sexuality, at least towards lay followers of the religion. (Priests are assumed to practice celibacy, but it is known that they are not always so strict [Ishii, pers. comm.]). Moreover, Buddhist and Shinto religious practices do not consist of well-planned social gatherings (Roemer, 2010). Instead, private rituals are essential, such as funeral rituals, praying and offering for ancestors at home (Tanaka, 2010). While it is hard to conclude anything about religion due to scarce data, there is no indication that this is an important factor shaping attitudes about recreational drug use or sex in Japan.

Not only religion is studied in relation to moral attitudes. Others see specific moral attitudes as the downstream effect of more general political commitments (Jacoby, 2002; Janda, Berry, & Goldman, 2002; Bardes & Oldendick, 2003; Sears & Levy, 2003; Erikson & Tedin, 2005). This view is expanded with basic personality factors explaining individual differences: According to Graham et al. (2009), one's (partly inherited, partly socially learned) personality traits create adult moral and ideological identities, which in their turn influence affiliation with specific political orientations (Haidt & Joseph, 2007). Indeed, in the US, personality factors (e.g. fear of threat) have been found to relate to

political conservatism (Carney, Jost, Gosling, & Potter, 2008), and the relative importance one assigns to each of five moral foundations is related to conservatism and liberalism (Graham et al., 2009).

In the Netherlands, perception of social danger (which is comparable with fear of threat) has been found to relate to the relative importance of the same moral foundations, and to left- versus right-wing political attitudes (van Leeuwen et al., 2007).

Zooming in on politics and drugs, in the US, democrats are found to be more likely to smoke compared to republicans (Subramanian & Perkins, 2010).

Similar results are found in Japan, where those who identify as left-wing are more likely to smoke (Subramanian, Hamano, Perkins, Koyabu, & Fujisawa, 2010). Both studies refer to (but do not measure) latent attitudinal values as a possible mediator for these effects. However, at present, neither drug issues nor family values dominate the political debate in Belgium or the Netherlands. Therefore, we cannot assume that drug attitudes or sexual attitudes of the electorate align with their political orientation or with the respective views of the parties they vote for. Other unsettled matters include the extent to which sexual issues and drug views relate to individuals' political orientation in Japan.

We do not dispute that there is at least a relationship between, on the one hand, ideology or personality and, on the other hand, behavior and specific moral attitudes. However, based on these studies, one can raise doubts about the proposed causal direction. To the extent that members of religious social networks prescribe restrictive moral standards, they might indeed inhibit other affiliates from developing progressive attitudes. Alternatively, preexisting attitudes might (also) cause individuals to more strongly align with a certain ideological group. This is compatible with the discussed studies: While denomination was a factor shaping sexual attitudes, church attendance was important as well. Although individuals might not choose their specific denomination to a large extent, they might more freely choose their *frequency* of church attendance (see also Berghammer, 2008), and this choice might be based on their preexisting attitudes, thus causing the relationship between attitudes and ideology. As to attitudes towards recreational drug use, not only the causal arrow but also the relationship with ideology in itself is not proven. Existing studies measure drug use and ideology; the causal importance of attitudes is merely a theoretical assumption.

Importantly, in relation to the present research question, we doubt that social science models are complete. Previous studies suggest that specific attitudes are the result of more basic or more general factors. They do not consider the possibility that different specific attitudes (in this case, attitudes towards drugs and towards sex) might be directly related to each other, unmediated by more general or basic factors. In the next section we suggest another set of theoretical models.

2.2.2 Strategic interests models

Strategic interests models propose that moral condemnation tends to align with the condemning individual's personal interests. Indeed, in various domains, people's moral attitudes have been found to track their personal interests: Socioeconomic status is consistently related to preferences for redistributive policies (e.g., Edlund & Pande, 2002; Gelman, Shor, Bafumi, & Park, 2007) and race is related to preferences for policies that benefit racial minorities (Erikson & Tedin, 2005). Analogously, Kurzban et al. (2010) predicted that individuals will endorse moral attitudes that benefit their own sexual strategy.

Kurzban et al. (2010) suggest that evolved reproductive strategies might be useful in explaining individual differences in attitudes towards drugs. More specifically, they predict that there is a direct relation between reproductive strategy and attitudes towards drugs and that this relation is not the result of more general ideologies or basic personality factors. The argument consists of three steps. First, people differ in the extent to which they follow either of two kinds of strategies that evolved to enhance their reproductive success: a short-term, promiscuous strategy or a long-term, monogamous strategy. Each strategy is implemented by corresponding attitudes towards sex. Second, people's moral attitudes will track their interests and it is in the interest of short-term strategists to promote promiscuity, while it is in the interest of more monogamously inclined people to promote restrictive attitudes towards sex. Third, drug use is causally related to promiscuity. From these points it follows that individual's attitudes towards recreational drug use will correlate with attitudes towards sex, at least in contexts or cultures where drug use and promiscuity are related. Contrary to the social science perspective, this relationship exists independent of ideological background or other personal factors. We will now further explain each of these four steps.

During human evolution, both short term and long term mating strategies were at times adaptive for either men or women (Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Gangestad & Simpson, 2000). Men could increase their reproductive success by mating with as many women as possible, thereby allocating less energy in parental effort. However, as regular food scarcities were a cause of child mortality in our evolutionary past, paternal effort increased the survival chances or reproductive success of their offspring (Geary, 1998). Therefore fathers could also increase their fitness by following a long term strategy, allocating their energy in parental effort while foregoing other mating opportunities. Women could increase their fitness by enhancing the survival of their children. They would therefore prefer a partner who was likely to be an investing father. However, in environments with a lot of pathogen stress, children's survival was more affected by their resistance towards pathogens than by food scarcity. In such an environment, women would prefer men with 'good genes', viz., men that showed signs of optimal

development and therefore resistance to prevailing pathogens (Little et al., 2011). There is evidence of a trade-off between good genes and parental investment; men with good genes seem likely to invest less energy in their offspring and they seem to specialize in short term encounters instead (Booth & Dabbs, 1993). Hence, 'good genes' partners are not likely to be investing fathers and women may have to choose between either a short term encounter with a 'good genes' partner or a long term relationship with an investing partner. Because the optimal strategy depends, among other things, on personal factors (such as being endowed with 'good genes' indicators for men, or fertility and reproductive value for women – which is related to their age), we can expect to find strategic diversity in all cultures.

There are ample data that moral attitudes are aligned with strategic interests: As mentioned, socioeconomic status is consistently related to preferences for redistributive policies (e.g., Edlund & Pande, 2002) and race is related to preferences for policies that benefit racial minorities (Erikson & Tedin, 2005). Analogously, we can expect that individuals endorse moral attitudes that benefit their own sexual strategy. People in a long-term relationship, who invest time and energy in their children, would benefit if others are sexually restricted – thereby reducing the risk of cuckoldry, seduction, mate-poaching or investing in children that are not their own. They would therefore admonish behavior that promotes short term sexual encounters *in others*. Recreational drug use is such a promiscuity-enhancing behavior. Studies have found that individuals are more likely to have a risky, promiscuous or short term sexual encounter when under the influence of recreational party drugs. This has been found in American (Lammers, Ireland, Resnick, & Blum, 2000; Weeden & Sabini, 2007) as well as European (Madkour, Farhat, Halpern, Godeau, & Gabhainn, 2010) and Japanese study groups (Takakura, Nagayama, Sakihara, & Willcox, 2001; Nemoto, Iwamoto, Morris, Yokota, & Wada, 2007; Nagata-Kobayashi, Maeno, Yoshizu, & Shimbo, 2009). If individuals perceive drug use as conducive to sexual encounters, attitudes towards sexuality are therefore likely to track attitudes towards recreational drug use. This is the main prediction of this strategic interests model: sexual attitudes will predict attitudes towards the use of recreational party drugs, irrespective of ideological or personality factors.

While this argument adds new predictions to classical social science models, it does not explain why ideology and attitudes are consistently related to each other. In this regard, the evolutionary model may be seen as a complement to social science models: While attitudes toward sex directly (unmediated by ideology) shape attitudes toward drugs, both are additionally influenced by learning processes in an ideological social environment. An alternative argument is that reproductive strategies influence one's ideology (at least religiosity) *and* mediate the relationship between ideology and attitudes towards recreational drug use. According to recent studies (Weeden, Cohen, & Kenrick, 2008; Li, Cohen, Weeden, & Kenrick, 2010), it is likely that one's reproductive

strategy shapes one's religiosity. In the U.S., religion might function to support a high-fertility monogamous mating strategy. This support is both practical, for example by providing child care and social support, and ideological, for example by keeping an eye on others' behavior and preaching norms that support this strategy. As a result, individuals following a long term mating strategy will be inclined to stay more firmly aligned with religious groups; these religious groups in their turn support their members' convictions and behavior. Individuals who do follow an unrestricted sexual strategy, independent of religious upbringing or other personality factors, will be inclined to leave or stay away from religious groups. Indeed, Weeden et al. (2008) found that present and expected future religious attendance was better explained by reproductive variables (family desires and sexual attitudes) than by other moral attitudes and personality variables, and that the relation between other moral attitudes and religious attendance could be explained by sexual attitudes. This makes it unlikely that religiosity shapes moral attitudes in general. However, it is compatible with the view that sexual attitudes shape religiosity, which in turn shapes other moral attitudes.

Finally, one's political orientation can be seen as a post hoc summary as opposed to a causal ideology with respect to specific political and moral opinions. Therefore, restrictive attitudes towards promiscuous sexual activity increase political conservatism, rather than the other way around. In sum, according to the model proposed by Kurzban et al. (2010), divergent strategic interests in low-commitment, promiscuous sexual activity versus high-commitment, monogamous sexual activity are predicted to play a fundamental causal role in explaining both ideological orientations and drug attitudes

If there is a relationship between sexual attitudes and ideology, and between sexual attitudes and drug attitudes, the relation between ideology and drug attitudes will be partially explained by sexual attitudes. As predicted, Kurzban et al. (2010) found a relationship between attitudes towards drugs and ideology, and this relationship could indeed be explained by attitudes towards sex. Even stronger, the correlations between ideology and drug attitudes were mostly spurious: when controlling for sexual variables, these correlations were reduced to almost zero, indicating that there was no causal relation between ideology and drug attitudes.

Is it plausible that the same dynamics are at work in Europe or Japan? We have seen that there is also a relation between religiosity and sexual attitudes in the Netherlands. In contrast, it is as yet more contentious that religiosity and *attitudes* towards drugs are directly related (we only know that drug *use* is related to religiosity). Moreover, there is likely a positive correlation between fertility ideals and religiosity in Europe. Berghammer (2008) used data of the 'Netherlands kinship panel' and found that both religious socialization (e.g. one's parents' religiosity) and current religiosity (especially current church attendance) are independently linked with greater fertility within a family. Combined with the previously discussed social science findings, these studies

support the hypothesis that also in the Netherlands religion functions to support a high fertility monogamous mating strategy. No studies about Belgium were found in this regard, but we see no reason why dynamics would be different there. Hence, we predict that sexual attitudes will likewise mediate the relationship between religiosity and recreational drug use in the Netherlands and Belgium.

For Japan though, we saw that we could not conclude to a relation between religiosity and attitudes towards sex or drugs. Do Buddhism and Shinto in Japan provide social support for families? Miller (1998) suggests that, while religion indeed provides social services for families in the US and Europe, in Japan these services are provided by informal secular organizations such as colleagues, family and neighbors. Therefore, there is no need for religion to provide this support. This is not to say that religions in Japan do not provide any social support at all. Indeed, wherever those informal mechanisms fall away, one can see an increase in religious attendance and activity and a rise of 'New Religions' (Roemer, 2007). However, it is mostly unemployed, elderly and unmarried individuals whose participation in religious activities increases, because they have less access to support from colleagues and family. For Japan, we predict that there will be no relationship between religiosity and attitudes towards sex or drugs.

Finally, as mentioned above, we do not know if attitudes towards sex are important in making up individuals' political orientation in Europe or in Japan.

2.3 This study

A first objective of this study is to replicate the previous study by Kurzban et al. (2010). A second objective is to compare the cross-cultural predictions of the ideological models with the strategic interests model.

The main predictions center on the relation between sexual attitudes and attitudes towards recreational drug use. Reasoning from ideological models, in Europe attitudes towards both recreational drug use and sex are caused by socialization in a specific ideology. When attitudes towards drugs and sex correlate, this can be explained by ideology: Thus, when statistically controlling for ideology, the correlation between recreational drug use and sexual attitudes will be reduced. In Japan, ideology does not explain moral attitudes; therefore, there will be no relationship between attitudes towards recreational drug use and sex. According to the strategic interests model, in all samples attitudes towards drugs will be related to attitudes towards sex and this correlation will not be eliminated when we control for ideology. The reason is that in all

sampled countries recreational drug use is thought to be causally related to promiscuous sexual behavior.

Additional predictions center on the relation between ideology and recreational drug use. The relation between religiosity and drug attitudes will be partially mediated by sexual attitudes in Europe but not in Japan. The reason is that religion functions to promote family values in Europe but not in Japan. Therefore, the relation between ideology and recreational drug use will at least in part be the effect of the relation between religiosity and sexual attitudes. In Japan, we also do not expect to find a relationship between religiosity and attitudes towards drugs.

All predictions are represented schematically in figures 1 (Belgium and the Netherlands) and 2 (Japan).

Table 1: Predictions of the ideological models versus the strategic interests models for Europe

<pre> graph TD Ideology --> Sex[Attitudes towards sex] Ideology --> Drugs[Attitudes towards recreational drug use] Sex -.- Drugs </pre>	<p>Reasoning from ideological models, ideology shapes one's moral attitudes in Belgium and the Netherlands. If there is a relation between attitudes towards sex and attitudes towards drugs, this can be explained by ideology. Statistically controlling for ideology will eliminate the correlation between attitudes towards sex and attitudes towards recreational drug use. Statistically controlling for attitudes towards sex will not eliminate the correlation between ideology and attitudes towards recreational drug use.</p>
<pre> graph TD Sex[Attitudes towards sex] --> Ideology Sex --> Drugs[Attitudes towards recreational drug use] Ideology -.- Drugs </pre>	<p>According to strategic interests models, attitudes towards sex are causally central in Belgium and the Netherlands. Attitudes towards sex shape one's attitudes towards drugs. Statistically controlling for ideology will not eliminate the correlation between attitudes towards sex and attitudes towards drugs. If there is a relation between religiosity and attitudes towards drugs, this can be explained by attitude towards sex. Statistically controlling for attitudes towards sex will reduce the correlation between religiosity and attitudes towards recreational drug use.</p>

Table 2: Predictions of the ideological models versus the strategic interests models for Japan

Ideology	Reasoning from ideological models, ideology does not shape one's moral attitudes in Japan. As a consequence, there will be no relationship between attitudes towards sex and attitudes towards drugs in Japan.
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">Attitudes towards sex</div> <div style="text-align: center;">Attitudes towards recreational drug use</div> </div>	
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">Attitudes towards sex</div> <div style="margin: 0 10px;">→</div> <div style="text-align: center;">Attitudes towards recreational drug use</div> </div>	<p>According to strategic interests models, attitudes towards sex shape one's attitudes towards drugs in Japan. According to the strategic interests models, there is most likely no relationship between attitudes towards sex and ideology in Japan. As a consequence, there will also be no relationship between attitudes towards recreational drug use and ideology in Japan.</p>

2.3.1 Methods

2.3.1.1 Measures

We adapted the survey used in Kurzban et al. (2010) and translated it to Dutch for Belgium (B) and the Netherlands (NL) and to Japanese for Japan (J). For our dependent measure, participants answered questions about their views on the morality and legality of the use of various recreational drugs (Cronbach's alpha = .88 (B), .89 (NL), and .86 (J)). High scores on Recreational Drug Attitudes indicate greater condemnation of drug use. An example of a question for this variable was:

Eric is going to a dance-party and he considers taking XTC, an illegal mind-altering substance. (1 = strongly disagree; 4 = neutral; 7 = strongly agree)

Using XTC in this way is morally wrong:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Using XTC in this way should be legal:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

For our independent measures, we constructed 18 ideological and personality variables. Participants responded to region-specific measures of religiosity. For Belgium and the Netherlands, these included level of religiosity, level of spirituality, frequency of private prayer, frequency of current church attendance, expected future frequency of church attendance, and how orthodox versus liberal they were concerning their religious affiliation (Religiosity; Cronbach's alpha = .80 (B) and .89 (NL)). For Japan, these

included level of religiosity, level of spirituality, how often they visit the family grave and make offers to the family altar, and how often they (now and in the expected future) visit a local shrine, temple or church, and participate in other religious activities (Cronbach's alpha = .61). Higher scores indicate higher religious engagement.

For Belgium and the Netherlands, we categorized participants in left-wing and right-wing orientation based on their party affiliation (Left/Right-wing; Belgium: left= Belgische Alliantie, Groen!, LSP (Linkse Socialistische Partij), PVDA+ (Partij van de Arbeid) and sp.a (socialistische partij anders); right= CD&V (Christen-Democratisch & Vlaams), N-VA (Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie), Open VLD (Vlaams, Liberaal, Democratisch), UF (Union Francophone) and Vlaams Belang; the Netherlands: left= GL (GroenLinks), PvdD (Partij voor de Dieren), PvdA (Partij van de Arbeid) and SP (Socialistische Partij); right= CU (ChristenUnie), CDA (Christen-Democratisch Appèl), D66 (Democraten 66), PVV (Partij voor de Vrijheid), SGP (Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij) and VVD (Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie)). For Japan, we asked if participants considered themselves right-wing or left-wing on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly support left-wing*, 7 = *strongly support right-wing*).

For Belgium and the Netherlands, participants indicated their agreement with a range of socially salient political issues. One group of items concerned sexual issues involving prostitution, porn and abortion while the other group of items concerned nonsexual issues such as police and punishment, environmental policies, and welfare-redistribution. We calculated a Sexual Politics variable consisting only of sexual items (Cronbach's alpha = .60 (B) and .65 (NL)) and a Nonsexual Politics variable consisting only of nonsexual items (Cronbach's alpha = .69 (B) and .71 (NL)). For both country samples, we removed an item about gay rights and an item about sex education since these items lowered the internal consistency when included in either Politics variable. Higher scores on Sexual Politics indicate stronger agreement with restrictive sexual policies; higher scores on Nonsexual Politics indicate stronger agreement with traditionally right-wing statements – such as harsher punishments for violent behavior – and less agreement with traditionally left-wing statements – such as protecting the environment. For Japan, the sexual items involved online dating sites, porn and prostitution while the nonsexual items involved, among other things, matters concerning the US marine base in Okinawa, North Korea, corruption, taxes, employment and violence. The a priori nonsexual variables did not show high internal consistency. In order to find the factors with the highest internal consistency, we performed a factor analysis (alpha factoring, oblimin rotation). This revealed a two-factor structure, where the item about gay rights and the item about sex education belonged to the nonsexual group rather than to the sexual group. Our final Japanese Sexual Politics variable consisted only of sexual items, excluding gay rights and sex education (Cronbach's alpha = .85) – with higher scores indicating stronger agreement with restrictive sexual policies. The final Japanese Nonsexual Politics variable consisted of 5 nonsexual items,

the item about gay rights and the item about sex education (Cronbach's alpha = .59). Higher scores on Japanese Nonsexual Politics could not be interpreted in Left-Right-wing or liberal/conservative terms.

Participants completed the Ten Item Personality Inventory (TIPI), a measure of the big five (Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003). This scale was used to calculate five basic personality factors (agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness, neuroticism and extraversion). Participants completed the revised sociosexual orientation index (Penke & Asendorpf, 2008) (Sociosexuality; Cronbach's alpha = .86 (B), .86 (NL), and .86 (J)). Higher scores indicate more permissive attitudes towards promiscuity. Participants completed Graham et al.'s (2009) moral relevance items (Cronbach's alpha: Harm = .55 (B), .44 (NL), and .62 (J); Reciprocity = .57 (B), .63 (NL), and .56 (J); Ingroup = .52 (B), .51 (NL), and .53 (J); Hierarchy = .48 (B), .60 (NL), and .46 (J); Purity = .43 (B), .41 (NL), and .16 (J)), and Tybur, Lieberman, & Griskevicius' (2009) disgust scale (Cronbach's alpha: Moral Disgust = .80 (B), .81 (NL), and .81 (J); Pathogen Disgust = .81 (B), .81 (NL), and .74 (J); Sexual Disgust = .78 (B), .83 (NL), and .86(J)).

2.3.1.2 Participants

In Belgium, we recruited first-year undergraduates in the Faculty of Literature and Philosophy at Ghent University. Participation was voluntary and participants did not receive credit for their participation. We only analyzed data from students that had never been married and did not have children. We thus included 476 participants (196 men, 280 women, $M_{\text{age}} = 18.54 \pm 1.95$ SD years, age range = 17-46 years).

In the Netherlands, we recruited undergraduates in the Faculty of Science at the University of Amsterdam. We additionally recruited undergraduate participants via lecturers and study organizations. They either made the paper surveys available for their members or advertised the URL of the electronic survey. These students were from various Dutch universities outside Amsterdam. Participation was voluntary and participants did not receive course credit for participation. We analyzed data from 299 participants who had never been married and did not have children (107 men, 191 women, $M_{\text{age}} = 21.11 \pm 2.751$ SD years, age range = 17-35 years).

In Japan, we recruited undergraduates at Kobe University and at Hiroshima Shudo University. Participation was voluntary and participants did not receive course credit for their participation. We analyzed data from 296 students that had never been married and did not have children (92 men, 204 women, $M_{\text{age}} = 19.89 \pm 1.141$ SD years, age range: 18-24 years).

2.3.2 Results

There was a statistically significant difference between samples in recreational drug attitudes as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F(2, 1070) = 254.76; p < .001$). A Bonferroni post hoc test revealed that participants in the Netherlands were significantly less opposed to recreational drug use ($M_{\text{drugs}} = 4.07 \pm 1.28 \text{ SD}$) than Belgian participants ($M_{\text{drugs}} = 5.01 \pm 1.23 \text{ SD}, p < .001$) or Japanese participants ($M_{\text{drugs}} = 6.25 \pm 1.00 \text{ SD}, p < .001$); Belgian participants were significantly less opposed to recreational drug use than Japanese participants ($p < .001$).

Throughout, we compare the correlations of the undergraduate samples in Belgium, the Netherlands and Japan with the undergraduate sample in the U.S. from Kurzban et al. (2010). For comparison, the results from the American sample are shown in Table 1. (Note that 'non-sexual items' is placed too low: the non-sexual items start with 'moral relevance-purity'.) In this sample, sexual variables (sociosexuality, disgust-sexual and politics-sexual issues) showed the highest correlations with recreational drug attitudes (first column), and these correlations were still significant and substantial when controlling for ideological and personality variables (second column). Recreational drug attitudes also related with the ideological variables (first column) but, after controlling for sexual variables, most of these correlations were reduced to almost zero (third column).

Table 3: Bivariate correlations and partial correlations between recreational drug attitudes and other items from a U.S. undergraduate sample. Source: Kurzban et al. (2010)

		correlations with recreational drug attitudes	partial correlations (controlling for non-sexual items)	partial correlations (controlling for sexual items)	
sexual items	sociosexuality	-0.49**	-0.40**	—	
	disgust—sexual	0.45**	0.31**	—	
	politics—sexual issues	0.35**	0.23**	—	
	moral relevance— purity	0.25**	—	0.14*	
	moral relevance— hierarchy	0.10	—	0.06	
	moral relevance— ingroup	0.07	—	0.04	
	moral relevance— harm	0.14*	—	0.10	
	moral relevance— reciprocity	0.09	—	0.08	
	disgust—moral	0.27**	—	0.16**	
	non-sexual items	disgust—pathogen	0.18**	—	0.07
		religiosity	0.25**	—	0-0.02
politics—ideology		0.19**	—	0.05	
politics—non-sexual issues		-0.01	—	-0.04	
social dominance orientation		-0.17**	—	-0.15*	
conscientiousness		0.17**	—	0.14*	
agreeableness		0.20**	—	0.07	
openness		-0.07	—	-0.03	
extraversion		0.02	—	0.09	
neuroticism		-0.08	—	-0.11	

N = 516

* p < .01

** p < .001

The results from the Belgian sample are shown in Table 1. In this sample, sexual variables showed the highest correlations with recreational drug attitudes, and these correlations were still significant and substantial when controlling for ideological and personality variables. Recreational drug attitudes also related with the ideological variables in the Belgian sample (Nonsexual Politics, Left/Right-wing and Religiosity) and, after controlling for sexual variables, these correlations were still significant. This is different from both the U.S. samples. For the moral relevance and personality variables, moral disgust, harm, ingroup, hierarchy, purity, conscientiousness and agreeableness correlated significantly with recreational drug attitudes; only hierarchy and purity were still significantly related to recreational drug attitudes after controlling for sexual variables.

Table 4: Bivariate and partial correlations between recreational drug attitudes and other items from an undergraduate sample in Belgium

	Correlations with Recreational Drug Attitudes (r)	Partial correlations, controlling for non- sexual items (r)	Partial correlations, controlling for sexual items (r)
Sociosexuality	-0.382**	-0.308**	
Sexual Disgust	0.373**	0.258**	
Sexual Politics	0.364**	0.300**	
Nonsexual Politics	0.171**		0.149*
Left/Right-wing	0.180**		0.188**
Religiosity	0.216**		0.143*
Moral Disgust	0.209**		0.075
Pathogen Disgust	0.103		-0.003
Harm	0.145*		-0.061
Reciprocity	0.087		-0.021
Ingroup	0.150*		0.125
Hierarchy	0.325**		0.250**
Purity	0.278**		0.162*
Conscientiousness	0.248**		0.102
Agreeableness	0.137*		0.011
Openness	-0.113		-0.046
Extraversion	0.073		0.118
Neuroticism	0.053		-0.021

N = 476.

* $p < .01$

** $p < .001$

The results of the sample from the Netherlands are shown in Table 2. In this sample, the three sexual variables had three of the four highest correlations with recreational drug attitudes, and these correlations were still significant and substantial when controlling for ideological and personality variables. Recreational drug attitudes also related with the ideological variables in this sample (religiosity, nonsexual politics and left/right-wing); after controlling for sexual variables, two of these three correlations were still significant (nonsexual politics and left/right-wing). For the moral relevance and personality variables, hierarchy, purity, conscientiousness and agreeableness correlated significantly with recreational drug attitudes; only purity was still significantly related to recreational drug attitudes after controlling for sexual variables.

Table 5: Bivariate and partial correlations between recreational drug attitudes and other items from an undergraduate sample in the Netherlands

	Correlations with Recreational Drug Attitudes (r)	Partial correlations, controlling for non- sexual items (r)	Partial correlations, controlling for sexual items (r)
Sociosexuality	-0.459**	-0.294**	
Sexual Disgust	0.424**	0.313**	
Sexual Politics	0.413**	0.225*	
Nonsexual Politics	0.283**		0.220*
Left/Right-wing	0.323**		0.240**
Religiosity	0.323**		0.109
Moral Disgust	0.075		-0.103
Pathogen Disgust	0.069		-0.065
Harm	0.001		-0.115
Reciprocity	-0.003		-0.121
Ingroup	0.064		0.020
Hierarchy	0.216**		0.156
Purity	0.422**		0.255**
Conscientiousness	0.313**		0.163
Agreeableness	0.166*		0.044
Openness	-0.050		-0.109
Extraversion	-0.075		0.053
Neuroticism	0.077		-0.028

N = 299

* $p < .01$

** $p < .001$

The results from the Japanese sample are shown in Table 3. Here, sexual variables correlated most strongly with attitudes towards recreational drug use and these correlations remained significant and substantial when controlling for other variables. No ideological variables correlated with drug attitudes. Some moral relevance and personality variables correlated with recreational drug attitudes, namely moral disgust, harm, agreeableness, and neuroticism, but only the correlation with harm remained significant after controlling for sexual variables.

Table 6: Bivariate and partial correlations between recreational drug attitudes and other items from an undergraduate sample in Japan

	Correlations with Recreational Drug Attitudes (r)	Partial correlation, controlling for non- sexual items (r)	Partial correlations, controlling for sexual items (r)
Sociosexuality	-0.341**	-0.276**	
Sexual Disgust	0.322**	0.249**	
Sexual Politics	0.390**	0.329**	
Nonsexual Politics	0.016		-0.040
Left/Right-wing	-0.143		-0.099
Religiosity	-0.083		-0.056
Moral Disgust	0.269**		0.141
Pathogen Disgust	0.031		-0.042
Harm	0.170*		0.198*
Reciprocity	0.064		0.067
Ingroup	0.045		0.025
Hierarchy	0.057		0.077
Purity	0.101		0.069
Conscientiousness	0.009		-0.048
Agreeableness	0.180*		0.087
Openness	-0.092		-0.056
Extraversion	-0.105		-0.054
Neuroticism	0.152*		0.146

N =296

* $p < .01$

** $p < .001$

Finally, we compared the bivariate (uncontrolled) correlations for the samples in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Japan with each other and with the U.S. undergraduate sample from Kurzban et al. (2010). We tested if country had a significant effect on the bivariate correlations. The chi-square values and significance levels listed in Table 4, second column, indicate for each variable whether there are significant differences in the correlations between the respective variable and recreational drug attitudes (Arsham, 1994; Fisher's z' -transformation). When we found a significant effect of country, we conducted pairwise comparisons of each country-pair's correlations to investigate pairwise differences (Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken, 2003; Fisher's z' -transformation). The z -values and significance levels of pairwise comparisons of correlations are also listed in Table 4.

Table 7: Differences between bivariate correlations

	Overall difference in correlations ($\chi^2(df=3)$)	Significant pairwise differences (z-values)
Sociosexuality	8.09	
Sexual Disgust	5.00	
Sexual Politics	1.19	
Nonsexual Politics	21.50***	NL > US (4.12**); NL > J (3.34**); B > US (2.87*)
Left/Right-wing	36.84***	NL > J (5.81**); US > J (4.59**); B > J (4.38**)
Religiosity	30.63***	NL > J (5.07**); US > J (4.62**); B > J (4.07**)
Moral Disgust	8.81	
Pathogen Disgust	5.00	
Harm	5.51	
Reciprocity	1.92	
Ingroup	2.76	
Hierarchy	19.78***	B > J (3.77**); B > US (3.72**)
Purity	18.15***	NL > J (4.23**); NL > US (2.67*)
Conscientiousness	16.94**	NL > J (3.82**); B > J (3.29*)
Agreeableness	1.07	
Openness	0.87	
Extraversion	7.62	
Neuroticism	11.57*	J > US (3.19*)

Note. χ^2 -values indicate whether, for all 4 countries, the correlations of each variable with Recreational Drug Attitudes are significantly different from each other. Z -values indicate whether the correlations differ between two specific samples.

* $p < .01$

** $p < .001$

As shown in Table 4, the correlations between sexual variables and recreational drug attitudes did not differ between countries. In contrast, we found between-sample differences in the correlations between ideological variables and recreational drug attitudes. For nonsexual politics, the bivariate correlation was highest in the Netherlands, and significantly higher in Belgium and the Netherlands than in the U.S., and significantly larger in the Netherlands than in Japan. The correlations in the samples from Belgium and the Netherlands did not differ significantly from each other, nor did the correlations in the U.S. and Japanese samples.

There were significant between-sample differences in the correlations between religiosity and recreational drug attitudes. Pairwise comparisons revealed that the bivariate correlation in the Japanese sample was significantly lower than in all other samples. The correlations in the other samples did not differ significantly from each other.

We also found significant between-sample differences in the correlations between left/right-wing and recreational drug attitudes. The correlation in the Japanese sample was negative and significantly lower than in all other samples, where it was positive. The correlations in the other samples did not differ significantly from each other.

Two moral relevance items differed significantly across the samples. The correlation between hierarchy and recreational drug attitudes was significantly higher in Belgium than in Japan or the US. The correlation between purity and recreational drug attitudes was significantly higher in the Netherlands than in Japan or the US. There were no significant differences between the other correlations.

The correlation with conscientiousness was lowest in Japan, and significantly lower than in Belgium or the Netherlands. Finally, the correlation with neuroticism was highest in Japan and lowest in the US; only this difference reached significance.

2.4 Discussion

2.4.1 Comparing models

In this study we evaluated two models by taking advantage of their opposing predictions with regard to mediation. Reasoning from the strategic interests model we predicted that there would be a relation between attitudes towards the use of recreational party drugs and attitudes towards sex in all three student samples, and that this relationship would not be explained by ideology or personality. Reasoning from the

ideological models we would predict that there would also be a relationship between attitudes towards sex and towards recreational drug use in Belgium and the Netherlands, but that this correlation would be explained by ideological variables. There would be no relation between sexual attitudes and attitudes towards recreational drug use in Japan.

The predictions of the strategic interests model were upheld: In all samples, the relationships between drug attitudes and sexual variables were significant and substantial, before and after controlling for religious, political, and personality variables. Specifically, participants who score low in sociosexuality (i.e., are less promiscuous, thus, more sexually restricted), participants who are more easily disgusted by sexual items, and those who have more restricted attitudes towards politically salient sexual issues are more opposed to recreational drug use. Kurzban et al. (2010) found the same patterns in a U.S. student sample and in a U.S. internet sample. Comparing the student samples revealed that the bivariate correlations did not differ significantly among the four groups. This provides substantial evidence that recreational drug attitudes are powerfully influenced by sexual strategies, independent of local political and religious dynamics or the prevailing local permissiveness towards recreational drug use.

Kurzban et al. (2010) suggested that their findings in the U.S. should be replicated in a cultural milieu with different mores surrounding sex and recreational drug use. We included at least two different milieus regarding drug attitudes and sex attitudes. Japan has a very restrictive drug policy. According to Greberman (1994) the maximum sentence for possession of amphetamines and heroin in Japan is 10 years, while it is 1 year in the U.S. In contrast, the Netherlands is unique in the extent to which cannabis is tolerated. Attitudes towards sex in Japan have long been more in line with a monogamous, family oriented life style. In our samples, we find significant differences across all three countries for recreational drug attitudes, and we find that participants in the Netherlands and Belgium are more permissive towards sex than the Japanese.

Despite this variation, it can be interesting to replicate these findings in an environment where the relation between attitudes towards sex and drugs is eliminated. According to our predictions, attitudes towards sex and drugs will only correlate if drug use correlates with promiscuous, unrestricted sexual behavior. In this cross-cultural study, we only tested undergraduates and only tested attitudes towards recreational use of typical party drugs, i.e., drugs that are used by younger people in social settings where they meet mostly other young people (and, as a consequence, where the chances of a sexual encounter are increased). It would be informative to test attitudes towards a range of drugs that are not typically used in such circumstances, e.g., stimulants that increase work or study performance. Indeed, the relation between sexual behavior and drug use holds for alcohol and illegal party drugs, but has not been tested – to our knowledge – for other drugs.

While the relationships between sexual attitudes and drug attitudes did not differ among the four student samples, there were several differences in the relationships between drug attitudes and ideological, moral, and personality variables. A key difference across samples was that in the Japanese sample, religiosity did not significantly correlate with recreational drug attitudes, whereas there were significant correlations in the samples from the Netherlands, Belgium, and the United States. This is in line with the suggestion that Shinto-Buddhism in Japan does not particularly provide support for those pursuing a monogamous, committed sexual strategy. In Belgium and the Netherlands, the relationships between religiosity and recreational drug attitudes seemed to be partially mediated by sexual variables, which supports the suggestion that religion in these European countries supports child-oriented family values to some extent. However, as we did not directly test for relationships between sexual and reproductive attitudes and religiosity, more research is needed to substantiate these hypotheses. So far these findings are compatible with ideological models and the strategic interests model.

Looking at the cross-sample comparisons, the correlations of recreational drug attitudes with general political orientation (left/right-wing or liberal/conservative in the U.S. sample) followed a similar pattern as the correlations with religiosity. In the U.S. undergraduate sample, political orientation correlated with recreational drug attitudes because of its relationship with sexual attitudes. In contrast, in both Belgium and the Netherlands, political orientation correlated significantly with recreational drug attitudes and these relationships were hardly mediated by sexual variables, which is different from the relationships with Religiosity. Hence, while sexual attitudes play a very important role in determining U.S. undergraduates' political orientation, drug issues are clearly important statistical predictors of the political orientation of students from Belgium and the Netherlands. In the Japanese sample, left/right-wing never related significantly to recreational drug attitudes. This suggests that drug issues do not divide the Japanese political landscape.

In the U.S. undergraduate sample, agreement with specific nonsexual policy statements did not correlate significantly with recreational drug attitudes. This was significantly different in Belgium and the Netherlands: The correlations between nonsexual politics and recreational drug attitudes were significant, they were significantly stronger than in the U.S. undergraduate sample, and they were hardly mediated by sexual variables. Thus, as is the case with left/right-wing, drug issues clearly relate to political attitudes in Belgium and the Netherlands. Again, in Japan, political attitudes did not track drug attitudes.

We think one final pattern is noteworthy. For hierarchy, purity and conscientiousness, we found significantly higher correlations in the samples from Belgium and/or the Netherlands than in the samples from the U.S. and/or Japan. However, when looking at the significance levels in Kurzban et al. (2010), the U.S.

relationships seem to be more similar to the relationships in the samples from Belgium and the Netherlands than to the relationships in the Japanese sample: In Japan, none of these variables related significantly to recreational drug attitudes, before or after controlling for sexual attitudes. In Belgium, the Netherlands and the U.S., some of these variables are significantly related with recreational drug attitudes before controlling for sexual attitudes, and some are still significantly related with recreational drug attitudes after controlling for sexual attitudes. Previously, these (but also other) variables have been found to relate to ideological conservatism (Graham et al., 2009; Carney, Jost, Gosling, and Potter, 2008). As such, it might be tempting to speak of a ‘conservative personality’ and to suggest that in Belgium, the Netherlands and the U.S., but not in Japan, ‘conservative personality traits’ relate to recreational drug attitudes and/or sexual variables. At present though, this is merely a speculative possibility that should be tested.

These findings support strategic interests theories because we found that, across four diverse countries, attitudes towards sex and drugs are related, even when controlling for ideological and personal variables. Our findings also indicate that relationships between general ideological orientations and concrete attitudes crucially depend on regional dynamics. In the U.S., political conservatism and religiosity promote and support restrictive, high-commitment sexual strategies (Weeden et al., 2008; Li et al., 2010); as a consequence, sexual variables explain the relationship between drug attitudes and ideology (Kurzban et al., 2010). In contrast, in Japan and Europe, conservative ideologies are not, or to a lesser extent, organized around restricted sexual strategies and family values. As a consequence, if drug attitudes are related to ideological variables, this relationship cannot be (entirely) explained by sexual attitudes.

2.4.2 Moral disagreement

Public debates about recreational drug use usually revolve around public health and criminality. For example, when checking political parties’ websites, we find that in Belgium (Flanders), Vlaams Belang defends a merciless war against the sale of drugs¹ and refers to criminality, public health and the stepping stone theory, linking drug use to addiction². Groen! equally focuses on the negative health effects of drug use but adds that repression and criminalization exacerbate the detrimental consequences for public

¹ <http://www.vlaamsbelang.be/3/18/dossier/239>

² <http://www.vlaamsbelang.org/0/7128/>

health and criminality³. They argue for the legalization and regulation of cannabis. These parties' reasoning provides a clear example of how explicated arguments are not necessarily the real causes of one's view. This is not to say that other parties' opinions are more or less consistent. We discuss these two parties because Groen! and Vlaams Belang are particularly clear and outspoken on these issues.

Both parties' websites mention the existence of scientific information that supports their arguments. However, when taking a closer look, it is unlikely that only the mentioned arguments determine these political instances' views towards recreational drug use. Reasoning from public health concerns, alcohol use should be prevented because alcohol's health effects rather ban it to the group of hard drugs (Nutt, King, Saulsbury, & Blakemore, 2007). Not one party argues for more prevention of alcohol use in the context of the debate on drugs. Reasoning from criminality concerns, the sale of all drugs should be regulated instead of criminalized. According to the United Nations' World Drug Report, the war on drugs has had detrimental consequences irrespective of the kind of drugs (World Drug Report of the United Nations, 2011). But Vlaams Belang argues for continued criminalization of all drugs (except alcohol, tobacco, coffee and tea). Groen! explicitly rejects decriminalizing 'hard drugs' (without further specification) because of the dangers to society. One might try to argue that health concerns warrant a distinction between hard and soft drugs, where the former's use should be prevented with more rigorous means than the latter. However, Groen! suggests treating cannabis ('soft' in regard to health risks) on a par with alcohol ('hard' in regard to health risks) and tobacco, and refers to 'scientific information' to substantiate this view. Consequentially, if the advanced arguments are the only ones that matter, one should decriminalize and regulate the sale of all drugs or focus on the prevention of alcohol use. Clearly other things matter too in this discussion.

In the case of politicians, the fact that the average view of their electorate is inevitably inconsistent is without doubt an important cause of their public standpoints. Studies showing that the electorate's views have changed would thus constitute influential information: Such studies will not immediately change political representatives' minds, but they will certainly motivate them to look for evidence in favor of their voters' views. However, the fact that some standpoint accords with public opinion is rarely accepted as a good reason to hold that view.

Likewise, the here presented study shows that other concerns implicitly matter when making up a view towards recreational drug use. In the case of our surveyed students, this is the potentially lewd behavior of drugged party animals. It is important to stress that we only sampled students' answers. While students are likely to associate party

³http://www.groen.be/ideen/vraag-en-antwoord/wat-is-het-standpunt-van-groen-inzake-drugsgenotsmiddelen_383.aspx?searchtext=drugs

drugs with lascivious party behavior, it is plausible that the same drugs elicit other associated thoughts in older individuals – e.g., cocaine may be seen as a work performance-enhancing yuppie drug instead of a party drug. In the case of students though, the link between recreational drug use and promiscuous sexual behavior might be co-opted in the discourse. Observing the present political debate would not predict the efficacy of this argument, but studies like the present one suggest it matters for at least specific groups in society.

Here we see that empirical studies might inform us about relevant causes of people's judgments, and these causes can be taken up as arguments in the discussion. Of course, this will not solve the disagreement and certain causes of the disagreement are likely to stay beyond discussion (e.g., one's own sexual attitudes). So how should we deal with such a stand-off? Is there anything normative or practical that we can conclude from this? It is time to discuss the is/ought gap again.

Chapter 3

Normative ethics does not need a foundation – it needs more science

Once a man wanted to cross the river in a skiff with a billy-goat, a dog (wolf) and a cabbage. The skiff carried only the man and one of the others. Had the man taken the goat across the river, it would have been a good start, but had the man gone back to bring the cabbages or the dog, the goat would have eaten the cabbages on the other bank, or the dog (wolf) would have killed the goat. The man didn't know what to do. Finally he came to an idea. Took the goat across the river, came back, took the dog across, but also brought the goat back to the cabbages. Took the cabbage to the skiff and left the goat on the riverbank. Took the cabbage to the dog – and the goat couldn't eat it – and now went after the goat. Finally took the goat across the river for the second time. Now all three were together on the bank, and the man did not let them eat or kill each other

- folklore tale, cited in Voolaid (2007)

3.1 Introduction

In chapter one, we introduced the ubiquitous is/ought gap, the related naturalistic fallacy, and some contemporary understandings or uses of these retorts. In both chapters one and two, we drew attention to previous findings in descriptive ethics that explore the nature and extent of individual differences in moral cognition. Such findings have had an impact on moral philosophy (Chapter 1), but it remains an open question what to do when confronted with moral disagreement. In this chapter, we explain how recent naturalistic ethicists defend an interaction between science and ethics. In chapter four, we use this discussion and empirical findings to critically evaluate arguments for and against normative moral relativism and toleration.

Despite the idea that descriptions are not prescriptions, some ethicists defend the view that scientific findings can be a guide in determining how one should live (e.g., Kurtz, 2007; Pigliucci, 2003). Such *scientifically informed normative ethics* (hereafter, *scientific ethics*) generally meets two kinds of criticism (see Section 3.3.2). First, the idea that normative statements can be deduced from scientific statements is accused of committing the *naturalistic fallacy* (e.g., Farber, 1994; Woolcock, 1999) or of illegitimately bridging the is/ought gap (Rosenberg, 2000). Second, when not committing this fallacy, it is claimed that scientific ethicists fail in demonstrating the relevance of science for normativity because science cannot offer a *foundation* for ethics (e.g. Farber, 1994; Woolcock, 1999; Rosenberg, 2000). While the first criticism is often debated, the second criticism is not systematically discussed in the literature. Still, it is not unusual for critics of scientific ethics to endorse both statements as valid.

The first aim of this chapter is to defend scientific ethics against these two major criticisms. In Section 3.3.1, it is illustrated that science can be pragmatically relevant to normative questions without committing the naturalistic fallacy. The second aim of this chapter is to argue that a difference in conception of normative ethics underlies the disagreement between proponents and opponents of scientific ethics. We hold that the discussed criticisms of scientific ethics imply a *foundational* view of normative ethics, while scientific ethicists see normative ethics as *nonfoundational*. The third aim of this chapter is to analyze the reasoning behind scientific ethics and highlight some plausible consequences. Present-day scientific ethicists refer to naturalism to defend their view – this chapter is thus dedicated to naturalistic ethics. We specifically ask how naturalistic ethics bears on the quest for foundations and how it deals with individual differences in moral cognition. The main conclusions are that, first, a naturalistic normative ethics is not committed to the quest for a normative foundation – instead it opts to reason back and forth between the descriptive and the normative domain. Second, the discussed naturalistic ethicists allow that different moral norms apply to different individuals or

groups. This provides the link with chapter four where we discuss moral relativism and toleration.

In order to substantiate the arguments put forward in the present chapter, we first have to revisit Hume's is/ought gap and George Edward Moore's notion of *the naturalistic fallacy*, explain what is meant by *foundations* in normative ethics and indicate how both themes are related to each other.

3.2 The naturalistic fallacy and the impossible quest for foundations

3.2.1 Skyhooks¹ and other foundations

The words *foundation*, *grounding* and their derivatives are differentially used in the ethical literature. In this dissertation, *foundational normative ethics*, shortly *foundational ethics*, refers to any attempt at deriving a normative system from one or several *first moral norms*. *Grounding ethics*, then, refers to the act of finding such first norms.

The distinction that we want to draw out in this chapter, between foundational and non-foundational ethics, has to do with the proper methods of moral investigation. We are concerned with the quest for first norms for normative ethics. What, then, is a first norm? Some philosophers have attempted to find one or a very limited amount of moral norms that are determined by something entirely non-normative and cannot be changed by other norms, moral rules or moral prescriptions. They can be grounded in, or determined by, a descriptive theory, a metaphysical theory, intuition, religion etc. It means that the non-normative theory in itself, without the help of any purely normative statement, determines at least one moral norm. That moral norm can be refuted on the basis of new non-normative information but it *cannot* be refuted on the basis of other moral norms, rules or prescriptions. We thus denote such determined moral norms as first moral norms. The quest for such first moral norms is accordingly

¹ The term 'skyhook' refers to Dennett's (1995) 'Darwin's Dangerous Idea'. Dennett uses this term to refer to miracles, sources of complex, seemingly designed natural phenomena, that do not build on lower, simpler layers. Explanations referring to God, intelligent design, or the explanandum's own ground are examples of skyhooks. Some foundational ethicists refer to skyhooks to explain a normative system.

called *grounding ethics*. Grounding ethics results in a foundational ethics. We will now give illustrations to further clarify these concepts.

Natural law theories in ethics can serve as examples of foundational ethics. According to Feser (2010), natural law theories evolving from the classical tradition (e.g. Thomas Aquinas) ground moral rules in nature by asserting that there is no strict distinction between descriptive and normative statements: Moral norms, including their moral force, are part of nature and can be described as such. In other words, in natural law theories purpose and normativity are taken to be part of the world, hence of physical nature. For classical natural law theorists, a description of nature also determines general moral norms from which specific rules can be inferred. According to Thomas Aquinas' natural law theory, for instance, the precepts of moral law theory are given by God and are to be found in nature. They are universally binding and universally knowable (Murphy, 2008). The content of Aquinas' moral theory is that good should be done and evil avoided. This is an abstract 'first moral norm' and it is conceivable that many agree with it – indeed, it might be the case that all nonfoundational normative systems agree on this. The content of the moral norm however is not important in deciding if it is a foundational ethics or not: for this we must consider the procedure for finding substantive moral norms and ask how the moral norms in the system relate to each other. In this case, all moral norms are derived from this moral norm. Moreover, the norm is determined by nature and cannot be refuted by moral norms that follow from it. This, then, is a clear instance of foundational ethics.

Another example is a new natural law theory as developed by Walsh (2008). In his theory, friendship, offspring and life are first identified as ends in themselves, as basic human goods. These first values cannot be questioned within the moral system that follows from them. In fact, it is unclear how he derives these ends, so it remains an open question what, if anything, would constitute evidence for or against them. They are the touchstone against which all acts must be evaluated. Acts can be chosen because of the act itself, or because of its consequences. Either way, if the choice to perform an act entails the choice of an appropriate human good, then this act is morally good; if not, it is morally bad. As such, Walsh (2008) argues, sexual acts are only morally good if the choice to perform them entails the choice of a basic human good. According to Walsh' new natural law theory, sex in itself is not a basic human good, but procreation is. Hence, a sexual act must entail the choice to procreate. Following this reasoning, Walsh considers homosexual sex to be morally wrong because the choice for homosexual sex cannot entail the choice to procreate. This shows that specific basic human goods here function as independently derived foundations of a moral system. Walsh' religiously inspired new natural law theory is also a foundational normative ethic. Contrary to the former example though, the content of its first moral norms is much more concrete and more likely to be controversial. But again, in deciding if the system is foundational or

not, one has to consider the procedures for finding or changing moral norms and not the content of the moral norms.

The popular religious normative systems put forward by the Intelligent Design and Creationist (IDC) movement are also examples of foundational ethics. According to writers such as the young earth creationist Wysong (1976), the Christian creation myth explains where we come from, but, at the same time, it also legitimates a certain social order. As a consequence, we can find what is right and wrong in the creation story, viz., genesis. For example, if we want to know the right place of men and women, we can ask one of the creationist websites *Answers in Genesis*, which provides us with the following advice (Stelzer, 2007): “One of the keys to maintaining the order God desires is recognizing the authority structure He established. (...) The Creator chose to form man first and to entrust to him the role of leader in the home, for His glory” (Stelzer, 2007). Thus God has made man the leader of the home; we should maintain God's desired order, therefore we must keep this structure. The role of women is similarly explained and legitimized: “God assigned the married woman the responsibility of being a helpmate to her husband (Genesis 2:18, 20).”

Certain nineteenth century intellectuals such as Leslie Stephen and William Kingdon Clifford developed a normative system, attempting to ground ethics in biological evolution (for an overview, see Farber, 1994). Herbert Spencer's (1820-1903) evolutionary ethics epitomized this approach. At first, Spencer inferred his first principle from God's will in *Social Statics* (Farber, 1994, p. 40). Only later in *Data of Ethics* and *Principles of Ethics* did Spencer ground his normative system in evolution. He reasoned that evolution by natural selection results in adaptations that are morally superior. Whatever is further evolved by natural selection is therefore better. Everything following from this first principle must be a correct norm. Whether one agrees with the content of this moral norm or not, the basic idea is again that it is a first moral norm.

Precisely because it was a foundational system, philosophers instantly refuted Spencer's ethics. George Edward Moore (1873-1958) dedicated substantial parts of his *Principia Ethica* to Spencer's evolutionary ethics (Moore, 1993/1903, §33). According to Moore, Spencer committed the crucial fallacy that he coined *the naturalistic fallacy*.

As illustrated in chapter one, this fallacy, as well as Hume's is/ought gap, are nowadays often invoked to argue that one cannot ground ethics in evolution. However, a close reading of the *Principia Ethica* reveals that both Hume and Moore in fact argued that one cannot 'ground' ethics in anything.

In the next section, we discuss Hume's and Moore's reasoning that leads to the is/ought gap and naturalistic fallacy argument. It is important to know that we do not purport to discuss the validity of their conclusion. The aim is to make their reasoning clear in order to better understand what exactly is deemed fallacious and why. This will allow us to ask if scientific ethicists are indeed committing the naturalistic fallacy as its

critics suggest, and to evaluate the coherence of critics' arguments in Section 3.3.2. The here presented interpretation of Moore's naturalistic fallacy is similar to the interpretation put forward by diCarlo and Teehan (2007). However, we specifically stress that the is/ought gap and the naturalistic fallacy relate to grounding ethics. Since this is crucial to evaluate the criticisms of scientific ethics, we will highlight the relevant parts in Hume's and Moore's reasoning.

3.2.2 Hume's and Moore's famous arguments

In his explication of the naturalistic fallacy, Moore built on the insights of Sidgwick. Sidgwick, a British utilitarian moral philosopher, was in turn influenced by Hume's work. Hume noticed that the author of every moral system seems to make prescriptive or normative conclusions from descriptive statements (Hume, 1739-1740). By now many interpretations of Hume's and Moore's reasoning exist (Curry, 2006), and philosophers refer to either Hume or Moore to criticize scientific ethics.

According to Hume, that something is right or wrong cannot be *true or false* (i.e., such statements have no truth value) and cannot be shown *a priori*; neither can it be *demonstrated* that something is right or wrong; there is also no system of eternal measures of right and wrong. It seems then that this kind of foundation is impossible: that we start with the existence of a first moral norm (or set of norms) that is eternal, thus cannot be changed by anything that follows from it.

Hume's reasoning goes as follows. We do not distinguish between right and wrong (vice and virtue) by means of reason. This is because morality is a practical matter: it influences our actions. Reason does not influence our actions – in fact, its force is very hard to keep, as the following beautiful paragraph makes clear:

There is an inconvenience which attends all abstruse reasoning that it may silence, without convincing an antagonist, and requires the same intense study to make us sensible of its force, that was at first requisite for its invention. When we leave our closet, and engage in the common affairs of life, its conclusions seem to vanish, like the phantoms of the night on the appearance of the morning; and it is difficult for us to retain even that conviction, which we had attained with difficulty. (Hume, 1739-1740, Book III, Part I, Sect. 1)

Only reason can a priori show us what is true and false. Therefore, because morality is not perceived by reason, we cannot a priori show that that something is right or wrong.

We cannot demonstrate that right and wrong are properties of the external objects either, because for every statement that equates virtue with a certain relation between external objects, we can find another example, that is another instance of the same

relation between external objects but is not a virtue. Hume gives the example of ingratitude towards one's parents. This, he says, is clearly a vice, but it does not follow that we have demonstrated that gratitude towards one's parents is always a vice. For if an oak's sapling overtops and destroys the parent tree, this is clearly ungrateful of the oak towards its parent, but we cannot say that it is wrong. Thus, neither demonstration nor reason yield moral norms; the result is that no eternal norm can be established:

Thus it will be impossible to fulfil the first condition required to the system of eternal measures of right and wrong; because it is impossible to shew those relations, upon which such a distinction may be founded: And it is as impossible to fulfil the second condition; because we cannot prove A PRIORI, that these relations, if they really existed and were perceived, would be universally forcible and obligatory. (Hume, 1739-1740, Book III, Part I, Sect. 1)

Moore's reasoning is somewhat different, but has similar implications: It focuses on rejecting all such premises that link normativity to something descriptive. As such Moore deemed it equally impossible to find a demonstratively true first moral principle. More correctly, he rejected a certain class of first principles, namely those that are considered to be analytically true. Before clarifying this, let us first revisit Moore's reasoning in the *Principia Ethica*.

Ethics – in Moore's terminology – is about moral truth, not about practice (Moore, 1993/1903, §3-§5, §14). It is about finding a first statement upon which Ethics – including the discussion of our everyday normative judgments (idem, §1) – can be built. This first statement provides an answer to Ethics' *first question*, i.e. "What is good?" (idem, §2). Moore adds: "Unless this first question be fully understood, and its true answer clearly recognized, the rest of Ethics is as good as useless from the point of view of systematic knowledge" (idem, §5). In other words, to save Ethics, one must find a first moral statement – such as the second premise in the example above. This principle must define what is *good* and it must be true by definition. This means that it must be *analytically* true (cf. *infra*).

So far so good, were it not that Moore insisted that finding a first moral principle that truly defines what is good is impossible. This has to do with the fact that he has an analytic definition of the word 'good' in mind (idem, §6). In general, a true analytic definition describes the real nature of a notion denoted by the word; it enumerates the simple notions that are already in the meaning of the complex notion (idem, §7). Analytic statements hence only explicate what is already in the meaning of the subject. The meaning of 'good' then describes its true nature. How does one find this meaning according to Moore? One does not need any observation to establish the real nature of a notion. Every normal user of a certain language, when thinking clearly, instantly grasps when an analytic statement is true. Hence one can derive the true meaning of 'good' by clear thinking alone. Now, 'good' is indefinable, says Moore: it is already a simple notion,

meaning that there is nothing in the meaning of 'good' than 'good' itself. Those who define 'good' as something else and claim this definition to be true all commit the naturalistic fallacy (idem, §1 - §15). Moreover, Moore continues, we intuitively acknowledge that we cannot define 'good' because for any definition of 'good' as something else, we can meaningfully ask whether this 'something else' is indeed 'good'. This means that we never instantly see such a statement to be true, thus it can never be analytically true. This argument is since known as the 'open question argument' (idem, §13).

Moore's idea that all of Ethics should be built upon an analytic truth logically implies that nothing that follows from this truth can refute this first definition – otherwise it would not be an analytic truth. Hence Moore was looking for a first norm and he concluded that it was impossible to find one. The core idea of Moore's reasoning is thus that one cannot ground a first moral principle: not in nature, not in metaphysics, and not in ethics itself. Only analysis of the meaning of a moral concept like 'good' would provide a solution, but this is impossible. According to Moore, naturalists – up to his time, and especially Spencer – made this very mistake. They tried to analytically identify 'good' with something else.

Contrary to what the term 'naturalistic fallacy' seems to imply, Moore's argument hence also applies to metaphysical properties (idem, §66 - §85). Similarly, religiously grounded normative systems are equally debunked if they rely purely on conceptual analysis for their foundations (cf. diCarlo & Teehan, 2007).

Thus, in this interpretation, both Hume's is/ought gap and Moore's naturalistic fallacy preclude the possibility of foundational ethics, and the derivation of a first normative principle from descriptive theories, unless we can conceive of another kind of foundation that does not rest on similarity in meaning. Because the subtle differences between these two fallacies are less important for my argument, we will use them interchangeably in the remainder of this dissertation.

Accepting this interpretation of Hume's is/ought gap and Moore's naturalistic fallacy has direct consequences for any scientific ethics. If scientists find that something *is* the case, it does not demonstratively or logically follow that the descriptive statement, or parts of it, *ought* to be the case. There is no such simple connection between scientific statements and ethical statements. Also, unlike in the field of mathematics, no first moral norm will be discovered by reasoning about (the definition of) moral terms.

Before we proceed with an example of the relevance of science for ethics, we should point out that one might also aim to build a conditional normative system. In such a system, we do not aim to demonstrate an eternal, analytical, or a priori truth. Neither Hume nor Moore argue against conditional normative systems. What do these look like?

Take the following reasoning (cf. Ferguson, 2001):

- (1) Premise 1: Humans are evolutionary disposed to act altruistically.

- (2) Conclusion: Humans ought to act altruistically.

This is a wrong kind of reasoning because the conclusion does not logically follow from the premise: There is a difference in meaning between ‘are evolutionary disposed to’ and ‘ought to’. How can we make the inference correct? This, we reckon, can be done by adding a second premise, as is done below:

- (1) Premise 1: Humans are evolutionary disposed to act altruistically.
- (2) Premise 2: It is good to do everything humans are disposed to do by their evolution.
- (3) Conclusion: It is good to act altruistically.

Here, the conclusion does follow logically from the premises. Of course, and problematically so, it comes at the cost of premise 2 being a *prescription* instead of a *description*. As a result, one has not derived a moral principle from descriptive statements only. In other words, it is not demonstrated that one can go from propositions merely linked by ‘is’ to propositions merely linked by ‘ought’. The conclusion only follows if we accept the normative premise. Now, what if one does not agree with this premise? In that case, the reasoning will simply not appeal to you. This, however, does not mean that we are simply divided between those who accept the premise and those who do not. We can give reasons for or against each normative premise, as we will see in Section 3.3.1 and further.

This might all seem quite trivial. Nonetheless, most of the time, scientific ethicists engage in conditional reasoning. If, however, they are not accused of committing a fallacy, it is objected that science has not been relevant for the normative argument. Let us now illustrate that science can be relevant for ethics without committing the naturalistic fallacy, and explain why some critics of scientific ethics contradict themselves.

3.3 Twentieth century scientific ethics and its critics

3.3.1 Moral guidance without foundations

Though Moore denounced all ‘naturalist’ moral systems, there were numerous early approaches in evolutionary ethics that did not commit the naturalistic fallacy (e.g., those of T. H. Huxley and G. G. Simpson). Also from the last decades of the twentieth

century on, several accounts proliferate in defense of a closer and argumentatively sound interplay between science and normative ethics (e.g., Ruse, 2008). What typifies these approaches is the argument that science is relevant for ethics, without there being an attempt to start from or derive a first moral principle.

Proposals in which scientific findings are claimed to play an important role for normativity vary from being uncontroversial but allegedly ‘trivial’ to supposedly reductionist accounts. Most authors stress the philosophical question of how moral and empirical *concepts* are connected (or unconnected); rarely do they make their proposals concrete, e.g. by exemplifying how science informs ethics in everyday issues. A refreshing exception, though in the field of ethics broadly conceived, can be found in Pigliucci (2003).

Our aim here is to discuss how scientific findings have an impact on normative ethics and ethical practice, even if they do not yield *demonstratively true* ethical principles. Scientific ethics deviates indeed from Moore’s ‘Ethics’, in being preoccupied less with absolute truth and more with practice (e.g., Kurtz & Koepsell, 2007). In Section 3.4, we look closer at the philosophical assumptions underpinning this view of ethics. Scientific information is at least *conditionally* relevant for ethics. That is, *if* we accept certain moral principles, *then* everything known can be used to infer rules that help us to reach these moral ends. In this scenario, scientific knowledge is instrumental to ethics (Rosenberg, 2000), or science can help us to infer hypothetical imperatives (Binmore, 2005). This is not controversial, and both foundational *and* nonfoundational systems can accept this procedure. Hence scientific findings are important for ethics in general. However, scientific ethics relies mostly on this conditional procedure, while foundational ethics allocates most philosophical activity on the quest for first moral norms. Moreover, in scientific ethics, the moral principles we use as assumptions can be evaluated by scientific findings and abductively inferred from scientific findings. In the following paragraph we illustrate that these procedures do not commit the naturalistic fallacy.

A clarifying example is provided by the Kibbutzim in Israel, modern communities that are unique in their organization of production, ownership, consumption and child care (Agassi, 1989). From the start these communities aimed to create a society where all would be equal and free from exploitation. Property was common. Every member received an equal wage depending on his or her needs. Men and women were expected to participate equally in all kinds of work: household chores, childcare, politics, farming and so on. Trained nurses and teachers raised children away from their parents. It was hoped that this would liberate women from their traditional mother roles. However, after one generation already this organizational structure weakened. Women were found to be more active in teaching and child care, while men participated more in politics and field work. Men also took up the majority of leading and managing positions. Because of these role patterns, men had easier access to some assets such as a car, an office and an apartment in town.

Some commentaries (e.g., Agassi, 1988) remained convinced that these gender differences could and should be eradicated. To do so, it would be helpful – or even necessary – to identify the precise factors causing the gender differences. Other commentaries (e.g., Palgi, Jones, & Sklar, 1983) saw in the unique constellation of the Israeli Kibbutzim a test case for social theories explaining gender inequality as a consequence of the unequal social organization of production, ownership and so on. Since gender differences were not eradicated in the Kibbutzim, where social organization started out equal for men and women, these theories are not supported. Maybe then one can consider biology as a factor accounting for at least some gender differences?

Let us zoom in on explanations of childcare asymmetries (yet without claiming these explanations to apply to other aspects of role patterns – indeed, for this more scientific information would be needed).

Concerning child care asymmetries, in all cultures mothers spend more time with their children than fathers do (Lamb, 2003; Blakemore, Berenbaum, & Liben, 2008). In addition, women have a lower threshold for responding to babies than most men (Silk, 2002) and feel more protective towards infants (Alley, 1983). More recently, it was found that women are more interested than men in babies and caretaking (Maestripieri & Pelka, 2002) and that women feel somewhat more motivated than men to take care for babies when these have (manipulated) very baby-like faces (Glocker, Langleben, Ruparel, Loughhead, Gur, & Sachser, 2009). This can be modified partly by the social environment. For example, pregnant women who had more prior childcare experience (for example due to baby-sitting) feel more positive about caretaking, children and their own fetus (Fleming, Ruble, Krieger, & Wong, 1997), and women may be asked to baby-sit more than men. But biology also plays a role in ‘molding’ mothers into this role. Pregnancy hormones seem to influence nurturing behavior: a pregnant woman’s body experiences a change in the estrogen/progesterone ratio. The change in this ratio during pregnancy correlates with maternal behavior immediately after birth (Fleming et al., 1997). Lactation as well may influence mothering behavior due to lactation-induced hormonal changes. As tested in nonhuman primates, breastfeeding heightens the concentration of blood hormones like oxytocin, which has a motivating role in nursing and grooming behavior (Maestripieri, Hoffman, Anderson, & Highley, 2009). It is suggested that these biological factors induce nursing behavior in females (Hrdy, 2005) and make it satisfying for mothers to nurture their children. However, this does not mean that men cannot be induced to demonstrate caretaking behavior. That the social environment can induce paternal care is for instance suggested by the finding that men engage in more paternal care when couple intimacy is high (Belsky, Steinberg, & Draper, 1991). Also biology helps in inducing paternal care: expectant mothers and fathers both experience an increase in prolactin levels and, in humans, higher prolactin levels in men are correlated with more paternal behavior (Storey, Walsh, Quinton, & Wynne-

Edwards, 2000; Fleming, Corter, Stallings, & Steiner, 2002). Experienced fathers are more reactive towards cries of babies than first-time or less experienced fathers: They show a more enhanced prolactin response and they feel a greater need to respond to the infant's cries (Fleming et al., 2002).

In other words, while men can be induced to be more responsive to children, it is plausible that many mothers – not necessarily women in general, maybe only those who have been pregnant or are lactating – will still *want* to spend more time with their children compared to fathers. If these differences in desires are – even partly – caused by hormonal changes during pregnancy and lactation, then we may expect these differences in desires to exist over a vast range of social environments. Along this line of thought, one can expect that completely eradicating the resulting role patterns would demand that many, not all, men and women constantly act against their internal desires. This could be very hard to do, and even could be dissatisfying.

Of course, it is exactly the point of moral behavior to act *against* certain tendencies for *moral* reasons. However, enforcing the total eradication of all gender differences not only conflicts with strong spontaneous tendencies, it can therefore also conflict with specific *values* humans have. In general, even though we may all agree that familial care is valuable, mothers may value familial care more than fathers do. If we accept that what is morally praiseworthy depends on how people affectively respond to it, then certain moral evaluations depend on what people value. And in this case, different people value different things. We thus should also consider *these* values as moral reasons for acting. As a consequence, a more coherent solution could allow for role patterns to exist, without *forcing* people into a certain gender-role and without devaluing one or the other role in economic terms. This implies that one takes into account the inherent desires people have as informing us about prima facie moral values, to see how these prima facie values mesh with each other and our other values. Men who prefer child care over politics may as well fulfill this role; women who prefer politics over child care may pursue their ambitions. (For theoretical support of this interplay, see Section 3.4.)

To further illustrate this, we can look at the question of how to accommodate the possibility that several women want to have both employment and children. Indeed, studies show that across Europe, the US and Japan, a relative majority of women prefers combining employment and family work above either a work-centered life (focused on a career and where family-life is fitted around their paid work) or a home-centered life (giving priority on private life and family over paid work). Significantly, men tend to prefer a work-centered life more than women do (Hakim, 2008). This makes one expect that several women wanting to combine employment or a career with having children cannot easily rely on the willingness of their partner to contribute equally in the household.

Here science provides us unforeseen solutions. For instance, in modern societies grandparents often invest heavily in their grandchildren (e.g., Pollet, 2007). In extant

hunter-gatherer societies as well, children clearly benefit from the help of others than their parents, especially of maternal grandmothers (Sear & Mace, 2008). It is suggested that during long periods of our evolution, children's survival depended on the additional care they received from others than their mothers (Hrdy, 2005; 2009). On the basis of this knowledge, one can consider promoting institutionalized childcare or familial assistance, benefiting those mothers who pursue demanding occupations. Moreover, fathers can be induced to feel more attentive towards infants as well. We can use this and similar information to optimally promote paternal care, although realizing that since differences in desires remain, an equal role pattern will be very hard to achieve. In sum, to promote women's professional aspirations, a narrow focus on paternal care will not help as much in reaching this aim as other possibilities would. A more optimal and desired solution is to keep the possibilities open by promoting or facilitating familial care and institutionalized childcare together with paternal care.

What this account illustrates is that scientific knowledge about children's needs and our evolved nature incites us to consider more successful alternatives to the enforced paternal care one tried to implement in the original Kibbutzim. Fathers should have the possibility to go on paternity leave, but science teaches us that this possibility alone will not be enough to free ambitious mothers from their mother roles. Promoting childcare facilities and familial assistance may be a more fruitful option.

Scientific findings play multiple roles in this example. First, scientific findings make us realize that people hold unforeseen values. They make us take more seriously the fact that women in general value childcare more than men in general do: According to the scientific information we have, this difference is unlikely to be eradicated by upbringing. This suggests that one better reconsiders some original goals, e.g., *equal participation* in every kind of work, while other goals such as *economic equality* can be retained. Second, this also suggests that it might be a more successful strategy to make it possible for individuals to diversify according to the values one has. Enforcing equal roles did not work out. Taking these individual differences in values seriously also urged us to find other methods to achieve economic equality. Familial solidarity appeared a possible and partial solution for childcare regulations.

Of course, in this example, certain things have been treated as a given: We assumed that the community in question can care about economic equality while disvaluing equality in role patterns. We also assumed that the values of all individuals initially shape what ought to be promoted, and we assumed that the community wanted to promote a system that is feasible. Only if this is accepted by the community, *then* science informs us that we should promote familial childcare systems. But as long as every stakeholder agrees about the assumptions, there is no reason to argue about the premises. If the community does not agree on any of these assumptions, progress is still possible because they can just point out what they would prefer to assume instead, and

reason from there on. Hence, science is conditionally and abductively relevant for normative conclusions.

Now, when science guides us away from value sets, points to new moral values and to possible solutions, do we then commit the naturalistic fallacy? The structure of the reasoning was as follows:

- (1) Initial moral premises: Economic equality and equality in role patterns are good and our normative system must be practically feasible and in line with what people value.
- (2) Factual premises: In general and over a broad range of situations (varying in upbringing, culture, etc.) women value childcare more than men do, making the premised moral norms not feasible or difficult to achieve without going against basic desires people have.
- (3) Conclusion: Either we have to give up on equality in certain domains of life (such as division of labor or economic benefits), or we have to give up on feasibility, or we have to give up on including individuals' values in moral considerations. We opt for not totally eradicating sexual differences in time spent in caring for children while retaining economic equality by providing child care services.

Clearly, the conclusion is not derived independently from normative rules. It is therefore not a first moral norm. But one might ask what the status of the initial moral premises is. Are any of these premises first moral norms? Do any of them define a moral value in terms of natural properties? We did not try to establish their truth: They were used as assumptions. One can always reject these norms and use different ones, but one can also give arguments for or against them, for example when they conflict with too many other values, when new scientific findings inform us of possibilities to change them or when it appears impossible to promote them. This is exactly what we did: the initial moral premises were assumed, then evaluated, after which we retained some and rejected others. No naturalistic fallacy has been committed because no norm had the status of eternal truth.

However, seeing the status of moral norms as temporary assumptions invites the criticism that science does not offer a definite justification, obligation or 'foundation' for any normative statement. In reaction, we can only say that we could not agree more: We fully endorse that science guides ethics *conditionally and abductively*, not absolutely. The Kibbutzim do not *have* to be organized that way, this is conditional on whether the members of the community accept these values or not. But that does not mean that science is not relevant for morality. Science does guide ethics, not by inferring true moral principles but by pointing us to the values people do hold and which value sets are incoherent. In the following section we will additionally argue that the criticism of scientific ethics is often contradictory.

3.3.2 Criticisms of scientific ethics and the quest for a foundation

How do critics oppose the sketched conditional procedures? To answer this question we draw on the clarifications made in Section 3.2.2. There we argued that Moore's concept of the naturalistic fallacy and Hume's idea of an is/ought gap are arguments against ethical foundations. Moore's critique was aimed towards early evolutionary ethicists like Spencer who did commit the naturalistic fallacy; it was not used to criticize ethicists who do not provide such an analytical foundation. Hume's critique was aimed towards objectivist and rationalist moral systems; it was not used against those who do not try to provide eternal, a priori moral truths. Contemporary critics however, accuse current scientific ethicists (and more specifically, evolutionary ethicists) of committing the naturalistic fallacy, while at the same time critiquing them for not providing a foundation for ethics. Let us dig deeper in this request for foundations as made by contemporary critics of scientific ethics.

Several scientific ethicists have argued that scientific information can be used to argue for and against specific values (e.g., Flanagan, 1996; Casebeer, 2003b). Some of these scholars grant a special role to *evolutionary theories* (e.g., Ruse, 1995). The idea is that information about our evolved nature is particularly relevant to ethics because it highlights general human possibilities and constraints. Hence, evolutionary theories, together with empirical data that corroborate these theories, can guide normative ethics in the most general way. As Rosenberg (2000, p. 9) asserts, of all sciences evolutionary theory "maximally combines relevance to human affairs and well-foundedness."

Among scientific ethics, it is mostly this kind of *evolutionary ethics* that is under attack. This is understandable from a historical perspective. Some evolutionary ethicists did try to ground ethics in evolution by inferring a first moral principle from our evolved nature (Richards, 1986; E. O. Wilson, 1984). Most evolutionary inspired scientific ethicists however mainly engage in the reasoning as sketched in the example (Ruse & Wilson, 1986). Nonetheless, both accounts have been criticized.

As one of the established critics of scientific ethics, Paul Farber (1994) reviewed accounts of evolutionary ethics throughout history. His work demonstrates the same reasoning as recent philosophical criticism against scientific ethics. Therefore Farber's *The Temptations of Evolutionary Ethics* is here used as a template to analyze this criticism. According to Farber, sociobiology – which relates animal and human behavior to its evolutionary history – "offers no new hope, no new foundation" for ethics (ibidem, 156). With this statement, Farber warns against reintroducing the naturalistic fallacy in evolutionary ethics, which is the most well-known way of grounding ethics. However, should one abandon hope together with foundations?

Although Farber acknowledges the existence of nonfoundational accounts, he is little enthusiastic about them. He discusses a range of programs in twentieth-century

evolutionary ethics, several of which do not commit the naturalistic fallacy and make no attempt at grounding anything. One of them is the strong program, which attempts to provide moral guidance by informing us about our biological nature. Farber rejects this program because “an established picture of human nature from which to derive useful lessons is far away” (ibidem, 160). In regards to the weak program, which aims at an understanding of what morality is, Farber argues that it does not provide moral guidance. Still, he recognizes it as “a possible source of relevant information” (ibidem, 160) and adopts the ambitions of the weaker program in using scientific information “in order to avoid misguided moralizing” (ibidem, p. 160). This seems to hint at a contradiction, especially because ‘the avoidance of misguided moralizing’ can be taken at least as some kind of moral guidance. In the Kibbutzim example, we concluded that scientific discussions can lead to conditional moral guidance. Evolutionary information is a helpful guide for moral practice, exactly because it constrains the desirable possibilities, while it suggests otherwise unnoticed options.

Farber finds these approaches wanting and concludes pessimistically that “the newest program for an evolutionary ethics looks [...] unpromising as a theory of ethics” (ibidem, p. 166-7). The only option he considers for evolutionary science is to provide a foundation for ethics (ibidem, p. 163-165). However, as argued in our discussion of the naturalistic fallacy, nothing can offer a foundation for ethics. Indeed, also Farber (ibidem, p. 165) is aware that *all* attempts to construe a unified rational ethics have “hit on hard times”. Consequently, if a foundationalist ethics proves to be impossible, why strive for it or demand it? Why would one not seek other alternatives?

Only at the end of his book does Farber briefly speculate on another possibility: “perhaps if philosophers develop an ethical theory [...] that is nonfoundationalist, evolutionary considerations may enter the philosophical arena” (ibidem, p. 165). He tentatively mentions pragmatism and Rawls’ *Theory of Justice* (1971). But, then again, he adds, these ethical philosophers rarely mention evolutionary ethics. The possibility that their ethics could benefit from evolutionary findings is not even considered by Farber. He simply concludes that evolutionary ethics looks unpromising as a theory of ethics. We think that, given Farber’s opposition towards committing the naturalistic fallacy, he should either consider a nonfoundationalist approach for a scientifically informed ethics (with evolution as part of the sciences) or make clear what he intends with a theory of ethics.

Criticism like Farber’s is well spread. Peter Woolcock, for example, argues that all the work in evolutionary ethics he studied committed the naturalistic fallacy. But he also claims that “in order to have some normative relevance, a descriptive theory would seem to have to be able to leap the is/ought gap (Woolcock, 1999, p. 290). And since evolutionary theory cannot leap this gap, he concludes that the naturalistic fallacy invalidates all efforts at an evolutionary ethics (ibidem, p. 282). Between the lines, he does suggest that there can be other ways to ground ethics. For instance, he argues that

ethical terms may not be “identical in meaning with some natural property, nonetheless they might be identical *in fact* with some natural property, just as water does not mean “H₂O,” even though in fact it is identical with H₂O” (ibidem, p. 284, our emphasis). But Woolcock does not consider this a serious option for science. Therefore, his argument is similar to that of Farber’s: there is the impossible demand that a descriptive theory should leap the is/ought gap if it is to be relevant to ethics. At the same time, ethicists who are inspired by scientific theories (in casu evolutionary theory) are accused of committing the naturalistic fallacy. This is inconsistent, unless Woolcock explains how the is/ought gap is different from the naturalistic fallacy in this regard (which he does not). Moreover, if nothing can ground ethics, considering grounding to be a criterion for ethical relevance is highly questionable.

Last but not least, Alexander Rosenberg acknowledges that science can inform ethics conditionally. But he also claims that this is not enough: “for a theory of human nature to have ramifications for moral philosophy itself, it will have to do more than any of these things” (Rosenberg, 2000, p. 120). According to Rosenberg, to be morally interesting, a theory of human nature must at least be able to derive some moral statement – a principle, value, obligation, etc. – from a descriptive theory. One cannot begin with assumptions with normative content because then “these assumptions are doing all the real work, and [...] the biological theory makes no distinctive contribution to the derivation” (ibidem). Indeed, the normative assumptions in the Kibbutzim example do some of the work – but the scientific information is relevant, both for eliminating certain value sets because they are less consistent than others, as for pointing us towards certain values. Still, Rosenberg demands an *independent* derivation of moral statements from a descriptive theory if this descriptive theory is to be truly relevant to ethics. But why would he demand this? Even more so when taking that he, too, explicitly connects the derivation of first principles with the illegitimate bridging of the is/ought gap: “the possibility of deriving [...] the existence of some moral principle [...] rests on two preconditions. The first is that we can derive “ought” from “is”” (ibidem). Even though Rosenberg does not express his opinion on whether he accepts the reasoning behind the naturalistic fallacy or not, that this first precondition cannot be realized “seems to me [Rosenberg] at least as widely held a view as any other claim in moral philosophy or meta-ethics” (ibidem). Like Woolcock, perhaps he does not follow Moore’s original interpretation of the naturalistic fallacy. Perhaps he too has some kind of foundation in mind that is not refuted by it. Unfortunately, once again, there is no indication that he really is considering such an alternative.

In sum, according to the discussed authors, scientific ethicists either commit the naturalistic fallacy or fail to make their descriptive theory morally relevant. This also counts when using evolutionary theory in order to ground ethics, as has been the case in several sociobiological and evolutionary epistemological approaches. Discussing the question when science would be relevant for normative ethics, these critics suggest that

it should provide either a new foundation (Farber, 1994), leap the is/ought gap (Woolcock, 1999) or derive moral statements from a descriptive theory (Rosenberg, 2000). But in light of the same naturalistic fallacy that these authors invoke to refute evolutionary ethics, these suggestions are all impossible.

Only Farber suggested a way out of these impossibilities, namely that in a *nonfoundational* ethical theory, evolutionary considerations may be of relevance. While Farber never examined this option further, we already illustrated in Section 3.3.1 that scientific ethics can be practically relevant even if one is not trying to ground ethics.

Unwarranted criticism of scientific ethics is not constrained to abstract philosophical discussions. We gave examples of foundational ethics in section 3.2.1: Of particular relevance are religious ethics, such as the popular version promoted by Intelligent Design and Creationist (IDC) proponents. The analysis we just presented helps us to make clear that a related but much less honest criticism is enthusiastically propagated by IDC propaganda. This movement accuses scientific ethicists of inferring an immoral normative system from the state of the world. At the same time, they accuse scientific ethicists of not providing a foundation for ethics, thus concluding on an amoral view of the world. Both criticisms are motivated by the IDC movement assumption that normative ethics is by definition foundational. As a consequence, IDC proponents cannot imagine any other consequence from a scientific worldview than either immorality or amorality. Let us look more closely at their objections.

We can distinguish two lines of reasoning in the IDC literature. One argument implies that a scientific worldview prescribes immoral behavior and the other argument implies that a scientific worldview reasons morality out of existence.

As to the first objection, the idea is that evolution is not just a description of where we come from; it is a creation myth, an encompassing world-view or a naturalist creation story. A creation story has profound implications for human morality. According to Phillip Johnson, evolutionary theory is “the secular equivalent of the story of Adam and Eve” (Johnson, 1991, p. 131). In *Darwin on trial* Johnson claims that “Darwinist evolution is an imaginative story about who we are and where we came from, which is to say it is a creation myth. As such it is an obvious starting point for speculation about how we ought to live and what we ought to value” (ibidem). Dembski argues that if God is no longer present “one’s accountability is only to the laws of nature.” We have seen that according to popular IDC websites, what one ought to do can be inferred in a very straightforward way from genesis (Section 3.2.1). When religion is replaced with a secular worldview, they suggest that this merely amounts to replacing genesis with evolution – as a result, one can likewise read one’s values from evolution as one could read them in genesis. We can again illustrate this with the question of the proper role of men and women, discussed by *Answers in Genesis*. According to Darwinism, Bergman (2007) says, man is superior to woman: “Reasons for male superiority included the conclusion that war and hunting pruned the weaker men, allowing only the most fit

to return home and reproduce. Women, in contrast, were not subject to these selection pressures but were protected by men, allowing the weak to survive.” The link between ‘the fittest’ and ‘the most superior’ is made in the beginning of this ‘answer: “According to Charles Darwin, the central mechanism of evolution is survival of the fittest. In this concept, inferior animals are more likely to become extinct while the superior ones are more likely to thrive” (Bergman, 2007). In defense of their own view, creationists stress that men and women are equal in the image of God. That men and women have a different role does not mean that one role is superior to the other. The supposed fact that Darwinism implies the superiority of men over women is thus meant to discredit Darwinism in the eyes of their fellow fundamentalist Christians. Either way, the IDC movement translates its view of the origin and justification of morals to a naturalist worldview. Just as for them the origin and justification of morals can be read in genesis, naturalists presumably can read the origin and justification of morals in human evolution.

The other creationist line of argument is that, because evolution is firmly embedded in a naturalist worldview which excludes God, this amounts to rejecting morality. Namely, the naturalistic fallacy precludes that anything moral can follow from a secular worldview. This is acknowledged on another creationist website, Creation Ministries International: “If humans are really just rearranged pond scum — the results of survival of the fittest — then what could possibly be the basis for saying that the Columbine killers did wrong? It is a logical fallacy (called the *Naturalistic Fallacy*) to derive moral codes from science. Morality tells us what people *ought* to do, while science can at best only tell what people *actually* do” (Sarfati, 2000). We find this theme pervasive throughout creationist literature from the 1920’s up until Intelligent Design. From William Jennings Bryan, who represented the *World Christian Fundamentals Association* at the 1925 Scopes trial², we can read another remarkably poetic passage: “Science is a magnificent force, but it is not a teacher of morals. It can perfect machinery, but it adds no moral restraints to protect society from the misuse of the machine. It can also build gigantic intellectual ships, but it constructs no moral rudders for the control of storm-tossed human vessels. It not only fails to supply the spiritual element needed but some of its unproven hypotheses rob the ship of its compass and thus endanger its cargo” (Bryan, 1925). Why should we respect a bunch of chemicals? As Wysong puts it: “If life

² In the early twenties of the twentieth century, creationist forces rallied against the teaching of evolution. This process accumulated in the famous Scopes trial in Dayton, Tennessee, in 1925 (Tennessee vs. John Scopes, a.k.a. ‘The Monkey Trial’). John T. Scopes, a high school biology teacher, was accused of violating Tennessee’s Butler Act which made it unlawful to teach evolution. The verdict was in favor of W.J. Bryan: Scopes was found guilty of illegally teaching evolution and was fined a hundred dollar. However, the Tennessee supreme court reversed the verdict on the technical ground that the fine was set by the judge rather than, as the state constitution required, by the jury (<http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/scopes/scopes.htm>).

came into existence through purely natural, materialistic chance processes, then, as a consequence, we must conclude life is without moral direction and intelligent purpose. This absence of direction would in effect mean man could direct his own life, or be guided by a situation ethic. Answers to life's many questions would come from materialistic philosophy. Materialistic philosophy relieves one of moral responsibility to anyone, including the supernatural. Atoms have no morals, thus, if they are our progenitors, *man is amoral.*" (Wysong, 1976, p. 6, our emphasis).

But morality needs an absolute basis, creationists argue, and this basis can be found in religion: "Science may indicate that if a 20 kg weight is dropped from a height of 100 metres on someone's head, it would probably kill him; morality is determined by our Creator who declares that murder (intentional killing of innocent humans) is *wrong.*" (Sarfati, 2000) Or as *Answers in Genesis* again warns us: "Can the concepts of right and wrong really be meaningful apart from the biblical God?" (Lisle, 2008) And further: "Words like *should* and *ought* only make sense if there is an absolute standard given by one who has authority over everyone" (Lisle, 2008).

With Kitcher, we may conclude that the two visions are mutually contradictory. Nothing can be amoral and immoral at the same time (Kitcher, 1982). But the relevant misconception is that creationists do not consider that ethics might be *nonfoundational*. Either science must provide a foundation for morality (but then it commits the naturalistic fallacy and yields an immoral system) or science is not relevant for ethics at all (and amorality is the result).

3.3.3 Conclusion

Notwithstanding the criticisms of evolutionary ethics, the example of the Kibbutzim made clear that science, including evolutionary theory, can inform ethics without committing the naturalistic fallacy. Moreover, common arguments against scientific ethics are misguided: Critics demand scientific ethicists to provide a foundation for ethics while at the same time opposing an analytic foundation for ethics. There is therefore a need to rethink ethics as nonfoundational. This insight is also socially relevant: a conception of normative ethics as necessarily foundational is widespread and undergirds IDC's criticism of scientific ethics.

This leads to the following questions: How can we philosophically support a scientific ethics, and what kind of normative system would follow from a scientific ethics? In what follows, we will first argue that scientific ethics is underpinned by naturalism. Naturalism rejects the foundations as conceived of by its critics, but for other reasons than Hume and Moore rejected them. Naturalism also offers a general view of what constitutes right and wrong. As such, there is no need to abandon hope together with

foundations. We finally discuss some normative and meta-ethical consequences of naturalistic ethics and individual differences in moral cognition.

3.4 Naturalistic ethics

Scientific ethicists support their argument for normative ethics informed by science by referring to *naturalism*. Most ethical naturalists commit to methodological and ontological naturalism. As Flanagan, Sarkissian and Wong (2008, p. 5) argue: “Ethical naturalism is not chiefly concerned with ontology but with the proper way of approaching moral inquiry” (see also Flanagan, 1996). Prinz (2007, p. 4-5) pledges allegiance to four kinds of naturalism, including metaphysical or ontological naturalism and methodological naturalism. Casebeer (2003b, p. 9) approaches ethics by referring to “methodological naturalism” when stating that “the methodological and epistemological assumptions of the natural sciences should serve as standards for this inquiry.” He presupposes ontological naturalism to a certain extent: “for the moment we should hold our methodological naturalism close so as to see if normativity can be derived without postulating “spooky” non-natural entities” (Casebeer, 2003b, p. 9) Others refer to naturalism as the view that is committed to the methods and findings of science (Rosenberg, 2000).

In the subsequent sections we give a pragmatist interpretation of this naturalistic view of ethics. Our first question is: What could this *method* of moral inquiry consist of and does it imply deriving first norms? We then move on to ontological naturalism.

3.4.1 Methodological naturalism and foundations

How can we possibly interpret the commitment of naturalist ethicists to the methods of the natural sciences? Does this mean that we can copy the methods of these sciences to normative ethics, and if so, why would we do that? To find out why the methods of the natural sciences are such an esteemed template, let us look into the pragmatic reasons for endorsing them.

We argue that it can be considered legitimate to engage oneself to a specific constellation of *methods and aims* when this constellation has been shown to be more productive in leading to a predetermined aim than another constellation. According to Rosenberg for instance, naturalism implies that the methods of the natural sciences are

to guide philosophy because of the contingent historical fact that science has been more successful than any other approach in predicting new phenomena and exerting control over the physical world (Rosenberg, 2000). Thus, science is committed to its methods because these methods successfully reached a certain aim. It is, now, this successful constellation of methods and aims that became the standard for scientific inquiry, not only its methods.

An example can illustrate the importance of the idea of a method-aim constellation. Fred Wilson (2007, p. 251-252) reviews methods and aims used throughout the history of natural philosophy. Before the 16-17th century, for instance, ‘rational intuition’ was thought to give one direct access to natural laws; rational intuition was thus seen as the method most conducive to the aim of finding natural laws. Some patterns in nature were supposed to reflect natural laws or motions, others to reflect unnatural motions. Natural motions were thought to be essential to a particular substance (e.g. falling down is essential to an earthy object), unnatural motions were thought to be induced by an external substance (e.g. the parabolic motion of a projectile is not essential to the object; someone or something – an external substance – must have thrown it to give the object its forward thrust). Natural laws, so it was believed, could not be observed; they were to be found by the method of rational intuition. Science was to deduce these natural laws. However, this conviction did not lead to great progress in questions such as projectile motion. Galileo changed the aims: one should not seek to distinguish the natural laws versus the unnatural motions. One should try to find exceptionless patterns in the observable world and forget about whether they are essential to the object or not. Galileo also changed the method: these patterns can be found by observation of and experiments on the behavior of changing things. This new science was very successful (F. Wilson, 2007, p. 254). Therefore, observation came to have a more prominent role in the scientific method while the aim of distinguishing natural versus unnatural motions was abandoned.

Rather than simply taking the methods and aims of science and translating them to normative ethics (see Sections 3.4.2-3.4.3), we take the sketched reasoning behind naturalism in science and apply it to ethics. We hence ask the empirical question what constellation of aims and methods until now has been most successful in *normative* inquiry. We consider a method of normative inquiry to be successful if it leads to its predetermined purpose. We can first ask how successful *foundational* ethics has been in solving specific moral problems, compared to the nonfoundational method in Section 3.3.1.

3.4.1.1 Analytic foundations

The twentieth century was dominated by analytical ethics, which gained attention due to Moore’s *Principia Ethica*. As a field, it thus grew out of a strong rebuttal of the

possibility of analytical *normative* ethics: Moore deemed it impossible to give an analytic definition of the most important normative moral term, thus precluding the rest of ethics as a normative moral system.

Accordingly, analytical ethicists did not primarily aim to discuss normative questions, but rather examined other aspects of the meaning of moral terms and moral statements, while still aiming for analytic truths in ethics. Analysis was mainly used in the domain of meta-ethics and not in the domain of normative ethics. Thus we can at least conclude that progress in analytical ethics was never seen as progress in normative ethics – in the best case, it provided the basis on which normative ethics could be constructed. Nonetheless, the focus on analysis in the twentieth century seemed to suggest that this was at times the preferred method for all ethics.

Accordingly, the relevance and merits of analytical ethics for normative ethics are contested. Holmes (1990), for instance, discusses the relevance of analytical ethics for bioethics. He argues that analytical ethics can only clarify normative issues and cannot provide moral wisdom. Similarly, while agreeing that conceptual analysis can clarify the logical connections between moral concepts, he doubts that it can resolve which normative theory is true or a better solution. Therefore he advises that bioethicists do not turn to conceptual analysis to solve their problems (Holmes, 1990). A similar pessimism towards foundational normative ethics is found in Farber's work. Farber mentions that philosophers since Sidgwick have tried to systematize morality, but without success (Farber, 1994, p. 165). Also Edward O. Wilson (1975, p. 562) describes the result of analytical ethics in the twentieth century as "several oddly disjunct conceptualizations". Williams equally expresses his dissatisfaction with this method in the original (1972) preface of *Morality: An introduction to ethics*:

This sad truth is often brought forward as a particular charge against contemporary moral philosophy of the 'analytical' or 'linguistic' style: that it is peculiarly empty and boring. In one way, as a particular charge, this is unfair: most moral philosophy at most times has been empty and boring, and the number of great books in the subject (as opposed to books involved in one way or another in morality) can be literally counted on the fingers of one hand. The emptiness of past works, however, has often been the emptiness of conventional moralizing, the banal treatment of moral issues. *Contemporary moral philosophy has found an original way of being boring, which is by not discussing moral issues at all.*" (Williams, 1993/1972, p. xvii, our emphasis)

Thus, if analytic philosophy is not in the first place about normative ethics because it aims at truth rather than at knowing what we ought to do, and if analytic philosophy has not previously been conducive to normative progress, may we then conclude that purely analytic philosophy will not lead to any normatively relevant truths at all? According to the sketched reasoning behind naturalism, this means we can reject this

method-aim constellation. Indeed, naturalism does not reject analysis *per se*, but it rejects the possibility of finding true statements by means of pure conceptual analysis. It thus rejects the suitability of this particular method for the specific aim of finding true statements; or stronger, it rejects the plausibility of ever finding analytic truths.

This supports the conclusion of the naturalistic fallacy, namely that one cannot analytically ground norms in facts. However, the naturalistic fallacy was arrived at by assuming the plausibility of ever finding analytic truths: It did not reject this method-aim constellation. Thus, naturalistic ethicists accept the conclusion of the naturalistic fallacy but not the underlying reasoning. Naturalism offers another reason for why one should not analytically 'ground' ethics: it is unlikely that analytic truths will ever be found.

One can reasonably expect that scientific ethicists who explicitly endorse naturalism as here presented explicitly reject the idea of analytically grounding ethics. In fact, this is the case with some authors who have been accused of committing the naturalistic fallacy. Ruse (1995), for example, claims that he is grounding ethics and is consequently refuted by Woolcock (1999) for committing the naturalistic fallacy. But Ruse explicitly endorses the is/ought gap. A closer look teaches us that with 'grounding' Ruse certainly does not aim to analytically derive a first principle (Ruse, 1995). Casebeer (2003b) explains that one cannot analytically ground ethics or find true moral principles by conceptual analysis. In other words, he recognizes that one cannot find an analytically true first principle – not because 'good' is a simple notion, but because the notion of finding truth by pure analysis (i.e., analytic truth) is flawed. His reasoning largely builds on Quine's *Two Dogma's of Empiricism* (1951) and is in contrast with Moore's reasoning which relied on the possibility of finding analytic truths: While Moore reasons that one cannot give an analytic definition of 'good' because 'good' is a simple term, Casebeer rejects the idea of simple terms and analytic definitions altogether. Also according to Flanagan et al. (2008, p. 5), "moral philosophy should not employ a distinctive a priori method of yielding substantive, self-evident and foundational truths from pure conceptual analytical testing". Consequently and importantly, naturalists like Casebeer and Flanagan do not rely on analytic statements when backing up their moral principles with facts or when proposing certain universal moral values. Their arguments are not about the very meaning of a moral word or about the true nature of a moral notion: "With regard to the alleged is-ought problem, the smart naturalist makes no claims to establish demonstratively moral norms." (Flanagan et al., 2008, p. 14)

Thus, we can safely conclude that naturalistic ethics, and scientific ethics, does not aim to find an analytic foundation for ethics. This practically neutralizes the criticism that they commit the naturalistic fallacy. If they would commit this fallacy, we could more poignantly argue that they start from a principle that is at odds with their naturalistic commitments.

Nonetheless, we haven't made clear yet what methods and aims scientific ethicists do follow.

3.4.1.2 Methodological naturalism in ethics

Can the modern methods and aims of the natural sciences serve as standards for normative inquiry? Let us first consider the aims of science that are put forward by philosophers of science. According to Rosenberg, science aims to predict and control the natural world (Rosenberg, 2000). According to Ernst Nagel, science aims to provide systematic and supported explanations (E. Nagel, 1961, p. 15), enabling the explanation and prediction of new phenomena that were not yet in the evidence on which the explanation was built (idem, p. 64). Are these aims the same as those of normative inquiry? In the literature, several objects have been postulated as the aim of ethics. We already saw that, according to Moore (Moore, 1993/1903, §14), 'Ethics' must aim at truth. Others, like Warnock, situate the object of morality in the amelioration of the human predicament (Warnock, 1971, p. 16) and Thomas Nagel identifies morality as the combination of a personal perspective with an objective perspective (T. Nagel, 1985, p. 3). While many other proposals exist, they do not consider it the aim of normative inquiry to explain, predict or control what will happen. Most proposals generally converge on the proposition that normative ethics aims to guide action, while this is not included in the aims of the natural sciences. Hence, the aims of science are not the aims of normative ethics.

What about the *methods* of science? The natural sciences test hypotheses against observations. When inconsistencies are discovered, hypotheses or theories are adjusted. Data from observations are only seldomly adjusted because the existing methods allow obtaining *reliable and objective* data from observation. Reliable data are (stated simply) the same when gathered under the same experimental circumstances, and they are objective in that everybody is able to see or (re)confirm the same raw data. But even when taking – for the sake of argument – that values are amenable to observation, we do not (or not yet) have an experimental method or theory to gather raw data in a way that makes everybody see, or be convinced by, the same values. As a result, as things stand now, one cannot simply copy the methods of science to normative inquiry either. So we question that normative ethics can be committed to the aims and methods of the natural sciences in the sense of copying them. How then can normative ethics proceed? Ontological naturalism may provide an answer.

3.4.2 Ontological naturalism

If success of a method-aim constellation would be the only criterion for choosing a method and aim, methodological naturalism in normative ethics would amount to a radical pragmatism. The only thing that would matter is whether or not a particular method yields a particular aim, independent of its connection with reality. As Wallace (1994) describes (but does not endorse) such a radical view: “Any choice of what it is for instance to be morally responsible is completely undetermined by the facts (whatever is independent of us) and so it would have to be grounded exclusively in our practical interests and desire” (Wallace 1994, p. 89). Accordingly, the epitomical pragmatist William James suggested that there are good reasons to have religious faith even if there are no good epistemic reasons for having religious faith.

However, Casebeer (2003b) refers to naturalism as the view that is committed to the methods *and findings* of science. We have seen that neither Casebeer nor Flanagan are willing to postulate the existence of non-natural entities. Prinz is equally unwilling to introduce “fairies and spirits” (Prinz, 2007, p. 2) as he commits himself to the view that “nothing can exist that violates these [natural] laws, and all entities that exist must, in some sense, be composed of the entities that our best scientific theories require.” In naturalists’ view, the claims of scientific ethics can thus in the first place be questioned by empirical findings. According to Flanagan et al. (2008, p. 5), “the claims of ethical naturalism cannot be shielded from empirical testing.” Prinz (2007, p. 3) allies with Quine when stating that “all claims are subject to empirical revision”. This clarifies how naturalistic ethicists understand their commitment to the methods and findings of science. They do not co-opt the aims of the natural sciences. They do co-opt their methods for testing normative ethicists’ claims on their empirical plausibility. But this is not the end of the story.

We can find two proposed functions of scientific findings and methods in naturalistic ethics: one positive and one negative. Science can *constrain* what moral norms we ought to accept, and science can *suggest* what other moral norms we ought to start from in constructing a normative theory. We can find this two-pronged function in the works of Casebeer (2003b) and Flanagan et al. (2008) or Flanagan (1996). The latter describes the method of naturalistic ethics as consisting of two components: One component is *descriptive-genealogical* and consists of scientific descriptions and explanations of the moral phenomenon (normative practices, judgments and so on). It can also include literature, art, human practices; or anything that may inform us about the values people hold (Flanagan, 1996). But merely describing the moral phenomenon will not yield a full normative theory: normative theories are underdetermined by empirical findings, different normative theories fit the picture. However, this descriptive-genealogical component does suggest what norms to start from, namely those that are already part of, or can plausibly be expected to be possible parts of, our moral practices. The second

component is *normative*: we draw upon this information and extract successful normative practices from unsuccessful ones (Flanagan, 1996). This means that we favor a norm or set of norms because this is conducive to a certain aim, for example, it *systematizes* what we should aspire to. Whether we should retain the aim of systematizing is itself a pragmatic question (Flanagan, 1996) – it depends on whether this ever works. In later work, Flanagan et al. (2008, p. 50) refer to the function of satisfying and coordinating the needs, interests, and purposes of the members of a community as another potential aim. The naturalist then “points to certain practices, values, virtues and principles as reasonable based on inductive and abductive reasoning” (Flanagan et al., 2008, p. 14).

Casebeer analogously asserts that “robust moral norms [...] can be constrained by and derived from the sciences” (Casebeer, 2003b, p. 34). He aims to develop a theory that helps to delineate those values that are conducive to human flourishing.

Despite subtle differences, Flanagan et al., and Casebeer thus describe a similar view on this: We start from existing moral practices. This is a purely descriptive endeavor. We then construe a theory of moral values. Values are not simply what people think they desire. People value long term or encompassing goals and therefore can have to forego their short term values. Also, what people think they desire need not be what they really would desire if they were fully informed. Therefore, naturalistic ethicists formulate a theory of what people value based on internal norms and a theory of human nature. They thus constrain possible normative theories on the basis of postulated criteria, such as needs, coordination and human flourishing. Thus, what is right or wrong depends on the motivational system of human beings.

Thus, in naturalistic ethics science is conditionally relevant for ethics: What is right or wrong depends on the values that are inherent to human beings. Science can inform us if and how these norms are attainable aims. Science can also inform us if these norms are attainable aims and what sets of norms are practically or epistemically coherent. Therefore, scientific findings can be a help in reevaluating, constraining and adapting our internal norms. However, science is also constructively relevant in that it has a say in what moral systems we start from. We may not always have full epistemic access to what is valuable for us. As in the Kibbutzim example, men and women may have thought that they really desired full equality, both in economic terms as to their social roles. Scientific findings though suggest that one might value childcare more than one’s explicit ideology dictates. As argued in the previous chapter, individuals may be inclined to think that one mostly cares about public health and criminality in forming an opinion about recreational drug use. Scientific data and scrutiny of one’s conclusions though may point to other concerns that implicitly play a role in one’s explicit commitments. In addition to this interaction between science and ethics, moral norms and systems that presuppose the existence of facts that are not supported by science are ruled out. Naturalistic ethics is furthermore inherently nonfoundational. Every moral

norm we accept may be revised in the future in light of other moral norms we came to accept, in light of extra-moral norms (such as feasibility) or in light of scientific findings.

As a final remark, critics may question if nonfoundational ethics is better than foundational ethics. Granted that foundational ethicists have never succeeded in finding a first moral norm and proceed in endless discussions of matters of right and wrong, how is nonfoundational ethics any different? It does not aim at finding a first norm, and insists on being open-ended, with every norm and principle being open to revision. But if this is all there is to nonfoundational ethics, then what it does is take foundational ethics' failures only to call them a success. However, it is the strength of nonfoundational ethics that it is prepared to build systems from an open-ended basis. It evaluates the system, not by rejecting its basis and starting anew, but by adapting it where necessary and keeping its good parts. Foundational ethics on the other hand avows to start from an unimpeachable foundation. When that foundation is rejected, one has to start anew. Thus while foundational ethics never gets off the ground for long, nonfoundational ethics is like a boat one rebuilds while on open water. The latter keeps on floating while the former can never set sail.

3.4.3 Naturalism and individual differences in moral cognition

Another possible objection with naturalistic ethics is that it seems to lead to relativism. We have seen that in general, naturalists propose a theory of what values are, and this theory depends on the human constitution. However, different people have different needs, desires, and flourish in different environments. Different ecologies may relate to different optimal lifestyles. If we combine naturalistic ethics with the knowledge that there are deep and widespread individual differences in affective intuitions, giving rise to individual and group differences in moral and extra-moral values, we seem to arrive at a view where some people converge on different normative systems than others. There might also be cultural groups that have internalized different values, possibly in coordination with their environment. In the discussed naturalists' view, normative systems are at least partly shaped by people's internal values. So how do naturalistic ethicists generally treat the topic of individual or group differences in moral values?

Casebeer (2003b) does not specifically address the topic of individual or group differences. Certain sections in his work suggest that he is committed to the formulation of one general normative theory in which particular rules can be specified. After stressing the nature of theories as tools he suggests that "there are certain constants in both the environment and the creatures that live in it, and the tools that rely more on those constants than others do will have more general applicability." (Casebeer, 2003b, p. 64). However, he explicitly denies that there is a single theory that will be perfect for

every situation. This sentence is immediately followed by: “Of course, if the situation changes, our tools may have to change as well.” (ibidem). Moreover, in order to find what most generally works, we have to allow “experiments in living”: “General considerations about epistemic progress in knowing how to function well will lead us to tolerate a Gaussian normal distribution of “experiments in living”” (ibidem). Thus, while Casebeer seems to value generalizability or universalizability, it is not seen as an essential characteristic of moral norms. He allows for different systems to be equally worthy, depending on the environment. Additionally, even in a single environment where only one system would be correct, we might not yet know what is most generally the optimal system for that environment. Therefore, experiments in living are to be tolerated because they can inform us about what most generally works. Thus, Casebeer suggests that different moral requirements apply in different environments and different moral systems ought to be tolerated.

Flanagan (1996) and Flanagan et al. (2008) explicitly discuss the objection of relativism, i.e. the idea that different moral systems can be equally good. In their view, naturalism avoids extreme relativism (according to which all moral systems are equally right) and nihilism (nothing is worth anything) because “the ends of creatures constrain what is good for them”. With this, Flanagan et al. (2008) mean that values depend on the motivational system of the species *Homo sapiens*. In other words, in their theory, values are not internal to any particular individual member of that species but internal to our species and external to individuals. For example, if an individual desires a solitary lifestyle, this may not be a correct reflection of what is valuable for that individual because, given human nature, loneliness is unlikely to make the person happy in the long term. Nonetheless, they hold that the values of human beings differ depending on the ecology, because different ecologies are better suited for different lifestyles. As a consequence, they defend a view that they dub ecological relativism: “what is good depends on what is good for a particular community, but when that community interacts with other communities, then these get a say” (Flanagan et al. 2008, p. 18). Here, the preferred scope of generality is the community, provided there are no interactions with outsiders. Thus, Flanagan et al. (2008) also hold that, depending on the ecology, different moral systems are equally good.

The view we exemplified here zoomed in on individual differences in moral views. We concluded that, within the community, different individuals hold different values, and we have to enable them to live in accordance with their own values. Moreover, all this depended on the view of the community, implying that other communities could come to different conclusions. Thus, in our view individuals’ values and communities’ values interact. We come to the view that different norms apply to different individuals and to different communities. Indeed, we suggest that Casebeer and Flanagan et al. (2008) neglect individual differences in human values. If what is right or wrong is shaped by human flourishing, values, needs and desires, and if individuals differ deeply

in certain needs, values and desires, this variation should also be included in normative theories.

In all this, we have to keep in mind that no normative moral theory is final. All normative moral theories, including those that are relative to local or individual circumstances, are open-ended and can be reviewed in the light of new information. This includes information about practical and psychological feasibility. Each individual can change his or her moral system based on a reconsideration of one's moral and epistemic values, for example after discussion or conflict with other individuals (e.g., Prinz, 2007, p. 287-308). Indeed, we can consider that pedophiles, psychopaths, sexists, and so on will conclude on widely different moral systems than others and allowing criminals to hold to their own moral systems will therefore create intractable practical problems. Moreover, some values are directed at others' behavior as is the case in moral condemnation (see Chapter 2). If the same behavior elicits condemnation from one individual and praise from another then it is hard to comply with their requests. So we have to ask: Given that different people come to different conclusions about what behavior is better, is it even possible to tolerate this diversity or to actively promote a society where different moral behaviors can exist next to each other? It might well be that, given our nature as social beings, we come to see that, for certain issues, we better hold to moral values that can be universalized. We can adduce empirical arguments when and why we should relativize or universalize our moral judgments. This is the topic of chapter four.

3.5 Conclusion

Today, many philosophers still aim at establishing a normative system built on an unimpeachable foundation; or they demand such a foundation from others. At the same time, they refer to the naturalistic fallacy as a legitimate criticism against instantiations of scientific ethics, mostly evolutionary ethics.

We have shown that both arguments when used together can be contradictory: as the naturalistic fallacy precludes certain foundations, it is not honest to demand scientific ethicists to give a scientific foundation for ethics. Moreover, if one's view of ethics is foundational, it is unclear how normative ethics can exist in a naturalistic worldview. The idea of ethics as nonfoundational is therefore an important one.

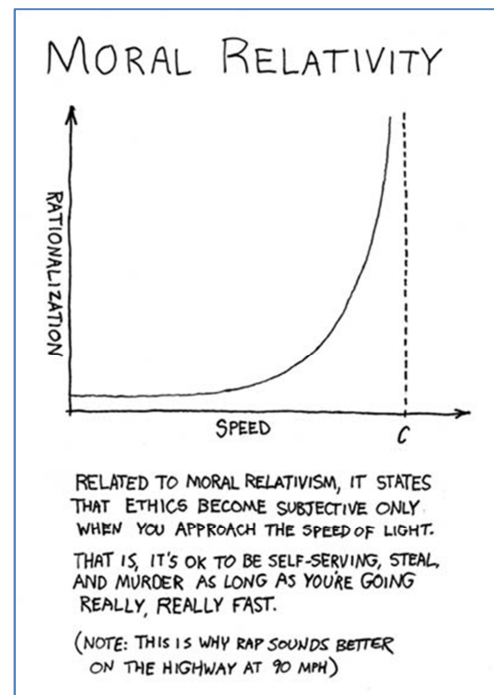
In the last sections, we discussed the reasoning that led to a view of ethics informed by science and against foundational views. Defenders of scientific ethics refer to

naturalism to support their view. Naturalists take the implausibility of a foundational ethics at face value and endorse another approach. Their approach suggests that we evaluate the sets of moral values we observe in the world, based on our other moral values and extra-moral values. Every resulting moral statement, principle and theory is open to revision.

Naturalistic ethics has the advantage that it allows us to question each moral norm without needing to rebuild the entire system. However, it needs to take seriously that different moral requirements apply to different individuals and different groups. Since each normative moral system is open-ended, we can adduce additional arguments for and against toleration, universalizability or relativism. This is the topic of the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 4

Varying versions of moral relativism and toleration



- <http://xkcd.com/103>

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we evaluate naturalistic arguments for and against certain normative reactions towards individual differences in moral cognition. We focus here on moral requirement relativism and toleration. Among naturalist philosophers, both defenders and opponents of moral relativism and toleration argue that normative moral theories should be constrained and inspired by empirical findings. However, the empirical research is underutilized in moral philosophy. At the same time, philosophers draw distinctions between, for example, extreme and moderate relativism, and between cultural and individual relativism, and ask if any of these is in accordance with human psychology. However, operating largely independent of these schools of thought, moral psychologists generally do not employ these distinctions, making it difficult to examine the extent to which their research findings do or do not support various philosophical positions. In part because of this disciplinary divide, philosophers may have largely overlooked work on folk morality that bears on moral relativism or toleration. Thus in order to review naturalistic arguments for and against these views, and optimally utilize empirical findings, it is necessary to link empirical studies with the specific moral theory they bear relevance to.

In this chapter, our aim is to bridge this disciplinary divide and integrate the conceptual landscape in order to guide future arguments for and against moral relativism and toleration. Focusing on authors who adhere to a naturalist methodology, we will use empirical findings to inform normative theories. We start by introducing various versions of moral relativism; we then introduce toleration.

4.2 Moral relativism

The term “*moral relativism*” is associated with a variety of very different concepts, some of which function mainly to oppose the view. While certain authors use the notion in a very inclusive way, others restrict it to a specific notion. In this dissertation, we use the notion of moral relativism in a broad, inclusive manner: We suggest a notion of moral relativism that is defensible and that coherently encompasses descriptive, meta-ethical and normative moral relativism. As a consequence of this approach, and because various specific notions of moral relativism abound in the philosophical literature, one may

object that our presented notion does not describe moral relativism at all. In order to anticipate such objections we first give a very short illustration of the breath of narrow and inclusive notions of moral relativism. We hope at least to make clear that, given this breath of notions of moral relativism, no definition seems to be standard and it might be useful to unify the many disjunct concepts discussed under the header of moral relativism into one coherent notion.

Opponents of moral relativism sometimes commit to a very narrow definition of moral relativism. They often hold the idea that, if moral relativism were true, we could not condemn any behavior, including the Holocaust, and this because according to moral relativism all moral theories are equally legitimate. This is a form of extreme moral relativism. It is indeed the case that cultural relativists sometimes defend or respect practices such as female genital mutilation/modification (FGM) (e.g., Shweder, 2009), but this does not mean that all moral relativists do so or that even those defending FGM are willing to defend every kind of behavior. Also, some relativists hold that all existing moral views are equally *true* (Prinz, 2007), but a theory being true does not make it *right*: We can additionally evaluate all true theories on their moral merits (Prinz, 2007; Hales, 2009; Harman 1975).

Others focus on a specific aspect of relativism. According to Rovane (2011, p. 32), “relativism is not an epistemological doctrine. It is a metaphysical doctrine.” As such, “relativists deny that there is a single, consistent, and complete body of truths, and they affirm instead that there are many, incomplete bodies of truths that cannot be conjoined; in other words, they hold that there are many worlds rather than one, or *multimundialism* (Rovane, 2011, p. 36, Rovane’s emphasis). In contrast to Rovane’s (2011) rejection of relativism as merely an epistemic doctrine, most moral relativists keep to defending that moral truth is relative, which is an epistemic claim (e.g., Harman, 1975; Prinz, 2007).

Still others use an inclusive notion of moral relativism and make a distinction between normative, descriptive and meta-ethical claims (e.g., Moser & Carson, 2001). Political notions of toleration and pluralism are sometimes also included under the umbrella of relativism (e.g., Long, 2011).

We do not have a reason to constrain the notion of moral relativism. In fact, as we will argue, we think that various notions of moral relativism have very specific aspects in common. Thus, we first want to give a coherent view of moral relativism at large. In line with many others (e.g., Miller, 2011; Brandt, 1967; Corradetti, 2009) we will make a distinction between descriptive, meta-ethical and normative moral relativism. First we give an example of meta-ethical relativism and propose a general notion. We then compare this view to related notions of moral relativism and to moral views that are sometimes used as relativism’s opposite. Then we review existing meta-ethical, descriptive and normative views of moral relativism.

4.2.1 The notion of moral relativism

Schematically, we will construe the notion of moral relativism as consisting of three necessary components. We will introduce them using the example of meta-ethical relativism. We take the specific case of meta-ethical relativism where the *truth of moral statements* is relative to a *moral framework* (cf. Harman & Thompson, 1996). This moral framework can be an internal or external set of moral values, principles or sentiments that play a relatively stable and justifying role in moral reasoning (e.g., one is willing to justify one's moral judgments by reference to these moral values).

Consider the following example, inspired by Lyons (1976/2001): Assume that pro-choice activists endorse a moral framework that prioritizes the value of personal choice over the value of the unborn life. According to (some kinds of) meta-ethical relativism, a pro-choice activist - say, Jane - can veridically judge that abortion is permissible because it is in accordance with her moral framework (i.e., her judgment being in accordance with her framework makes the judgment true). Nonetheless, if a pro-life activist - say, Claudia - abhors abortion, this statement is also true because it is in accordance with Claudia's moral framework that prioritizes the value of the unborn life over personal choice. In this example, the truth of moral statements thus depends on the moral framework of the person uttering a moral statement. Since this example relativizes the truth of the moral statement to the appraiser, it is a form of appraiser meta-ethical relativism.

Second, meta-ethical (truth) relativism holds that there is *variation* in, here, these moral frameworks. In our example, some people are pro-choice activists and others are pro-life activists. Some of their moral judgments will therefore veridically differ because their moral frameworks differ. Skeptics may object that relativism need not imply variation in moral frameworks: It may mean that morality is relative to a moral framework, even if there is only one moral framework. However, in that view, almost all moral theories would be compatible with moral relativism, which would render the notion of moral relativism trivial. For example, according to consequentialism, something is wrong relative to the moral framework of utilitarianism, which then happens to be the only correct moral framework.

Finally, this variation (in moral frameworks) *cannot* be entirely *eliminated*, even when applying all accepted epistemic rules. Assume that the truth of moral statements is only relative to the moral framework one endorses and that different individuals adhere to different moral frameworks. If it is the case that a pro-choice framework is, for example, epistemically correct while a pro-life framework is not, then the expression 'abortion is wrong' becomes false no matter who utters it. If moral relativism would allow that all variation in moral frameworks could be eliminated, moral relativism would be compatible with (most forms of) moral universalism, objectivism, realism and so on.

This meaning of moral relativism would be too broad for our purposes; rather, we hold that many moral frameworks are equivalent.

We can generalize this three-pronged view of moral relativism as: X is relative to Y, where X is an aspect of the moral phenomenon and where there is irrevocable variation in Y. Reasoning thus, other kinds of relativism exist, for example those that (additionally) relativize the truth of moral statements to the body of information someone has at a certain moment (e.g., Claudia's statement is true relative to the fact that she believes, at the moment she utters her statement, that embryos have a soul), or those that relativize an aspect of morality according to the actor, this is, the person having an abortion, etc. Still another form of meta-ethical moral relativism is that the *meaning* of moral terms is relative to a moral world. We can also hold that X - the permissibility or requirement of performing a morally relevant action - is relative to Y - the actor, the moral framework of the actor, or still something else. When we relativize moral permissibility or requirement of a morally relevant action to Y, we speak of normative moral relativism. Finally, we can hold that the use of moral statements is relative to affective intuitions that are beyond reasonable discussion. This is an example of descriptive relativism: we are merely describing how moral statements are being used, when they are uttered. Throughout this chapter, we will generally discuss relativity to internal moral frameworks.

4.2.2 A note on being committed to relativism

Before we go on, we must clarify the difference between moral relativism as a philosophical theory and *being committed to* moral relativism. It might well be that moral truth is relative, or that different people are required to do different things. This however does not mean that lay people in any way use moral language in accordance with moral relativist theories, think of morality as relative, relativize their moral statements or require different things from different people in a way consistent with moral relativism. It is useful to make the analogy with Mackie's error theory. According to Mackie, when people make moral judgments, they conceive of moral properties that exist in the world. However, there are most likely no such objective moral prescriptions, because these would be very queer properties. Therefore, our moral judgments are in error. Analogously, it might be the case that what is a moral fact depends on the kind of person one is, or that different people should do different things, while at the same time, people in fact think of the moral judgments they make as inherently non-relative. Thus moral relativism might be the most plausible theory of morality, while people, being convinced that morality is inherently universal, are constantly 'in error'.

If someone, stating that 'abortion is wrong', holds that abortion is wrong for everyone in the same circumstances, then we will say that this person is a moral

universalist. If, on the other hand, someone stating that ‘abortion is wrong’, holds that this only holds for herself and maybe her community but not for people with another moral framework, then we will say that this person is a moral relativist. This distinction will prove important in the next sections and the following chapters.

4.2.3 Related and opposite notions

Relativism is similar to *value pluralism*, the view that there are many different moral values (Mason, 2011). Raz (1986, p. 395) defines value pluralism as “the view that there are various forms and styles of life which exemplify different virtues and which are incompatible.” Several pluralists denounce moral relativism, but they usually do so by equating relativism with a very constrained view. However, there are also subtly different kinds of value pluralism that may be different from some of the subtly different kinds of normative relativism. For example, moral relativism could stress that what you ought to do is different from what another individual ought to do, and this because what is valuable depends on, or *is relative to*, what kind of person you are. This is *incompatible* with Raz’s notion of strong moral pluralism: According to this kind of strong moral pluralism, incompatible virtues *cannot* be ranked relative to each individual; what you ought to do does not depend on what kind of person you are. For every person, the same requirements occupy the same position in the moral hierarchy. In sum, moral relativism and value pluralism are general categories that are partly overlapping – each embrace various more specific terms, and some of these terms belong to both categories.

An influential tradition discusses related *normative and political* views under the header of relativism, as the following quote makes clear: “Toleration – the principle that we should refrain from persecuting others despite having both motive (we judge them to be wrong) and opportunity (we have the power to do so) [...] is also thought to be a component (or a consequence of) relativism about morality. Relativism is sometimes taken as requiring that we suspend our judgment of others, or as a reason for offering toleration at all” (Long, 2011, p. 310-311). However, toleration as a universal requirement does not seem to fit in our scheme of moral relativism. It can be a relativist requirement, if, for example, some contexts require toleration while other contexts do not, or when some people should tolerate while others should not. Moreover, toleration also need not be a consequence of relativism. As we will see, toleration is usually endorsed by absolutists holding that from two incompatible views at least one must be wrong. Indeed, as is the case in Long’s description, toleration is usually defined as the view that one should not interfere with *what we judge to be wrong*. This is at odds with Long’s and others’ notion of relativism, which entails that we should *suspend* our

judgment. However, we will further see that the notion of toleration can also be related to moral relativism.

As to normative relativism's counterparts, we can turn to the three components that are outlined. The first component relates an aspect of morality to Y, for example moral frameworks. Most often, proponents of relativist views then have in mind that 'what is related to' is constituted (at least partly) by a subject's or culture's moral views and not entirely by objects, facts, or anything that exists independently of people's minds. For example, they may hold that no moral framework exists entirely out of people's heads. This makes moral relativism markedly different than *moral objectivism*, the latter here holding that what is right or wrong is substantially mind-independent. With this meaning of moral objectivism we stay very close to its use by scholars whose work we will discuss later in Sections 4.3 and 4.4 (e.g., Ruse, 1986; Nichols & Folds-Bennett, 2003; Goodwin & Darley, 2010). Moral relativism is not incompatible with objectivism – we can envision the existence of different, objective, moral worlds (e.g., Rovane, 2011) – but throughout this dissertation moral relativism will be construed as a substantially mind-dependent notion. The second aspect in the sketched scheme concerns scope, where relativism is distinct from universalism. While moral relativism entails variation in Y, *moral universalism* holds that acts are true or false, right or wrong, or are used in the same way, for or by everyone. Universalism does not necessarily entail any metaphysical claim: Morality might be mind-dependent but still be the same for everyone, for example because we all possess the same species-typical evolved moral psychology (e.g. Ruse, 1986). Objectivism and universalism may thus be orthogonal concepts, though objectivism usually entails universalism. The third aspect in our scheme concerns irrevocable variation in Y. Value pluralists hold that there are different values. However, while relativists hold that not all conflicts between values can be resolved, certain value pluralists hold that conflicts between these values can be resolved (e.g., Nagel, 1979, discussed in Wong, 2006).

These concepts will be of interest in Section 4.4, when we evaluate normative theories' empirical assumptions. But first we compare our notion of moral relativism with other, specific theories of meta-ethical, descriptive and normative moral relativism. We hope to show that these existing theories all fall under our encompassing scheme.

4.2.4 Meta-ethical relativism

Harman's *meta-ethical relativism* is a clarifying example (Harman & Thomson, 1996). According to Harman, meta-ethical relativism is a claim about the truth conditions of moral judgments: judgments about what is morally right or wrong are true or false relative to a moral framework, just as the speed of motion is relative to a spatiotemporal

framework. Moral frameworks are shaped by the set of values one holds, and these cannot be entirely explained by referring to external (mind-independent) factors. The truth of moral notions is thus subjective. Harman infers from observation that different people most likely hold different sets of values, hence there are different moral frameworks. Since variation in people's values is at least partially subjective, it cannot be entirely eliminated by objective discussion. Therefore, Harman concludes, none of these moral frameworks is more correct than the others (Harman & Thomson, 1996, p. 8). As such, two incompatible moral judgments can both be true, depending on the moral framework one refers to. If Claudia asserts that an abortion is wrong, and Jane asserts that the same abortion is not wrong, both their assertions might be veridical, albeit each is true relative to a different framework (Lyons, 1976/2001, p. 127-128). This fits our working definition of moral relativism.

4.2.5 A note on extreme meta-ethical relativism

Peculiar to Harman's meta-ethical relativism is the position that no existing moral framework is more correct than any other; all singular moral statements to which people subscribe are relatively true or false but none are universally true. Harman thus defends an extreme form of moral meta-ethical relativism. *Extreme meta-ethical relativism* holds that no moral judgment is universally true or false. *Moderate meta-ethical relativism* holds that some moral judgments are universally true or false while others are relatively true or false (adapted from Moser & Carson, 2001, p. 3). This distinction between extreme and moderate will be more important when we discuss normative views: We will be mainly concerned with moderate normative moral relativism and toleration.

4.2.6 Descriptive relativism

Harman considers his meta-ethical account to be a plausible inference from a *descriptive moral relativist* claim. Descriptive relativism is a claim about the nature and extent of moral disagreement: It is the claim that some moral disagreement is not objectively, reasonably or rationally resolvable. The moral disagreement is then said to be intractable or fundamental. We have seen in chapter one that there are good reasons to assume that descriptive moral relativism is true, thus that some moral disagreements are fundamental. However, whether a specific moral disagreement is fundamental may depend on what procedure for solving moral disagreement we commit to.

Harman lays out his theory as follows (Harman & Thomson, 1996, p. 12-14): Some moral disagreements seem to be intractable because, as we have seen, they rest on disagreements about basic values, and these basic values derive from affective attitudes. No matter what factual arguments we adduce, Harman explains, they cannot bring us to change our affects. People differ in these attitudes because they are acquired by enculturation in a system of conventions; different cultural systems and different positions within them lead to the internalization of different values, mediated by affect. Hence, Harman's descriptive relativism is also consistent with the aforementioned schematic view, namely, what is deemed to be right or wrong is relative to one's moral framework, which derives from an affective attitude. There are individual and cultural differences in people's affective attitudes and hence in their moral frameworks, and we cannot eliminate this variation by objective discussion since these attitudes cannot be traced back to factual evidence.

Harman's descriptive relativism fits with other frequently promulgated accounts. Brandt (1967/2001, p. 25-26) describes the notion of fundamental moral disagreement as follows: "To say that a disagreement is "fundamental" means that it would not be removed even if there were perfect agreement about the properties of the thing being evaluated." To assert that moral disagreements are non-fundamental is thus to presume that "all ethical diversity can be removed, in principle, by the advance of science, leading to agreement about the properties of the things being appraised".

Doris and Plakias (2008) likewise speak of fundamental moral disagreement as disagreements that would not be resolved if the disputants were operating under ideal circumstances. The same terminology is used by Levy (2002), who says that some disagreements can ultimately be brought back to disagreements about values that cannot be further discussed. Ivanhoe (2009) similarly holds to the view that "there are a variety of distinct ethical values in the world that cannot be reduced to one another or derived from any higher common source." All this fits with the schematic description in that moral disagreement is caused by subjective values; variation exists in those values and this variation cannot be removed by committing to a certain epistemology.

4.2.7 Normative relativism

In order for a normative theory to be relativistic, the prescription should state that, first, what one has to do or is allowed to do is relative to a moral framework, second, there is variation in moral frameworks, and third, this variation cannot be eliminated. This is called moral requirement relativism (Moser & Carson, 2003). An example of moral requirement relativism is agent relativism (Streiffer, 1999; Lyons, 1976/2001): different requirements or permissions apply to different individuals depending on these individuals' moral framework. This is not to be confused with appraiser relativism.

Appraiser relativism is the meta-ethical position that different moral judgments are true or false relative to the appraiser (Streiffer, 1999; Lyons, 1976/2001) - as in the example in Section 4.2.1.

Importantly, there are many different kinds of moral requirement relativism. First of all, we must ask whose framework a moral requirement can be relative to. For example, there is a continuum with cultural relativism at one end and individual relativism at the other end. Individual moral requirement relativism holds that an action is right or wrong depending on the moral framework of one individual, e.g. the agent. This is discussed under the header of subjectivism by Williams (1993/1972, p. 26). For Williams, moral relativism is constrained to cultural moral relativism (id., p. 20-25). Cultural normative relativism then holds that an action is right or wrong relative to the moral framework of a culture.

Individual relativism does not mean that someone who is totally informed about the state of the outside world can never do something wrong. People can always elect not to follow the prescriptions of their own moral framework because they have other incentives, i.e., they can choose to act in a manner that, by their own reckoning, is immoral. Moreover, choices may arise in a manner that reveals a lack of clarity in the individual's hierarchy of moral values, such that, upon subsequent reflection, the individual may determine that her actions were immoral. For example, an individual might ponder whether she should have defended a friend accused of academic misconduct knowing that he cheated on his exams. Reflecting on her commitments, she may decide that she holds justice to be more important than the loyalty she felt at the moment of defense, and hence that she was, in retrospect, wrong. In contrast to individual relativists, cultural relativists hold that whether an action is right or wrong depends on the moral framework of the culture of the actor, i.e., the hierarchy of values that prevail in the actor's society. While this is not obviously in accordance with morality being relative to a subjective appraisal, we hold that the moral viewpoint of a culture depends on the moral views of the individuals who make up the given society.

4.3 How to deal with moral disagreement

Notions of moral relativism, toleration and being a moral relativist play an important role when discussing how to react towards moral disagreements. Certain authors suggest that we should tolerate other points of view, but mainly when there are irresolvable individual differences in moral attitudes (e.g., Williams, 1996). Importantly,

there might be irresolvable moral differences if moral rules hold universally or are perceived to hold universally. In that case, moral disagreements are not irresolvable because they are both true or right. They can be irresolvable because the means or consequences of interference are undesirable. For example, a disagreement can be irresolvable because intrusion with a different lifestyle would inevitably lead to conflict or even war. A moral disagreement can also be irresolvable because we do not (yet) know what is right or wrong. So conceived, toleration need not be classified under the header of moral relativism – though it is compatible with holding other norms that are relativist, and it can be a relativized norm if only some people are required to be tolerant. Moreover, toleration does not even necessarily *follow* from moral relativism. A universalist, for example, may hold that all legal actions ought to be tolerated by everyone.

Most often – albeit not necessarily, toleration is discussed against the background of moral universalism (hence, not moral relativism). Toleration is associated with ‘endurance’ and with ‘patience in suffering’; it is thus taken to imply that one objects to and would rather not want to bear the other point of view.

When moral rules are relatively right or wrong, other options open up. In this case, certain authors assert that, in case of irresolvable moral disagreement, we should relativize our moral judgments or even incorporate other moral views in our own lives. In that case, one does not tolerate the other point of view but accepts it as praiseworthy. However, toleration is not incompatible with moral relativism. If moral statements are relatively true while individuals cannot but hold moral statements to be universalizable (cf. error theory), then toleration might be a corollary of meta-ethical relativism. Another example is when some individuals are required to tolerate other points of view while others are not: this is an example of moral requirement relativism because different requirements hold for different people. Most often though, as we will see in Section 4.3.1, toleration and relativism are seen as alternatives. In the following four sections though we merely introduce the concepts.

4.3.1 Toleration: non-interference

Toleration is a common view discussed under the rubric of advisable reactions towards moral disagreement. It is a normative claim, stating that one is morally required to tolerate moral diversity. A minimal notion of toleration entails that one does not interfere with what one considers to be wrong. More demanding notions include that one should also respect, or even stand up for, those who hold different objectionable moral views.

While different ideas about toleration abound, they often come down to the notion that there are certain actions with which one should not interfere even though one judges them to be wrong according to one's own moral framework. This may sound contradictory even though it is exactly what toleration is held to mean. In an edited volume about toleration (Heyd, 1996), we can read that "the concept of tolerance consists of beliefs and actions that are justifiably (and maybe morally) disapproved of and yet are said to be immune from negative interference" (Heyd, 1996, p. 11); the virtue of toleration "emphasizes the moral good involved in putting up with beliefs one finds offensive" (Williams, 1996, p. 19); toleration "is the refusal, where one has the power to do so, to prohibit or seriously interfere with conduct that one finds objectionable," (Horton, 1996, p. 28); toleration "permits continued private moral hostility toward the values and activities that are the object of toleration," (Herman, 1996, p. 61), and "tolerance presupposes a complexity of two sentiments: the first, an impulse to intervene and regulate the lives of others, and the second, and imperative - either logical or moral - to restrain that impulse," (Fletcher, 1996, p. 158). The idea of toleration is often criticized for being psychologically impossible or otherwise constituting a logical contradiction. We will discuss criticisms of toleration in Section 4.4.2.3; we want to note though that not all the authors we just quoted oppose toleration. Some of them rather try to solve this so-called "paradox of toleration" (Heyd, 1996, p. 11).

4.3.2 Toleration: respect

Simply not interfering with others' lives is often rejected as an insufficient practice of toleration. Instead, several authors suggest that one should also respect other points of view. Heyd (1996) describes respect as the practice of evaluating individuals independently of their acts. Respect here entails that one judges the act but one does not judge the person, one tries to understand the individual and does not treat the individual differently because of his or her actions. Forst (2007) lists respect as the practice of recognizing one another as moral-political equals. Specifically, "their common framework of social life should — as far as fundamental questions of rights and liberties and the distribution of resources are concerned — be guided by norms that all parties can equally accept and that do not favor one specific ethical or cultural community." More demanding is the notion of active toleration as used by Lester and Roberts (2009). They argue that one could also stand up for the rights of those that hold diverging moral views. We will use the notion of respect when speaking of treating others as equals such as standing up for others' rights irrespective of their moral views.

4.3.3 Pluralistic relativism and ambivalence

A notable relativist theory is Wong's (2006) notion of pluralistic relativism and his idea of accommodation. Wong (2006) rejects toleration. Instead, he recommends that in case of disagreement over what to do, one should accommodate, meaning that one should attempt to understand the others' viewpoint. This is always possible, he contends, because all (legitimate) moralities start from the same assumptions and values; it is just that they are interpreted in different ways and that their value hierarchies are different. For example, stated simplistically, the Western world prioritizes autonomy over community, while the Eastern world prioritizes community over autonomy. Individuals from both types of cultures can nevertheless understand that autonomy and community are valuable. When confronted with another morality, Wong suggests, one has to put oneself in the other's shoes. Once one understands the other's values one should also incorporate them, thereby opening new moral options in one's own life. This process is called accommodation.

This is an alternative to toleration. Here we can also ask, if all the values in all legitimate moralities can also hold for any other morality, is this relativism? After all, moral notions are universally right or wrong in this view. Recalling our schematic view of relativism, moral notions are right or wrong depending on these basic values that constitute moralities and these values are mind-dependent: this is the case in Wong's account. There is also variation in moral frameworks: one holds the value of autonomy paramount, another that of community, and so on. Considering the third component of relativism, it seems that this variation between individuals could, in principle, be eliminated because we can come to understand all other (legitimate) moralities. However, a closer look reveals that this variation is not eliminated *within* individuals. Indeed, Wong's (2006) theory is relativistic because it centralizes the notion of ambivalence. Ambivalence happens when one comes to understand the other's point of view and thereafter has two values in mind; in the case of previous disagreement, these values will prescribe irreconcilable actions but now they do so for one and the same actor. If community-values order one to take care of one's family, while autonomy-values order one to pursue one's own interests, one experiences ambivalence. Hence different irreconcilable actions are prescribed and, no matter what one chooses, the other option would still have been right too. In Wong's (2006, p. 21) words, "even if we are firm in taking a side, we can understand that something of moral value is lost when we act on that side, and the loss is of such a nature that we cannot simply dismiss it as a regrettable though justifiable result of the right decision." This ambivalence, as we understand Wong, resembles the experience of a moral dilemma. An agent is in a moral dilemma when there is internal conflict: she

regards herself as having moral reasons to do each of two actions, but doing both actions is not possible... The agent thus seems condemned to moral failure; no matter what she does, she will do something wrong (or fail to do something that she ought to do) (McConnell, 2010).

Hence, when one is in a state of ambivalence, different irreconcilable actions are prescribed. This is what makes the theory relativistic – the only peculiarity being that the irreconcilable variance is not between individuals but within an individual.

We can object that this makes Wong's view a form of strong moral pluralism (see Section 4.1.3) because each value belongs to every moral framework. However – and it is here that ambivalence differs from a dilemma – while experiencing ambivalence, one can still invoke practical reasons for following one or the other action. Important practical considerations have to do with following a consistent life path or conforming to one's role in several social structures. While a moral dilemma can confront one with the options of giving money to charity or lending it to a friend, ambivalence happens when the head of a global charity organization realizes that a quiet life at a farm would also have been a valuable option (and the other way around) if he or she had lived a different life throughout. In the end, what to do still depends on what kind of person one is and what kind of life one lives.

Thus, Wong's view of accommodation is a form of moral requirement relativism: different people are required to do different things.

In our view, the notion of accommodation – while conceived as an alternative to toleration by Wong (2006) – also requires toleration as a temporary reaction to moral disagreement. In order to accommodate others' values or in order to know whether another view is respectable, one has to tolerate the objectionable behavior until such time as one has either accommodated or rejected the act. (Note that toleration does not legitimate interference with the action, but does legitimate reasonable discussion.) Graham (1996) similarly defends a view of toleration as a temporary state. He argues that toleration is best seen as a reaction to meta-ethical objectivity (thus, non-relativism). If moral judgments are objectively true or false, one has to tolerate actions of which one disapproves during the time that one is still trying to discern moral truth. Toleration as patience assumes that eventually one will accommodate, accept or reject the other's view.

Not only that, accommodation also requires of people that they relativize their moral judgments. We have seen that it is possible to defend moral requirement relativism, meta-ethical relativism or descriptive relativism while all individuals in fact think of morality as universal. This would amount to a sort of error theory, comparable to Mackie's error theory. However, in order to accommodate, one should first tolerate objectionable behavior before entertaining the idea that a view, incompatible with one's own, might be equally correct. This seems necessary in order to undertake the next

steps, which are to fully understand the value, internalize it, and give it a proper place in one's own life. In the end, one holds that what other people have to do is different from what is required of oneself, which again means that one relativizes one's moral judgments. Accommodation thus is a rather demanding requirement, as it necessitates states of toleration and relativism.

Wong's view shows remarkable similarities with the notion of respect as used by, for instance, Levy (2002, p. 62-66). While toleration can require one to inhibit acting in accordance with one's judgments, respect here demands that one tries to understand the value of certain other ways of life, in order to either affirm them as worthwhile or reject them as illegitimate. This goal of affirmation or rejection is not always included in notions of respect though; usually respect is a form of toleration, entailing that one objects to aspects of the respected way of life rather than understanding it. Accordingly, we will use the notion of respect as a form of toleration (see Section 4.2.2).

4.3.4 A note on extreme normative relativism and toleration

It is important to dispel one last misconception that can hinder readers in considering moral requirement relativism and toleration as interesting options. We have seen that there is extreme and moderate meta-ethical relativism; there is an analogous distinction between *extreme* and *moderate normative relativism* and between *extreme* and *moderate toleration*. Moderate normative relativism holds that *some* moral actions are relatively right or wrong while other moral actions are universally right or wrong. Extreme normative relativism holds that all moral actions are relatively right or wrong, implying that every action can be required or ought to be tolerated. Analogously, we use extreme toleration to mean that one tolerates indiscriminately and thus allows morally deviant behavior to take place. Moderate toleration means that only a certain set of objectionable behavior is tolerated (e.g., only lawful though objectionable behavior, and not illegal behavior, or only fundamentally different moral views). Opponents of moral relativism and toleration often equate relativism with extreme normative relativism or toleration. Graham (1996, p. 44) for example holds that “[meta-ethical] relativism in turn provides support for toleration; if no one belief or set of beliefs is superior to any other in terms of truth, *all must be accorded equal respect*,” (our emphasis). According to Levy (2002, p. 25), opponents of relativism often associate relativism with something like the following: “If relativism is true, then there are no absolute moral standards in the name of which we can denounce the Nazi holocaust, the slave trade or the Spanish Inquisition; [...] If relativism is true, then anything goes (or so its opponents fear).” Indeed, extreme normative relativism was widely defended by early 20th century anthropologists and social scientists, often in the form of cultural relativism (e.g., Sumner, 1906/2001; Benedict, 1934/2001). However, contemporary moral philosophers

hardly ever defend extreme normative relativism, be it in its cultural or individual variant. As such, toleration might even be a universal requirement if normative ethics is relative: Moderate normative relativism is characterized by *some* requirements being relative while others might hold for everyone. Moreover, meta-ethical relativism does not necessarily imply a normative view; as such the extreme meta-ethical view that all moral judgments can be true does not necessarily imply that all moral actions ought to be tolerated, permitted, etc. It is conceivable that among the set of true moralities, not all of them are morally right.

While extreme forms of relativism are compatible with the scheme presented in the beginning of this chapter, all of the normative works under discussion defend a moderate form of relativism as here defined. Wong holds that there are different moralities, but only a subset of these are legitimate. Which moralities are legitimate is beyond the scope of this chapter, but Wong (2006) expands considerably on criteria to delineate the set of legitimate moralities. Notable criteria in Wong's (2006) view are constraints due to the function of morality as a tool to regulate conflicts of interest, and constraints due to human nature, needs, and desires. Levy (2002), explicitly inspired by Wong, arrives at a similar view.

4.4 Arguments for and against moral relativism and toleration

In this section, we will lay out certain defenses and criticisms of moral relativism and toleration. In this chapter, we are mainly interested in the presumed or asserted *psychological* constraints, because these claims provide grounds for comparison with the empirical findings under discussion in Section 4.5. We thus draw mainly on work that explicitly acknowledges the importance of moral psychology for normative ethics (in chapter seven we will deal with practical constraints).

Obviously, the authors who we will discuss fully endorse the dictum that one cannot draw prescriptive or normative conclusions from descriptive statements only (Hume, 1739-1740); they also do not have the intention of committing the naturalistic fallacy (Moore, 1993/1903). None of their statements should be interpreted as a priori knowledge, analytic truth or a demonstration of the eternal truth of a certain moral view.

4.4.1 Arguments for moral relativism and toleration

Most arguments for toleration or moral relativism depend on the existence of fundamental moral disagreement (e.g. Levy, 2002). They can also be called *procedural arguments* because they presume that, in order to solve moral disagreement, we must follow a specific procedure. If this procedure does not resolve the disagreement then the incompatible moral statements all prescribe permitted actions, or we may not legitimately judge, interfere with or restrict the behavior that one considers to be wrong. Arguments from fundamental moral disagreement are usually used to argue for meta-ethical relativism (e.g., Hales, 2009), but some authors argue for normative views such as normative moral relativism, or toleration in the background of universalism. Importantly, the resultant prescriptions only hold for those cases where there is fundamental moral disagreement, not for all moral disagreements: we are thus talking about moderate normative views.

Levy gives the example that, when one cannot convince others with ‘reasonable’ arguments, then one has no right to impose one’s view on others (Levy, 2002, p. 77). Following the same line of argument, Wong (1984) first argues that there is fundamental moral disagreement, as some moral disagreements cannot be resolved by accepted arguments (Wong, 1984, p. 66). This only has normative implications if we add one or more normative principles. As an example he introduces an interpretation of Kant’s formula of humanity as an end in itself. This formula states that all human beings are ends in themselves because they are rational by nature. Whereas Kant believed his principle to be universally valid, Wong merely argues that it is a plausible expression of the moral traditions of Europe and other cultures. In other words, it is likely that many of us implicitly or explicitly endorse Kant’s principle; hence we start from common ground when arguing about right or wrong. Wong wants to show that arguments for toleration are plausibly valid when one accepts or holds this formula, for the following reason: according to Wong, Kant’s principle implies that one should not interfere with others’ ends unless one can justify the interference to be acceptable to them were they fully rational and informed of all relevant circumstances (Wong, 1984, p. 181). Wong calls this the justification principle. We can clarify this reasoning with the following example: Images of dead fetuses are repulsive and saddening. These affective reactions might induce one to disapprove of abortion. However, such images, and the affects they induce, might not be a reasonable argument according to representatives of the pro-choice side of the debate. When someone cannot give reasonable arguments against abortion, then that person is not justified in prohibiting or interfering with an abortion, even though that person is convinced that abortion is wrong. Hence, one should not interfere with certain behavior even though one thinks that the behavior is wrong. This is a valid argument for toleration. Of course, this argument for toleration relies on the justification principle. As a consequence, if one does not accept the justification

principle, one will not be convinced of the virtue of toleration. If one does accept the justification principle, Wong adds, and since one still judges the behavior to be wrong, one should weigh the principle of toleration against the principle that urges one to stop the behavior in question. Wong's early principle of toleration already includes that one only ought to tolerate those who practice a true morality (Wong, 1984, Chapter 12); but it is only in 2006 that Wong greatly expands on what kind of moralities are true (Wong, 1984) or adequate (Wong, 2006). In this more recent work, he still adheres to, among others things, a procedural argument for a normative view, but here he prefers accommodation over toleration.

A particularly popular procedural argument is the enculturation argument (Levy, 2002, p. 45, 77). Some authors assume that if one acquires one's values via processes that do not constitute good reasons for our moral outlook, then one simply does not possess good arguments in favor of one's own values or in opposition to someone else's values and one may not impose them on others. Enculturation processes are processes that contingently shape moral outlooks. Arguably, one's moral outlook is also contingently shaped by evolved human nature, one's specific upbringing, genetic factors, environment, etc., all of which are a likely causal factor in the existence of individual differences in moral cognition (Henrich and Boyd 1998; Van Vugt et al. 2007; Ishii and Kurzban 2008; Bogaert et al. 2008). Hence this argument can be applied to these cases as well.

However, the enculturation argument and analogous arguments imply that reasonable discussion has not weeded out unreasonable values and strengthened or created reasonable ones. The origin of our moral values may not provide a good argument for our moral outlook, but this does not mean that no good reasons for specific values exist. In sum, this kind of argument falls prey to the genetic fallacy: It assumes that the origin of an opinion is relevant to the veracity or legitimacy of the opinion. In this case, reason can justify certain moral attitudes and reason can shape moral attitudes in the long term, even when everyday moral judgments are often more directly caused by affective intuitions. Thus, when developing an argument from disagreement, it is important to focus on reasoning practices more broadly, not merely on the origin of a moral attitude.

We have seen that toleration is deemed paradoxical. In order to solve this so-called paradox of toleration, several authors have suggested that we oppose the urge to interfere by cultivating values that inhibit us to interfere or that help us to tolerate. Thus, while certain authors suggest *that* we should tolerate other points of view, most authors additionally focus on *how* we can do that. In this context, following Williams (1996), it is useful to make a distinction between practices of toleration and tolerant attitudes. Practices of toleration encompass not interfering with and actively standing up for others' lives whose moral values one objects to. Because practices of toleration may be thwarted by an urge to interfere with objectionable ways of life, we have to

adduce certain *attitudes* that may facilitate such practices. For example, we should value human beings as autonomous agents. We thus counteract the values that make us interfere with the value of autonomy. Williams' suggestions are reasonable when one is a universalist awaiting the resolution of moral disagreements, and if one indeed values the capabilities of other people to make their own decisions.

In 2006, Wong defends accommodation and ambivalence, which are a version of moral requirement relativism because, in this view, different people have to do different things. Hales (2009) arrives at a similar view. While accommodation and ambivalence are also meant to bolster practices of toleration, they cannot be subsumed under tolerant attitudes because they do not imply that the tolerated behavior is morally wrong. Here one adduces a view of moral legitimacy of the to-be-tolerated behavior in order to enhance practices of toleration.

Ivanhoe (2009) defends a view he calls ethical promiscuity, which is similar to, and inspired by, Wong's (2006) moral ambivalence and accommodation. In the face of irreconcilable differences and moral pluralism, Ivanhoe argues, one should celebrate this state of affairs. Ethical promiscuity insists that we work to appreciate the "mad variety of values" and be open in the quest for new ones. Ivanhoe backs up Wong's view of accommodation with extra values that can bolster attitudes of tolerance. Openness is a virtue in itself, Ivanhoe insists; moreover, ethical promiscuity is constituent of leading a good life because it avoids a severe deformation of character, it enables us to share and enjoy a richer and more edifying life, it is a form of respect for good forms of life, and it avoids harm, which is also a source of satisfaction and delight.

Similarly, one can find tolerance intrinsically valuable, or value it because it prevents one from imposing one's view on others and in the process harming them (Levy, 2002, p. 55-56). Respect has similarly been defended because individuals purportedly feel a need to be morally recognized, including by those who live other moral lives (Levy, 2002, p. 63). This recognition is deemed valuable because it is a part of what humans need. Many norms can be adduced in formulating an argument for a normative view such as respect, non-interference or accommodation.

In sum, for some authors, the fact of irreconcilable differences (whether they reflect universalism, pluralism, relativism, or simply lack of knowledge) must be met with practices of toleration. In order to succeed in doing so, we need attitudes of toleration, such as accommodation, ethical promiscuity, or the value of autonomy. Together with the existence of disagreement, a stated reasoning constitutes an argument for moral requirement relativism or toleration if one accepts that the ways to solve the moral disagreement would be wrong and if one can accept the attitudes that bolster practices of toleration. We thus go from an 'is' and one or more 'oughts' to a new 'ought.' The kinds of values one needs to accept, and the kind of reasoning procedure one thinks is reasonable, all depend on one's meta-ethical and descriptive theories. For example, Saunders (2009) appeals to reflective equilibrium as a procedure for justifying moral

norms and resolving disagreement because reflective equilibrium does not require that individual moral intuitions are directly responsive to rational reflection. If one is committed to meta-ethical relativism, accommodation is unlikely to be accepted. Nonetheless, most suggestions have been criticized for being psychologically unattainable; in what follows we will review these objections.

4.4.2 Constraints and arguments against various forms of normative relativism

In 1975, E.O. Wilson sparked considerable debate with the publication of *Sociobiology*. At the end of the section that he notoriously opens with an appeal to “biologize” ethics, Wilson writes that it “should also be clear that no single set of moral standards can be applied to all human populations, let alone all sex-age classes within each population. To impose a uniform code is therefore to create complex, intractable moral dilemmas - these, of course, are the current condition of mankind,” (Wilson, 1975, p. 564). We see that Wilson rejects imposing a uniform code because the alternative is not a functional moral system. Nowadays though, different kinds of moral relativism and toleration have been rejected by naturalist philosophers for similar reasons.

Some philosophers have objected that we cannot ask individuals to relativize their moral norms because moral relativism would not fit with our moral psychology: It is not attainable due to the workings of our mind. First of all, in order to accommodate other points of view, one has to be capable of entertaining the idea that different requirements, that are incompatible with each other, hold for different people. A first critique argues that this way of thinking about morality is not possible. This is the problem of *feasibility*. A second critique holds that, if we do think of morality as relative, then we will not rely upon our own values anymore. This is the problem of *confidence*. A third criticism is that judging an action to be wrong implies that we are motivated to stop the action. An appeal to tolerate what we condemn is unstable because it goes against the drive to interfere with what we condemn. This is the *paradox of toleration*. A fourth critique holds that normative relativism is practically impossible because we cannot coordinate very different ways of live in one community. This is the problem of *practical feasibility*. We will discuss this last problem in chapter seven because we are in this chapter merely concerned with human psychology.

4.4.2.1 Feasibility and psychological feasibility

Flanagan (1991) expanded upon the requirement of feasibility. His formulation, the “principle of minimal psychological realism” reads:

“Make sure when constructing a moral theory or projecting a moral ideal that the character, decision processing, and behavior prescribed are possible, or are perceived to be possible, for creatures like us,” (Flanagan, 1991, p. 32).

One can interpret Ruse (1986) as an explicitly psychological version of this position. Ruse (1986) argues that we evolved to think of morality as objectively true in the service of motivating us to act upon our values. As a consequence, people are innately objectivist about morality – when they judge something right or wrong they have strong inclinations to think of this judgment as having a basis that is independent of their beliefs; correspondingly, they are also inclined to believe that the judgment should hold universally. Another consequence is that, should one manage to think of a judgment as relative, then one necessarily would no longer think of it as a moral judgment. This leads us to ask if people indeed are inclined to be moral objectivists. Ideally, we should then ask how morality develops and if there are cross-cultural similarities. As this is an empirical question, we will discuss studies that bear on moral relativism in Section 4.5. Ruse and others do rely on the contemporary majority view in moral psychology and on their own intuitions about morality.

As we will see in Section 4.4, a deeper and more up-to-date reading of empirical studies reveals that both mainstream moral psychology and personal intuitions are constrained by modern Western moral philosophies; as such, they presuppose that folk morality is objectivist. Other studies support a more nuanced view on folk moral relativism. This knowledge should invite philosophers to become more familiar with the empirical literature at hand; it should also invite more empiricists to directly address the question of folk moral relativism without presupposing it.

Wong (2006) presents a more nuanced take on psychological realism. He claims that we should not ask whether something is feasible; after all, we might not be able to decide this. Even if people are not moral relativists now, that does not mean they never can be. Hence, we should not dismiss a moral theory only because we cannot say that it is possible. Instead the criterion for accepting a theory should be that “it is not impossible.” Even stronger - though this is a normative statement - moralities that wrongly reject possible requirements should be ruled out as legitimate moralities: “Interestingly, however, seeing that certain possibilities are real enough (if not realistic) also works as a constraint on adequate moralities. Those moralities that in some way depend for their acceptance on denying the reality of certain possibilities must also be ruled out as inadequate” (Wong, 2006, p. 176). This more nuanced interpretation of the problem of feasibility leads us to ask if we can reasonably say that it is impossible for human beings to think of morality as relative, for example after setting up developmental conditions under which maturing individuals become moral agents with

relativistic views of morality. Can we point to conditions that are likely to make us moral relativists? Do they make us think of morality as relative?

Flanagan (1991) adds another possibility. He stresses that we have to make a distinction between the attainability of relativism for everyone and its feasibility for particular individuals (Flanagan, 1991, p. 48). In this view, it might be psychologically plausible to impose a relativist morality on some people (i.e., asking them to tolerate other views) but not on everyone. Whether a society like that would be feasible is an open question, but does not concern us in this section. Interpreted like this, the problem of feasibility simply leads us to ask whether some people are moral relativists, and what kind of people are moral relativists. As to the last two possibilities, we will see in Section 4.4 that empirical studies indicate that age, education, culture and personality correlate with the likelihood that someone is a moral relativist. These studies could bear on moral theories; while many are only informative for business ethics, there is a niche for empirical questions that bear on normative theory at large.

4.4.2.2 Confidence

Moral relativism would lead us to undermine our adherence to our own values. This problem of confidence is foregrounded by Ruse (1986) when he says that “we think [morality is] binding upon us *because we think it has an objective status*” (his emphasis).

In contrast to Ruse’s position, Wong does not think that his view of ambivalence will lead us to lose confidence in our moral values. In this, it is different than a moral dilemma. Indeed, on the one hand, according to Wong, ambivalence turns moral questions into mere practical choices; moreover, ambivalence means that our moral commitments must remain open-ended and flexible: “We must remain ready to affirm values and priorities that are not presently encompassed by our current commitments,” (Wong, 2006, p. 237).

On the other hand, practical considerations will lead us to think of our own values as the best values for us, “because we could not possibly strive equally to realize all valuable ways of life,” (Wong, 2006, p. 236). Even though we realize that other values might be better, they are either better for others or better for us but only in different circumstances (Wong, 2006, p. 235-236). The question of confidence has been addressed by empiricists by comparing moral ideology with other aspects of moral functioning. Here we find empirical data in support of the view that, cross-culturally, relativism is related to decreased confidence (Forsyth et al., 2008). However, as before, no distinction is made between different kinds of relativism in the empirical literature. As to the matter at hand, a pragmatist view as described by Wong is a form of relativism; as such, studies suggest that his view is not correct. On the other hand, people might be cultural relativists yet stringently adhere to a personal moral code. Philosophy can inform empiricists about the nuances that should be tested for; empiricists can inform

philosophers about the kinds of relativism that increase or decrease specific aspects of confidence. We will discuss relevant empirical findings in Section 4.5.2

4.4.2.3 The paradox of toleration

Fletcher (1996) gives a clear account of the paradox of toleration. Toleration here means that we do not interfere with acts that we judge to be wrong. However, Fletcher assumes that judging an act to be wrong is intricately linked to an impulse to intervene. For this reason, toleration will never hold for long. It can, in the longer run, lead to indifference when the act becomes demoralized, as has been the case with many sexual acts in contemporary Western societies. It can lead to respect when we decide that the other party was right, as is the case when we recognize the value of community. Or, toleration can break down and lead to intervention in the long run. Ivanhoe (2009) explicitly follows Fletcher when he criticizes toleration as psychologically unstable. Wong (2006) equally criticizes his own 1984 view of toleration by calling it schizophrenic. However, these criticisms beg the question of whether disapproving is in fact psychologically linked to an impulse to intervene with the act, and if so, if that impulse is overwhelmingly powerful or not. This is, after all, an empirical question. Moreover, all this implies that toleration is only a problem if we see it as a permanent solution. We might equally well ask if toleration works as an intermediate step (e.g., Graham, 1996). Would it, for example, make a difference if, on the one hand, we tolerated with the intention to resolve the disagreement, or, on the other hand, we tolerated with the intention to endure the other's behavior for an undetermined time?

4.5 Empirical studies on moral relativism

Our aim in this section is twofold: We review empirical studies that might be relevant to the critiques – the purported constraints – on normative relativism. We also aim to integrate these and future empirical studies with each other and with the philosophical literature. In order to do so, it will be useful to note that the discussed distinctions matter when empirical researchers address morality; we will see that the difference between extreme and moderate relativism and the continuum from individual to cultural relativism have been neglected to date.

4.5.1 Are people moral relativists?

4.5.1.1 Defining moral relativism away

4.5.1.1.1 Piaget and Kohlberg

Piaget argues that, by the age of seven, children are moral realists, and that they can come to think of moral rules as autonomous after the age of ten. Realism to Piaget means that one regards duty and value as independent of the mind and imposing itself, regardless of the circumstances (Piaget, 1932, p. 106). A rule is conceptualized as autonomous when it is thought of as man-made and as legitimated by consensus or conformity. Different rules can be fair if everybody agrees with them or follows them (Piaget, 1932, p. 57). Hence, in this view, children start off as moral non-relativists but develop in the direction of relativity (Piaget, 1932, p. 316). Kohlberg added four more stages after the two moral stages proposed by Piaget. He argues that social interactions subsequently lead us to develop adequate conceptions of morality. Individuals who have reached stage six think of moral judgments as guided by universal ethical principles that all humanity should follow. Stages three to five are characterized by the content of norms, rather than the form of norms, as in stage six. Accordingly, individuals who have reached stages three to five think that all moral rules are guided by those specific universal principles, while individuals who have reached stage six hold that moral rules are right whenever they are universalizable.

Piaget and Kohlberg should be credited for their pioneering work in moral psychology. Nonetheless, their conception of morality was biased towards non-relativism. Both defined the moral domain by referring to Kant. Piaget came to disagree with Kant's criterion of universalizability and objectivity, but Kohlberg postulated that universalizability was the last stage of moral development. This necessarily limits the scope of empirical investigation. If the researcher does not conceptualize a certain rule as universalizable, it will not be studied as such, even though subjects could categorize the rule as moral. Granted, one needs a prior conception of morality in order to know what to investigate. However, this conception could be minimal and broader at the start, allowing the data to guide the investigation by, for example, asking participants if the rule has anything to do with morality as they conceptualize it. When starting from philosophical conceptions of morality, we see that non-relative theories are only a subset of existing moral philosophies. Hence Piaget's and Kohlberg's prior conceptions of morality are too narrow; as a consequence, their methods are biased towards finding people to be moral non-relativists (e.g., Rest, 1988).

4.5.1.1.2 Domain theory and the moral/conventional distinction

The above problem shows up to an even larger extent in domain theory and, more specifically, research concerning the postulated moral-conventional distinction. Theorists (e.g., Turiel, 1983; Turiel et al., 1987; Smetana, 2006; Shweder, 1990) hold that most individuals develop the capacity to distinguish two kinds of social interactions. One cluster of interactions is perceived as belonging to the moral domain and triggers associated mental computations. The other cluster is perceived as belonging to the conventional domain and triggers different, convention-specific mental computations. According to the most prominent domain-theorists, those following Turiel (1983), moral and conventional transgressions are thought to be distinguished along the following dimensions: moral transgressions are, first, transgressions that involve a victim who is harmed, whose rights have been violated, or who has been subjected to an injustice. These are perceived as universal justifications. When asked why a moral transgression is wrong, people accordingly refer to these justifications. A conventional transgression, on the other hand, is wrong because there are implicit or explicit social strictures ruling against it, such as laws, sanctions, or prevailing opinions or practices. Second, moral transgressions are wrong independent of the rulings of authority structures or authority figures, while the wrongness of a conventional transgression depends on such authorities' decrees. Third, moral transgressions are generalizably wrong. This means that they are wrong in every social system, independent of convention, while conventional transgressions might not be wrong in a different social system (Turiel, 1983; see discussion in Kelly et al., 2007). A fourth characteristic is seriousness: Moral transgressions are more seriously wrong than conventional transgressions. This characteristic does not always hold and is not considered to be of primary importance (Turiel et al., 1987, p. 171-176; Smetana, 1993). Lastly, moral transgressions are less often deemed permissible than conventional transgressions.

Often, the moral/conventional theory is held to imply that people distinguish between moral and conventional transgressions along all or many of the dimensions indicated: it is claimed that the moral and the conventional are qualitatively different systems of thought, and not merely points along a continuum (Wainryb et al., 2004).

Given that there are different possible interpretations of these core ideas (e.g., Sousa, Holbrook, & Piazza, 2009; Stich, Fessler, & Kelly, 2009), it is useful to explain how individuals might come to perceive the distinction between moral rules and conventions. In 1983, Turiel provided the theoretical foundations of the moral/conventional distinction in his seminal work *The development of social knowledge*. He refers to the work of such philosophers as Gewirth, Searle, Dworkin and Rawls to defend the view that there is a distinction between acts that are wrong in themselves (or because of their inherent consequences) and acts that are wrong because of the social context (Turiel, 1983, p. 33-40). He further hypothesizes why individuals would

perceive such a distinction. Harmful acts, for example, have intrinsic features, such as causing empathic distress in the perpetrator, that allegedly cause the individual, in the course of his or her social development, to condemn these acts as wrong in themselves (Turiel, 1983, p. 35, 42-43). Referring to Rawls (id., p. 39), Turiel argues that the same holds for violations of rights and justice. Violations of conventions, on the other hand, do not have intrinsic consequences; instead, the reasons they are wrong are to be found in the social context. Wearing your pajamas at school might be wrong these days around here, but it would not be wrong if wearing your pajamas at school was a local convention. In order to be a convention, a prescription must address a behavioral uniformity that has a social function such as coordinating interactions; such functions are only possible if members of a society share knowledge about the given conventions. Conventions are validated by, and can be altered by, consensus or by general usage (Turiel, 1983, p. 35). During their development, individuals gain knowledge about these conventions and their function and, as a consequence, come to condemn transgressions of prevailing convention as wrong, not in themselves, but because of the social context.

Turiel's empirical hypothesis is thus that individuals come to develop (at least) two broad, distinguishable ways of thinking about behavior, namely, a) intrinsically, universally wrong behavior, and b) conventionally, variably wrong behavior.

In order to test this theory, a moral/conventional task has been developed. An example of such a task can be seen in Table 1. Participants are first presented with a scenario describing a violation of a prescription (i.e., a transgression, e.g. hitting a child for fun), after which they are asked to answer a set of questions that reveals their reasoning pattern. Typically, participants are first asked if the behavior was permissible ('permissibility question', usually phrased as 'ok or not ok'). They are then asked why it is or is not permissible ('justification question'). Additionally, they may be asked for the 'authority dependence' of the transgressions, e.g., if the behavior would still be wrong if an authority figure ruled otherwise. Other commonly employed questions are if it would still be wrong if the event had occurred somewhere else, at another time, where everybody did it, in another culture, where they don't have a rule about it (Nucci & Turiel, 1978; 1993), and so on, all of which are 'generalizability questions.' The contention is that some transgressions will show a 'moral response pattern,' meaning that, depending on what specific questions were asked, they will be viewed as generalizably wrong, viewed as wrong independent of authority, and viewed as wrong because they go against universal principles such as harm, justice or rights. Other transgressions will purportedly show a 'conventional response pattern,' meaning that they will be judged to be variably wrong, depending on authority and social context, and that they will be seen as meriting less punishment.

Table 8: The moral/conventional task

		MORAL	CONVENTIONAL
Example of a scenario		Paul is a six-year-old child who goes to a public elementary school. One Friday he walked up to one of the other children in his class and hit him just for fun.	After playtime, the children were supposed to put their toys back where they had found them. Luis put his toy on a shelf nearby instead of putting it where he had found it.
Permissibility	Is it OK for [X] to [act]?	No	No
Justification	Please thoroughly explain why you marked this option	Participant refers to universal principles of harm, justice or rights	Participant refers to social context, e.g., authority or social norms
Authority dependence	If the government passed a law that said it was ok to do what [X] did, would that make [X]'s action OK?	No	Yes
Generalizability	If [X] lived somewhere where everyone else did this, would it be wrong for [X] to do this?	Yes	No

Note. This is an example of a classical moral/conventional task. All scenarios and two questions (the authority dependence and generalizability question) are adapted from Huebner, Lee, & Hauser (2010). The permissibility question is adapted from Kelly et al. (2007). The justification question is adapted from Sousa et al. (2009). The inner eight cells show the signature moral response pattern and the signature conventional response pattern.

What does this tell us about folk moral relativism? Often, a transgression being generalizably wrong because it violates universal principles is juxtaposed to it being relative, both in experimental studies and according to the theory. Turiel (1983, p. 35) thus describes conventions as justified by, and relative to, the societal context. The result is that they vary from one social system to another or when general usage or consensus differs, while immoral acts are generalizably wrong. The property of justification can be assessed by asking subjects why this transgression is wrong, while the property of generalizability can be assessed by asking if the act would also be wrong in a different social system, or when general usage or consensus differ. Either of these criteria can determine that the transgression is non-relatively wrong. Thus, two conditions have to apply before we can decide that a transgression is relatively wrong. If a transgression is seen as wrong in two different societies but is seen as wrong because

it causes harm, then it is non-relatively wrong. If a transgression is claimed to be wrong because of consensus, but is claimed to be wrong even when varying a range of societal factors, we cannot decide it is relative. Hence, it will be much easier under this paradigm to decide that a rule is non-relative than to decide that it is relative.

Consonant with the aforementioned asymmetry in the affordances of the Turiel paradigm, an impressive corpus of empirical investigations employing this conceptual framework supports the conclusion that people are moral non-relativists (e.g., Wainryb et al. 2004; Turiel et al., 1987). Indeed, studies find that transgressions that are intuitively judged to be in the moral domain are consistently categorized as generalizably wrong and as wrong due to issues of harm, justice, and rights (e.g., Nucci & Turiel, 1993). Despite this voluminous evidence, however, we argue that the methods used in these studies will fail to detect moral relativism when it occurs.

Like Kohlberg, Turiel (1983) premises his approach on a narrow conception of 'morality' and 'conventionality,' drawing on a selection of philosophical theories that support universal accounts of morality (e.g., Searle, 1969). Morality is *defined* as "analytically independent of systems of social organization that coordinate interactions," (Turiel, 1983, p. 39). Moral right and wrong are determined by, and justified by, universal values of justice, rights, and 'do no harm.' As a consequence, what is morally wrong is morally wrong everywhere and its wrongness is justified by these universal values – wrongness is not determined by consensus. This is not a description, as moral systems do vary – it is a definition about the proper moral domain. In this conception, by definition, relativistic rules cannot be moral rules. For example, socio-functional accounts of morality as a device to regulate cooperation (e.g. Wong, 2006) are excluded from the scope of research.

In the moral/conventional task, participants are confronted with transgressions that have been selected and categorized by the researchers. In early studies (e.g. Nucci & Turiel, 1978; Turiel et al., 1987, p. 172-174; Nucci & Nucci, 1982), researchers or independent jurors classified the transgressions based on the prior definitions of 'moral' and 'conventional.' Some later studies (e.g. Nichols, 2004; Nucci & Turiel, 1993) adapt previously used scenarios. Thus, researchers pick out transgressions that would either elicit the moral response pattern or the conventional response pattern in themselves. This opens the possibility that participants had to rate a biased sample of transgressions. There might be transgressions that many of us would intuitively classify as 'moral' but that are not generalizable or not dependent on issues of harm, justice or rights according to the researchers. Such transgressions would not have been included in these studies because they could not have been classified as either 'moral' or 'conventional' due to their 'atypical' combination of characteristics. Hence, the finding that participants rated all 'moral' transgressions as generalizable means nothing more than that the participants agreed with the researchers regarding the generalizability of the selected transgressions.

In addition, participants have typically been asked to rate a small number of transgressions. This opens the possibility that their answers were specific to the transgression considered and not to morality per se (Wright et al., 2008). Studies that included a wider range of scenarios and did not have inclusion or characterization criteria based on Turiel's (1983) classification did not find this clear-cut conceptual distinction (e.g. Huebner, Lee, & Hauser, 2010; Nichols, 2004; Kelly et al., 2007). Also, there are cultural differences in how people classify transgressions. When participants belong to the same cultural group as do the researchers, we can expect that their response patterns will reflect the same intuitions as those of the researchers. Clear cultural differences have been found in the response patterns in regard to putative moral or conventional transgressions (e.g., Miller et al., 1990).

Clearly, most studies do not ask participants whether they think of the transgression as moral or conventional - the distinction is made by the researchers, and its affirmation by participants is entirely implicit, dependent on their answers to questions intended to tap into the relevant properties. Wright et al. (2008) presented participants with a broad range of issues and asked them to explicitly classify them as moral or conventional. They found that, for almost all issues, there was no consensus among participants. Many issues were considered moral by one participant and conventional by another participant; some of these issues would have been classified as moral according to Turiel's (1983) criteria, while other issues would have been classified as conventional. Huebner et al. (2010) employed principal components analysis to explore how participants' judgments regarding a wide variety of putative moral and conventional transgressions assort. While arguing that postulated moral transgressions do cluster together, they also report that postulated conventional transgressions seem to form a continuum from conventional at one end to moralized at the other end.

Findings such as these indicate that there are reasons to doubt the a priori rationale given for drawing the moral/conventional distinction where many researchers place it (see also Bauman & Skitka, 2009). We suggest that, unless one knows the participants' categorization, there is no reason to categorize particular transgressions one way or another (indeed, there might not even be a strict conceptual distinction at all, but instead a continuum, with 'moral' and 'conventional' as poles).

This has important implications for the empirical question of whether or not people are moral relativists. Testing a very limited range of moral issues is only informative if one expects that some individuals will be extreme relativists, namely, they will give relativist answers irrespective of what moral issues they have to evaluate. But suppose it were the case that people were moderate moral relativists, deeming as 'moral' some transgressions that researchers in the Turiel tradition did not include or would have classified as 'conventional.' If participants are not asked how they classify such transgressions, and if participants are presented with only a small set of transgressions that have been pre-selected by researchers on the basis of the intuition that (in the

researcher's opinion) each is clearly moral or conventional, then even copious research will not reveal people's relativist leanings.

4.5.1.1.3 Ethical ideologies

A more open-minded body of research relevant to the present discussion is that employing the Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ) developed by Forsyth (1980). Forsyth proposes that people differ in their personal 'ethical ideologies': people differ in the degree they are relativists and idealists, two orthogonal continua ranging from low to high. Forsyth describes highly relativistic individuals as those that "feel that moral actions depend upon the nature of the situation and the individuals involved, and when judging others they weigh the circumstances more than the ethical principle that was violated," (Forsyth, 1992). At first glance, this definition might seem to differ substantially from our previous definition of relativism. Nonetheless, consider the components of the EPQ designed to categorize people along this dimension. Participants employ a 9-point Likert scale to indicate how much they agree with each of ten items. In Table 2, we reproduce these ten items, noting in the right column the extent to which each item bears on relativism as we have defined it. Items differ in the extent to which they tap into whether people think of moral principles as variable, and whether moral disagreements can be resolved.

Table 9: Items 11-20 of the Ethics Position Questionnaire (left) (Source: Forsyth, 1980) and their relation to moral relativism (right).

Item	Morality is ...	
11	There are no ethical principles that are so important that they should be a part of any code of ethics.	Variable, relative to a code of ethics
12	What is ethical varies from one situation and society to another.	Variable, relative to situation and society
13	Moral standards should be seen as being individualistic; what one person considers to be moral may be judged to be immoral by another person.	Variable, relative to individual
14	Different types of moralities cannot be compared as to “rightness.”	Variable and irresolvable
15	Questions of what is ethical for everyone can never be resolved since what is moral or immoral is up to the individual.	Relative to individual, and irresolvable
16	Moral standards are simply <i>personal</i> rules which indicate how a person should behave, and are not to be applied in making judgments of others.	Relative to individual
17	Ethical considerations in interpersonal relations are so complex that individuals should be allowed to formulate their own individual codes.	Relative to individual
18	Rigidly codifying an ethical position that prevents certain types of actions could stand in the way of better human relations and adjustment.	Unclear, maybe variable
19	No rule concerning lying can be formulated; whether a lie is permissible or not permissible totally depends on the situation.	Variable, relative to situation
20	Whether a lie is judged to be moral or immoral depends upon the circumstances surrounding the action.	Variable, relative to circumstances

Most items combine at least two of the three criteria of individual relativism. When an individual scores high on all of these criteria, we can conclude that the participant explicitly endorses moral relativism as here defined. The items are biased towards extreme moral relativism: moderate moral relativists would agree that *some* moral standards are individualistic (item 11) or personal rules (item 16), but they would not necessarily agree with the more general wording that is used. Moreover, it is not clear if normative relativism is assessed. ‘Relativist’ answers are also concomitant with other interpretations, such as meta-ethical relativism (moral statements are relatively true or false) (see also Goodwin & Darley, 2010). On the other hand, Forsyth (1992) explicitly avoids an a priori commitment to an objectivistic moral philosophy. All things considered, this is a useful starting point if we want to know about the possibility of lay people being folk moral relativists.

Studies that make use of the EPQ frequently inform us about variation in moral views, as suggested by Flanagan (1991). Researchers often report that, among adults, age is negatively correlated with relativism (e.g., Chen & Liu, 2009; Dubinsky et al., 2005;

Hartikainen & Torstila, 2004; Fernando et al., 2008; Vitell & Paolillo, 2003). In most studies, religiosity is negatively correlated with relativism (Chen & Liu, 2009; Barnett et al., 1996; Vitell & Paolillo, 2003 but see Fernando et al., 2008). Relativism also differs significantly between nations (Forsyth et al., 2008; Alas et al., 2010), with the East generally being more relativistic than the West (Forsyth et al., 2008). We see here that a very general but less biased conception of relativism yields a more nuanced view on folk moral relativism. We suggest that more elaborate scales could differentiate between normative and meta-ethical relativism, between cultural and individual relativism, and between extreme and moderate relativism.

4.5.1.1.4 Moral heuristics

Experimental philosophers have recently begun to examine individuals' implicit moral heuristics by presenting them with scenarios and varying the relevant conditions therein. However, these studies mostly tap into meta-ethical commitments: participants are asked to assess the truth value of moral statements, rather than their judgments of right and wrong about diverging moral behavior (Sarkissian et al., forthcoming; Goodwin and Darley, 2008, 2010). While these studies offer preliminary indications that some individuals could be meta-ethical relativists, it would be useful to explicitly try to tap into implicit normative intuitions.

A critique that might be raised is that researchers mostly study moral psychology by analyzing subjects' explicit verbal reports of their reasoning while many moral psychologists now hold that moral behavior and moral judgment do not correlate with explicit reasoning (e.g., Haidt, 2001; interestingly, Piaget [1932] was already aware of this difficulty). On the other hand, explicit verbal reasoning is used to convince others about one's moral judgments and to influence others' moral behavior (also Haidt, 2001). This suggests that it is appropriate to approach the issue of folk morality from different angles: moral behavior, implicit moral judgments, and explicit moral reasoning.

4.5.1.2 Development

Many developmental studies are premised on the assumption that there is a moral/conventional distinction. These studies suggest that young children (ages 4-7) are non-relativists about morality (e.g., Nichols & Folds-Bennett, 2003; Wainryb et al., 2004). However, some of the previously mentioned caveats are important, most notably that only a small number of typically moral items were tested (hitting, kicking, helping, and breaking another child's toys). This raises the issue that a distinction should be made between extreme and moderate relativism. This distinction is even more important in light of Gabennesch's critique on the development of the moral/conventional distinction. Gabennesch suggests that certain issues might be

relativized more easily than others. He reviews previous studies and notes that *both* moral and conventional transgressions are non-relativistically wrong for young children, while transgressions classified as conventional become relativistically wrong for older children. He also notes that some conventional transgressions are more likely than others to continue to be reified at a later age. This, he argues, is caused by their lack of transparency, the extent to which their human origins are visible for the subject. A range of factors influence a rule's transparency. For example, a rule with which the child is familiar will be more transparent than a new one; a rule that applies only to certain groups or only in certain contexts will be more transparent; and so on. In accordance with this, it was found that non-relativism was not exclusive to moral issues (Nichols & Folds-Bennet, 2003; Wainryb, 2004). Given the previously stated critique (Section 4.4.1.1) that it should be up to the participant to explicitly classify rules as 'moral' or 'conventional,' there are no sufficient grounds to conclude that only conventional rules can become relative, while moral rules cannot.

Kelly et al. (2007) provide findings consonant with the suggestion that moral rules can be thought of as relative. They find that participants are indeed more likely to say that more historically and locally variable moral rules against slavery or cannibalism are ok or not depending on time and place. However, as Kelly et al. (2007) did not ask participants to justify their responses, we cannot know for certain how their findings, including order effects, articulate with folk moral relativism. Also, Nichols (2004) found in one study that moral non-objectivism was positively correlated with years spent in college. Moral non-objectivism being a function of education is consonant with the transparency hypothesis; nonetheless, more research is needed to establish a potential causal link between non-objectivism, relativism, and education. Moreover, this finding did not replicate in additional studies (id.). In short, preliminary data suggest that factors that have to do with the rule in question can interact with age or education to make a rule relative, independent of the rule being moral or conventional. While other factors undoubtedly matter in reifying rules (Shweder, 1990), Gabennesch's critique is a promising one.

4.5.2 Confidence

Can empirical studies inform the philosophical discussion about moral confidence? In order to find out, we must know how philosophers understand moral confidence. Being motivated by moral commitments as such is a major aspect of moral confidence (Ruse, 1986). Another aspect is that we do not cling to an "anything goes" philosophy or that flexibility does not make us indecisive (Wong, 2006), in sum, that we are still able to make consistent decisions in a specific direction.

Research that makes use of Forsyth's EPQ sheds light on the question of whether

moral confidence is undergirded by moral non-relativism. More relativistic adult U.S. consumers are less likely to find a range of consumer practices wrong (Vitell & Paolillo, 2003). Practices examined concerned illegal behavior such as changing price tags as a consumer on consumer products, lying about a child's age in order to get a lower price, not telling the truth when negotiating about the price of a car, and illegally copying computer software. Among marketing managers, those who score high on relativism have been found to think that ethics is less important for a firm's long term plans (Vitell et al., 2003). Chinese managers are reportedly more favorable towards bribery and kickbacks if they score higher on relativism (Tian, 2008). In another study, relativists are shown to be more accepting of violating property rights (Winter et al., 2004). Business undergraduates at a U.S. university who score higher on relativism score lower on corporate social responsibility, the extent to which they take the wider social impact of their business into account instead of just caring about profits and stockholders (Kolodinsky et al., 2010). As for behavior, Forsyth (1980) and Forsyth and Berger (1982) did not find a relationship between ethical position and cheating behavior on a test. On the other hand, Indonesian consumers scoring high on relativism report being more likely to engage in questionable but legal activities, and being more likely to initiate an illegal activity from which they would benefit (Lu & Lu, 2010). In all this, it might be that moral confidence decreases relativism as well as the other way around. Fernando et al. (2008) find that relativist Australian managers score lower on the "corporate ethical values scale," which measures the employee's perceived ethical values in his company, and the authors hypothesize that corporate ethical values have a causal influence on relativism scores.

The moral/conventional distinction is again important here. Relativism might lead us to being less motivated by morality, or it might make us indecisive about what values to follow because many conflicting actions have become legitimate. However, other motivations, for example, motivations to follow personal values, might remain intact. If moral relativists think of certain rules as less serious and more permissible than moral objectivists, we can say that moral relativists are less confident about those rules. Nichols (2004) categorized adult participants as moral objectivists if they said that there was no fact of the matter regarding a moral disagreement; otherwise, they were classified as moral objectivists. Both groups had to complete a moral/conventional task. Nichols found that both objectivists and non-objectivists made a distinction between moral and conventional rules in regard to permissibility (for three of the four studies conducted) and seriousness (for all four replications). However, in all four studies, non-objectivists found moral transgressions less serious (but equally permissible) than objectivists, suggesting a negative relationship between relativism and confidence.

In conclusion, most results are in accordance with moral relativism being negatively correlated with moral confidence in three ways: perceived seriousness of moral transgressions, judging a wide range of immoral behaviors to be wrong, and acting

morally. Nonetheless, these studies do not inform us much regarding the direction of causality, which could go both ways – as such, philosophers’ intuitions that relativism correlates with decreased confidence might reflect an existing correlation, but with the causal arrows going from confidence to relativism instead of the other way around. Also; these studies do not make a distinction between different kinds of moral relativism. Here, it would be of interest for philosophical theories to develop a relativism scale that taps into more pragmatist accounts of moral reasoning.

4.5.3 Accommodation

Accommodation is about more than merely relativizing one’s moral judgments. Wong (2006) also urges us to accept diverging moral views, internalize others’ values and incorporate them into our lives. But can we indeed fully understand moral views that we did not accept before?

Schwartz (1994) reviews the content of moral values and universal aspects in this regard. He finds that, if only for methodological reasons, one cannot find universal aspects in the content of moral values. Nonetheless, there is *near* universality in a small subset of values and, importantly, there is considerable evidence that many people can come to recognize the worth of values from different cultures when they did not recognize these before.

Graham, Haidt and Nosek (2009) equally find that harm and justice are generally acknowledged as morally relevant. However, there is much disagreement about the moral relevance of authority, loyalty and purity. It is as yet an open question if someone can come to understand and incorporate the value of disgust where one did not do so before.

4.5.4 Toleration: non-interference and respect

We mentioned philosophers who argue that toleration – not interfering with behavior that one judges to be morally wrong – is psychologically unstable. The purported reason is that a moral judgment involves the desire to regulate others’ behavior – indeed, some moral sentiments function to regulate others’ behavior rather than one’s own (see Chapter 2) . There are different gradations of intervention, and openly judging an act may in itself partially inhibit others from performing the given act. Also, even in the case where judgments are kept private, studies suggest that people prefer to distance themselves from others who hold diverging moral beliefs. Haidt et al. (2003) found that participants preferred roommates who held similar political and moral views. They

were much more willing to have more moral variation in a classroom seminar, and slightly less at the university as a whole. Other kinds of diversity (e.g., demographic) were much more readily accepted in roommates. This was partly replicated by Wright et al. (2008), whose study we discussed in Section 4.4.1. Participants were less accepting of someone as a potential roommate who differed in moral issues, than of encountering a morally disagreeing person in a seminar or at the university as a whole. Participants were also less accepting of encountering someone who disagreed on moral issues than when encountering someone who differed on non-moral issues. They also found that participants would sit farther away from, and more turned away from, a discussion partner who disagreed on a moral issue than a discussion partner who disagreed on a conventional issue. Other subtle changes in behavior occur: participants in an experimental setting gave fewer raffle tickets to a student whom they thought disagreed with them on moral attitudes than they gave to a student who was said to disagree on non-moral attitudes (Wright et al., 2008). This indicates that, at least at the interpersonal level, the requirement of toleration may run counter to subtle discriminatory mechanisms such as shunning and excluding. These processes will obviously not occur between groups that do not intimately interact in the first place, thus intergroup toleration seems more feasible than intragroup toleration.

Nonetheless, Lester and Roberts (2009) noticed that even when participants claimed to tolerate behavior that was symbolic of a worldview they did not agree with, people were less willing to defend the rights of groups with which they did not agree. However, after taking a course on the seven major world religions, students claimed to be more willing to defend the rights of suppressed groups and to allow individuals from all other worldviews to execute their rights. This effect was slight, but significant. It is hard to know whether participants' self-reports reflect their actual behavior, but explicitly formulated judgments might have a general effect on one's own and others' behavior (see also Haidt, 2001).

The possibility of toleration might depend on the principles in question, and the relativism or age of actors. In observations of naturally-occurring behavior among 7 to 14 year old children in Chicago, Nucci and Nucci (1982) find that moral transgressions elicited more retaliatory actions than did conventional transgressions; however, conventional transgressions elicited more ridicule than did moral transgressions, and there were no differences in threats and commands to stop the act between the two kinds of transgressions. There were no main age effects for retaliation, threat, ridicule or command. Smetana (1981) asked 2 to 9 year old children if perpetrators deserved punishment and how much (none, a little or a lot). She found that moral transgressions were deemed more punishable than conventional transgressions. Hollos, Leis and Turiel (1986) tested 8-18 year old Nigerians and found that these participants wanted an authority figure to react to moral transgression by flogging the transgressor. However, in line with the previously discussed age differences, 8-11 year old subjects thought that

conventional transgressions should be punished by flogging, while 15-18 year old subjects gave this response significantly less often. These findings suggest that both moral and conventional transgressions do elicit interference from children and adolescents, be it in the form of punishment, retaliation, ridicule, threats, or commands. However, since it is likely that moral transgressions are less tolerated than conventional transgressions, it is also likely that, mediated by age, relativized moral judgments will elicit less punishment than universal or objective moral judgments.

Similar age differences are evident in the realm of respect. Here we have to ask how people judge others with whom they morally disagree, as a person, as opposed to judging their moral opinions. In Section 4.5.1.1.2, we discussed the study of Wainryb et al (2004), conducted among 5 to 9 year old children. The moral issues used were breaking other children's toys and kicking other children. The children used positive descriptors to describe the characters who expressed divergent beliefs bearing on taste, ambiguous facts, and facts, but they described as bad characters those who expressed divergent moral beliefs. Regardless of the realm of disagreement, 7 to 9 year olds described disagreeing characters as nice or normal more often than did 5 year olds, but this was mostly caused by age differences in the non-moral domains. Enright and Lapsley (1981) presented a short vignette to adults, students from grades 3 to 12, and college students, and asked for their judgment about a moral dilemma. They then confronted participants with an audio-taped peer stating the opposite judgment. Participants could then choose what they thought about the other person. Possible items were "The other does not seem to be a predominantly good person but there is some good in everyone" (level 1), "The other is probably as good a person as anyone else" (level 2) and "I cannot tell what kind of a person the other is until I know much more about the other's beliefs" (level 3). The authors found that college students were most likely to agree with level 3-like items, denoting that one can judge others, but not based on only this one moral belief; adults (older than college students but matched on amount of education) scored slightly lower than college students. This indicates that character judgments are initially linked to moral belief judgments, and that respect increases with age or education, regardless of the realm of disagreement. This is also analogous to the preliminary finding that education is positively related to relativism (see Section 4.4.1). Again, we conclude that factors that have to do with the rule in question could make diversity more or less difficult to respect.

4.6 Conclusions

Naturalist philosophers welcome empirical evidence to constrain or support theories of normative relativism and toleration. An important critique against all versions of normative relativism holds that individuals think of morality as non-relative, therefore it is not feasible to impose normative relativism as a requirement. At first sight, results from moral psychology inspired by Kohlberg and findings from domain theory, indeed suggest that morality is inherently non-relative: children and adults are non-relativists about moral rules, and they only relativize rules that are not in the moral domain. However, a closer look suggests that skepticism is in order, as much of moral psychology defines morality as non-relative, either implicitly or explicitly. Subsequently, no measures are taken to independently decide whether or not participants' moral reasoning is at work. As such, no relative rule will ever be described under the headings of moral psychology. While it might well be the case that people are moral non-relativists, the methods employed in most of this research are biased against finding moral relativist leanings.

Other traditions, for example research making use of the Ethics Position Questionnaire, do find diversity in moral views. Moral relativism is less abundant in the West and among religious people, and it may decline with age among adults (but may increase with children's development). Promising possibilities of folk moral relativism can also be found in moral development research and studies that are critical of mainstream interpretations of the moral/conventional distinction. Older children treat a wider range of rules as relative than do younger children. Assuming that some of these rules might be categorized as moral by the children themselves, children might become more relativistic in the course of moral development (though for adults age is negatively related to relativism as measured by the EPQ). The relativity of moral rules might also depend on the specific properties of the rule, most notably the degree to which their human origins are transparent. In all of this, we have to keep in mind that it is unlikely that people are extreme moral relativists. Therefore, it is important to test participants on a range of issues. Here, the lack of an encompassing theory of folk moral relativism makes it difficult to predict what moral rules are likely to be relativized and who will be what kind of moral relativist.

The second worry is that we need the idea that morality is objective in order to have confidence in our moral values. Some results are in accordance with moral relativism being negatively correlated with moral confidence as measured by perceived seriousness of moral transgressions and judging moral behavior. However, researchers have yet to explore the relationship between moral relativism and actual behavior. Moreover, these studies do not inform us much regarding the direction of causality,

which could go either way – as such, philosophers’ intuitions that relativism correlates with decreased confidence might reflect an existing correlation, but with the causal arrows going from confidence to relativism instead of the other way around. More research on this topic is clearly necessary.

A third constraint is linked to the requirement of toleration: judging an action to be wrong purportedly implies that we are motivated to stop the action or disrespect the individual. Studies do find a link between moral condemnation and interference; this speaks against toleration as a feasible strategy towards much of moral diversity. However, we find the same moderating factors for toleration and respect as for moral relativism – age (development in children) and education seem to impact one’s capacity to tolerate and respect certain other ways of life. Interestingly, in these studies, researchers did not ask participants if they condemned the behavior. Instead, they first collected participants’ moral judgments and then confronted them with someone holding a conflicting view. This means that the participants might have been relativists. As such, they would not have condemned the view but relativized their judgments. Now, we cannot speak of toleration for a particular action when participants judge that action as permissible relative to the agent. Namely, toleration is defined as not interfering with what one considers to be wrong. This should not distract us though: practically, we are interested in non-interference and respect, irrespective of the accompanying judgment. This leads to the possibility that relativism is linked to non-interference and respect, even though toleration is a paradoxical concept. This speculation is somewhat substantiated by the fact that relativism as well as interference and respect are mediated by the same factors.

Findings to date also suggest that distance, operationalized as the amount of intimate interaction, can be a mediating factor in the kinds of possible interference. Moral diversity is not desired in intimate contexts, and individuals ‘distance’ themselves from those holding other moral views. This can make moral diversity in an intimate context problematic. This can also create groups, and exacerbate moral diversity between groups. In turn, moral diversity between groups likely falls prey to problems, such as structural discrimination and political inequality. However, the problems that confront within-group disagreement (shunning) are different than the problems that befall between-group disagreement (structural discrimination). This suggests the need to distinguish between cultural and individual moral diversity.

We therefore arrive at the following circumspect conclusions. Major traditions in the empirical literature seem to support the view that morality is intuitively thought of as objective. However, a closer reading indicates that caution is in order here. It is indeed unlikely that people are extreme moral relativists, meaning that no moral rules are thought of as objective or universal. However, this should not be taken as implying that moral rules are intrinsically non-relative: there are both individual differences and properties of the rules themselves that influence whether or not a rule is thought of as

relative. Results indicate that, in the course of moral development, children might become more relativistic. More transparent rules might be more likely to become relativized. In order to relativize a rule, one might try to clarify its functionality. In sum, it is likely that many people are, or can be, moderate moral relativists. However, this might come at the cost of increased permissiveness towards a range of immoral acts and decreased perceived importance of ethics.

We shortly visited the paradox of toleration. Indeed, condemnation seems consistently linked to punishment and interference. However, non-interference and respect are also mediated by age and education. We do not know if this was linked to moral condemnation as researchers supposed participants generalized their moral judgments. It could be that non-interference and respect can be elicited by moral relativism. This question is worth pursuing empirically.

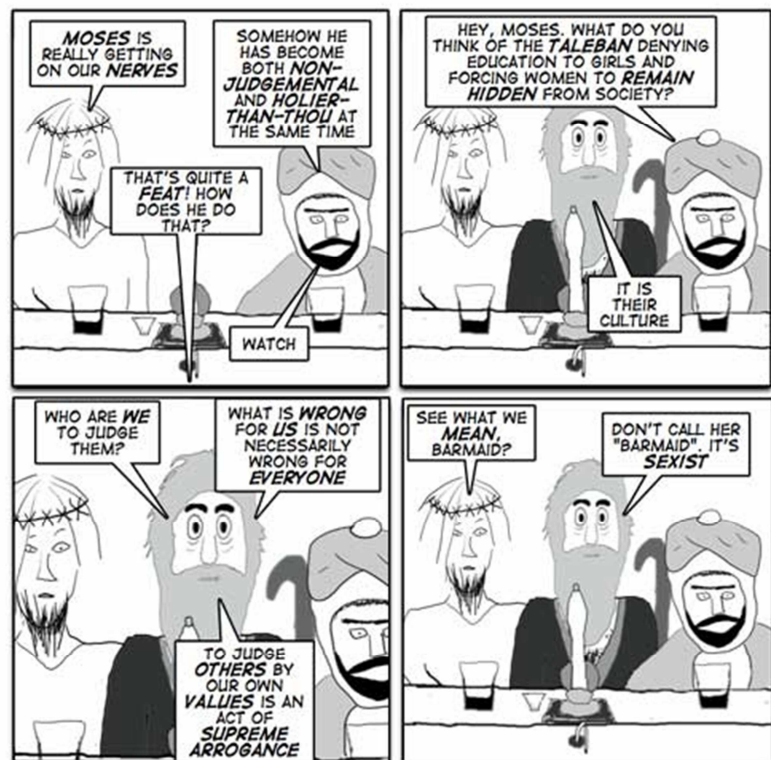
All in all, this is a relatively underexplored field, both in empirical work and in philosophical theories. We argue that empiricists can learn from philosophers when investigating folk moral relativism. Future research would provide a clearer portrait of the nature and extent of folk moral relativism were investigators to adopt some rules of thumb. First, participants should always be asked to categorize events as moral or non-moral instead of leaving this categorization solely to the researchers. Second, a distinction should be made between the extremes of individual and cultural relativism. Preliminary evidence indicates that adults are more likely to tolerate cultural than individual diversity. Since this is an important philosophical and social distinction, it is one of the mediating factors that deserve empirical attention. Third, we would urge researchers to investigate the development of relativism for 'transparent' moral issues, such as gender discrimination, hierarchy, inequality, or modes of punishment. One should take into account that relativism most likely does not mean extreme relativism. Finally, investigators should probe implicit heuristics as well as explicit reasoning and behavior. Behavior is also of primary importance for discussions surrounding confidence and toleration. Lastly, studies in which participants are asked to evaluate the person and her rights as well as her behavior are particularly informative for the notion of respect.

In contrast to the diversity of philosophical perspectives being developed on these issues, most empirical researchers have been, and continue to be, deeply influenced by modern Western moral philosophies; as such they conceptualize morality as objective. Due to its influence on methodological design, this perspective then biases empirical findings accordingly. Similarly, most empirical research that addresses relativism, objectivity, or universalism does so in broad categorical fashion, ignoring philosophers' distinctions between different kinds of moral relativism, and this despite the fact that at least some of the empirical findings to date indicate that such distinctions should be taken seriously. It is time that, on the one hand, more philosophers recognize the empirical nature of much of the discussion surrounding relativism, and, on the other

hand, moral psychologists question their conceptual assumptions. Awareness of both existing findings and lacunae therein should invite philosophers to become more familiar with the empirical literature at hand; it should also invite more empiricists to directly address the question of folk moral relativism without presupposing it.

Chapter 5

The case of the drunken sailor: Contra the moral/conventional distinction, harmful transgressions are not generalizably wrong



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5.1 Introduction

In chapter four, we gave arguments for and against normative moral relativism and toleration. On the one hand, certain authors argue that toleration is valuable (e.g., Wong, 1984) or that one should relativize moral judgments about others in order to accommodate different moral views (Wong, 2006). On the other hand, relativizing one's moral judgments might be constrained because of aspects of individuals' moral cognition. Certain authors argue for the inability to see moral rules as variable and relative to a moral framework (e.g., Ruse, 1986). If we consider a rule to be relative, it ceases to be a moral rule, we might become less confident about how to act and we might become more permissive towards a range of objectionable acts. In this chapter we focus on the objection that we cannot relativize moral judgments.

At present, empirical research does not allow us to conclude that relativizing moral judgments is impossible. Nonetheless, major research traditions in psychology converge on a view of morality as objective and universal. We have seen that there is a widespread conviction that people distinguish moral from conventional events, that is, between, on the one hand, acts that are generalizably wrong and wrong because they go against universal principles of harm, justice or rights, and, on the other hand, acts that are variably right or wrong depending on the social context. This debate has figured prominently in the empirical literature regarding the moral/conventional distinction, in particular studies following Turiel's (1983) seminal work *The development of social knowledge*.

However, we have also seen that research on the moral/conventional distinction is biased. First, the experimental paradigm often reveals little about moral relativism, and, second, the methods used in these studies will fail to detect moral relativism when it occurs. Where less biased research is conducted, there is no clear delineation of moral rules as perceived as universal.

Still, the idea of *core* moral issues is widespread and has not often been challenged: The idea remains that *harmful* acts are perceived to be universalizably or generalizably morally wrong. In this view, moral universalism could be inherent to certain moral issues without necessarily being inherent to other moral issues. Nonetheless, Kelly et al. (2007) suggested that even core moral issues such as harm do not reliably elicit other moral features. Their study quickly met with counter-criticism (Sousa, Holbrook, &

Piazza, 2009). Then again, the ensuing discussion revealed that there is much ambiguity over how the moral/conventional claim ought to be interpreted or tested (Stich, Fessler, & Kelly, 2009).

In this chapter we revisit the question of the extent to which people think of harmful transgressions as generalizably wrong and wrong because they go against universal principles. We discuss two prominent properties addressed in the moral/conventional literature, namely generalizability and justification. Additionally, we revisit certain criticisms of the moral/conventional task and lay out our concerns about most existing methods. Subsequently, modifying previous methods (Kelly et al., 2007), we report new findings on lay people's commitments in regard to the distinction between moral and conventional transgressions. The results reveal that people do not always think of harmful transgressions as generalizably wrong because of universal principles. We finally discuss the importance of these findings in light of recent criticisms of moral/conventional research and in light of the question of the practical feasibility of relativizing moral judgments.

5.2 Methodological criticism of the moral/conventional distinction

In chapter four, we discussed several problems that plagued the theory that postulates the existence of a moral/conventional tradition. We also saw that methodological problems plagued research into the moral/conventional distinction, most notably the following two: First, whether intentionally or not, researchers may choose only the most unambiguous transgressions, leaving unexamined a potentially large class of transgressions that do not elicit a signature response pattern where one would nonetheless theoretically predict one. When researchers do employ a wider range of transgressions, the results do not support this postulated clear-cut distinction (Huebner, Lee, & Hauser, 2010; Nichols, 2002, 2004). Second, when testing individuals from diverse backgrounds, the same transgression might elicit considerably different features in different individuals or cultures (Nichols, 2004; Shweder, Mahapatra, & Miller, 1987; Wright, Cullum, & Schwab, 2008). All this could mean that no feature reliably predicts the occurrence of another feature, and that we cannot predict which issues will elicit the moral response pattern and which will elicit the conventional response pattern.

Nevertheless, until fairly recently, the finding that harm transgressions elicit the signature moral response pattern had been relatively robust, suggesting that harmful interactions tap into a core moral domain (e.g., see (Royzman, Leeman, & Baron, 2009). However, Kelly et al. (2007) point out that many studies of adults use playground transgressions, that is, transgressions that spontaneously occurred on school or kindergarten playgrounds, such as pushing a child. Kelly et al. (2007) therefore decided to conduct a survey with more adult, and more variable, harm transgressions, such as whipping as a punishment, slavery, and physical abuse as part of a military training. Consider the following example (Kelly et al., 2007):

In the United States, slaves were an important part of the economy of the South 200 years ago. American slaves were used mainly to maintain households, and to supply agricultural labor.

Was it OK for Americans to keep slaves 200 years ago? (Yes/No)

On a scale from 0 to 9, how would you rate the Americans' behavior? (0=not at all bad; 9=very bad)

Kelly et al. (2007) then present participants with another scenario:

In ancient Greece and Rome, slaves were an important part of the economic and social system. Greek and Roman slaves were used as oarsmen, as soldiers, to maintain households, and to supply agricultural labor.

Was it OK for the ancient Greeks and Romans to keep slaves? (Yes/No)

On a scale from 0 to 9, how would you rate the ancient Greeks and Romans' behavior? (0=not at all bad; 9=very bad)

Note that this method is slightly different from classical moral/conventional tasks in that it does not ask a generalizability question but instead introduces a second, related scenario. This *generalizability scenario* describes the same act in a different social context, before asking if the act would be OK then and there (*permissibility question*); the generalizability scenario and accompanying questions thus constitute the *generalizability probe*. We will refer to the other scenario as the neutral scenario. Order was randomized for these two scenarios. The aim was to see if participants perceived the wrongness of slavery as generalizable or dependent on the social context and authority. The authors found that slavery was not consistently perceived as generalizably wrong: while most participants deemed it wrong in the U.S. South 200 years ago, fewer participants deemed it wrong for ancient Greece and Rome. Kelly et al. (2007) also explored other harm transgressions. In general, they found that their harm transgressions were often

not deemed generalizably wrong, nor did they evoke highly authority-independent response patterns. They conclude that this casts doubt on whether harm transgressions evoke the moral response pattern.

Sousa et al. (2009) replicated this study. For one scenario (whipping generality, see Section 5.3), they found a much larger percentage of participants that considered the harmful act to be generalizably wrong, thus raising doubts about the robustness of previous findings, and reinstating the hypothesis that harmful acts are uniformly viewed as generalizably wrong. In this study, we pursued this question further, asking whether or not harmful acts are indeed generalizably wrong. We adapted the ‘whipping generalizability’ scenario in line with theoretical concerns (see Section 5.3), and administered it to a large online sample of participants.

Sousa et al. (2009) criticize Kelly et al. (2007) for (among other things) not asking participants to justify their answers. Permissibility answers should not be taken at face value, they argue: Even response patterns that apparently disconfirm the moral/conventional distinction may be driven by rationales that confirm the moral/conventional distinction. Sousa et al. (2009) indeed report participants’ justifications, but their sample sizes were too small to yield reliable conclusions. Because Kelly et al. (2007) did not ask participants to justify their answers, it is an open question as to what rationales participants would have given in their study. We therefore added justification questions to the survey design.

In the next section, we address an additional, related difficulty in moral/conventional studies, namely, the problem of biased generalizability probes. We also clarify which justifications we take to disconfirm the moral/conventional distinction.

5.3 Problems plaguing measures of generalizability

Though intended to cast a stark light on methodological problems plaguing previous moral/conventional tasks, in one important respect, the Kelly et al. (2007) study extended such problems rather than solving them. Specifically, we contend that both i) the types of generalizability questions traditionally employed, and ii) the generalizability scenarios used by Kelly et al. (2007) and Sousa et al. (2009), are highly ambiguous and likely to introduce measurement bias. Related to the remark by Sousa et al. (2009), participants might indeed introduce several non-moral *and* moral

assumptions that influence their answers. In contrast to Sousa et al. (2009) however, it is not only the non-moral considerations that we are concerned about.

Let us first address rationales that are related to the moral domain. Consider again the slavery scenario. Though most participants deemed slavery wrong in the United States, substantially fewer participants thought slavery was wrong in ancient Greece and Rome. This is contrary to what moral/conventional theory would predict, namely that participants would judge slavery as wrong in the U.S. South because it was harmful, *and* wrong in ancient Greece and Rome because it was also harmful. However, in this scenario many factors varied between the neutral scenario and the generalizability scenario, and this variation may have driven the patterns of participants' responses. For example, given cultural schemas that, on the one hand, highlight the horrific aspects of American slavery and, on the other hand, valorize ancient Greece and Rome as the origins of Western civilization it is likely that the average well-educated Westerner assumes that slaves in the U.S. South suffered greater physical harm than did slaves in ancient Greece and Rome; that slaves in ancient Greece and Rome had more rights than slaves in the U.S. South; and so on. Compared to associations attending schemas of ancient Greece and Rome, systematic associations between slavery in the U.S. South and more harmful, and thus morally worse, conditions could readily account for differences in the frequency of 'not OK' judgments across the two conditions.

Analogous biases may have been present in the whipping generalizability scenario. In this scenario, a sailor is drunk while he should have been on watch; the ship's officer therefore punishes him by giving him five lashes with a whip. In the neutral scenario, all this happens on a large modern American cargo ship in 2004. In the generalizability scenario, this happens on a ship where whipping is common practice, in accord with the law, and deemed appropriate by everyone. Problematically, however, the generalizability scenario differed from the neutral scenario in other, important ways, namely it took place on an (unspecified) cargo ship 300 years ago. However, 300 years ago was a different time than now, and not whipping sailors might have had different moral consequences. Being drunk on duty could have made the ship vulnerable to the attacks of cruel one-eyed pirates that hardly exist these days (so participants may think). Participants may assume that the average modern American would not need to be whipped to remain disciplined; in contrast, sailors 300 years ago might surely have needed harsher measures (because they, for all the participants know, could be unruly vagabonds from the American South transporting slaves).

In sum, in these scenarios, the same act was depicted in the generalizability scenario and in the neutral scenario. However, the time and place of the act differed in such a way that the consequences of the act in the generalizability scenario might have been systematically more moral than the consequences of the act in the neutral scenario. This difference may have driven the increase in the percentage of participants evincing the 'conventional' response pattern in response to a moral transgression. Conceivably,

this problem might have been mitigated somewhat by asking participants to justify their permissibility answers, as Sousa et al. (2009) note. However, it is unlikely that, in response to an open question, participants will articulate every reason that plays a role in their judgment, especially if the questions and scenarios are vague and subject to myriad interpretations and associations. A better strategy would be to design a generalizability probe with fewer confounds.

A related problem of ambiguity arises with the generalizability question in the classical moral/conventional task. Often, the feature of generalizability is assessed by merely asking a simple question, for example, whether the act would still be wrong somewhere else, where everyone else did it (Huebner et al., 2010). Above, we suggested that participants may consistently associate the *generalizability scenarios* in Kelly et al. (2007) with more positive ideas than the *neutral scenario*, where both scenarios described *the same moral transgression*. Correspondingly, in the classical moral/conventional task, *the same generalizability question* may be interpreted differently when asked about a *moral transgression* than when asked about a different, *conventional transgression*. Before we clarify in what way interpretations of this generalizability question could be biased, it is important to first explain what, exactly, should vary in the generalizability questions, and what should stay the same.

It is clear from previous theoretical and empirical work that, according to moral/conventional theory, moral transgressions are perceived as wrong independent of convention, and that this can be tested by asking a generalizability question. As we have seen in chapter 4, conventions address an implicit behavioral uniformity or an explicit regulation with a social function. Conventions can be altered by consensus or by general usage (Turiel, 1983, p. 35). With this description in mind, we find ample illustrations that generalizability probes should vary convention: Turiel (1983, p. 35) explicitly mentions that “moral issues are not perceived as relative to the social context;” for example, “an individual’s perception of an act such as the taking of a life as a transgression is not contingent on the presence of a rule” (ibid.); or, consider the following telling statement: “today one would not say that slavery was morally right in the 1800s but morally wrong now simply because of a change in the consensus” (id., p. 36); or, when Turiel refers to Dworkin’s example of a moral transgression: “The vegetarian’s claim, according to Dworkin, is that in spite of a lack of consensus and irrespective of its widespread practice, it is wrong to kill animals for food” (id.).

The importance of varying convention in the moral/conventional task is also supported by other authors. Smetana (1981, p. 1333) states that “transgressions that are consistently evaluated as (...) universally wrong, *even in the absence of rules*, have been considered moral events” (our emphasis). Royzman (2009, p. 160) asserts that “the prototypically immoral acts are generally judged inappropriate even when subjects are instructed to consider the performance of these acts under a set of counterfactual conditions designed to negate their status as *a breach of the established socio-conventional*

order” (our emphasis). He clarifies the kind of questions that constitute good probes for distinguishing moral from conventional transgressions: “Thus (...) a subject may be invited to imagine that there is no rule against the act, that the act has been permitted by a legitimate authority or that the act is a matter of general agreement” (ibidem). As such, generalizability, rule alterability, and authority dependence are all meant to vary convention.

The fact that various concepts are related to the notion of convention also explains why different generalizability questions have been employed in the moral/conventional task, as they each probe for a specific aspect of convention. Huebner et al. (2010) ask their participants if the act would still be wrong if X lived somewhere where everyone else did this; this changes the existence of a ‘behavioral uniformity.’ Smetana (1981) asks if it would be OK if there were no rule about it, thus varying ‘explicit regulations.’ And the questions in Royzman et al. (2009) vary social norms: “Suppose that there were NO social norms against [the behavior];” “Suppose that the majority of people in this country decided that [the behavior] was OK;” “Suppose that the majority of people in another country decided that [the behavior] was OK. Suppose that Julie and Mark were born, raised and lived in this other country...”

While these questions indeed vary some aspects of convention, they leave it to the imagination of the participant what other aspects of the situation would vary or stay the same. For example, while Huebner’s generalizability question clearly induces participants to think about a place where all children hit other children for fun, it is unspecified if, in this other place, children consent to being hit, or are also allowed by their teachers to hit other children for fun. In this example, most participants will probably assume that, even if hitting is the general practice in a school in another place and time, the teachers will still forbid it, or it will still be against general consensus. In that case, though, we cannot exclude the possibility that participants still condemn the moral transgression – even at another time and place where everyone else does it – because it is nonetheless against explicit rules or against an implicit consensus. In contrast, in the case of the conventional transgression, in places where every child puts their toys away wherever they found them, it is at least somewhat likely that ‘putting toys away where you found them’ is part of the prevailing convention (thus consented and not against the rules). Some other examples of moral transgressions that have been used are “a child throwing water at another child,” (Smetana, 1981), and an angry student driving his car through a crowded area on the college campus trying to hit people,” (Huebner et al., 2010). Examples of conventional transgressions are “a child not saying grace before snack,” (Smetana, 1981), and “getting the waiter’s attention by yelling across the room” (Huebner et al., 2010). In all of these cases, it is conceivable that the moral transgression will be at odds with aspects of the prevailing convention, even where ‘everyone else does it,’ or ‘where there is no rule about it.’ When thinking about a place or time where people tend to hit others with their car, participants conceivably

think about a place and time where this is nonetheless against explicit rules or against an implicit consensus. In contrast, in the conventional scenarios, it is somewhat likely that there is no rule about the given action in those places where everyone else does it. When thinking about a context where everybody yells to get the waiter's attention, one is likely to think that there are also no expectations or rules about more subtle behavior. In sum, the moral transgressions that have been used in moral/conventional studies are plausibly transgressions that are also generalizably conventionally wrong. Hence, even when varying one aspect of convention due to a generalizability question, other aspects of convention might still be at odds with the moral transgression. As a consequence, such moral/conventional tasks do not effectively test the moral/conventional distinction. To be effective, the generalizability probe must vary every aspect of the prevailing convention for the conventional and the moral transgression, not simply for the former. This lack of symmetry across the testing conditions may partly explain the difference in response patterns in previous moral/conventional studies, as the methods employed make it impossible to rule out the possibility that moral transgressions are deemed generalizably wrong because they happen to be generalizably against convention.

To address this problem, we modified the 'whipping generalizability' scenario from Kelly et al. (2007) in such a way that the generalizability probe describes the same act, in the same moral circumstances, occurring in a situation where this act is entirely in accord with convention.

5.3.1 The present study

5.3.1.1 Hypotheses

The moral/conventional theory predicts that moral transgressions elicit the moral response pattern. In our understanding, this means that under similar moral circumstances, harmful transgressions will be thought of as wrong; that this will be true even when the given actions are in accord with convention; and that their wrongness will be justified by referring to universal principles of harm, justice or rights.

We expected that carefully designed, less biased scenarios and questions, would *disconfirm* the moral/conventional theory. As mentioned, we therefore modified a scenario (whipping generalizability) from Kelly et al. (2007) in three important ways. First, we structure each version of the scenario so as to explicitly vary the conventionality of the act without varying the moral consequences. In line with previous studies (Kelly et al., 2007 and Sousa et al., 2009), we expected that some participants would evince a moral response pattern while others will evince a conventional response pattern in reaction to harmful transgressions. The first

prediction is that there will be an effect of convention on the permissibility of a harmful act: harmful acts that are in accord with convention will more often be considered permissible than harmful acts that are not in accord with convention. Such a pattern would constitute provisional disconfirmation of the moral/conventional theory.

Second, we included a justification question in order to allow us to control for differences in participants' underlying rationales and assumptions. The second prediction was that there would be an effect of provisional response patterns on justifications given. We predicted that participants who evince a conventional response pattern would more frequently justify their answers by referring to those matters of convention that are explicated in the scenarios when compared to participants who evince a moral response pattern. Conversely, participants who evinced a moral response pattern would justify their responses by referring to universal principles of harm, justice or rights more frequently than participants who evinced a conventional response pattern.

Third, in order to test the presumption that previous investigators' generalizability questions employed moral transgressions that were biased towards also being generalizably unconventional, we introduced two versions of the moral/conventional test. In one version, we explicitly varied two aspects of convention: consensus and common practice. In the second version, we only mentioned and varied one aspect of convention, namely common practice. These versions are otherwise identical. Participants are randomly assigned to either version 1 or version 2. The third prediction is thus that there will be an effect of version on provisional response patterns: In version 1, more participants will evince a conventional response pattern than in version 2, as participants presented with version 2 - which parallels prior investigators' tasks - will be more prone to assume that the harmful act is also against prevailing convention than will participants presented with version 1.

5.3.1.2 Stimuli

The scenarios are schematically described below. For a literal transcript of the scenarios and questions, see Appendix 3. We here present version 1; version 2 is the same as version 1 except that we only vary one aspect of convention: the portion of version 1 that we here display in italics is omitted in version 2.

Each version consists of two scenarios describing the same act (whipping a sailor). In one scenario, whipping is not in accord with prevailing convention, while in the other scenario whipping is in accord with convention. We therefore speak of the discordant (cf. 'neutral') and concordant (cf. 'generalizability') scenario. Relevant differences between the discordant scenario and the concordant scenario are to be found in the second paragraph of the scenario. In order to ensure that concern with issues of legality would not influence participants' responses, all scenarios explicitly stated that the acts

described were not illegal. Order of scenarios (discordant versus concordant) was randomized.

5.3.1.2.1 Discordant scenario (harmful act not in accordance with convention)

Mr. Johnson is an officer on a cargo ship in 2010, carrying goods along the Atlantic coastline. All the crew members are American but the ship is mostly in international waters. When a ship is in international waters, it has to follow the law of the state whose flag it sails under and each ship can sail under only one flag. This ship does not sail under the U.S. flag. The law of this ship's flag state allows both whipping and food deprivation as a punishment.

On this ship, food deprivation is always used to discipline sailors who disobey orders or who are drunk on duty; *as a consequence everyone on this ship has come to think that food deprivation is an appropriate punishment.* Whipping however is never used to discipline sailors *and no one on this ship thinks whipping is an appropriate punishment.*

One night, while the ship is in international waters, Mr. Johnson finds a sailor drunk at a time when the sailor should have been on watch. After the sailor sobers up, Mr. Johnson punishes the sailor by giving him 5 lashes with a whip. This does not go against the law of the flag state.

Participants answered the following permissibility and justification questions:

Is it morally permissible for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor?

- (1) Yes, it is morally permissible
- (2) Yes, it is morally permissible but it is wrong for reasons that have nothing to do with morality (e.g., it might be unlawful)
- (3) No, it is morally wrong (whether it is right or wrong in other ways or not)

Why is it morally permissible/wrong for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 1. (Write a minimum of one word.)

5.3.1.2.2 Concordant scenario (harmful act in accordance with convention)

Mr. Williams is an officer on another cargo ship in 2010, carrying goods along the Atlantic coastline. All the crew members are American but the ship is mostly in international waters. When a ship is in international waters, it has to follow the law of the state whose flag it sails under and each ship can sail under only one flag. This ship does not sail under the U.S. flag. The law of this ship's flag state allows both whipping and food deprivation as a punishment.

On this ship, whipping is always used to discipline sailors who disobey orders or who are drunk on duty; *as a consequence everyone on this ship has come to think that whipping is an appropriate punishment.* Food deprivation however is never used to discipline sailors *and no one on this ship thinks food deprivation is an appropriate punishment.*

One night, while the ship is in international waters, Mr. Williams finds a sailor drunk at a time when the sailor should have been on watch. After the sailor sobers up, Mr. Johnson punishes the sailor by giving him 5 lashes with a whip. This does not go against the law of the flag state.

Participants again answered the permissibility and justification questions.

5.3.1.3 Participants

From December 2010 to January 2011 we recruited participants using Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk web-based employment system (hereafter MTurk). MTurk is a 'crowdsourcing' website that allows people to perform short tasks for small amounts of money. Anyone over 18 may use the site. This study was deemed exempt from ethical review by the UCLA Institutional Review Board. After discarding incomplete responses, we analyzed data from 536 men and 488 women. Three-hundred and ninety participants indicated they lived in India, 513 indicated they lived in the U.S., and 121 participants listed another country of residence. These participants came from various European countries (41), Canada (15), The Philippines (8), Pakistan (5), Bangladesh (4), Indonesia (4), Turkey (4), Australia (3), Egypt (3), and Singapore (3); in addition there were one or two participants from each of several countries in Oceania, Asia, Africa, Central and South America. Mean age was 30.83+/-10.557 SD years, ranging from 18 to 78.

5.3.1.4 Analysis

5.3.1.4.1 Permissibility

In order to evaluate the extent to which participants consider an act to be morally right or wrong, we pooled answer options 1 and 2 of the permissibility question, constructing a variable indicating whether the act was judged permissible or not (DISCORDANT-DICHOTOMOUS for whipping when not in accordance with convention, CONCORDANT-DICHOTOMOUS for whipping when concordant with convention). We also looked for order effects on the unpooled answers of the permissibility question (DISCORDANT and CONCORDANT, respectively).

5.3.1.4.2 Justification

We asked two independent coders to categorize participants' justifications according to the scheme presented in Table 2.

Table 10: Justification categories

	Explanation	Example
Personal	The participant refers to the personal values of the actors in the scenarios. For example, the act is permissible or not because the relevant actors do or do not consent in the act.	"Everyone who could be whipped, including the drunk sailor, believes that whipping is an acceptable punishment that is preferable to the alternatives."
Group	The participant refers to conventions that are specific to the social group or context in the scenario. For example, the act is permissible or not because the act is or is not in accord with a known explicit rule, with a law, or with prevailing practice.	"The sailor knew the laws and rules when he (I'm assuming it was a man) signed up for the crew and when he got drunk."
Universal	The participant refers to universal principles, such as harm, justice, or rights	"It is morally wrong to hurt other people."

The universal category was analyzed as 'universal justifications', while the other two were pooled and analyzed as 'conventional justifications.' As mentioned in section 5.1, consensus is explicitly varied in version 1, but is not mentioned in version 2.

Justifications can belong to more than one category. We therefore created two variables, one indicating whether a conventional justification was mentioned, and one indicating whether a universal justification was mentioned. Inter-coder agreement for all justifications was moderate (Cohen's kappa=.561; n=4096); however, as reported below, the results are straightforward when using the categorizations of either coder.

5.3.1.5 Results

5.3.1.5.1 Version 1: consensus and common practice

We classified participants according to their permissibility answer patterns (CATEGORY, see table 3, first two columns). Participants who perceived whipping as permissible in both scenarios (yes-yes) are categorized as 'permissive'; participants who deemed whipping wrong in both scenarios (no-no) are categorized as 'universalist'; participants who thought whipping is wrong when not in accordance with convention but permissible when concordant with convention (no-yes) are referred to as 'conventionalist,' and participants whose answers followed the reverse pattern (yes-no) are 'unexpected' because we do not have a ready explanation for this last category of

answer pattern. Table 3 gives a breakdown of the results for version 1; the second column lists the percentage of participants who fall into each of the aforementioned categories using only the patterns of responses to the permissibility questions. We can compare these response patterns with previous findings. Sousa et al. (2007) find that 16% of participants evince the conventionalist response patterns ('No-Yes' in their study), while 41% of Kelly et al.'s (2007) participants evince this pattern; the here presented result (14.8%) is thus more in line with the former. However, if we exclude permissive and unexpected participants, as Sousa et al. (2009) suggest, these percentages rise to 26% [$14.8/(14.8+39.7+2.4)$], compared with 17.2% (Sousa et al. 2009) and 45.5% (Kelly et al. 2007).

Importantly, the categorizations listed in the second column of Table 3 are only provisional interpretations, since we cannot definitely know participants' reasoning without inspecting their justifications. The third through fourth columns of Table 3 list the percentages of participants classified as universalist or conventionalist by each of the two coders on the basis of the participant's justifications (because participants could give more than one justification, these percentages add up to more than 100% in some cases).

Table 11: Classification according to permissibility answers: version 1

Permissibility answer pattern (discordant- concordant)	CATEGORY Provisional interpretation (%)	Justifications (coder1,% / coder2,%)			
		Discordant scenario		Concordant scenario	
		universal	conventional	universal	conventional
yes – yes	Permissive (43)	21.4 / 21.0	68.1 / 77.3	17.9 / 17.9	61.6 / 72.5
no - no	Universalist (39.7)	76.3 / 80.6	11.8 / 17.1	73.0 / 84.4	9.0 / 11.8
no – yes	Conventionalist (14.8)	19.0 / 27.8	72.2 / 67.1	12.7 / 12.7	69.6 / 87.3
yes - no	Unexpected (2.4)	30.8 / 46.2	76.9 / 92.3	61.5 / 61.5	15.4 / 38.5

Note. Classification of participants according to permissibility answers and percentage of participants who gave conventional and universal justifications for each permissibility answer.

5.3.1.5.1.1 Order

Chi square tests revealed that order did not have an effect on any of the permissibility answers (CONCORDANT: $\chi^2(2,534) = 0.363$; $p = 0.834$; CONCORDANT-DICHOTOMOUS: $\chi^2(1,534) = 0.302$; $p = 0.583$; DISCORDANT: $\chi^2(2,532) = 5.489$; $p = 0.064$; DISCORDANT-DICHOTOMOUS: $\chi^2(1,532) = 1.862$; $p = 0.172$; CATEGORY: $\chi^2(3,532) = 3.815$; $p = 0.282$). Participants who read the discordant scenario first were not more or less likely to be conventionalists, or to permit whipping in either scenario, than participants who read the concordant scenario first. We therefore pooled the two orders.

5.3.1.5.1.2 Permissibility

Does the conventionality of whipping have an effect on permissibility patterns? In order to measure the effect of convention, we conducted a within-subject test. Participants were more likely to hold that the 'conventional' whipping was morally permissible than that the 'unconventional' whipping was morally permissible (McNemar test, $\chi^2(1,532) = 245.74$; $p < 0.001$).

Because order was randomized, half of the participants saw the discordant scenario in the first round and the concordant scenario in the second round, while the other half saw the concordant scenario in the first round and the discordant scenario in the second round. This allows to also perform a separate between-subject analysis for each round. These analyses revealed that the effect of convention was mostly driven by the second round, that is, after participants had already judged the first scenario. In the first round, there was only a marginally significant effect of convention on permissibility: participants were more likely to answer that whipping was morally permissible in the concordant scenario than in the discordant scenario, ($\chi^2(1,532) = 3.697$; $p = 0.055$). In contrast, in the second round, there was a highly significant effect of convention on permissibility ($\chi^2(1,534) = 14.648$; $p < 0.001$). The difference between rounds was not large enough to create order effects.

Proponents of the moral/conventional theory might argue that neither the 'permissive' participants nor the 'unexpected' participants viewed whipping as a transgression, as these participants did not indicate that whipping was wrong in response to the discordant scenario. Sousa et al. (2009) assert that such participants should be excluded from analyses of this type. However, removing 'permissive' individuals from the sample does not change the results. If we remove both 'permissive' and 'unexpected' participants, participants are also more likely to hold that the conventional whipping is permissible than they are likely to hold that the unconventional whipping is permissible. However, said pattern is trivial because, if we remove 'permissive' and 'unexpected' participants, *all* remaining participants hold *unconventional* whipping to be *not* permissible, and some of these participants hold the conventional whipping to be permissible. Additionally, it is impossible to perform a statistical analysis on the remaining data because of insufficient variation in the permissibility answers (specifically, permissibility of the discordant scenario has a constant value, namely 'not permissible').

Within-subject analysis reveals that participants are still more likely to hold that the conventional whipping is permissible than they are likely to hold that the unconventional whipping is permissible (McNemar test, $\chi^2(1,303) = 4.790$; $p < 0.001$). Likewise, between-subjects analyses reveal that, in both rounds, conventional whipping is more likely to be deemed permissible than is unconventional whipping (first round $\chi^2(1,303) = 21.131$; $p < 0.001$; second round $\chi^2(1,303) = 35.257$; $p < 0.001$).

Convention thus has an effect on permissibility; the first hypothesis is supported.

5.3.1.5.1.3 *Justification*

Moral/conventional theory adherents might also argue that ‘conventionalist’ participants permitted the harmful act in the concordant scenario because these participants assumed that the *moral* consequences would be different from those entailed in the discordant scenario. Conventionalist participants would then refer to universal principles when judging a harmful act to be wrong *and* when judging it to be right. However, as is evident when we compare universalist and conventionalist participants in Table 3 and in Figure 1, conventionalist participants are very likely to give conventional justifications for either scenario, much more so than universalist participants. A chi square test for each coder’s results treated separately reveals that these differences are highly significant (discordant scenario: coder 1 $\chi^2(1,290) = 103.066$; $p < 0.001$; coder 2 $\chi^2(1,290) = 67.629$; $p < 0.001$; concordant scenario: coder 1 $\chi^2(1,290) = 111.119$; $p < 0.001$; coder 2 $\chi^2(1,290) = 149.535$; $p < 0.001$). Conventionalist participants are also less likely than are universalist participants to give universal justifications for either scenario, as we can see in Figure 2 and Table 3 (discordant scenario: coder 1 $\chi^2(1,290) = 79.148$; $p < 0.001$; coder 2 $\chi^2(1,290) = 71.407$; $p < 0.001$; concordant scenario: coder 1 $\chi^2(1,290) = 85.138$; $p < 0.001$, coder 2 $\chi^2(1,290) = 129.602$; $p < 0.001$). In fact, conventionalist participants simply treat the act as a conventional transgression, period.

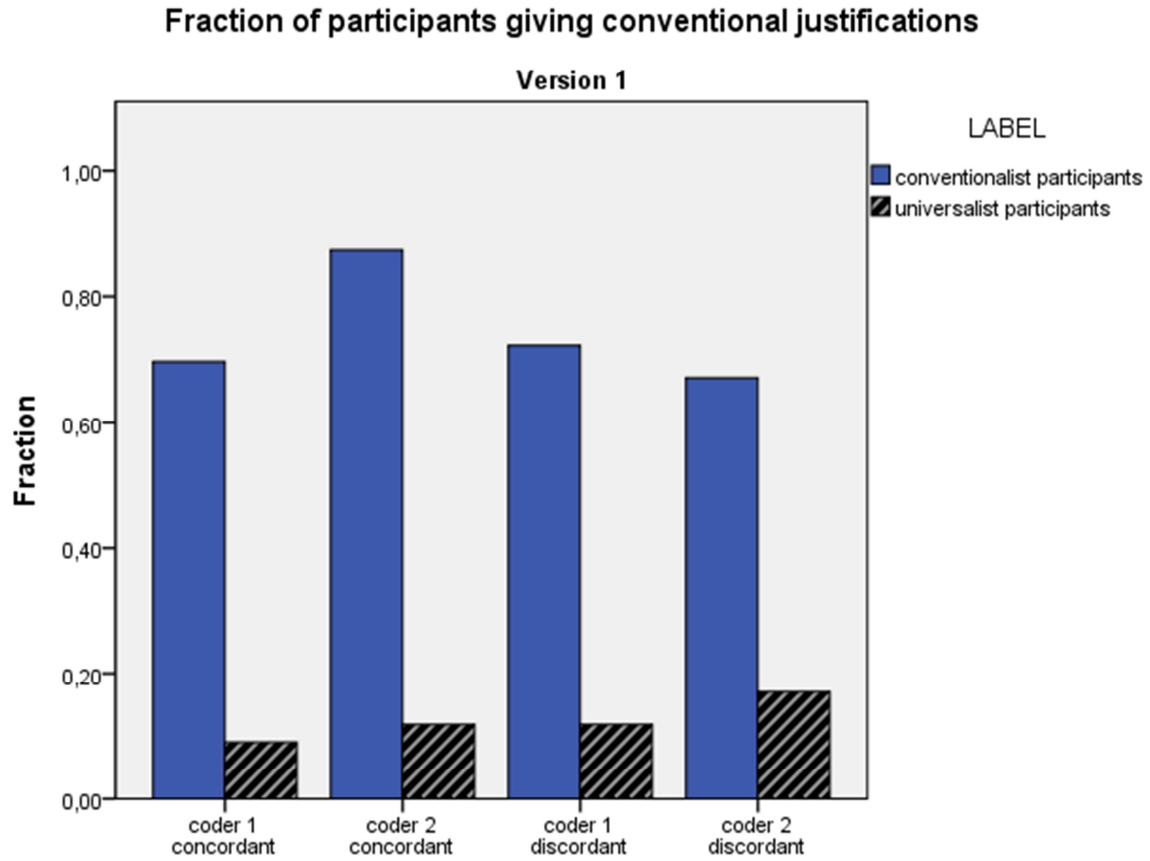


Figure 1: Comparison of conventionalist with universalist participants' conventional justifications; version 1

Note. In this figure we see the fraction of participants that gives conventional justifications for their answers to Version 1, according to each coder, for each scenario and category of participant.

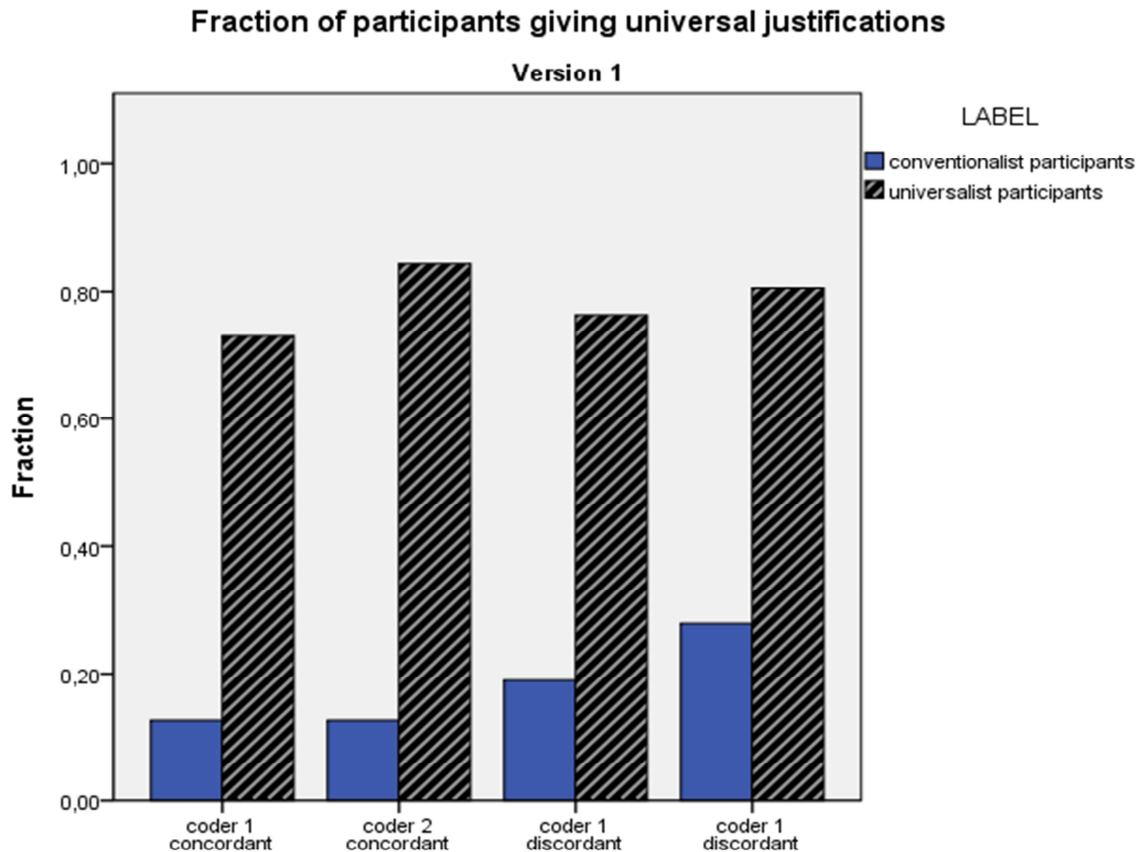


Figure 2: Comparison of conventionalist with universalist participants' universal justifications; version 1

Note. . In this figure we see the fraction of participants that gives universalist justifications for their answers to Version 1, according to each coder, for each scenario and category of participant.

5.3.1.5.2 Version 2: common practice only, not consensus

Table 4 gives the classification of participants according to their answer patterns for version 2. The results are similar to those for version 1. We find that 17.5% ($10.6/(10.6+47.6+2.2) = 0.175$, see version 1) of participants give conventionalist answers compared to 17.2% (Sousa et al. 2009) and 45.5% (Kelly et al. 2007).

When comparing the permissibility answers of participants in the two versions, one can see that version 2 has a significant effect on the permissibility answer pattern ($\chi^2(3,1021) = 8.096$; $p = 0.044$). When we only include conventionalist and universalist participants, it is clear that the fraction of conventionalist (universalist) participants is significantly lower (higher) in version 2 than in version 1 ($\chi^2(1,575) = 6.612$; $p = 0.010$). The third hypothesis is thus confirmed.

Table 12: Classification according to permissibility answers: version 2

Permissibility answer pattern (discordant-concordant)	CATEGORY Provisional interpretation (%)	Justifications (coder1,%/coder2,%)			
		Discordant scenario		Concordant scenario	
		universal	conventional	universal	conventional
Yes – Yes	Permissive (39.5)	24.4/32.6	79.8/69.4	22.3/30.1	79.8/66.3
No - No	Universalist (47.6)	88.8/80.3	10.7/22.3	88.4/79.0	6.4/19.3
No – Yes	Conventionalist (10.6)	28.8/26.9	65.4/73.1	23.1/28.8	94.2/86.5
Yes - No	Unexpected (2.2)	45.5/27.3	72.7/54.5	54.5/45.5	27.3/27.3

Note. Classification of participants according to permissibility answers, with percentage of participants who gave conventional and universal justifications for each permissibility answer.

5.3.1.5.2.1 Order

Chi square tests revealed that order did not have an effect on any of the permissibility answers (CONCORDANT: $\chi^2(2,490)=1.063$; $p=.588$; CONCORDANT-DICHOTOMOUS: $\chi^2(1,490) = 0.070$; $p = 0.792$; DISCORDANT: $\chi^2(2,489) = 0.771$; $p = 0.680$; DISCORDANT-DICHOTOMOUS: $\chi^2(1,489) = 0.702$; $p = 0.402$; CATEGORY: $\chi^2(3,489) = 2.408$; $p = 0.492$).

5.3.1.5.2.2 Permissibility

Participants were more likely to judge the commonly used whipping to be morally permissible than they were to judge the unconventional whipping to be morally permissible (McNemar test, $\chi^2(1,489) = 277.323$; $p < 0.001$).

Once again, we begin with a between-subjects analysis in each round. In the first round, there was no effect of scenario on permissibility ($\chi^2(1,490) = 2.390$; $p = 0.122$). In the second round, there was a significant effect of convention on permissibility ($\chi^2(1,489) = 4.489$; $p = 0.034$). The difference between rounds was not large enough to create order effects though.

Once again, excluding permissive individuals as Sousa et al. (2009) suggested does not change the results (McNemar test, $\chi^2(1,296) = 2.435$; $p < 0.001$; round 1 $\chi^2(1,296) = 15.511$; $p < 0.001$; round 2 $\chi^2(1,296) = 12.634$; $p < 0.001$).

Hence, in line with the first hypothesis, as in version 1, convention has an effect on permissibility.

5.3.1.5.2.3 Justification

As in version 1, conventionalist participants are very likely to give conventional justifications for either scenario, much more so than universalist participants (discordant scenario: coder 1 $\chi^2(1,285) = 77.358$; $p < 0.001$; coder 2 $\chi^2(1,285) = 50.694$; $p <$

0.001; concordant scenario: coder 1 $\chi^2(1,285) = 188.171$; $p < 0.001$; coder 2 $\chi^2(1,285) = 88.918$; $p < 0.001$). Conventionalist participants are also less likely than universalist participants to give universal justifications for either scenario (discordant scenario: coder 1 $\chi^2(1,285) = 88.867$; $p < 0.001$; coder 2 $\chi^2(1,285) = 58.176$; $p < 0.001$; concordant scenario: coder 1 $\chi^2(1,285) = 100.917$; $p < 0.001$; coder 2 $\chi^2(1,285) = 50.692$; $p < 0.001$). Conventionalist participants thus simply treat the act as a conventional transgression, period.

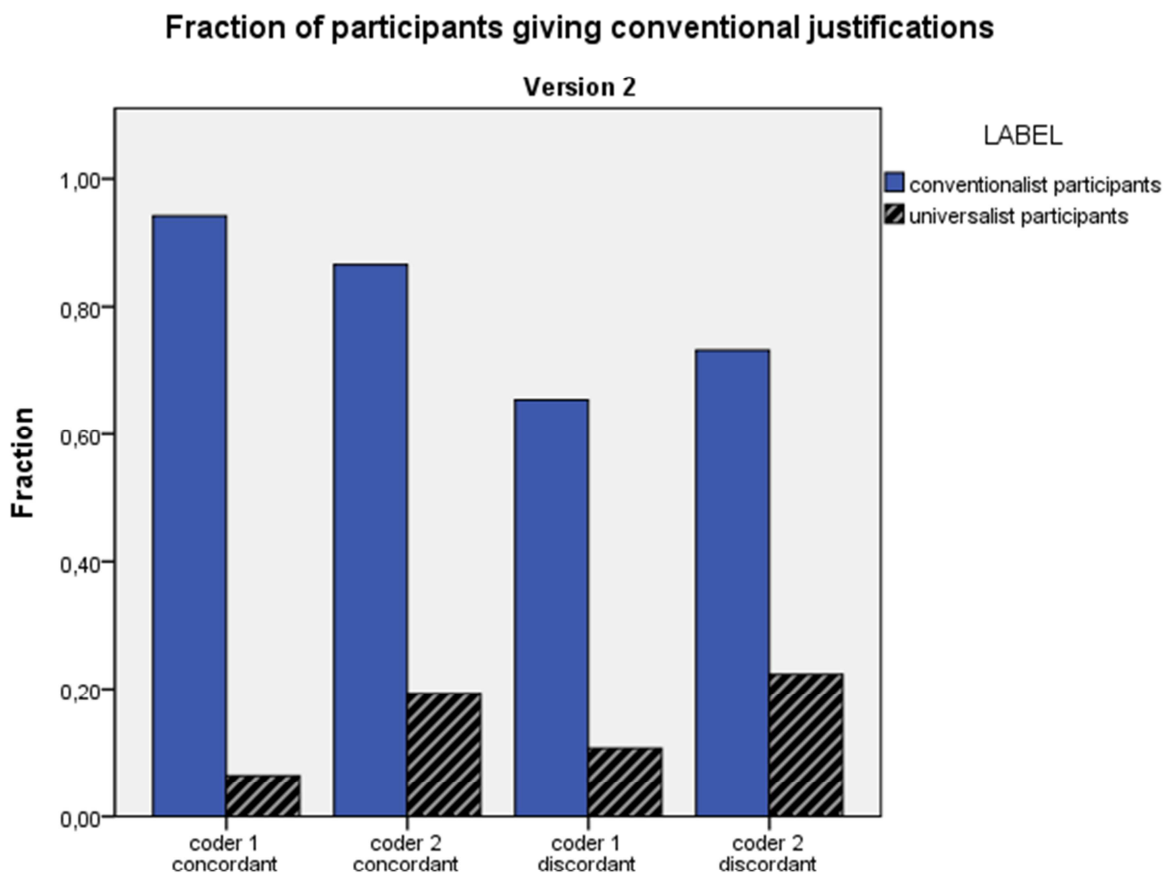


Figure 3: Comparison of conventionalist with universalist participants’ conventional justifications in version 2

Note. In this figure we see the fraction of participants that gives conventional justifications for their answers to Version 2, according to each coder, for each scenario and category of participant.

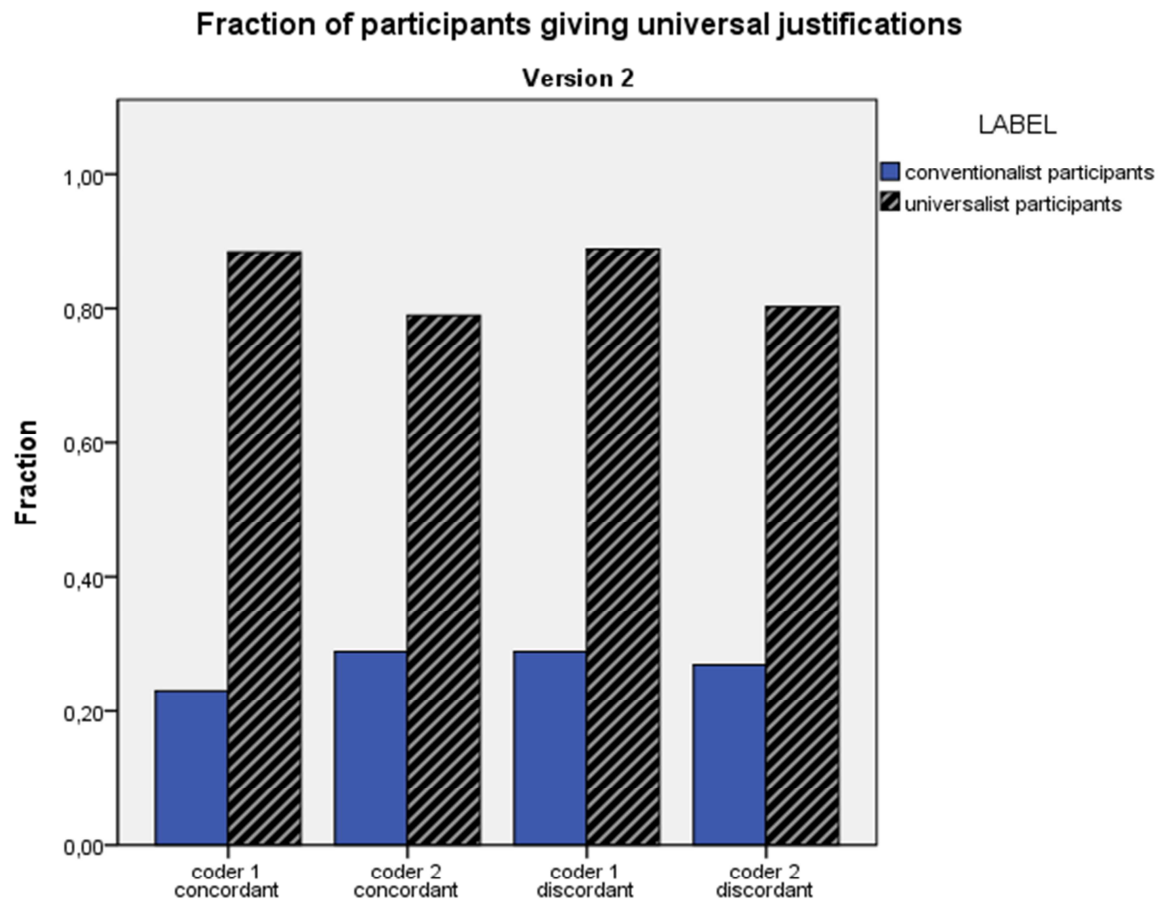


Figure 4: Comparison of conventionalist with universalist participants' universal justifications in version 2

Note. . In this figure we see the fraction of participants that gives universal justifications for their answers to Version 1, according to each coder, for each scenario and category of participant.

5.4 Discussion

5.4.1 Moral/conventional distinction

This study contributed to the discussion about the moral/conventional distinction in two ways: First, we modified previously used methodologies and replicated the finding that harmful transgressions are not uniformly judged to be generalizably wrong. Second, we now have evidence that in previous studies biases can have played a role in the perceived moral response pattern for moral transgressions. These findings thus substantially weaken the claim that harmful transgressions evoke the signature moral response pattern, a central pillar of the moral/conventional distinction.

Kelly et al. (2007) claimed to have demonstrated that harmful transgressions are not necessarily perceived as generalizably wrong. However, the scenario-based probes that Kelly et al. employed in order to measure generalizability-based reasoning were such as to possibly introduce bias: Participants might have associated the ‘neutral scenarios’ with more severe moral consequences than the ‘generalizability scenarios’, thus explaining the decreased wrongness of the harmful act in the ‘generalizability scenario’. We therefore developed a generalizability probe with fewer confounds. First, we structured each version of the scenario so as to explicitly vary the conventionality of the act without varying the moral consequences. Second, we included a justification question in order to allow us to control for differences in participants’ underlying rationales and assumptions. Although the fraction of participants who gave conventionalist answers was lower than that reported by Kelly et al., it was nonetheless still substantial, as we still found that 17.5-26% of participants fit this category. Moreover, the first hypothesis was confirmed. The extent to which a harmful act was in accord with convention had an effect on the perceived wrongness of this harmful act. In version 1, a harmful act was significantly more often wrong when not in accord with common practice and consensus. In version 2, a harmful act was significantly more often wrong when not in accord with common practice. Moreover, confirming the second hypothesis, we demonstrated that participants did not justify the non-generalizability of harmful transgressions in terms of confounded moral consequences. Instead, they referred to conventional rationales.

Another problem of bias plagues much of the existing literature on the moral/conventional theory, as commonly-used moral/conventional tasks employ vague generalizability questions. In the classical moral/conventional task, moral transgressions are deemed generalizably wrong, independent of convention. However, generalizability questions do not sufficiently vary the prevailing convention. As a result, participants might be biased to perceive moral transgressions as generalizably wrong

because they are generally against convention and not because they are wrong independent of convention. This is in contrast to conventional transgressions, which are not perceived to be generally against convention. We developed two versions of the same moral scenario, one that varied two aspects of convention and one that varied only one aspect of convention. Indeed, more participants evinced a moral response pattern in the latter, suggesting that this implicit bias may well have played a role in previous findings. We found that moral transgressions are generalizably against convention and this biases participants to evince moral response patterns (hypothesis 3).

This position is subject to a number of possible criticisms. First, only 10 to 15 percent of the participants did not generalize the wrongness of the harmful transgression; if we exclude participants from the ‘permissive’ and ‘unexpected’ categories, this rises to 17.5-26 percent, a non-trivial fraction, but not a majority by any means. Skeptics may therefore argue that these percentages are not informative because we did not compare whipping with non-harmful transgressions – perhaps these percentages would be dwarfed by the fraction of participants that would deem conventional transgressions as variably wrong. However, we suggest that the outcome of such a comparison would importantly hinge on the nature of the conventional transgressions employed. Huebner et al. (2010) have documented the existence of an intermediate class of acts that do not reliably elicit either the signature conventional pattern or the signature moral pattern. These authors classify members of this class as conventional transgressions. Nichols (2002) found that disgusting violations, which would otherwise be classified as conventional, were deemed less permissible and more seriously wrong than non-disgusting conventional transgressions; also, their wrongness was less dependent on authority. Therefore, whether conventional transgressions would elicit a smaller proportion of generalized responses than did the transgressions employed in our study, likely depends on what conventional issues were chosen.

Others may object that whipping as a punishment constitutes a conventional transgression rather than a moral transgression. Indeed, it does go against prevailing convention in the discordant scenario. Nonetheless, that is not a reason to classify it as a conventional transgression. Virtually all of the moral transgressions used in previous moral/conventional tasks violate prevailing convention. A child hitting another child on the playground is against the rules, it is not a habit, and there is no consensus that it is acceptable.

Another potential criticism, raised by Sousa et al. (2009), is that harmful transgressions need not reliably elicit moral response patterns. Sousa et al. propose that Turiel’s hypothesis should be interpreted as follows: “transgressions involving harm *and* injustice or rights violations evoke the moral signature, or, more explicitly, harmful transgressions are conceived to be authority independent and general in scope if they are perceived to entail injustice or rights violations,” (2009, p. 84). While at first pass

Sousa et al.'s linkage of harm and injustice might seem to protect the moral/conventional distinction from evidence such as that which is presented here, as Stich et al. (2009) have previously argued, this linkage actually undermines the purported claims of the generalizable nature of moral prescriptions. As Stich et al. put it, "some rights and some principles of justice are geographically and temporally local, while others may be universal" (2009:95). Philosophers do not agree as to which principles of rights or justice, if any, are universal. It remains an empirical question as to whether lay people evince such agreement, but we think it likely that they do not. Some participants will likely perceive certain principles as universal, other participants will perceive other principles as universal, and so on – at present, we have no means of predicting which principle will be perceived as universal by which group of individuals.

In defense of Sousa et al. (2009) (and here we diverge somewhat from Stich et al. [2009]), it is possible to interpret the former as arguing that 'transgressions, involving harm *and* involving violations of those principles of justice or rights that are perceived to be universal by the given participant, evoke the moral response pattern from that particular participant.' However, while this might seem to rescue the moral/conventional theory, it is critical to note that, under this definition, it is again impossible to predict which transgressions will evoke the moral response pattern. Moreover, this definition introduces a potential tautology: if harm in itself is not enough, and if principles of justice and rights only evoke a moral response pattern when these principles are perceived as universal, then generalizability cannot be used as a definitional feature of moral transgressions.

In sum, in line with previous studies (e.g. Kelly et al., 2007), our results suggest that harm does not reliably predict whether or not a moral response pattern will occur. Moreover, previous studies (e.g., Nichols, 2002; Shweder et al., 1987) and criticisms of the moral/conventional theory (e.g. Stich et al., 2009) suggest that neither are other features plausible predictors of the occurrence of a moral response pattern. The onus is thus on proponents of a perceived moral/conventional distinction to prove its existence.

5.4.2 Practical feasibility

In chapter 4, we have seen that Wong suggested accommodation as an alternative to toleration. Toleration is deemed paradoxical because it requires one to inhibit interference with objectionable actions. Accommodation requires one to trace others' actions to their basic values, understand those values and subsequently incorporate them in one's own value system. Relativizing moral judgments to agents' basic values is thus a first step in accommodation and might increase non-interference and respect. While traditional researchers argue that people necessarily think of moral judgments as

objective and universal, Kelly et al. find that harmful actions are not always deemed generalizably wrong.

In this study, we further criticized classical moral conventional research as well as the methodology used by Kelly et al. (2007). We developed new methods and asked if people could relativize moral judgments about harmful actions. We found that some participants relativized their moral judgments to the agents: They considered the same act to be permissible when in accordance with the agents' moral appraisals but not permissible when not in accordance with the agents' moral appraisals.

These findings might shed new light on one problem that plagues toleration: The paradox of toleration holds that it is hard not to interfere with acts one considers to be wrong. But it is an open question if it would also be hard not to interfere with acts one considers to be wrong for oneself but permissible for someone else. Relativist participants do not simply condemn the act (whipping), even though they quite likely think it is wrong for themselves and their own group. This opens up two questions. First of all, relativizing one's moral judgments might define toleration out of existence. Toleration is usually defined as a behavioral prescription towards those acts one judges to be wrong. When relativizing a judgment, one does not simply judge the behavior to be wrong – one judges it to be wrong for oneself but permissible for someone else. Thus, relativism asks us to reconsider the notion of toleration or to apply a new notion that aptly describes non-interference with those acts one would condemn for oneself. Second, while studies show that condemnation is indeed related to interference, it is an open question if relativized judgments also elicit interference. We do not know if relativism is related to non-interference and respectful behavior, therefore it remains an interesting, to be investigated, speculation that relativism might enable non-interference and respect.

While our experimental manipulation thus elicited relativist judgments in some individuals, this was not the case for everyone. What could we conclude from this variation in participants' exhibited scope of moral judgments? We could suggest that relativism holds for some people and universalism for others, because some people prioritize others' autonomy while other people value universalizability more.

However, given certain assumptions, this possibility may run into problems of coordination. Say we assume that moral judgments are related to behavior, such that a relativist does not interfere with whipping in communities where it is part of convention, while a universalist is always inclined to interfere with whipping. The universalist decides to raise awareness of the issue, and to motivate politicians to put a halt to this practice. Now what will the relativist do? Will the relativist tolerate the universalists' interference or will the relativist stand up for the whipping practice and interfere with the interference? Consider two relativists, P and G. They discuss the universalist's (U) actions.

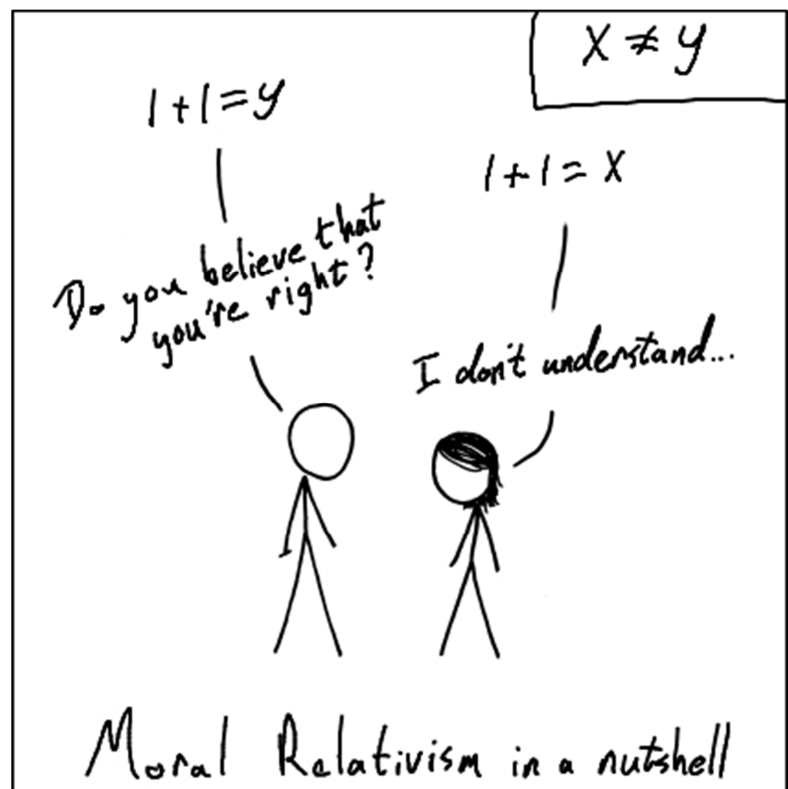
G: “What is wrong for me may not be wrong for you. It is wrong for me to whip another human being, but it is permissible for people in the whipping culture to whip another human being and one should therefore not interfere with their whipping. Everyone should accept that; the universalist’s interference is wrong and I will interfere with it.”

P: “What is wrong for me may not be wrong for you. It is wrong for me to whip another human being, but it is permissible for people in the whipping culture to whip another human being and one should therefore not interfere. However, if the universalist thinks interference with this whipping culture is permissible, then it is permissible for the universalist to interfere because what is wrong for me (interference) may not be wrong for the universalist. I will *not* interfere with the universalist’s interference.”

If relativists are like P, universalists will win and toleration is self-defeating. Universalists will interfere with behavior which is to be tolerated, and likely also with the relativists’ behavior, and relativists will permit this. Relativists will not demand or enforce toleration from those who are not morally committed to it. But if relativists are like G, they will stand up for others’ practices. G’s reaction also seems to be in accordance with the relativist who tolerates whipping, and G’s reaction is less defeasible. So in evaluating the feasibility of relativism we will have to be more specific. Some kinds of relativism may be futile while others are not. We will go into more detail regarding different kinds of relativism in the next chapter.

Chapter 6

Agent relativism reappraised: An empirical study of moral agent relativism



- <http://themothbox.wordpress.com/>

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, it became clear that being a relativist can lead to intricate problems: Relativizing one's moral judgments appears defeasible, open to interpretation or contradictory according to some interpretations. This difficulty is not new: In the *Theaetetus*, Plato ridiculed the relativist teachings of Protagoras (Plato, 1921), and Bernard Williams dubbed moral relativism "possibly the most absurd view to have been advanced even in moral philosophy," (Williams, 1972, p. 20). It is then no surprise that cartoonists welcome moral relativism as a rich source of inspiration. More formally, some moral philosophers oppose theories of moral relativism due to its counter-intuitive implications (e.g., Streiffer, 1999). Nonetheless, other philosophers defend moral relativism by referring to common intuitions, lay people's speech acts, or common understanding of moral terms (e.g., Brogaard, 2008; Beebe, 2010; Prinz, 2007; Harman, 1975). Previous empirical studies suggest that survey responders can indeed be induced to make moral judgments that are in accordance with relativism (Sarkissian, Park, Tien, Wright, & Knobe, forthcoming). Other studies classify participants according to their score on a 'relativism scale' (e.g., Forsyth, 1980, 1992; Davis, Andersen, & Curtis, 2001).

There are several plausible explanations for this academic disagreement. It is possible that different individuals have different moral intuitions, or that these intuitions vary across moral terms, contexts, etc. (Sinnott-Armstrong, 2009; Gill, 2009). Another, compatible, option is that philosophers are talking about different kinds of moral relativism (Beebe, 2010; Chapter 4): while some have relativist P from the previous chapter in mind, others focus on relativist G. One distinction that has received recent attention in philosophical work is agent versus appraiser relativism (Beebe, 2010). While appraiser relativism is usually a claim about the truth or meaning of moral judgments, agent relativism can be a claim about the permissibility of actions or about the truth or meaning of moral statements.

In contemporary empirical work, the focus is primarily either on relativism in general, or on appraiser relativism. While appraiser relativist accounts usually also take agent relativism into account, pure agent relativist accounts are rare. In this chapter, we primarily address agent relativism. While previous work suggests that some individuals use moral terms in accord with appraiser moral relativism, we show in an empirical study that individuals also use moral terms in accord with agent moral relativism. Parts of the findings from this study were presented in the previous chapter.

Below, we first explain how we define agent moral relativism and appraiser moral relativism, and discuss why these distinctions matter. We then summarize existing relevant empirical studies on folk moral relativism. In the main section, an empirical

study is described and the findings are reported. In the discussion we discuss the results in light of the theoretical and practical importance of agent relativism.

6.2 Agent and appraiser relativism

In chapter four, we construed the notion of moral relativism as consisting of three necessary components. First, we took moral relativism to mean that descriptive, prescriptive, or meta-ethical aspects of moral statements with terms such as ‘right,’ ‘wrong,’ ‘ought,’ etc. (e.g., their use, legitimacy, or meaning) are relative to a moral framework (cf. Harman & Thompson, 1996). Second, moral relativism holds that there is variation in these moral frameworks. Finally, this variation in moral frameworks cannot be entirely eliminated.

We then gave an example inspired by Lyons (1976/2001) where two moral relativists were judging an abortion. According to meta-ethical relativism, a pro-choice activist – say, Jane – can veridically judge that abortion is permissible because it is in accordance with his or her moral framework. Nonetheless, if a pro-life activist – say, Claudia – abhors abortion, Claudia’s statement regarding the impermissibility of abortion is also true because it is in accordance with Claudia’s moral framework that prioritizes the value of the unborn life over personal choice. In this example, the truth of moral statements thus depends on the moral framework of the person uttering a moral statement, or the appraiser.

The above picture did not vary another important component of moral judgments, namely whose moral framework matters in deciding whether a moral judgment is correct or not. In the above example, it was the appraiser whose moral framework mattered, but one can equally imagine the truth of moral statements to depend on an agent. Another example can illustrate this complication.

Both Susan, another pro-choice activist, and Helen, another pro-life activist, are having an abortion. They are agents performing an act with moral relevance. Claudia (the pro-life activist) and Jane (pro-choice activist) again contemplate these actions and prepare their respective judgments. Claudia and Jane are appraisers, appraising the moral acts of the agents. In the previous example, we showed how the truth of moral statements was contingent upon its accordance with the speakers’ or appraisers’ moral frameworks. Now, if we introduce agents and their moral frameworks, whose moral framework constitutes the appropriate frame of reference? Should we assign truth values based on the moral frameworks of the agents performing the act, this being

Susan and Helen, or based on the moral frameworks of the appraisers judging the act, this being Claudia and Jane? Or could any moral framework be an appropriate frame of reference?

According to a moral agent relativist, moral judgments are true if they are in accordance with the moral framework of the agent. In this case, it would be true that it is permissible for Susan to have an abortion (because Susan is a pro-choice activist) while it would be false that it is permissible for Helen to have an abortion (because Helen is a pro-life activist). For the moral agent relativist, it does not matter who is appraising the act. Both Claudia and Jane would be correct if they admonished Helen's abortion and permitted Susan's. Jane would be wrong if she permitted Helen's abortion and Claudia would be wrong if she admonished Susan's abortion, even though this is in accordance with their own (i.e., Claudia's and Jane's, or the appraiser's) respective moral frameworks.

According to a moral appraiser relativist, the truth of a moral statement depends on the appraiser and not on the agent. In that case, the truth values of the very first example (in the second paragraph of this Section 2) apply because we can ignore the agents' moral frameworks. In other words, it would be incorrect for Claudia (pro-choice) to admonish Helen's abortion because Claudia has to judge Helen according to the appraiser's, this is, her own (Claudia's) moral framework, not according to Helen's moral framework.

Put differently, according to meta-ethical agent relativism, a moral statement about a specific act is true or false simpliciter. However, according to meta-ethical appraiser relativism, a moral statement about a specific act is not true or false in itself but it is true or false depending on the moral framework of the appraiser of the act. As a consequence, conflicting moral statements can both be right, depending on appraisers' different moral frameworks.

Thus far we have discussed meta-ethical relativism, where the truth of a statement is relative to the moral framework of an appraiser and/or agent. This implies that meta-ethical relativism is a form of cognitivism: moral statements have truth-values and we can know them. In contrast, a non-cognitivist would endorse that we cannot know if a moral statement is true or false (either because moral statements have no truth values, or because we cannot know their truth values). Nonetheless, other forms of relativism do not speak to this issue. We can also evaluate the *rightness* of an *act* instead of the truth of a moral statement, thus employing normative moral statements rather than meta-ethical statements. In the case of normative agent relativism, Jane is allowed to have an abortion while Helen is not allowed to have an abortion, independent of who is evaluating these acts. Thus, according to normative agent relativism, an act is right or wrong simpliciter, as long as we specify who is committing the act. The case of normative appraiser relativism though is more complex, as it entails that Jane's

abortion is right or wrong depending on who is looking at it. Contrary to normative agent relativism, Jane's act of abortion is thus not right or wrong in itself.

6.3 Folk moral relativism: previous studies

An important feature in the debate is if moral relativism is compatible with lay people's linguistic behavior. Moral philosophers refer to lay people's speech acts to oppose or defend moral relativism. However, different kinds of moral relativism are compatible with different speech acts. For example, in his seminal 1975 paper, Harman defends the position that the truth of moral judgments is relative to agents by referring to the moral judgments lay people would and would not make: "[I]f we learn that a band of cannibals has captured and eaten the sole survivor of a shipwreck, we will speak of the primitive morality of the cannibals and may call them savages, but *we will not say that they ought not to have eaten their captive,*" (1975, p. 5; our emphasis). Streiffer (1999) and Lyons (1976/2001) argue against appraiser relativism on the basis of lay people's moral judgments. When discussing conflicting moral statements (e.g., 'X is good' versus 'X is not good', uttered by two different individuals), they refer to "the conviction shared by laymen and philosophers that only one of these [assertions] could possibly be right" (Lyons, 1976/2001; quoted by Streiffer, 1999, p. 16). This argument, however, does not refute moral agent relativism.

Different intuitions or moral speech acts thus support or refute different kinds of relativism. Nonetheless, while empirical research on folk moral judgments is flourishing, to date, most investigations do not allow us to draw strong conclusions about specific kinds of moral relativism (see also Chapter 4). Little studies inform us to what extent lay people's use of moral terms is in accordance with appraiser or agent relativism. Can we find clear instances of relativism, and more specifically, agent and appraiser relativism?

Sarkissian et al. (forthcoming) empirically investigated folk moral relativism. They were able to manipulate participants' agreement with a statement either in the direction of objectivism or in the direction of relativism. Sarkissian et al. presented participants with a short scenario about a man killing his son because he found him very unattractive. Participants were then told about a classmate, and about another appraiser who could be another classmate, someone from a different culture, or an extraterrestrial. In the scenario, the first appraiser, the one who was always a classmate, thought the behavior was wrong while the other appraiser thought it was right.

Participants then had to indicate how much they agreed with the statement that at least one of the appraisers must be wrong. As they had predicted, Sarkissian and colleagues found that participants were more likely to disagree with this statement when the other appraiser was from another culture, and they were most likely to disagree when the other appraiser was from a different planet. The results held for both American and Singaporean students and also when American students received all three cases (same culture, other culture and extraterrestrial) side-by-side. This relativist response was significantly less common when the vignette described a non-moral, factual disagreement. These data are consistent with the view that individuals allow the truth of moral evaluations to depend on the cultural background of an appraiser. The authors concluded that, while people do have objectivist intuitions, different psychological processes are at work that lead to objectivist intuitions in some cases and relativist intuitions in other cases.

This study also seems to speak for appraiser relativism and against agent relativism (though such detailed questions were not the aim of their research). In another study in the same paper they varied the cultural background of the agent. They did not find an effect of the cultural background of the agent on participants' assessments of moral truth. However, it is important to note that the cultural backgrounds of these agents were still similar to each other (an American versus an Algerian agent), while, throughout this study, the appraisers varied much more in cultural background (a classmate versus an appraiser from a fictitious primitive society, or versus an extraterrestrial).

Also, it is possible that participants assumed that the stranger or alien was not fully informed about the practices and moral values surrounding the event. In that case, it might have been right for the extraterrestrial to say that the event was permissible, but only because the extraterrestrial was misinformed about the nature of the event.

This study also suffers from the limitation that participants might have thought that different moral consequences result from this act in different cultures. For example, do participants reason that the given act is acceptable for another culture because individuals in another culture hold different values – which would be in accordance with the relativist interpretation? Or are participants inferring morally aversive consequences? Participants might have thought that it was necessary for the father to kill at least some of his children using some or other criterion, for example because letting all one's children live will inevitably result in future famine and suffering for the entire village. This would merely mean that the diversity in evaluations was caused by applying the same underlying utilitarian principle. Killing an unattractive son might be the best thing to do in a fictitious primitive society, if one assumes that in this society food is scarce and unattractive children are prone to die from disease anyway. At the same time, killing an unattractive son would still be wrong for appraisers in the U.S. Hence, this variation in the truth of moral judgments does not necessarily imply that

one is a relativist. In order to avoid such confounds, in our study, we explicitly vary the moral framework of agents while keeping all other relevant features constant (see Section 5.3).

In a study of moral objectivism, Goodwin and Darley (2008) asked participants whether a specific moral statement was true, false, or an opinion or attitude (in a first experiment), or whether there could be a correct answer as to whether the statement is true (in a second experiment). Participants were further asked to indicate how they interpreted the information that another person disagreed with them; here, the response options were: (1) the other was surely mistaken, (2) it is possible that neither you nor the other person is mistaken, (3) it could be that you are mistaken, and the other person is correct, (4) other. Even though Goodwin and Darley (2008) were interested in moral objectivism, we can interpret certain answer patterns as in accordance with meta-ethical moral relativism: If the participant indicates that the statement can have a truth value (i.e., the participant chooses either response option 'true' or response option 'false'), and the participant indicates that neither (s)he nor a disagreeing person is mistaken about the statement, then the participants' answers are in accordance with meta-ethical relativism: Two logically incompatible moral statements can both be true, depending on the appraiser. The authors report that in the first study 11% (11 out of 100) of participants and in the second study 8% (12 out of 152) of participants conformed to this pattern. Hence, a small but consistent minority of participants used moral terms in accordance with meta-ethical appraiser relativism in each experiment. However, from this study, no conclusions can be drawn about agent relativism or normative relativism. Moreover, it might again be that participants assumed that the disagreeing person had different information, or assumed that different moral consequences would follow.

While the above studies tell us nothing about agent relativism, they do indicate that appraiser relativism is present in lay people's moral judgments. However, in both studies a non-relativist explanation can be given for this: participants may have reasoned that the same moral framework yields different specific moral judgments because of the variation in moral consequences, or participants may have reasoned that individuals come to different moral conclusions because some of them are not fully informed.

As we have seen in chapter four, other relativism studies make use of Forsyth's (1980) Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ), which includes a scale developed to measure relativist commitments in lay people. We have equally seen that the items in this scale are somewhat ambiguous as to the individual-cultural distinction. Participants can also interpret some items in non-relativist ways and both normative and meta-ethical interpretations are possible. How does this scale fare in regard to the agent-appraiser distinction? As in chapter four, we analyze the relevant questions and give some possible interpretations in this regard. These are listed in table 1.

Table 13: : Items 11-20 of the Ethics Position Questionnaire (left) (Source: Forsyth, 1980) and their relation to agent versus appraiser relativism (right).

“Please read each statement carefully. Then indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree by placing in front of the statement the number corresponding to your feelings, where:
 1 = Completely disagree 2 = Largely disagree 3 = Moderately disagree 4 = Slightly disagree 5 = Neither agree nor disagree 6 = Slightly agree 7 = Moderately agree 8 = Largely agree 9 = Completely agree”

Item	Some possible interpretations
11 What is ethical varies from one situation and society to another.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agent-relativism: what is ethical varies from one society and its agents to another. - Appraiser-relativism: what is ethical varies from one situation or society and its appraisers to another. - Descriptive statement - Non-cognitivism
12 Moral standards should be seen as being individualistic; what one person considers to be moral may be judged to be immoral by another person.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agent relativism: type of act - Appraiser relativism: exact same event - Descriptive statement - Non-cognitivism
13 There are no ethical principles that are so important that they should be a part of any code of ethics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agent-relativism: there are no ethical principles that should be a part of any agent’s code of ethics. - Appraiser-relativism: there are no ethical principles that should be a part of any appraiser’s code of ethics. - Non-cognitivism
14 Different types of moralities cannot be compared as to "rightness."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agent-relativism: different types of agents’ moralities - Appraiser-relativism: different types of appraisers’ moralities - Non-cognitivism
15 Questions of what is ethical for everyone can never be resolved since what is moral or immoral is up to the individual.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agent-relativism: what is ethical for every agent - Appraiser-relativism: what is ethical for every appraiser - Non-cognitivism
16 Moral standards are simply <i>personal</i> rules which indicate how a person should behave, and are not to be applied in making judgments of others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agent-relativism: moral standards are not to be applied in making judgments of other agents - Appraiser-relativism: moral standards are not to be applied in making judgments of other appraisers - Non-cognitivism
17 Ethical considerations in interpersonal relations are so complex that individuals should be allowed to formulate their own individual codes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agents should be allowed to form their own ethical codes - Appraisers should be allowed to form their own ethical codes - Non-cognitivism

18	Rigidly codifying an ethical position that prevents certain types of actions could stand in the way of better human relations and adjustment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is more likely to be about consequentialism than about relativism. - Descriptive statement - Non-cognitivism
19	No rule concerning lying can be formulated; whether a lie is permissible or not permissible totally depends on the situation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agent-relativism: depends on the situation of the liar - Appraiser-relativism: depends on the situation of the appraiser - Non-cognitivism
20	Whether a lie is judged to be moral or immoral depends upon the circumstances surrounding the action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agent-relativism: depends upon the circumstances surrounding the action (and, most likely, the agent) - Descriptive statement - Non-cognitivism

Since most items can be interpreted as agent or as appraiser-relativism, this scale does not inform us if participants with a high score are agent or appraiser relativists. However, item 20 is most likely interpreted as agent-relativism. Even so, we have to keep in mind that each item is also consistent with non-cognitivist interpretations of morality.

Overall, we cannot draw any conclusions about the prevalence of agent relativism from previous studies.

6.4 Present Study

Philosophers often refer to common use of moral statements to argue for agent relativism. We think that those philosophers' arguments for agent relativism have some ground. We therefore predict that changing the moral framework of agents will have an impact on lay people's moral judgments.

From December 2010 to January 2011 we collected participants using MTurk (Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk web-based employment system). This study was certified exempt from UCLA's Institutional Review Board. All participants took part in both the present study and the study described in the previous chapter.

6.4.1 Methods

As described in Section 6.2, in order to assess whether participants use moral terms in accordance with agent relativism, it is important to explicitly vary the moral framework of the involved agents. We tested two ways in which participants could be agent relativists. We presented participants with a normative manipulation and with a meta-ethical manipulation. Moreover, we tested whether, on the one hand, participants were consistent in their agent relativist speech acts, or, on the other hand, varied their moral responses between manipulations (normative or meta-ethical). In order to do so, all participants were assigned to both manipulations.

The scenarios are schematically described below. For a literal transcript of the scenarios and questions, see Appendix 3. In the normative manipulation, participants were presented with two scenarios describing the same act, one in which the act was *concordant* with the agents' moral framework and one in which the act was *discordant* with the agents' moral framework. The relevant variation is to be found in the second paragraph of the scenario.

6.4.1.1 Scenario 1: Agent-discordant

Mr. Johnson is an officer on a cargo ship in 2010, carrying goods along the Atlantic coastline. All the crew members are American but the ship is mostly in international waters. When a ship is in international waters, it has to follow the law of the state whose flag it sails under and each ship can sail under only one flag. This ship does not sail under the U.S. flag. The law of this ship's flag state allows both whipping and food deprivation as a punishment.

On this ship, food deprivation is always used to discipline sailors who disobey orders or who are drunk on duty; as a consequence everyone on this ship has come to think that food deprivation is an appropriate punishment. Whipping however is never used to discipline sailors and no one on this ship thinks whipping is an appropriate punishment.

One night, while the ship is in international waters, Mr. Johnson finds a sailor drunk at a time when the sailor should have been on watch. After the sailor sobers up, Mr. Johnson punishes the sailor by giving him 5 lashes with a whip. This does not go against the law of the flag state.

Participants answered the following *permissibility question*:

Is it morally permissible for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor?

- (1) Yes, it is morally permissible

- (2) Yes, it is morally permissible but it is wrong for reasons that have nothing to do with morality (e.g., it might be unlawful)
- (3) No, it is morally wrong (whether it is right or wrong in other ways or not)

Participants were then led to another screen with the following scenario:

6.4.1.2 Scenario 2: Agent-concordant

Mr. Williams is an officer on another cargo ship in 2010, carrying goods along the Atlantic coastline. All the crew members are American but the ship is mostly in international waters. When a ship is in international waters, it has to follow the law of the state whose flag it sails under and each ship can sail under only one flag. This ship does not sail under the U.S. flag. The law of this ship's flag state allows both whipping and food deprivation as a punishment.

On this ship, whipping is always used to discipline sailors who disobey orders or who are drunk on duty; as a consequence everyone on this ship has come to think that whipping is an appropriate punishment. Food deprivation however is never used to discipline sailors and no one on this ship thinks food deprivation is an appropriate punishment.

One night, while the ship is in international waters, Mr. Williams finds a sailor drunk at a time when the sailor should have been on watch. After the sailor sobers up, Mr. Johnson punishes the sailor by giving him 5 lashes with a whip. This does not go against the law of the flag state.

Participants again answered the permissibility question. They were then led to another screen with the meta-ethical manipulation, or to a debriefing page if they had seen the meta-ethical manipulation first.

6.4.1.3 Scenario 3: Agent-discordant, appraiser-concordant

In the meta-ethical manipulation, participants again saw two scenarios describing the same act that was either concordant or discordant with the agents' moral framework. In this manipulation, participants had to assess the *truth* of the *same moral judgment* about the act, made by an appraiser. At the same time, we also varied the moral frameworks of the appraisers – whose judgment participants had to assess – *in the opposite direction*: appraisers evaluated an act that was in accordance with their own moral framework but contrary to the agents' moral framework, and the other way around. This way we can distinguish meta-ethical agent relativists from appraiser relativists. Relevant differences are to be found in the second paragraph of the scenario.

Marc and Eric are sailors on Mr. Williams' ship.

They both know that on Mr. Johnson's ship whipping is never practiced and that no one on Mr. Johnson's ship thinks that whipping is an appropriate punishment. They also know that food deprivation is always practiced on Mr. Johnson's ship and that everyone on Mr. Johnson's ship has come to think that food deprivation is an appropriate punishment. Of course, on their own ship, it is just the other way around: Everybody on Marc's and Eric's ship thinks that whipping is an appropriate punishment.

Hence, even though Marc and Eric are sailors on Mr. Williams's ship, they are both fully informed about the different practices and sensibilities on Mr. Johnson's ship.

They have heard that Mr. Johnson whipped a sailor on his ship. Marc says to Eric: what Mr. Johnson did was morally permissible.

Participants then answered the *truth question*:

Is what Marc says true or false?

- (1) True
- (2) False
- (3) Neither

Participants were then led to another screen with the following scenario:

6.4.1.4 Scenario 4: Agent-concordant, appraiser-discordant

Peter and Steve are sailors on Mr. Johnson's ship.

They both know that on Mr. Williams's ship food deprivation is never practiced and that no one on Mr. Williams's ship thinks that food deprivation is an appropriate punishment. They also know that whipping is always practiced on Mr. Williams's ship and that everyone on Mr. Williams ship has come to think that whipping is an appropriate punishment. Of course, on their own ship, it is just the other way around: no one on Peter's and Steve's ship thinks that whipping is an appropriate punishment.

Hence, even though Peter and Steve are sailors on Mr. Johnson's ship, they are both fully informed about the different practices and sensibilities on Mr. Williams's ship.

They have heard that Mr. Williams whipped a sailor on his ship. Peter says to Steve: what Mr. Williams did was morally permissible.

Participants again answered the truth question.

The order of presentation of the two manipulations was randomized between subjects. Within each manipulation, the order of scenarios was also randomized between subjects. This yielded eight different orders to which participants were randomly assigned. Table 1 shows the final distribution of the participants. The normative manipulations in orders one to four were used as part of the study on the moral/conventional distinction (Chapter 5; Quintelier, Fessler, & De Smet, submitted).

Table 14: Distribution of participants across randomized conditions

	Screen 1	Screen 2	Screen 3	Screen 4	Sample size (%)
Order	Normative		Meta-ethical		
O1	Agent-disc.	Agent-conc.	Agent-disc./ appr.-conc.	Agent-disc./ appr.-conc.	153 (16.1)
O2	Agent-disc.	Agent-conc.	Agent-conc./ appr.-disc.	Agent-conc./ appr.-disc.	120 (12.6)
O3	Agent-conc.	Agent-disc.	Agent-disc./ appr.-conc.	Agent-disc./ appr.-conc.	128 (13.5)
O4	Agent-conc.	Agent-disc.	Agent-conc./ appr.-disc.	Agent-conc./ appr.-disc.	133 (14.0)
	Meta-ethical		Normative		
O5	Agent-disc./appr.- conc.	Agent- conc./appr.-disc.	Agent-disc.	Agent-conc.	106 (11.2)
O6	Agent-disc./appr.- conc.	Agent- conc./appr.-disc.	Agent-conc.	Agent-disc.	86 (9.1)
O7	Agent- conc./appr.-disc.	Agent-disc./appr.- conc.	Agent-disc.	Agent-conc.	124 (13.1)
O8	Agent- conc./appr.-disc.	Agent-disc./appr.- conc.	Agent-conc.	Agent-disc.	100 (10.5)
TOTAL					950 (100%)

6.4.2 Analysis and Results

We analyzed data from 991 participants (46% women). Mean age was 30.36 years ($SD = 10.055$), ranging from 18 to 81 years old. Participants were mostly from the U.S. (47.3%) and India (39.9%). The remaining participants (12.8%) were from various countries, such as: Canada (13 individuals), United Kingdom (9), Romania (7), Pakistan (6), Serbia (6), Germany (5), The Philippines (5), Australia (4), Macedonia (4), Portugal (4), Spain (3), other European countries (1-2 per represented country), and other Asian countries (1-2 per represented country). There were significantly more women in the American group (61%) than in the Indian group (33%; $\chi^2(1,864) = 65.651, p < .001$) or in the remaining group (31%; $\chi^2(1,596) = 34.013, p < .001$). The gender distribution in the Indian group was the same as in the remaining group ($\chi^2(1,522) = 0.088, p = .767$).

In order to evaluate the extent to which participants consider an act to be morally right or wrong, we pooled answer options 1 and 2 of the permissibility question, constructing a variable indicating whether the act was judged permissible or not (agent-disc-dich for whipping when not in accordance with the agents' moral framework, agent-conc-dich for whipping when concordant with the agents' moral framework). We also did analyses on the unpooled answers of the permissibility question (agent-disc and agent-conc, respectively). In order to evaluate the extent to which participants consider a moral statement to be true or false, we constructed a dichotomous variable leaving out the non-cognitivist 'either' answers (agent-disc/appr-conc-dich when whipping is not in accordance with the agents' moral framework and agent-conc/appr-disc-dich when whipping is in accordance with the agents' moral framework). We also did analyses on the unpooled answers of the truth-value question (agent-disc/appr-conc and agent-conc/appr-disc). We also classified participants according to their moral judgments, i.e., whether they were agent relativists or something else (norm-class for the normative manipulation; meta-class for the meta-ethical manipulation).

6.4.2.1 Order effects

There were no order effects across the eight conditions (agent-conc: $\chi^2(14,948) = 13.207$, $p = .510$; agent-disc: $\chi^2(14,943) = 16.767$, $p = .269$; agent-conc-dich: $\chi^2(7,948) = 8.328$, $p = .304$; agent-disc-dich: $\chi^2(7,943) = 8.079$, $p = .326$; agent-conc/appr-disc: $\chi^2(14,948) = 15.134$, $p = .369$; agent-disc/appr-conc: $\chi^2(14,830) = 19.937$, $p = .132$; agent-conc/appr-disc-dich: $\chi^2(7,794) = 8.582$, $p = .284$; agent-disc/appr-conc-dich: $\chi^2(7,685) = 13414$, $p = .063$; norm-class: $\chi^2(21,943) = 23.338$, $p = .326$; meta-class: $\chi^2(42,796) = 46.876$, $p = .279$). We therefore pooled data across all orders.

6.4.2.2 Normative manipulation

We classified participants according to their moral judgments. Table 2 presents a breakdown of the results. The last column lists the percentage of participants whose answers fit the given pattern of permissibility answers. Participants who perceived whipping as permissible in both scenarios are categorized as 'permissive'; participants who deemed whipping wrong in both scenarios are categorized as 'universalist'; participants who thought whipping is wrong when not in accordance with the agents' moral framework but permissible when in accordance with the agents' moral framework are referred to as 'agent relativist,' and participants whose answers followed the reverse pattern are termed 'reversed' (we suspect that this last category of answer pattern reflects participant confusion or frivolity, as it is otherwise difficult to explain).

We wanted to know if there were effects of gender and nationality. Because gender distributions were significantly different in the American group, we conducted chi

square tests for each gender and nationality separately. Being an agent relativist was not related to gender for either nationality (American: $\chi^2(1,469) = .086, p = .769$; Indian: $\chi^2(1,395) = .960, p = .327$; Remaining: $\chi^2(1,127) = 1.074, p = .300$.) nor was it related to nationality for either gender (Men, American vs. Indian: $\chi^2(1,450) = .177, p = .674$; American vs. Remaining: $\chi^2(1, 272) = 1.809, p = .179$; Indian vs. Remaining: $\chi^2(1,352) = 1.173, p = .279$; Women, American vs. Indian $\chi^2(1,414) = .763, p = .382$; American vs. Remaining: $\chi^2(1, 324) = .126, p = .722$; Indian vs. Remaining: $\chi^2(1,170) = .034, p = .855$).

Table 15: Classification of participants: Normative manipulation

Discordant	Concordant	Interpretation	
Permissible?	Permissible?	Category (CAT)	Frequencies (%) ^a
Yes	Yes	Permissive	43.9
No	No	Universalist	36.6
No	Yes	Agent relativist	17.3
Yes	No	Reversed	2.2

^aN=950.

To determine whether participants are more likely to consider whipping permissible when it is in accordance with the agent's framework, we conducted a within-subject test. Participants were indeed more likely to hold that the 'concordant' whipping was morally permissible than that the 'discordant' whipping was morally permissible (602 vs. 454 of 984 participants, McNemar test, $\chi^2(1,984) = 409.669; p < .0001$).

6.4.2.3 Meta-ethical manipulation

Table 3 presents the results of classifying participants according to their assessments of the moral statements. Participants who thought that the statement 'whipping is permissible' was true when in accordance with the moral framework of the agents but false when not in accordance with the moral framework of the agents are referred to as 'agent relativists,' while participants whose answers followed the reverse pattern are 'appraiser relativists' because their truth assessments follow the moral frameworks of the appraisers. The 'mixed' category consists of individuals who did not assign a truth value to the moral statement in one scenario, but indicated that they thought that the same statement was true (or false) in the other scenario. We suspect that participant confusion or frivolity accounts for this latter category.

Being an agent relativist was not related to gender for any of the subsamples structured by nationality (American: $\chi^2(1,469) = .765, p = .382$; Indian: $\chi^2(1,395) = 1.109, p = .292$; Remaining: $\chi^2(1,127) = .259, p = .611$), nor was it related to nationality for either gender (Men: American vs. Indian: $\chi^2(1,450) = .825, p = .364$; American vs. Remaining $\chi^2(1,272) = .248, p = .618$; Indian vs. Remaining: $\chi^2(1,352) = 1.413, p = .235$; Women: American vs. Indian $\chi^2(1,415) = .270, p = .603$; American vs. Remaining: $\chi^2(1,324) = .226, p =$

.635, Indian vs. Remaining: $\chi^2(1,170) = .527, p = .468$). Being an appraiser relativist was not related to gender for most nationalities (American: $\chi^2(1,469) = .520, p = .471$; Indian: $\chi^2(1,395) = .004, p = .949$; Remaining: $\chi^2(1,127) = 3.925, p = .048$). We do not have enough participants in the remaining group for each nationality to conduct further analyses on this. The Indian group consisted of more appraiser relativists than did the American group for both genders (Men: $\chi^2(1,450) = 5.736, p = .017$; Women: $\chi^2(1,414) = 10.103, p = .001$), and the Indian group consisted of more appraiser relativists than did the Remaining group for women only: $\chi^2(1,170) = 5.062, p = .024$; the distributions in the other groups were not significantly different from each other (Men: American vs. Remaining: $\chi^2(1,272) = 1.894, p = .169$, Indian vs. Remaining: $\chi^2(1,352) = .307, p = .579$; Women: American vs. Remaining: $\chi^2(1,324) = 1.453, p = .228$).

Table 16: Classification of participants: Meta-ethical manipulation

Agent discordant, appraiser concordant	Agent accordant, appraiser discordant	Category	Frequency (%) ^a
True	False	Appraiser relativist	8.7
False	True	Agent relativist	14.4
True	True	Permissive	37.5
False	False	Universalist	21.3
Neither	False/true	Mixed	5.4
False/true	Neither	Mixed	
Neither	Neither	Neither	12.7

^aN=950.

To determine whether participants were more likely to hold that the statement ‘whipping is permissible’ was true when whipping was in accordance with the agents’ moral framework than when whipping was not in accordance with the agents’ moral framework, we again conducted a within-subject test; this was indeed the case (429 vs. 382 of 677 participants, McNemar test, $\chi^2(1,677)=119.443; p < .01$).

6.4.2.4 Consistency

Finally, we asked whether being an agent relativist in the normative manipulation predicted being an agent or an appraiser relativist in the meta-ethical manipulation. We constructed dichotomous variables for being an agent relativist or not and for being an appraiser relativist or not. Being an agent relativist in the normative manipulation is strongly correlated with being an agent relativist in the meta-ethical manipulation $\chi^2(1,991) = 809.385, p < .001$. In contrast, being an agent relativist in the normative manipulation did not correlate with being an appraiser relativist in the meta-ethical manipulation: $\chi^2(1,991) = .044, p = .833$.

6.5 Discussion and conclusions

6.5.1 Agent and appraiser relativism

We investigated whether lay people's moral evaluations are in accordance with agent relativism. We tested this in two ways. First, we asked participants to make a normative judgment about the same act while manipulating the moral frameworks of the agents. It was found that participants were more likely to consider the act morally permissible when it was in accordance with the agents' moral framework. Second, we asked participants to assess the truth of the same moral judgment while manipulating the moral frameworks of the agents and of the appraisers. This way, the act was either in accordance with the agents' moral framework and discordant with the appraisers' moral framework, or in accordance with the appraisers' moral framework and discordant with the agents' moral framework. Again, participants were more likely to answer that it is true that the act was permissible when the act was in accordance with the agents' moral framework.

We classified participants according to their answer patterns. We found comparable frequencies of agent relativists in both manipulations. This is remarkable given that, in the meta-ethical manipulation but not in the normative manipulation, agent relativism was competing with appraiser relativism. Likewise, the agent relativist pattern appears to reflect a coherent position held by a substantial minority of participants, as it is not readily attributable to confusion or frivolity. Were it the case that the agent relativist pattern was spuriously generated, we would expect to find it appearing at approximately the same rate as other patterns that are parsimoniously likewise explained, namely the 'reversed' category (2.2% of participants in the normative manipulation) and the 'mixed' category (5.4% of participants in the meta-ethical manipulation); instead, agent relativism was vastly more common than either (17.3% and 14.4%, respectively). Similarly, there were no order effects, suggesting that the frequency of meta-ethical agent relativists in orders one to four was not influenced by the fact that these participants had first seen the normative manipulation. Moreover, agent relativism in the normative manipulation predicted agent relativism, but not appraiser relativism, in the meta-ethical manipulation. Thus, agent relativism was a stable feature in 14 to 17% of participants.

That a non-trivial fraction of people consistently employ this form of reasoning indicates that researchers of moral relativism cannot make claims regarding moral relativism without first specifying the type of relativism at issue, nor can they attend only to appraiser relativism. Whether they be empiricists or theorists, researchers of

moral relativism must take seriously the existence of agent relativism, and must consider the important differences between it and appraiser relativism.

While we have documented the existence of both agent relativists and appraiser relativists, these results also indicate that, for many participants, the given act was not morally permissible in any of the four situations. Additionally, appraiser relativism may be culture-dependent, as Indian participants were more likely to be appraiser relativists than were American participants, and Indian women were more likely to be appraiser relativists than women in the remaining group. We did not find any cultural differences in agent relativism. We did not predict effects of cultural background, and we recognize that country of residence is but a crude proxy for a participant's culture, hence these findings should be considered highly preliminary, but deserving of future investigation nonetheless.

Such substantial inter-individual variation in types of moral judging is in line with previous suggestions (e.g., Gill, 2009; Sinnott-Armstrong, 2009) that different individuals employ (or deploy) quite divergent moral language. The inter-individual variation that we have documented thus supports Gill's position that philosophical theories that appeal to lay people's speech acts cannot rely on a "handful of commonsense judgments," (2009, p. 217), as the philosopher's commonsense judgment will often fail to reflect the actual distribution of moral reasoning in the folk world.

6.5.2 Agent versus appraiser normative relativism

We can now return to the problem sketched in the previous chapter. Two relativists, P and G, reacted differently towards a universalist (U). How does this relate to the distinction made here? First of all, we assume for the sake of argument that both evaluations of moral judgments (assessments), and moral evaluations of acts (moral judgments), are related to interfering behavior. Thus, those who judge that whipping is wrong are inclined to interfere with the permitted whipping. Those who think that whipping is permissible for a group of agents are not inclined to interfere with it. Those who think that 'whipping is permissible' is true, are inclined to permit it, and those who think that 'whipping is permissible' is false, are inclined to interfere with it.

The universalist who generally admonishes whipping will interfere with whipping (by raising awareness and demanding policies that prevent this kind of punishment). Two relativists react to the universalist:

G: "What is wrong for me may not be wrong for you. It is wrong for me to whip another human being, but it is permissible for people in the whipping culture to whip another human being. Everyone should accept that; the universalist's interference is wrong and I will interfere with it."

P: “What is wrong for me may not be wrong for you. It is wrong for me to whip another human being, but it is permissible for people in the whipping culture to whip another human being. If the universalist thinks interference with this whipping culture is permissible, then it is permissible for the universalist to interfere. I will not interfere with the universalist’s interference.”

Now, clearly, G is an agent relativist and not an appraiser relativist. G thinks whipping is permissible (thus should not be interfered with) if all those involved in the act of whipping condone it. But G does *not* think that the truth of ‘whipping is permissible’ depends on those who are *appraising* the act. According to G, moral truth and permissibility merely depend on the agents, and not on the appraisers, and that is the end of the matter. G holds that every appraiser (including the universalist) should take the perspective of the agents (and all those involved) into account when judging an act, and universalists are sometimes wrong to interfere.

P on the other hand relativizes moral statements to the agent and also to the appraiser. As a consequence, anyone who condemns whipping can veridically say that whipping is wrong and is permitted to act upon that. Thus P will not interfere with whipping in virtue of being an agent relativist, nor will P interfere with the interference of universalists.

Of course, and importantly so, all this depends on the existence of a causal relation between moral judgments (or evaluations of moral judgments) and an impulse to act (e.g. to interfere). It remains an interesting question to what extent this assumption is correct. This may depend on the function of each specific moral judgment, e.g., whether a judgment functions to condemn others or whether it functions as one’s conscience. However, if there is such a link, agent/appraiser relativism will be defeasible by universalism in a way that pure agent relativism is not.

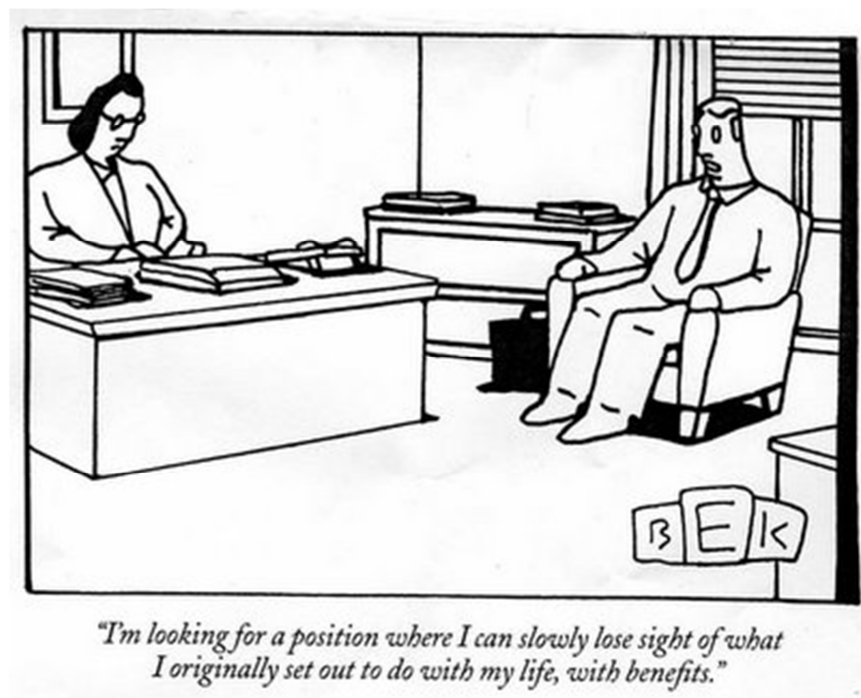
Our argument also depends on a perceived close relation between assessments and moral judgments, such that “‘P is permissible’ is true’ is, according to lay people, equivalent to ‘P is permissible’. In this case, this assumption seems to be upheld because being an agent relativist in the normative condition (P is permissible) was predictive of being an agent relativist in the meta-ethical condition (it is true that P is permissible). Thus, given these assumptions, it seems that agent relativists can stand up for the rights of those holding different moral views, even when these views are under attack.

However, coordination between non-interfering relativists and interfering others is not the only thing that constrains the possibility of relativizing one’s moral judgments or of tolerating and respecting different ways of life. As an issue of practical feasibility, we have to take into account that living a life in accordance with our own values can be either supported or dwarfed by the actions of others. Wong (2006) and Hales (2009) discuss how ‘what we ought to do’ depends on what kind of person we are. However, what we *can* do also depends on others’ behavior and institutions that enable certain

ways of life. Thus our social environment can be a benefit or a hindrance to our personal commitments. This is the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter 7

Commitment and practical feasibility



- Kaplan, 2010

This chapter is a revised version of Fessler D.M.T., and Quintelier K. (forthcoming). Suicide Bombers, Weddings, and Prison Tattoos. An Evolutionary Perspective on Subjective Commitment and Objective Commitment. In Richard Joyce, Kim Sterelny & Brett Calcott (Eds.), *Signaling, Commitment, and Emotion*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter we take a break from empirical research, move our focus away from the topic of morality and take a look at commitment instead. Commitment partly overlaps with morality, and can inform us about the practical feasibility of differences in lifestyles. Throughout this chapter, we will give examples of moral issues. At the end of this chapter, we discuss our findings in the light of toleration and of relativizing our moral judgments.

Consider three hypothetical suicide bombers. The first seeks to die in a suicide attack because he believes that doing so is an effective means of achieving his goals, including obtaining access to sexual opportunities and ensuring the material and spiritual welfare of his family. The second seeks to die in a suicide attack because he is outraged at the treatment that he and others like him have received at the hands of their oppressors, he feels that his honor has been tarnished, and therefore longs to visit vengeance upon his enemy. The third seeks to die in a suicide attack because, having already recorded a videotape detailing his plan, the social costs of backing out would be enormous. In common parlance, all three are said to be *committed* to terrorist acts. However, this broad term masks important differences among these cases. For example, the presence of alternative avenues may readily dissuade the first bomber; the second bomber is less easily discouraged, yet may nonetheless falter at the critical moment; the third bomber is more reliable still. In reality, terrorist organizations recognize these differences, and seek to create redundant motivations by employing all three facets in conjunction (see Moghadam, 2003).

The central features of the notion of commitment are that, first, at the time at which commitment is initiated, multiple courses of action present themselves to the actor; in committing, the actor is choosing one of these options to pursue. Second, by definition, that choice is intended to endure despite the continued or anticipated attractiveness of alternatives. For example, business partners may promise to share workload equally, intending to keep their promise even when they could easily parasitize on the other. Importantly, markedly different proximal mechanisms might generate these two features of ‘selecting among options’ and ‘the durability of the choice.’ This heterogeneity is reflected in the remarks of Schelling, a seminal contributor to the modern study of commitment: “The ways to commit [...] are many. Legally, one files suit. Reputationally, one takes a public position. Physically, one gathers speed before taking an intersection. Emotionally, one becomes obsessed” (Schelling, 2001, p. 49). In this chapter, we propose that, as inspection of these instances suggests, commitment draws attention to some of the many possible

factors that influence whether an individual's behavior will be in line with one's personal values.

The goal of this chapter is to first disambiguate two major types of commitment, then stress the importance of hitherto neglected forms of commitment, and finally consider how disambiguating the processes at issue sheds light on coordination issues. We begin by distinguishing between subjective commitment and objective commitment (Section 7.2), then introduce the notion of a commitment device (Section 7.3). These concepts are all defined in relation to the committing individual – whether others play a role in committing, and what role they play, is irrelevant to these prior distinctions. In Section 7.4 we introduce various kinds of social interactions that can play a role in commitment, focusing on the costs and benefits that third parties incur in this regard. In Section 7.5 we turn to the communicative facets of commitment involving social interactions, arguing that signals stemming from objective commitments are more reliable than those that derive from subjective commitments. Many social commitments employ existing practices, hence in Section 7.6 we explore how culture shapes commitment through institutions.

7.2 Subjective and objective commitment

By *subjective commitment* we mean an internal, psychological phenomenon wherein, either consciously or subconsciously, individuals appraise one course of action as intrinsically superior to other courses of action, leading them to pursue it. In contrast to the first suicide bomber in the opening example, in cases of subjective commitment, the selected option is chosen not because it is deemed instrumentally superior, i.e., more likely to achieve some objective separate from the course of action itself, but rather because this course of action is valued more highly in and of itself. By our definition, commitments caused by reputational issues are not subjective, unless one is also (and then subjectively) committed to upholding one's reputation. Analogously, individuals also have a subjective valuation of money, yet it would be nonsensical (or at least not useful) to say that an actor who engages in an action because he is paid to do so is subjectively committed to *that course of action* – at most, he might be subjectively committed to earning money. By the same token, in our terminology, an actor who is himself indifferent between two options, but selects one over the other because he knows that others will praise him for doing so,

is not subjectively committed to his choice but to the ensuing praise. Nonetheless, reputation is important for commitment. In Section 7.4, we will argue that reputation can play a significant role in all forms of commitment; this, however, depends on the role of third parties in a focal actor's commitments.

In pure subjective commitments, no externally generated costs befall the actor should the selected course of action subsequently be abandoned in favor of another option. We stress the *source* of costs here because subjective commitment does entail costs, but these arise internally, primarily in the form of aversive emotional states should the commitment be broken. In contrast, as we define it, *objective commitment* encompasses interactions with the external world that create a situation wherein the actor has narrowed the range of options, in that costs that are external to the actor will be incurred in the event of a subsequent change of course. The case of the third suicide bomber in our opening example illustrates the external nature of such costs: once the videotape has been made, the bomber's own attitude toward the terrorist plan becomes far less relevant to the costs that he will suffer if he fails to carry it out – were he to back out, dissemination of the videotape would ensure the ostracism of him and his family. Note that for objective commitment to obtain, it is crucial that the actor voluntarily takes steps that change the costs of alternative courses of action. If such changes are the product of events not involving the actor's own actions, then the term "commitment" does not apply, e.g., when robbed at gunpoint, the victim is coerced, not committed, to handing over his wallet.

Neither subjective or objective commitment necessarily requires the other form in order to ensure that commitment is successful (i.e., that the selected course of action is followed to its conclusion). *Strong* subjective commitment requires no objective commitment because the actor's current ranking of the relative desirability of the various courses of actions is wholly predictive of the actor's future rankings: In strong subjective commitment the valuation of one option over others does not change over time, the course of action selected is pursued to its completion without fail. For example, our second hypothetical suicide bomber may be so firm in his belief in the moral rectitude of his cause, and so unwavering in his hatred of his foe, that neither concern for himself, empathy for his victims, nor obstacles in his way will lead him to abandon his plans. Conversely, strong objective commitment requires no subjective commitment because the alternative courses of action have been made prohibitively expensive (or, in some cases, eliminated entirely). For example, in order to protect themselves from security forces, some terrorist organizations make it difficult, or even fatal, to leave the organization once one has joined, thereby substantially obviating the need for unwavering ideological or emotional motives (see Crenshaw, 1987; Miller, 2006).

In all objective commitments, the act of choosing alters the cost/benefit ratios, or availability, of the various courses of action. The same is not true of many forms of subjective commitment, as, much of the time, there is no feedback from the course of action to the emotions and values that motivated the choice. However, a subclass of subjective commitments involves selecting a course of action that, by virtue of its inherent subsequent effects on the actor, generates secondary subjective motivations that reinforce the original hierarchy of preferences. For example, an individual who wishes to reduce his salt intake for health reasons will, if he adheres to a low-sodium diet, find that his appetite for salt eventually diminishes, making his new diet more palatable than his old diet. Likewise, a teenager who wishes to overcome the aversive aspects of cigarette smoking in order to appear fashionable will, if she smokes consistently, become chemically dependent on nicotine. Mere habit may also offer mild forms of secondary subjective reinforcers: Following practices that have become habitual requires less concentration than deviating from them. Nevertheless, as centuries of discussions in philosophy and theology attest, many of the most important manifestations of subjective commitment lack such secondary subjective reinforcers – when discussing sexual fidelity, courage in battle, and similar challenges, observers have long understood that it is precisely because the relative attractiveness of the alternative, un-chosen options remains unaltered (or even increases) after one has chosen to commit that strong forms of subjective commitment are often needed to fulfill the selected course of action. One partial solution to this challenge is to augment the initial choice with secondary choices, as discussed below.

7.3 Commitment Devices

In some circumstances, once a course of action has been selected from among the available options, provided that the option takes some time to be completed, it is possible to then additionally select a second course of action, unrelated to the first, that serves to increase the probability that the commitment will be successful. We define a *commitment device* as any action that is taken with the intention of increasing the probability that a commitment will be successful. Both subjective and objective commitment can be boosted by commitment devices.

Actors can seek to maintain subjective commitment by structuring their environment in a manner that reinforces or re-generates the initial motivation to

commit. For example, after being demoted for drinking on the job, an alcoholic may be subjectively committed to giving up alcohol. However, anticipating that the shame and regret undergirding this commitment will fade over time, while the pain of alcohol withdrawal will increase, the alcoholic may seek to maintain his subjective commitment by posting a copy of his demotion letter on his wall, thereby re-eliciting the subjective state that led to his decision. We suggest that commitment devices are quite common. Religious symbols and icons displayed in the home evoke feelings of piety and reinforce the choice to forgo temptation; photos of loved ones, lockets, and similar reminders are akin to minor emotional spark plugs, reinvigorating dedication to the goal of benefiting the depicted individuals (e.g. Gonzaga, Haselton, Smurda, Davies, & Poore, 2008); and so on.

As is true with regard to subjective commitment, commitment devices are not an intrinsic part of objective commitment. Some choices are themselves costly or impossible to reverse, hence taking them objectively commits the actor to pursuing the chosen action. For example, as noted earlier, in some terrorist or criminal organizations, once one has joined the organization, subsequent options are limited to a choice between continued membership and death.

Nevertheless, commitment devices can also bolster objective commitment. For example, being committed to raising awareness for a certain cause involves objective commitment, as the act of rallying for the environment generates reputational costs if the actor changes camp at some later date. However, for every additional public action to the benefit of the cause, one creates an objective commitment, as this commitment device increases the reputational cost of changing sides.

7.4 Social facets of commitment

7.4.1 Investment

Neither subjective commitment, nor objective commitment intrinsically requires interaction with other parties. For example, suicide can be pursued in isolation by simply stopping the consumption of food and drink (a process involving subjective commitment, as both the opportunity to change course and the attractiveness of alternatives continue to exist until the process is completed) or jumping off a precipice (a process involving objective commitment, as other options simply

evaporate once the action is begun). However, social interaction is usually a part of commitment. Interesting complications develop when a social component occurs, as social interaction in the context of commitment raises two distinct classes of issues, namely investment and communication.

Social interactions can function as commitment devices, or as investments in other's commitments.

Because social interactions are themselves powerful elicitors of emotions, social interactions can strengthen the emotional underpinnings of subjective commitment. Similarly, because we are prone to both imitate prestigious individuals and conform to the ideas held by a majority of the members of our group, others can have a strong influence on an actor's values. As a consequence of these and similar phenomena, social interactions can reinforce the hierarchy of preferences at the heart of subjective commitment. Together, these effects allow certain forms of social interaction to serve as commitment devices for subjective commitment. For example, our aforementioned alcoholic may join a self-help support group in which he is encouraged to revisit his shameful past failures, is provided with extensive input regarding the value of abstention, and is placed in relationships with successful role models. In this case, the members of the support group cooperate with the focal individual in order to help him fulfill his commitment. Resembling the manner in which objects can help sustain subjective commitment, the support group can operate as a subjective commitment device.

Social interactions can also be a powerful source of commitment devices in objective commitments, as interactions can be used to change the cost or availability of alternative courses of action. In some cases, others are directed to enact a commitment device on behalf of the actor, as when Odysseus instructed his crew to first tie him to the mast of their vessel, then ignore his subsequent orders until they had sailed beyond the point where he would be able to hear the Sirens' seductive songs. In other cases, others are themselves the source of some of the costs and benefits of various courses of action, such that they are part and parcel of the commitment device. For example, publicly swearing an oath or issuing a promise creates a context wherein failing to adhere to the selected course of action entails reputational costs that increase the incentive to adhere to the commitment.

This already shows that certain institutional services can have a mediating effect on living in accord with the values one is committed to. Overly repressive reactions to recreational drug use, for example cutting in subsidized rehabilitation programs in favor of repression and criminalization, will not do well for a drug user caught in flagrante delicto. Then again, repression might scare and discourage adventurous individuals from trying drugs in the first place.

Whenever others play a role in commitment devices, they pay some cost in doing so, even if, in the minimal case, it is only time and attention. This raises the question

of why others are willing to pay such costs. In some cases, others are subject to larger contracts that encompass the given interaction – payroll officers are *paid* to manage payrolls; Odysseus' crew was obliged to follow his orders; doctors are paid to visit patients; and so on. In other cases, despite the absence of a larger contract, other parties participate in a non-symmetrical and non-reciprocal manner. For example, in the oath-swearing case, reputational factors are at stake precisely because observers benefit from knowing whether the focal actor is the sort of person who adheres to oaths, cares about others' opinions, and so on, information that is useful to the observers because they can then employ it in making decisions regarding possible relationships with the focal actor. In still other cases, participation is a non-symmetrical reciprocal act; for example, in Alcoholics Anonymous, it is believed that an experienced sponsor benefits by mentoring a new member, as mentoring purportedly assists the sponsor in his own pursuit of sobriety. Most interesting, perhaps, are those cases in which participation is a symmetrical reciprocal act, i.e., all parties are in pursuit of the same objective, and they each generate a commitment device for the other. For example, rotating savings and credit associations (ROSCAs) are a mechanism that, among other functions, provides reciprocal social commitment devices that generate objective commitment to save up lump sums. In a common variant of this institution, at scheduled intervals, each member contributes a fixed amount to a pool, and the pooled funds are given to a single member at each meeting; this cycle is repeated until all members have received the pool one time. Once an individual has joined a ROSCA group, she is objectively committed to adhering to the contribution schedule, as failing to do so will elicit the wrath of those pool recipients whose proceeds would thereby ultimately be less than their net contributions. Although the respective roles are sequential rather than simultaneous, these social commitment devices are relatively symmetrical: Due to simple self-interest, each member is motivated to perform the role of enforcer for each of the other members (Fessler, 2002). This symmetry means that the system can be self-sustaining: It does not rely on any additional benefits to ensure that actors are willing to pay the costs of enacting commitment devices for one another.

The recognition that enacting commitment devices for others entails investment can focus researchers' attention on the benefits that those who serve in such a capacity reap. The higher the costs, the greater the benefits must be if the commitment device is to be reliably enacted. Given this, reciprocal symmetrical arrangements such as ROSCAs in which each party performs the same function for the other will often be among the most stable such systems.

However, as attentive readers may have noticed, costs and benefits do not need to coincide in time. This creates the possibility of defection: A focal actor may claim to commit to a certain action but then change her behavior as soon as third parties

have invested. In the next section, we turn to the question of when signals of commitment are reliable versus when defection is likely.

7.4.2 Communication and reliability

The communicative aspect of commitment has long played a central role in scholarly treatments of the topic (e.g., Schelling, 1960). In both situations involving conflict (*ibid.*) and situations involving cooperation (Hirshleifer, 1987), the optimal course of action by one party is often contingent on the course of action selected by the other party. In such contexts, commitment is frequently conceptualized as a pledge that is communicated by one party, with the *intention of influencing the behavior of the other party* (Schelling, 2001, p. 48; Hirshleifer, 1987; Nesse, 2001). A signaled commitment is a threat if the signaler pledges to do something at a cost to himself that inflicts a cost on the adversary. The intention is to change the adversary's behavior in a way that will be beneficial to the signaler. At the same time, the adversary's new behavior will also be more beneficial to the adversary in light of the possibility that the threat will be carried out. For example, during an armed robbery, the robber threatens to shoot the victim if he does not hand over his wallet. Shooting is bad for the victim but also bad for the robber, who faces harsher punishment if caught. Before the threat, handing over his wallet would not be in the victim's interest. When threatened, it becomes in the victim's interest to hand over his wallet. However, it also becomes in the thief's interest that the victim do so because carrying out the threat (shooting) is costly to the thief. Conversely, a signaled commitment is a promise if the signaler pledges to do something at a cost to himself that will provide a benefit to the other party. The intention is again to regulate the other party's behavior such that it is beneficial to the signaler. At the same time, the partner's new behavior will also be more beneficial to the partner in the event that the promise is kept. As the examples suggest, threats occur primarily in cases of conflict, while promises are common in cases of cooperation.

Threats and promises are members of a larger class of signals describing purported future actions by the signaler; those inform the recipient about its optimal choice among the available courses of action. In deciding whether to act on such signals, recipients must, however, consider the signal's reliability, where reliability has to do with the accuracy of the forecast that the signal provides concerning the signaler's future behavior. As we have seen, regulating behavior contingent on a signal of commitment is beneficial only if the threat would otherwise be followed through to completion; regulating behavior contingent on a promise is beneficial only if the promise is followed through to completion.

But how can the recipient be certain that the signal of commitment is reliable? In the robbery example, shooting is very costly to the robber, so he would do well to avoid it, while the victim, knowing this, would do well to keep his wallet if the threat is, in fact, an empty one. Among the factors that influence the reliability of signals of commitment (and hence their impact on recipients' behavior) the distinction between subjective and objective commitment plays a central role.

Subjective commitments can certainly be powerful determinants of behavior. Consider, for example, that the evolved psychological systems that motivate eating and drinking markedly increase the attractiveness of these behaviors as the period of deprivation progresses, yet subjectively committed hunger strikers nonetheless sometimes fulfill their threats by fasting to death in pursuit of political objectives. Nevertheless, despite such dramatic examples of the powerful and enduring nature of some subjective commitments, recipients of signals of subjective commitment face the problem that such signals can be unreliable for two reasons. First, if the focal actor's internal motivators change between the time of the signal and the time of the behavior of interest to the recipient, then the signal will inaccurately forecast the behavior. The fact that today someone is passionately in love, or fervently dedicated to a political cause, does not preclude the possibility that they will not be so tomorrow, or next year – people 'fall out of' love, become disillusioned with causes, substitute new beliefs and values for old ones, and so on. Second, the focal actor may seek to deceive the recipient in order to manipulate the recipient's subsequent actions.

As prior investigators (e.g., Frank, 1988) have noted, signals associated with subjective commitment afford deceptive manipulation. By virtue of the fact that the determinants of the focal actor's commitment are internal, they cannot be directly observed by the recipient of the signal. As a consequence, it will often be relatively simple for the focal actor to send signals that falsely convey the nature or degree of the commitment – declarations of love or political dedication are unreliable because it is relatively easy to lie about one's emotions and values. In the abstract, there is no intrinsic connection between sentiments and statements, hence recipients of statements of subjective commitment are often rightly skeptical of them. And yet, subjective commitment is an undeniably real phenomenon. Seeking to explain the ultimate functions of subjective commitment, a number of investigators have asked how subjective commitment might nonetheless lead to signals of sufficient reliability.

Hirshleifer (1987) and Frank (1987; 1988) promulgated versions of what has become an influential theory of subjective commitment wherein many emotions are described as evolved mechanisms that not only generate subjective commitment, but, moreover, signal to other parties by virtue of costly voluntary acts. Around the same time, Gauthier (1986) proposed a somewhat parallel account of internalized

moral norms. Hirshleifer, Frank, and Gauthier all propose that witnessing acts that have some cost attached to them, particularly when numerous and distributed over a prolonged period, leads the observer to accurately infer the dispositional nature of the focal actor, i.e., to discern that actor's chronologically stable hierarchy of preferences. In other words, through repeated actions, the actor establishes a *reputation* that accurately captures his enduring propensities.

Such accounts hold that the honesty of the signal is maintained through budgetary constraints, cognitive constraints, or both. What do we mean by this? Turning first to budgetary constraints, it is claimed that the larger the number of signals emitted, the greater the costs of employing a deceptive strategy. Habitually acting in a manner consistent with a given disposition is therefore claimed to provide a reliable index of that disposition to long-term observers. However, as illustrated by the case of spies and sleeper cells, if the benefits are great enough, it will be worth paying substantial costs to repeatedly emit false signals. Moreover, even in cases that do not involve malice aforethought, at the time that an opportunity for substantial gain through defection occurs, past signaling costs are already sunk, hence, from a cost/benefit perspective, the only logical consideration is whether the costs of the reputational damage caused by defection, outweigh the benefits of defection. If the benefits of defection are sufficiently large so as to outweigh the reputational costs, it is economically rational to defect. In short, cost/benefit considerations suggest that, while many past acts of accurate signaling may well predict future instances when costs are low, there is no inherent strategic impetus for continued consistency when opportunities for substantial gain through defection present themselves. This means that, while the mechanisms that underlie much of subjective commitment (e.g., moral emotions such as guilt, shame or loyalty) may well have evolved in part because they reliably indicated future actions and thus persuaded recipients of the focal actor's trustworthiness, such mechanisms will often not suffice in high-stake situations.

Turning to cognitive constraints, a second tenet of Frank's (1987; 1988) position is that the reliability of repeated observations of signals derives in part from the greater cognitive demands of deception, relative to honesty. Because sustained pretense is more cognitively taxing than acting in a manner that accurately reflects one's motives, multiple observations over prolonged periods will reveal the reliability of a focal actor's signals, as a manipulative actor will make occasional mistakes that reveal the underlying misrepresentation. While evidence continues to accumulate that deception is indeed more cognitively demanding than honesty (e.g., Walczyk et al., 2009), this argument nonetheless suffers from limitations similar to those that weaken the budgetary reasoning discussed above. First, we can expect cognitive resources to be marshaled in proportion to the importance of the task at hand. In pursuit of substantial benefits through long-term deception, spies

and sleeper cells succeed at manipulating others in part through rehearsal and memorization, practices that, while costly, are worth the price given the benefits at issue. Second, all such considerations apply primarily to cases of malice aforethought, and are less relevant to decision making at the time that a new opportunity for substantial gains through defection presents itself. Overall, the observation that deception is sufficiently common - such that it apparently selected for evolved mechanisms for detecting cheaters (Cosmides & Tooby, 2005; Verplaetse, Vanneste, & Braeckman, 2007) - suggests that, over evolutionary time, cognitive constraints have often not been prohibitive when it really matters. In sum, while existing signaling accounts of emotions and morality may shed light on contributors to subjective commitment, they do not resolve the problem of the fundamentally unreliable nature of signals of subjective commitment.

In contrast to signals associated with subjective commitments, objective commitments are maintained by factors that are external to the individual. As a consequence, observers will often be able to more directly discern the determinants of the focal actor's actions, thus increasing their ability to forecast the focal actor's future behavior. Of course, signals associated with objective commitment are not entirely immune to deceptive manipulation. Focal actors can falsely create the impression that such external factors exist when they do not. For example, Kahn (1965, p. 11) gives the example of winning the drivers' game of chicken by removing the steering wheel and conspicuously throwing it out the window. This signals that one cannot move out of the way, thus motivating the opponent to move out of the way first. However, these actions are potentially subject to deception, as the thrown wheel may not, in fact, be the steering wheel from the given car, the focal actor may have a secondary means of steering (such as a smaller steering wheel not visible to the opponent), and so on (Kurzban, pers. comm.). Nonetheless, while both subjective and objective commitment signals are amenable to deception, signals associated with objective commitment can more readily be subjected to systematic scrutiny, thus increasing their reliability. As a consequence, we may expect objective commitments to have a stronger effect on others' behavior.

A key factor influencing the ability of observers to forecast the behavior of focal actors in situations of objective commitment is the extent of the costs underlying the given commitment. If alternative courses of action have not been eliminated, then signals associated with objective commitments are only as reliable as the size of the costs attending alternative courses of action, as this predicts the likelihood that the focal actor will not subsequently change course - when the costs are low, objective commitment is weak, i.e., the actor may subsequently decide that the costs are worth paying, and alter course accordingly. However, once again, observers will have greater access to this information than is true in subjective commitment, and

hence signals referencing this information will be more reliable than is often the case with regard to subjective commitment.

This does not mean that, in cases in which no deception is involved and the costs of alternative courses of action are high, forecasts based on signals associated with objective commitment are perfect. With the exception of those objective commitments in which alternative courses of action have been irreversibly eliminated, it is possible that external costs and benefits will change before the fulfillment of the course of action, whereafter the focal actor's behavior may then change accordingly. However, particularly when compared with the fluctuations of emotions and values, many features of the world may be quite stable. More importantly, even when they are not stable, their change can be observed in ways that internal states cannot. Correspondingly, particularly in stable environments, observers can be expected to have greater confidence in forecasts associated with objective commitment than in those associated with subjective commitment.

Taken together, the above considerations indicate that, while caveats apply, signals associated with subjective commitment will generally be less reliable than signals associated with objective commitment. The focal actor motivated by subjective commitment who stands to benefit from signaling her commitment to others therefore faces the dilemma that, being unreliable, such signals will likely not have sufficient effect on others' actions. A partial solution is to create an observable commitment device that reinforces subjective commitment, as knowledge of this device can provide some reassurance to observers. For example, our aforementioned demoted alcoholic might document for his employer that he has joined Alcoholics Anonymous. However, because commitment devices of this type merely enhance subjective commitment, signals associated with them still suffer from the problems of reliability intrinsic to subjective commitment itself. Because of the fundamental asymmetry in reliability between subjective and objective commitments, a focal actor motivated by subjective commitment who wishes to substantially increase her ability to influence observers will therefore often be best served by initiating parallel objective commitments through the use of commitment devices.

Consider the problem of marriage. A substantial corpus of literature supports the assertion that, consonant with the central role of reproduction in natural selection, much of contemporary human behavior in this domain reflects the workings of evolved psychological mechanisms (for a review, see Sefcek, Brumbach, Vasquez, & Miller, 2006). Viewed in evolutionary terms, heterosexual courtship presents a prototypical signaling dilemma of the type described above. For women, a committed male partner affords substantial fitness benefits through provisioning, co-parenting, and protection. However, women face a signaling problem: Men who wish to pursue a high-investment strategy run the risk that their partners will be

surreptitiously unfaithful, leading these men to miss-allocate their investment by provisioning another man's progeny. A woman who seeks to secure a high-investing partner therefore profits by signaling that she will be faithful to her prospective husband. However, given the benefits to women of securing investment from one man and genes from another (reviewed in Pillsworth & Haselton, 2006), men, in turn, should be skeptical of women's declarations of subjective commitment. Elizabeth Pillsworth and Robert Kurzban (pers. comm.) have each proposed that limerence, the form of romantic love motivating sincere courtship (Tennov, 1979), impels the actor to conspicuously and consistently spurn alternative suitors, thereby generating observable objective commitment by narrowing the options available to the woman. Once a woman has a child by a man, the costs to her of being abandoned by her mate increase. These costs then create an objective commitment in the woman to being faithful.

Now, consider the same situation from the perspective of a male suitor. Because the obligate biological costs of reproduction are low for men, men have the option of pursuing either a long term strategy (one or a few partners in whom much is invested) or a short term strategy (many partners in whom little is invested). As a consequence, women should be skeptical of men's declarations of subjective commitment in this regard, as some purported dads are likely to be deceptive cads. Because provisioning loomed large among the benefits that men provided to women and their children in ancestral populations, and hence plays a central role in mating psychology today, one solution available to the male suitor is to provide initial gifts that are sufficiently substantial as to constitute an objective commitment. American folk culture specifies that the man should give the woman a diamond engagement ring and, importantly, it should cost 25% of his annual salary; this is to be followed later by a similarly-priced wedding ring. Because the gifts become the property of the recipient (i.e., the man cannot subsequently retrieve the rings), these practices constitute sequential additive objective commitment devices (Sozou & Seymour, 2005; see also Brinig, 1990) – due to the financial constraints involved, the farther down the path to the altar that the man proceeds, the less feasible it becomes for him to alter course and seek to woo another woman. Lastly, although engagement and wedding rings are a culturally and historically parochial invention, the institution of requiring male suitors to provide a substantial up-front payment is not unique to modern nations, occurring in two-thirds of societies (Anderson, 2007). Bride wealth or bride service (providing labor, rather than wealth, to the bride's family) occur in almost half of extant foraging societies (Apostolou, 2008). Dowries on the other hand, where parents provide payment to a man when he is to marry their daughter, are found only in a small fraction of the world's societies (see Anderson, 2007), 2.44% according to Apostolou (2008). Moreover, they have a different function than bride wealth: Dowries are associated with social

stratification wherein parents are able to move up the social hierarchy by providing inducements for higher-status men to marry their daughters (Anderson, 2007).

7.5 The role of institutions in commitment

Many classes of public behaviors can act as objective commitments or as commitment devices. Once the chosen course of action has been broadcast, deviation from that course can entail reputational costs. However, this is not the only avenue whereby public behaviors can play a role in commitment. When individuals take on a *social role* associated with obligations or responsibilities, failure to properly perform that role may lead to active *punishment* by other parties.

What public acts belong to a specific role is culturally defined. For example, in regard to the case mentioned in the introduction, the role of “living martyr,” the final stage of preparation for a suicide bombing mission, has been highly codified among Palestinian terrorist organizations, and the testimonial video shot during this phase is likewise culturally dictated, with standardized props and set phrases being employed (see Moghadam, 2003). Performing the prescribed actions that will serve to publicize one’s status as martyr generates powerful objective commitment; this in turn bolsters or rekindles subjective commitment (Sosis & Alcorta, 2008). Importantly, such practices are neither limited to rare or malicious behaviors such as suicidal terrorism. For example, in the cultures in which they occur, engagement, wedding rings and formal marriage ceremonies serve the dual purpose of publicizing the commitments at issue and linking them to a widely-shared set of cultural pre- and proscriptions. This linkage increases the likelihood that failure to adhere to cultural strictures will elicit punishment. In turn, because prospective punishers decide whether or not to punish in part based on the likelihood that others will punish, reducing ambiguity as to the acceptability of any given act increases the likelihood that a given prospective punisher will punish (see DeScioli & Kurzban, 2009; Boyd, Gintis, & Bowles, 2010). Thus, punishment is more likely when all participants in a culture interpret a public act, its expectations, and its ensuing obligations in the same way. By formalizing the public acts whereby roles are assumed, culture thus provides actors with powerful objective commitment devices that allow them to reliably signal their commitments and future actions to other parties.

It appears that all societies employ institutionalized practices to formalize and publicize commitments, generating objective commitment. In particular, oaths and similar formal pledges or promises appear to be a human universal (Brown, 1991). Oaths can serve as objective commitment devices via a variety of pathways. Although the degree varies across instances, all oaths and promises are attended by norms of sanctity, such that violating them constitutes a moral failing above and beyond mere dishonesty, inconsistency, or hypocrisy. As such, these acts attach substantial additional costs to deviation from the selected course of action. Indeed, oaths often contain within them an invocation of external costs should the oath be violated. A common variant of this is to appeal to supernatural agents or forces as sanctioners, as in "...may God strike me dead," or "...cross my heart and hope to die." Supernaturalism is not mandatory, however, and some oaths even contain within them an explicit social contract empowering others to enforce the oath, as in the initiation vow of the Nuestra Familia prison gang in California: "If I go forward, follow me; if I hesitate, push me; if they kill me, avenge me; if I am a traitor, kill me" (quoted in Phelan & Hunt, 1998).

Thus, culturally-constituted practices may generate objective commitment to a group. However, the assumed role may be publicized not only to members of the in-group, but also to members of out-groups. For example, some of the most powerful rites binding a new member to a group involve permanent body modification. Such advertisements of affiliation can constitute objective commitment devices as, in the event of intergroup hostility or discrimination, emblematic body modification that identifies group identity will elicit hostility from out-group members. Practices such as ritual surgical modification and scarification are more common in groups that engage in intergroup warfare than in peaceful groups or those that engage in intragroup conflict, a pattern explicable in terms of the need for warlike groups to bind their members to the group in order to prevent freeriding (Sosis, Kress, & Boster, 2007). Similarly, in the U.S., prison gangs such as Nuestra Familia are engaged in endemic violent conflict; these gangs employ a graded system of tattooing wherein the more visible the tattoo, the greater the perceived dedication to, and hence status within, the group (Phelan & Hunt, 1998). This is clearly a product of the levels of objective commitment generated by different tattoos, as, for example, individuals tattooed on the face and neck cannot pass as non-members of the gang, hence neutrality is impossible during intergroup conflicts.

7.6 Commitment and gene-culture co-evolution

As previous commentators have noted at length (Hirshleifer, 1987; Frank, 1987, 1988), objective commitment can be used to increase cooperation in a wide variety of domains, as each party can be confident that, due to the increases in the cost of defection entailed by the given objective commitment, the other party will cooperate. Importantly, while people occasionally invent novel objective commitment devices to facilitate cooperation, concordant with their linkage with both culturally-defined roles and reputation and punishment, this objective is usually achieved through existing culturally-defined practices. That such institutions are frequently available precisely in those contexts in which they are most useful is explicable in terms of cultural group selection. Consider the case of body modification discussed above. Intergroup conflict is an important source of selective pressure in cultural evolution, as groups that can successfully solve the free-rider problem can marshal larger and more cohesive combat forces than those that cannot, leading the former to decimate, or conquer and assimilate, the latter (Boyd & Richerson, 2009). Moreover, while dramatic, the case of intergroup conflict is not unique. Because groups characterized by higher rates of cooperation will be more prosperous, more stable, and more competitive than groups characterized by lower rates, cultural group selection can be expected to favor the cultural evolution of a wide variety of institutionalized practices that support cooperation (Boyd & Richerson, 2009). This principle is nicely illustrated in Kanter's (1968) study of utopian communities, in which community longevity is shown to be correlated with both the contribution of all private assets to the common pool and the public renunciation of outside social ties upon initiation. These two measures objectively narrow alternative courses of action for all parties. The magnitude of the cost, together with the group-wide nature of the measure, increase dedication to, and cooperation within, the collective, as all parties know that the others are subject to the same objective commitments.

Noting that longstanding patterns of cultural practice can generate selective pressure for the biological evolution of traits that enhance fitness in such cultural environments, Richerson and Boyd (2001; Boyd & Richerson, 2009) argue that institutions supporting cooperation and collective action have co-evolved with psychological propensities that undergird subjective commitment to groups. We concur, noting that many institutions appear exquisitely well designed to bolster subjective commitment and, correspondingly, humans seem markedly susceptible to such practices. Indeed, Kanter's (1968) study also revealed that the longevity of utopian groups is positively related to the presence of ideologies and rituals that

involve the diminution of autonomy and surrender to the collective, practices that, in even more extreme form, are found among terrorist organizations (reviewed in Atran, 2003, and Moghadam, 2003), and, in less extreme form, are readily observed in the ceremonies of all major religions, the folk rituals practiced at professional and collegiate sporting events, and so on. Nevertheless, much as we agree with Richerson and Boyd in this regard, as our earlier example of engagement rings implies, we wish to carry their position one step further. We suggest that the psychological features responsible for many kinds of commitment, and not merely commitment to groups, have co-evolved with diverse cultural practices that shape commitment. We thus hypothesize that actors are innately prepared to recognize (albeit not always explicitly) the affordances that cultural practices offer as commitment devices, including opportunities to employ institutionalized commitment devices that both add an objective component to subjective commitment and provide other parties with a reliable signal whereby they can forecast the focal actor's future behavior.

The above hypothesis has two entailments, one cognitive/behavioral, the other affective. First, people will seize upon culturally-provided means to solve both the personal and the social aspects of commitment problems. For example, Brinig (1990) has compellingly demonstrated that, although the institution of the engagement ring had existed in some form for centuries, the practice only became widespread (and, eventually, highly normative) in the U.S. following the repeal of breach of promise-to-marry laws in the first half of the twentieth century. These laws had allowed a woman to sue a man for substantial sums if he broke off their engagement, with additional compensation awarded in the event that she had lost her virginity with him during that period (as was fairly common at the time). This legal recourse for women created an objective commitment for men who proposed marriage. As a consequence, women enjoyed increased certainty that proposals would be followed by marriage. When legislatures repealed these laws, both skeptical women and their sincere suitors were left without an institutionalized objective commitment device to solve their cooperation problem. Engagement rings, already known but not widely employed, provided a solution, and a previously rare behavior rapidly became common. Moreover, rings provided affordances absent from breach of promise laws, as wearing the ring signals to a woman's other potential suitors that she is no longer available. Accordingly, confidence that his partner will display the ring in public (e.g., because she has elected to size the ring such that it cannot readily be removed) provides additional reassurance to a man that she will be faithful. The ring can enhance a woman's own efforts at reliable signaling via an objective commitment device. Our point here is that individual commitment psychology and culture work together. On the one hand, cultural practices provide standardized mechanisms for solving cooperative

commitment problems, and, on the other hand, such practices are refined and transmitted in part due to individuals' propensities to recognize the relative utility in this regard of different practices.

The second entailment of our gene-culture co-evolutionary account is our claim that humans are unique in that, living within a culturally-constituted reality, they experience an intimate feedback between subjective commitment and culturally-shaped objective commitment. In our view, participants in cultural practices that generate objective commitment are often deeply moved by those practices precisely because they recognize the objective commitment aspect, and thus understand that their participation provides a reliable signal to others. We expect, for example, that the intensity of the sentiments experienced by a bride and groom at their wedding will increase with the size of the audience and the degree to which the wedding conforms to cultural templates. The same will be true of the allegiance of a suicide bomber to his cause, the devotion of an initiate to his group at an initiation, or the dedication of an oath-taker to the principles espoused in her oath. This is because, as discussed previously, audience size and cultural standardization are determinants of the degree of objective commitment. We propose that the mental mechanisms that generate subjective commitment are sensitive to the extent to which recipients of signals concerning the focal actor's future behavior can accept those signals as reliable – when subjective commitment leads to objective commitment, the focal actor experiences intense emotions in part because she knows that both she and others can be confident that her future path is laid.

In sum, we suggest that, while nonhuman animals likely experience subjective commitment of sorts (Dugatkin, 2001), and certainly recognize the external factors that generate objective commitment, unlike humans, they are not psychologically equipped to recognize how socially transmitted practices can translate subjective commitments into objective commitments, nor are they able to experience an enhancement of subjective commitments through the enactment of cultural commitment devices. Consonant with the highly cooperative nature of our species, humans possess an evolved psychology and a corresponding cultural repertoire that allows us to engage in commitment to a degree unprecedented in evolutionary history.

7.7 Relation with relativism

We have exemplified the role of institutions and, more generally, the role of social facets of commitment in supporting a focal individual's commitments. The possibility of being committed to a certain enduring value can be greatly promoted or greatly constrained by the social environment. If an enduring value is recognized as a public role in a society, and regulates the behavior of the audience, others are more likely to punish one for not living up to one's values. When chosen lifestyles are not publicly recognized and interwoven with other cultural habits, we would predict them to be harder to follow.

This has practical consequences for toleration and relativizing moral judgments. First of all, our discussion of commitment clarifies why living one's values requires more than non-interference on behalf of others. Merely relativizing or tolerating a certain moral decision that is beyond discussion, for example vows of celibacy, monogamy, not eating meat, wearing a headscarf etc., is not optimal in the eyes of the individual committed to these practices. A subjectively committed individual will predict to be tempted from time to time. It is therefore reasonable for the committed actor to desire an enabling and punitive attitude from others towards not wearing scarfs, promiscuity, etc. Mere non-interference may thus be counterproductive to one's chosen lifestyle, even if there is no direct interaction between your and others' behavior.

Moreover, commitments often work in the context of communication and interaction. One can be committed to monogamy, provided that one's partner is as well. Women dressing modestly are committed to not showing off their bodies to prospective suitors; this is only fair in those communities where others do not show off either. In many cases, different lifestyles come down to different rules of the game, and the committed individual may perceive others as cheaters to their game. It is thus inherent to one's commitments that other morals are being condemned instead of relativized. In the case of a monogamous relationship, one's value of monogamy is not a personal value, it expands to a prescription for one's partner. In the case of headscarfs, one's value of modesty is not merely personal but extends to all women fishing in the same pool of possible marriage partners. Thus, the issue of commitment makes clear that there are good reasons to condemn others as opposed to merely sticking to one's own values, simply because many values require an enabling social environment.

The issue of commitment may shed new light on the problem of confidence. We have seen in chapter four that some philosophers (e.g., Wong, 2006; Hales, 2009) suggested that what one is required to do depends on the kind of person one is. This

stands in contrast with the fear that relativism will lead to indecisiveness. If all actions can be right, all options seem to be equally good. However, once a specific commitment is embedded in a recognized cultural practice, this problem may disappear. Many public and culturally recognized actions create expectations in others, who will change their behavior accordingly. Commitment shows us that one has good reason to stay faithful to one's values, at least when these values entail social expectations.

However, objective commitment can also be very restricting, to the point where we may ask if it still serves the purpose of fulfilling one's ideals. Ideologies have lured many individuals to subscribe to severe objective commitments. One can think of former communist nations, where politicians created a political system and installed security measures such that the system could not be overthrown. However, people's values and subjective commitments may change, or one may decide that certain commitments were wrong after all. If one's installed security measures are very efficient, it may have become impossible or very dangerous to change strategy. More than one communist party member (for example Imre Lakatos), upon deciding to stop being politically active, had to flee the region altogether. Thus, even upon 'discovering' one's supposedly ideal life goal, a moral truth, or the best political system ever, it is better to keep at least the possibility of opting out.

Commitment is thus an important tool, both for committed individuals and their social network. Since it requires coordination, it is an argument for constraining individualized life options and relativist moral requirements. However, it does not preclude the possibility of toleration and relativism between groups that do not substantially interact. It potentially diminishes the problem of confidence because our commitments create expectations in other individuals, and once a life path is chosen, we have good reason to keep to it. Commitment also shows us that we are capable of restricting our options to a great extent. Because the values of human beings (either individuals or the species) may change during a life course or due to circumstances, it is better to create an environment that allows for change in social institutions.

Chapter 8 Discussion and conclusions

8.1 Introduction

We kicked off this dissertation with the observation that different people hold to different moral views, and that, in some cases, we legitimate such moral diversity. We asked if, and when, we can reasonably and practically tolerate or legitimate apparently incompatible moral views. First, we made a detour via the importance of individual differences in moral cognition. For example, do they have an impact on social and philosophical questions or are they eclipsed by universal aspects of our moral nature? We then went on a quest for possible bases on which to resolve such moral disagreements, and could not find anything remotely resembling this holy grail. Allying with naturalistic ethicists, we found good reasons why some diversity in moral cognition has a normative status. That leaves us with the question if we can tolerate or accommodate and relativize this diversity. For example, is it possible to simply refrain from interfering with objectionable behavior or do we need to cultivate additional attitudes such as a relativist view on morals? Can we adopt a *laissez-faire* attitude or do we need to restrain others' behavior for the sake of social order and cohesion? How narrowly constrained by psychological and practical limits is the range of bearable diversity?

In order to solve these questions, we pledged our allegiance to naturalistic ethics. Naturalistic ethicists take seriously that most arguments are open to empirical investigation. As such, we adduced empirical findings in order to evaluate the issue of feasible and advisable reactions to moral disagreement, most notably aspects of accommodation and tolerance. Although much of the discussion does translate to empirical statements, this research is underexplored. We additionally conducted

This chapter is a revised version of Fessler D.M.T., and Quintelier K. (forthcoming). Suicide Bombers, Weddings, and Prison Tattoos. An Evolutionary Perspective on Subjective Commitment and Objective Commitment. In Richard Joyce, Kim Sterelny & Brett Calcott (Eds.), *Signaling, Commitment, and Emotion*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

our own empirical studies to further investigate if lay people can think of moral judgments as relative, and if so, what kind of relativism they can be committed to.

Previous research about individual differences in moral cognition focuses on descriptive and meta-ethical issues, such as the origin and extent of individual differences and implications for moral realism. Nowadays, these research topics are informed by empirical studies. At the same time, there is an extensive normative and political research tradition about the feasibility and desirability of practices and attitudes of toleration. These theories are usually less directly informed by empirical findings. We think this dissertation offers an original approach to the normative question of how to deal with fundamental moral disagreement, because it links this question with previous and new empirical research. We cannot offer grand answers to difficult questions such as when and how to tolerate, but we hope this dissertation at least convinces theoretical and empirical researchers to bundle strengths.

In this concluding chapter, we will defend the following circumspect conclusions:

- (1) Constraining ourselves by certain metaphysical and epistemic theories, we agree with previous authors that some moral disagreements are irresolvable, or, that there is fundamental moral disagreement. This conclusion provides the background for our next conclusions.
- (2) Quite likely, there are psychological and practical constraints to practices of toleration, but more empirical research is necessary in order to test philosophers' suggestions of tolerance-bolstering attitudes against reality.
- (3) Even if the attitude or the practice of accommodation is too demanding, relativizing one's moral judgments is an interesting possibility. Future empirical and theoretical research might therefore focus on comparing relativist attitudes towards moral disagreement with skeptical or universalist alternatives.
- (4) The concept of toleration presupposes a universalist attitude; it is therefore inapt when entertaining the possibility that relativist attitudes may bolster practices of toleration.

We will now discuss each conclusion in more detail.

8.2 Fundamental moral disagreement

Given the pattern and persistence of moral disagreement, it is likely that there are no universal moral facts that affect our moral judgments (Gustafsson & Peterson, 2010, online first). However, this does not mean that there are no moral facts; it might just be that we have not yet found the right method that gives access to universal moral facts. If only we find this method, we can resolve moral disagreements by reference to universal truth. Is this possible? Let us review certain proposals for moral truth and how they fare in solving disagreement.

It is common for evolutionary inspired moral psychologists to focus on so-called 'human universals', features that are fairly common in almost all cultures in the world, irrespective of their environment. Indeed, commonalities can be found, especially in the perceived moral importance of caring, empathy or harm and in the perceived moral importance of justice and fairness (e.g., Henrich et al., 2005; Robinson & Kurzban, 2007). Nonetheless, even when reasoning from an evolutionary perspective, we may expect to find individual and group differences in moral attitudes. First of all, different issues (e.g., foundations, see Haidt & Joseph, 2007) are deemed morally important by different people and prescriptions related to one foundation may conflict with prescriptions related to another foundation. It is repeatedly shown that different groups and different individuals prioritize these moral foundations differently: The most publicized difference is that liberals (in the U.S.A.) or left-wing voters (in the Netherlands) prioritize harm and justice while conservatives or right-wing voters assign relatively more importance to matters of purity, group loyalty and authority. Since such differences divide the political landscape, we may well say that they are socially relevant. Likewise, as illustrated in chapter two, evolved fitness strategies are found to relate to moral attitudes towards sex and recreational drug use, and in Belgium, the Netherlands, and the U.S.A., they correlate with religiosity and political orientation (see also Kurzban et al., 2010). This is in line with previous findings that comparative punishments of sex- and drugs-related transgressions elicit much more disagreement than similar rankings of desired punishments for harmful and unjust acts (Robinson & Kurzban, 2007). These and many other studies show that there are individual and group differences in moral attitudes, and that these differences can, in part, be explained by evolutionary theories. The origin of moral attitudes does not preclude the existence of good reasons for these views; however, these findings do suggest that such differences are not likely to be eradicated soon. On the contrary, they might repeat themselves in every generation. It is thus unlikely that we will come to agree on moral issues by digging deep in our nature.

Focusing on more proximate explanations of moral attitudes, we find that our everyday moral judgments are plausibly directly caused by affective intuitions that are outside our conscious control. We do give reasons for our moral judgments, and these reasons are under our conscious control. However, these reasons are most likely not the causes of everyday spontaneous moral judgments but rather post-hoc rationalizations. Importantly, certain individual differences in moral judgments have been found to relate to individual differences in affective intuitions. If we are not aware of the direct causes of our judgments, and individuals differ in these factors, we may well ask how we could ever influence our judgments in order to resolve moral disagreements.

Fortunately, this view is too grim. First of all, it is possible to reassess and adapt our moral judgments, and align them with the reasons we give and endorse (even if these reasons are confabulated after the fact). An influential philosophical tradition has reconciled the affective intuitionist model with philosophical theories of moral justification (Saunders, 2009; Daniels, 1996; see also Sie & Wouters, 2008; 2009, in the domain of moral responsibility). Their suggestions boil down to the claim that a moral judgment is justified (or correct, legitimate, ...) if it is in accordance with the reasons (a.k.a., post-hoc rationalizations) we come up with and endorse. We thus aim to hold our moral judgments in narrow reflective equilibrium (Rawls, 1975) with our more general reasons by adapting either our reasons or our judgments. This is possible: For example, we can adapt our affective intuitions by exposing ourselves to others' judgments or by imaginatively looking at the situation from different angles, thus aligning our affective intuitions with those of others or with our reasons. Even though this is a slow and laborious process, it opens up the possibility of resolving moral disagreements. We just need to reason our way through a moral argument until we reach agreement.

So far, so good, were it not that different people start with different affective intuitions, hold to different moral judgments *and* endorse different reasons. Graham and colleagues (2009) did not merely find affectively induced differences in moral judgments. They also asked participants which features of a situation they considered relevant in judging something good or bad. It appeared that conservatives hold that, e.g., the fact that something is unnatural, or disgusting, is morally relevant, while for liberals this is much less the case. Now, if different people start with different affective intuitions, they will end up with different narrowly equilibrated moral systems; therefore, not all moral disagreements can be resolved if we take this justification principle as the epistemic norm.

It appears that we need common ground to reason our way to agreement. Daniels (1996) discusses wide reflective equilibrium, wherein an objective aspect is introduced. In wide reflective equilibrium, we bring our reasons and judgments in accordance with all the relevant scientific theories, thus rejecting moral systems

that are not in accord with science. Nonetheless, the array of possible moral systems is underdetermined by scientific facts. Given the diversity in affective intuitions, different people will still end up with different moral systems if we use this procedure.

Certain naturalistic ethicists (viz., Casebeer, 2003b and Flanagan, Sarkissian, & Wong, 2008) defend a thick normative moral theory, making maximal use of knowledge about human nature. These authors start from what is considered valuable by human beings. This is not determined by what one desires, but rather by what one would desire if one was fully informed about human nature and the consequences of one's actions. Given a theory of human nature and this description of values, it is possible to fill in broad guidelines for what we should do. Both Casebeer (2003b) and Flanagan et al. (2008) focus on commonalities in our human nature instead of individual differences, thus guaranteeing a certain universality in values. We can adduce a naturalistic normative theory when equilibrating our moral systems. However, both acknowledge that different groups ought to do different things, because our environment shapes what is valuable for human beings. Thus, both Casebeer and Flanagan discuss environment-induced variation. In our view, these theories do not fully take into account that micro-environments, personality differences and evolved strategies may cause individual differences in what is valuable. In any case, naturalistic normative theories do not determine which moral system is best suited for each community; here also, the range of legitimate moral theories is underdetermined by data. In addition to the existence of group (and individual) differences in moral values, we still end up with moral disagreement: Even assuming that every individual adheres to the same naturalistic theory, we will still end up with different normative moral systems (though the variety might be greatly reduced if we all accept the same theory).

8.3 Toleration

We discussed two advisable reactions to moral disagreement: toleration and accommodation. Accommodation is put forward as an alternative to tolerance, but both fall prey to practical and psychological objections. In chapter four, we perused the empirical literature in an attempt to get a grip on psychological constraints of tolerance and accommodation. In chapters five and six, we tested the possibility of adequately relativizing our moral judgments, which is an aspect of accommodation.

Lastly, in chapter seven, we discussed possible practical constraints. Let us now trace our steps and evaluate our findings.

Toleration is most often understood as a reaction to what one legitimately objects to. However, toleration is deemed paradoxical and psychologically unstable because it “presupposes a complexity of two sentiments” (Fletcher, 1996, p. 158), namely an urge to interfere and an impulse to overcome that urge. Second, it begs the question what should be tolerated and what not. There are already two boundaries to toleration in virtue of its most common definition: “one the one hand, some things should not be tolerated, because they should not be permitted; on the other, some things should not be objected to, hence are not the appropriate objects of toleration” (Norton, 1996, p. 33). What kind of answers do philosophers suggest to the paradox of toleration and the question of the proper range of toleration? Are these suggestions possible to live by?

Following Williams (1996), we consider it useful to make a distinction between practices of toleration and tolerant attitudes. Both are usually taken to imply that we object to the tolerated behavior. For sake of clarity, we will speak of tolerance when we are merely talking about the attitude (moral judgment and behavior), and we will speak of toleration when we focus on the practice. We take toleration to range from non-interference over equal treatment to active defense of others’ rights. Non-interference means that one does not act restrictively towards those who act objectionably. However, this can be seen as insufficient. As numerous studies point out, even if we refrain from interfering, there are endless other possibilities in which one can subtly hinder other individuals from acting in accordance with their values (e.g., Lester & Roberts, 2009). Therefore, unconscious and structural discrimination should equally be eliminated if one is to speak of effective tolerance. In order to uphold political equality, it might even be necessary to stand up for others’ rights independently of their moral views. Respect is another possible aspect of toleration: here one treats others as moral and political equals and organizes a state in such a way that no specific ethical community is favored. As we will see below, toleration-bolstering attitudes are often put forward in order to enhance the possibility of toleration or in order to resolve the paradox of toleration.

Toleration is related to more than one paradox (see, e.g., Forst, 2007). We have focused on the psychological difficulty that arises when – due to objecting to the relevant behavior – one has an impulse to intervene and regulate the lives of others, while at the same time one accepts an imperative to restrain that impulse. This paradox has to be modified. In chapter two, we mentioned the distinction between condemnation and conscience. Certain moral attitudes and moral emotions are self-directed, such as concerns about ‘the good life’, guilt and shame. Other moral attitudes are directed to others’ behavior rather than one’s own (this might have been functional from an evolutionary or from a historical perspective, or it might

still be functional nowadays). In the case of personal values, it is an open question if moral objections (that are then self-directed) would still relate to an urge to interfere. Therefore, the paradox of toleration might hold for condemnation and not for conscience. We will see in Section 8.5 that this also points to the limits of the concept of toleration.

In any case, studies show that condemnation is related to aspects of intolerance. For example, psychologists have found that behavior that is deemed generalizably wrong is also deemed more deserving of punishment than behavior that is merely conventionally wrong (Smetana, 1981). Likewise, individuals dislike diversity in very intimate settings (Haidt et al., 2003; Wright et al., 2008). Participants have also been found to distribute a resource (raffle tickets) unfairly to those who hold different moral views (Wright et al., 2008). Thus, at first sight it seems that tolerance is a paradoxical notion because objection is related to interference, either in the form of self-reported desire for punishment or in the form of actual unfair behavior.

In order to overcome this urge to interfere, several authors suggest that we have to cultivate certain toleration-bolstering attitudes. Williams (1996) suggests that valuing autonomy is one possible basis of such attitudes. The virtue of toleration consists in identifying the dignity of human beings in their autonomy, this is, the possibility they have to make their own lives and determine their own convictions. For example, political pluralism demands of its citizens a belief in the value of autonomy (Williams, 1996, p. 22-23). Thus, one overcomes the urge to interfere by juxtaposing this urge to the perceived goodness of the autonomy of the actor, because this autonomy would be thwarted were one to interfere. We did not discuss (or find) empirical studies relating to the effectiveness of valuing autonomy. We think this is an interesting avenue for future empirical research: Are individuals' practices of toleration related to their adherence to the value of autonomy, or, indeed, to any other attitude that is suggested to bolster toleration?

We do find variation in practices of toleration. The kind of transgression no doubt will matter: Compared to generalizable ('moral') transgressions, conventional transgressions generally meet with less punishment (Smetana, 1981) or with different kinds of interference (e.g., ridicule instead of punishment, see Hollos et al., 1986). It also seems that educating individuals about different moral views enhances active and passive toleration (Lester & Roberts, 2009), at least according to participants' self-reports. Nonetheless, none of these studies attempted to test philosophical theories of toleration, and it is hard to interpret their findings for or against a certain philosophical view.

We previously saw that the range of tolerance was already constrained by its very definition: If it should not be objected to, then it is not the appropriate object of toleration. In other words, we cannot speak of toleration if the tolerated situation is not wrong. A well-known example is the racist who restrains from interfering with

people with a different skin color: even though the racist inhibits an urge to interfere with something he considers wrong, this is not toleration because there is nothing wrong with having a different skin color (e.g., Horton, 1996). Thus, there is also a lower limit for when we may speak about toleration, even though the relevant behavior (e.g., non-interference) is the same. Again, it might be interesting to know if individuals indeed do not employ the notion of toleration when the 'tolerated' behavior is not wrong.

Finally, there are also practical limits to toleration. Living one's values does not merely depend on one's own character. For many social roles, institutions are in place that bolster one's commitment to a specific role. In the early Kibbutzim in the example in chapter three, no institutions were in place to support housewives. In most contemporary societies, not enough institutions are in place that enhance the lives of families with children in which both partners want to have a full-time job. If both parents value to be successful and ambitious role-models to their children, not many social structures are in place that act as commitment devices (one can think of TV-series that mirror one's choices; crèches in the office building,...). Living one's values is thus reasonably linked to a desire to regulate society, and even others' lives, for example because there is power in numbers. We therefore do not want to tolerate too much diversity.

The practical limits of toleration suggest that distance can be a good thing. If we need coordination and homogeneity for a specific valuable way of life, it is reasonable to distance ourselves from those who make different moral choices. Rather than being discriminating, associative sorting might enable both parties to create one's personal supportive environment. Therefore, tolerance could be easier between communities than within communities. On the other hand, this process likely exacerbates between group differences, thus creating new problems. Nonetheless, moral diversity might be easier to tolerate when it is located between groups than when it is located within groups.

8.4 Accommodation

We mainly discussed authors that prescribe toleration in cases of fundamental moral disagreement: toleration is often defended because we are not allowed to interfere when we aren't able to justify this interference to all parties involved, assuming they are rational and informed (Ivanhoe, 2009; Wong, 1984; 2006). However, in order to bolster such practices, we need additional attitudes. In the case

of fundamental moral disagreement, accommodation opens up as a reasonable option (e.g., Wong, 2006). However, in suggesting accommodation as an attitude, one has to reject toleration. The reason is that accommodation requires that one at least entertains the idea that different moral views are equally legitimate, one thus relativizes one's moral judgments while staying faithful to one's previous commitments. This cannot be subsumed under the header of toleration because the relativizing individual no longer objects to the others' behavior. We will discuss this conceptual consequence in Section 8.5; for now, we focus on the psychological and practical feasibility of accommodation.

According to naturalistic ethicists, moral acts are right or wrong relative to, for instance, the moral framework of agents. This however does not mean that we are *capable* of relativizing moral judgments. Maybe human beings think of moral rules as inherently universal or general, as Ruse (1986), Turiel (1983) and moral/conventional theorists suggest. We would then need to describe morality in terms of an error theory. Nonetheless, previous studies that conclude on the universalizability of moral judgments *presupposed* moral universalism. As such, they only considered universalizably or generalizably wrong acts to be morally relevant. We argued that, if we restrict moral psychology to the psychology of universalizable judgments, we will never be able to find out if lay people can relativize moral judgments. In chapter five, we built on previous research to further reject the presumption that individuals reliably think of moral transgressions as generalizably wrong and wrong because they go against universal principles. Relativizing moral judgments seems at least psychologically feasible. But does it also bolster desirable practices?

We found that some, but not all, individuals relativize specific moral judgments. However, we cannot just conclude that this attitude will bolster practices of non-interference or respect towards the relativized act. First of all, we do not know to what extent one is less likely to interfere with something that is considered relatively right. For example, the relativist may hold that whipping is wrong in culture A and permissible in culture B. Will the relativizing individual now be more likely to interfere with whipping in culture A than with whipping in culture B? This question is open to empirical investigation, and its answer can thus inform us about the effectiveness of relativist attitudes.

Another important issue is to what extent relativists are likely to stand up for others' rights. This question has a conceptual component: it may depend on whether one is merely an agent or also an appraiser relativist for a specific moral issue. Assuming that condemnation is related to action; if all moral statements are true or false relative to an appraiser, and if all moral acts are right or wrong relative to an agent, then a relativizing individual is doomed to indifference because he is not motivated to protest against injustice, including others' intolerant interference.

The agent relativist however stops at the level of the agent when relativizing the wrongness of moral acts. This is compatible with practices of non-interference, respect and active defense of others' rights. Indeed, we found that some individuals were agent relativists but not appraiser relativists about a specific moral issue. Further research should investigate if their judgments induce according behavior.

While relativizing one's judgments might be a promising attitude to bolster practices of non-interference and respect, we could not evaluate the more demanding notion of accommodation. On the one hand, on top of relativizing one's moral judgments, it requires one to internalize other values, which doesn't seem plausible. On the other hand, it might diminish practical constraints of non-interfering practices: If we are ambivalent to the proper course of action, we might simply adapt to our community's most common practices instead of trying to live in accordance with our particular values. At present though, this is mere speculation.

8.5 The conceptual boundaries of toleration

The notion of toleration, it seems to us, presupposes the universal wrongness of the tolerable act. Philosophers only speak of tolerance when the thing that is to be tolerated is, simply put, wrong, without further qualifications (e.g., Forst, 2007; Heyd, 1996; Williams, 1996). Moreover, toleration is usually discussed by universalists (e.g., Horton, 1996). Indeed, the notion of toleration is easily associated with attitudes of putting up with, or patiently bearing something objectionable. However, practices of toleration (ranging from non-interference to political equality) are important in a much broader context, and excluding a useful term as toleration from these contexts may leave us with a conceptual gap. Let us illustrate this with topics from previous chapters.

Consider again the difference between condemnation and conscience. We can judge something to be wrong for ourselves, and this independent of our judgments towards others. For example, imagine telling someone a white lie, gossiping about a colleague, inflicting a punishment on a child, not helping an old person on the bus, or any other minor fault that makes you feel uncomfortable. In each of these cases the act may be accompanied by a feeling of aversion that inhibits the actor from acting badly. However, this does not mean that we just as easily judge others when they are telling us a juicy gossip or decline to help an old person. In this case, it seems that one would not judge others for gossiping even though one can still think it is wrong to do it oneself. Nonetheless, it is an open question how this attitude

would causally relate to practices of toleration towards gossiping colleagues and friends. The problem now is that, if we want to discuss advisable reactions to such behavior, we cannot employ the notion of toleration.

This nuance thus points to a larger issue, namely that many instances of non-interference and equal treatment are by definition precluded from the discussion of toleration. For example, skepticism about our capacity to know what is right and wrong may enhance all the virtues usually discussed under practices of toleration, but skepticism precludes toleration because skepticism entails bracketing our judgments of right and wrong. In a similar vein, demoralizing something or relegating an act to the personal domain can strengthen the practices otherwise discussed under the header of toleration, were it not that this, again, is at odds with the definition of toleration.

This problem is exacerbated in the context of this dissertation. Being a relativist and accommodating moral diversity cannot be subsumed under toleration, even though the aim is, exactly, to bolster non-interference, non-discrimination, and political and social equality. This cluster of virtuous practices would otherwise be neatly summarized as practices of toleration. It seems then that we are in need of another term that summarizes the same practices of toleration, without the connotation of patiently putting up with the unbearable, and without presupposing a specific meta-ethical view such as moral universalism. Thus, there might be need for a notion of toleration *sensu stricto* that encompasses all the virtuous behavior associated with toleration *sensu lato*, but does not imply that the tolerated behavior is wrong or perceived as wrong.

8.6 Conclusion

Moral universalism, the idea that moral rules are necessarily universal in scope, has often been the dominant doctrine in Western moral philosophy. However, contrary to universalists' arguments, it is probably not the case that individuals uniformly think of all moral rules as universal. The moderate claim that some individuals (e.g., philosophers, experts) perceive moral evaluations to be evidently, or necessarily universalizable cannot be upheld either: Both philosophers and lay people can think of various action-guiding prescriptions that need not be universalized but are nevertheless moral statements.

We suspect that universalizing moral statements can be a valuable goal in normative theories, for epistemic and practical reasons. However, there is no need

to postulate universalizability as an essential feature of morality. In fact, we find good reasons why morally relevant actions are relatively right or wrong. First of all, there are no good methodological and ontological reasons to think of moral acts as universally right or wrong. Even according to a thick naturalistic theory of what people value, different people ought to do different things, depending on one's values; the set of values that is applicable to a person depends irrevocably on one's environment, one's community and maybe on personal factors as well. Thus, moral systems are relative. This does not mean that all conceivable moral systems are equally right: What one ought to do is still heavily constrained by our human nature, and practical and psychological constraints.

Contrary to error theorists, we find good reasons why lay people should think of certain moral acts as relatively right or wrong. If we want to tolerate (s.s.) others because their actions are, for all we can know, legitimate, relativizing our judgments might bolster non-interference, respect and equal treatment. Again, this does not mean that a relativist cannot condemn something. This reasoning is best applied in the case of fundamental moral disagreements, but it does not hold for those cases where an agent's moral system can be shown to be at odds with facts and theories, or her values, intuitions and principles.

The discussion about tolerance suggests that universalism is often taken for granted. A moral relativist (or skeptic) can, by definition, not tolerate. Nonetheless, it is still an open question if thinking of an act as relatively right will inhibit interference or disrespect. Thus, it might be useful to make a distinction between practices of toleration *sensu stricto* and *sensu lato*. In the domain of moral philosophy, there is a need to take relativism seriously as a plausible normative theory.

Appendix 1

Questionnaire: Moral attitudes towards sex and drugs (The Netherlands)

Gelieve de beweringen hieronder te lezen en aan te geven (omcirkelen) in welke mate u het ermee eens bent, waarbij: 1 = Sterk mee oneens; 4 = Neutraal; 7 = Sterk mee eens

Eric gaat naar een dance-feestje en overweegt Ecstasy te nemen, een illegaal stemmingsbeïnvloedend middel.

Ecstasy op deze manier gebruiken is moreel verkeerd: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Ecstasy op deze manier gebruiken zou legaal moeten zijn: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Megan hangt rond met vrienden en overweegt cannabis te roken, een illegaal maar gedoogd stemmingsbeïnvloedend middel.

Cannabis op deze manier gebruiken is moreel verkeerd: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Cannabis op deze manier gebruiken zou legaal moeten zijn: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

John is op vakantie en overweegt cocaïne te nemen, een illegaal stemmingsbeïnvloedend middel.

Cocaïne op deze manier gebruiken is moreel verkeerd: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Cocaïne op deze manier gebruiken zou legaal moeten zijn: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Claudia gaat uit en overweegt speed te nemen, een illegaal stemmingsbeïnvloedend middel

Speed op deze manier gebruiken is moreel verkeerd: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Speed op deze manier gebruiken zou legaal moeten zijn: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Gelieve voor de volgende uitspraken aan te geven hoe sterk u het ermee eens of oneens bent.

Mensen die recreatieve drugs gebruiken zijn vies: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Het is oké om drugs te bekommen met als doel jezelf beter
te voelen: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Hoe oud bent u? VUL IN: _____

Wat is uw geslacht? OMCIRKEL: Mannelijk Vrouwelijk

Indien u een vrouw bent (indien u een man bent mag u deze vraag overslaan): gebruikt u één van de voorbehoedsmiddelen in de volgende lijst: spiraaltje, anticonceptiepil, prikpil, anticonceptiepleister, implantatiestaafje, nuvaring.

(OMCIRKEL) Ja Nee

Wat is uw nationaliteit? Gelieve al uw nationaliteiten te vermelden als u er meerdere hebt.

VUL IN: _____

Waar woont u het grootste deel van de tijd? (VUL IN)

Land: _____ Is dit gebied: stedelijk / landelijk ? (OMCIRKEL)

Wat is uw studierichting en -jaar? _____

Hoe gelovig bent u? Omcirkel wat past, waarbij 1 = Helemaal niet gelovig; 4 = Enigszins gelovig; 7 = Heel gelovig

OMCIRKEL: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Hoe spiritueel bent u? Omcirkel wat past, waarbij 1 = Helemaal niet spiritueel; 4 = Enigszins spiritueel; 7 = Heel spiritueel

OMCIRKEL: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Kies de categorie die het nauwst aansluit bij uw religie of geloof. (OMCIRKEL)

- (1)Geen/atheïst/agnosticus
- (2)Boeddhist
- (3)Hindoe
- (4)Joods
- (5)Katholiek
- (6)Moslim
- (7)Protestant
- (8)Andere (gelieve te specificeren) _____

Indien u Protestant hebt aangeduid, kunt u zeggen tot welke kerk u behoort?

- (1)(Voorheen) Hervormd
- (2)(Voorheen) Gereformeerd
- (3)(Voorheen) Evangelisch-Luthers
- (4)Andere Gereformeerde kerken, namelijk (gelieve te specificeren) _____
- (5)Evangelische en Pinksterkerken, namelijk (gelieve te specificeren) _____
- (6)Overige kerken, namelijk (gelieve te specificeren) _____

Wat geloof betreft, kunt u zeggen hoe orthodox u bent? 1 = Orthodox; 7 = Vrijzinnig

OMCIRKEL: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 8: niet van toepassing

Welk van de volgende opties beschrijft het best hoe vaak u tegenwoordig een religieuze dienst bijwoont? (OMCIRKEL)

- (1)Nooit of bijna nooit
- (2)Een paar keer per jaar
- (3)Ongeveer één keer per maand
- (4)Ongeveer elke week
- (5)Meer dan één keer per week

Welk van de volgende opties beschrijft het best hoe vaak u privé, op uw eigen, bidt? (OMCIRKEL)

- (1)Nooit of bijna nooit
- (2)Een paar keer per jaar
- (3)Ongeveer één keer per maand
- (4)Ongeveer elke week
- (5)Meerdere keren per week
- (6)Ongeveer één keer per dag
- (7)Meerdere keren per dag

Hoe goed beschrijven de volgende zaken u? Omcirkel wat past, waarbij 1 = Beschrijft me niet; 4 = Beschrijft me enigszins; 7 = Beschrijft me goed

Lichamelijk aantrekkelijk:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Komt uit een goede familie:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extravert en enthousiast:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Kritisch en ruziezoekend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Betrouwbaar en zelf-gedisciplineerd:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Angstig en gemakkelijk ontdaan:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Open voor nieuwe ervaringen en complex:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Gereserveerd en stil:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sympathiek en warm:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Slordig en achteloos:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Kalm en emotioneel stabiel:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Conventioneel en oncreatief:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Gelieve aan te geven in hoeverre u het eens of oneens bent met de volgende stellingen. Omcirkel wat past, waarbij 1 = Sterk mee oneens; 4 = Neutraal; 7 = Sterk mee eens

Ik doe bepaalde dingen die slecht zijn voor mij als ze leuk zijn: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Ik hou van wilde feestjes: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Ik zou graag nieuwe en opwindende ervaringen meemaken,
ook al zijn ze illegaal: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Hoe vaak drinkt u in een normale maand alcohol tot u dronken bent? (OMCIRKEL)

- (1)Nooit
- (2)Eén of twee keer per maand
- (3)Enkele keren per maand
- (4)Meerdere keren per maand
- (5)Dagelijks of bijna dagelijks

Hoe vaak gebruikt u in een normale maand recreatieve drugs (zoals cannabis, paddo's, poppers, enzovoort)? (OMCIRKEL)

- (1)Nooit
- (2)Eén of twee keer per maand
- (3)Enkele keren per maand
- (4)Meerdere keren per maand
- (5)Dagelijks of bijna dagelijks

Hoe zou u uw seksuele geaardheid omschrijven? (OMCIRKEL)

- (1)Exclusief heteroseksueel
- (2)Hoofdzakelijk heteroseksueel
- (3)Biseksueel
- (4)Hoofdzakelijk homoseksueel
- (5)Exclusief homoseksueel

Gelieve eerlijk te antwoorden op de volgende vragen:

Met hoeveel verschillende partners hebt u de laatste 12 maanden seks gehad? (OMCIRKEL)

0 1 2 3 4 5-6 7-9 10-19 20 of meer

Met hoeveel verschillende partners hebt u seksuele betrekkingen gehad op één en slechts één enkele gelegenheid (one-night-stand)? (OMCIRKEL)

0 1 2 3 4 5-6 7-9 10-19 20 of meer

Met hoeveel verschillende partners hebt u seksuele betrekkingen gehad zonder dat u geïnteresseerd was in een langetermijnrelatie met deze persoon? (OMCIRKEL)

0 1 2 3 4 5-6 7-9 10-19 20 of meer

Seks zonder liefde is Oké. (1 = Sterk mee oneens; 9 = Sterk mee eens)

OMCIRKEL: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Ik kan me inbeelden dat ik me gemakkelijk voel en kan genieten van "vrijblijvende" seks met verschillende partners. (1 = Sterk mee oneens; 9 = Sterk mee eens)

OMCIRKEL: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Ik wil *geen* seks hebben met iemand voordat ik zeker weet dat we een serieuze langetermijnrelatie zullen hebben. (1 = Sterk mee oneens; 9 = Sterk mee eens)

OMCIRKEL: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Hoe vaak fantaseert u over het hebben van seks met iemand waarmee u *geen* toegewijde romantische relatie hebt? (OMCIRKEL)

- 1 – nooit
- 2 – heel zelden
- 3 – eenmaal om de twee of drie maanden
- 4 – ongeveer één keer per maand
- 5 – ongeveer één keer om de twee weken
- 6 – ongeveer één keer per week
- 7 – meerdere keren per week
- 8 – bijna iedere dag
- 9 – ten minste één keer per dag

Hoe vaak bent u seksueel geprikkeld wanneer u in contact bent met iemand waarmee u *geen* toegewijde romantische relatie hebt? (OMCIRKEL)

- 1 – nooit
- 2 – heel zelden
- 3 – eenmaal om de twee of drie maanden
- 4 – ongeveer één keer per maand
- 5 – ongeveer één keer om de twee weken
- 6 – ongeveer één keer per week
- 7 – meerdere keren per week
- 8 – bijna iedere dag
- 9 – ten minste één keer per dag

Hoe vaak hebt u in het algemeen spontane fantasieën over seks met iemand die u nog maar pas leren kennen hebt? (OMCIRKEL)

- 1 – nooit
- 2 – heel zelden
- 3 – eenmaal om de twee of drie maanden
- 4 – ongeveer één keer per maand
- 5 – ongeveer één keer om de twee weken
- 6 – ongeveer één keer per week
- 7 – meerdere keren per week
- 8 – bijna iedere dag
- 9 – ten minste één keer per dag

Welke van de volgende opties beschrijft het best uw burgerlijke staat? (OMCIRKEL)

- (1) Nooit getrouwd
- (2) Huidig eerste huwelijk
- (3) Huidig in een tweede of later huwelijk
- (4) Gescheiden van tafel en bed
- (5) Gescheiden
- (6) Weduwe/weduwnaar

Welke van de volgende opties beschrijft het best de burgerlijke staat van uw moeder? (OMCIRKEL)

- (1) Nooit getrouwd
- (2) Nu in haar eerste huwelijk met mijn biologische vader
- (3) Nu in haar eerste huwelijk met iemand anders dan mijn biologische vader
- (4) Nu in haar tweede of later huwelijk, met mijn biologische vader
- (5) Nu in haar tweede of later huwelijk met iemand anders dan mijn biologische vader
- (6) Gescheiden van tafel en bed
- (7) Gescheiden
- (8) Weduwe
- (9) Geen van bovenstaande

Welke van de volgende opties beschrijft het best de burgerlijke staat van uw vader? (OMCIRKEL)

- (1) Nooit getrouwd
- (2) Nu in zijn eerste huwelijk met mijn biologische moeder
- (3) Nu in zijn eerste huwelijk met iemand anders dan mijn biologische moeder
- (4) Nu in zijn tweede of latere huwelijk met mijn biologische moeder
- (5) Nu in zijn tweede of latere huwelijk met iemand anders dan mijn biologische moeder
- (6) Gescheiden van tafel en bed
- (7) Gescheiden
- (8) Weduwnaar
- (9) Geen van bovenstaande

Indien uw ouders ooit gescheiden zijn, in welk jaar zijn ze dan gescheiden? VUL IN: _____

Als u nog nooit getrouwd bent, hoe waarschijnlijk denkt u dat het is dat u ooit trouwt? Omcirkel wat past, waarbij 1 = Niet waarschijnlijk; 4 = Enigszins waarschijnlijk; 7 = Heel waarschijnlijk

OMCIRKEL: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Als u nog nooit getrouwd bent en in de veronderstelling dat u zou gaan trouwen, wat zou dan uw ideale trouweleeftijd zijn? (Of als u al getrouwd bent, hoe oud was u toen u de eerste keer trouwde?)

VUL IN: _____

Als u nog nooit getrouwd bent en in de veronderstelling dat u zou gaan trouwen op de door u aangegeven ideale trouwleeftijd, wat zou dan de ideale leeftijd zijn van uw partner? (Of als u al getrouwd bent, hoe oud was uw partner toen u de eerste keer trouwde?)

VUL IN: _____

Hebt u kinderen? (OMCIRKEL) Ja Nee

Als u kinderen hebt, hoeveel hebt u er? VUL IN: _____

Als u nog nooit kinderen hebt gehad, hoe waarschijnlijk denkt u dat het is dat u ooit kinderen krijgt? (OMCIRKEL)

- 1 Niet waarschijnlijk
- 2 Enigszins waarschijnlijk
- 3 Heel waarschijnlijk

Als u nog nooit kinderen hebt gehad, maar u denkt wel dat u ooit kinderen zult krijgen, hoe waarschijnlijk is het dan dat u kinderen krijgt voordat u getrouwd bent?

- 1 Ik zou zeker niet getrouwd zijn
- 2 Enigszins waarschijnlijk dat ik niet getrouwd zou zijn
- 3 Enigszins waarschijnlijk dat ik getrouwd zou zijn
- 4 Ik zou zeker getrouwd zijn

Hoeveel eigen kinderen zou u willen hebben? (OMCIRKEL)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 of meer

Als u nog nooit kinderen hebt gehad en in de veronderstelling dat u kinderen zou krijgen, wat zou dan uw ideale leeftijd zijn om uw eerste kind te krijgen? (Of als u al kinderen hebt, hoe oud was u toen u uw eerste kind kreeg?)

VUL IN: _____

Als u zichzelf over tien of vijftien jaar inbeeldt, hoe vaak denkt u dat u religieuze diensten zult bijwonen? (OMCIRKEL)

- (1) Nooit of bijna nooit
- (2) Enkele keren per jaar
- (3) Ongeveer één keer per maand
- (4) Ongeveer iedere week
- (5) Meer dan één keer per week

Als u zou trouwen, denkt u dat uw kansen hoger of lager liggen dan bij andere mensen om binnen de 15 jaar te scheiden? Omcirkel wat past, waarbij 1 = Veel lager; 4 = Rond het gemiddelde; 7 = Veel hoger

OMCIRKEL: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Als u zou gaan trouwen, welk percentage waarschijnlijkheid denkt u dat u zou hebben om binnen de 15 jaar te scheiden?

VUL IN: _____

Als u getrouwd was en kinderen had en uw echtgeno(o)t(e) gedroeg zich op een manier die u onaanvaardbaar vindt, hoe waarschijnlijk zou het zijn dat u wilt scheiden? Omcirkel wat past, waarbij 1 = Niet waarschijnlijk; 4 = Enigszins waarschijnlijk; 7 = Heel waarschijnlijk

OMCIRKEL: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

In welk land woonde u hoofdzakelijk gedurende uw kinderjaren? (OMCIRKEL)

(1)Nederland

(2)België

Andere (gelieve te specificeren) _____

Toen u opgroeide, hoe welgesteld waren uw ouders dan in vergelijking met anderen? Omcirkel wat past, waarbij 1 = Helemaal niet welgesteld; 4 = Rond het gemiddelde; 7 = Heel welgesteld

OMCIRKEL: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Kies de categorie die de religie of het geloof het best beschrijft waarmee u bent opgevoed toen u kind was. (OMCIRKEL)

- (1) Geen/atheïst/agnosticus
- (2) Boeddhist
- (3) Hindoe
- (4) Joods
- (5) Katholiek
- (6) Moslim
- (7) Protestant
- (8) Andere (gelieve te specificeren) _____

Indien u Protestant hebt aangeduid, kunt u zeggen welke kerk het best deze beschrijft waarmee u bent opgevoed toen u kind was?

- (1) (Voorheen) Hervormd
- (2) (Voorheen) Gereformeerd
- (3) (Voorheen) Evangelisch-Luthers
- (4) Andere Gereformeerde kerken, namelijk (gelieve te specificeren) _____
- (5) Evangelische en Pinksterkerken, namelijk (gelieve te specificeren) _____
- (6) Overige kerken, namelijk (gelieve te specificeren) _____

Wat geloof betreft, kunt u zeggen hoe orthodox u bent opgevoed? 1 = Orthodox; 7 = Vrijzinnig

OMCIRKEL: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 8: niet van toepassing

Welk van de volgende opties beschrijft het best hoe vaak u als kind een religieuze dienst bijwoonde? (OMCIRKEL)

- (1) Nooit of bijna nooit
- (2) Enkele keren per jaar
- (3) Ongeveer één keer per maand
- (4) Ongeveer iedere week
- (5) Meer dan één keer per week

Wat is de hoogste opleidingsgraad van uw vader? (OMCIRKEL)

- (1) Geen eindexamen voortgezet onderwijs
- (2) Eindexamen voortgezet onderwijs
- (3) Hogeschool (HBO) zonder diploma
- (4) Hogeschool (HBO) met diploma
- (5) Bacheloropleiding of Kandidatuur zonder diploma

- (6) Bacheloropleiding of Kandidatuur met diploma
- (7) Masteropleiding (opleiding leidend tot licentiaat, baccalaureus, doctorandus, ingenieur, of meester) zonder diploma
- (8) Masteropleiding (opleiding leidend tot licentiaat, baccalaureus, doctorandus, ingenieur, of meester) met diploma
- (9) Postuniversitair (e.g., specialisatie, doctorandus/promovendus, doctoraat).

Wat is de hoogste opleidingsgraad van uw moeder? (OMCIRKEL)

- (1) Geen eindexamen voortgezet onderwijs
- (2) Eindexamen voortgezet onderwijs
- (3) Hogeschool (HBO) zonder diploma
- (4) Hogeschool (HBO) met diploma
- (5) Bacheloropleiding of Kandidatuur zonder diploma
- (6) Bacheloropleiding of Kandidatuur met diploma
- (7) Masteropleiding (opleiding leidend tot licentiaat, baccalaureus, doctorandus, ingenieur, of meester) zonder diploma
- (8) Masteropleiding (opleiding leidend tot licentiaat, baccalaureus, doctorandus, ingenieur, of meester) met diploma
- (9) Postuniversitair (e.g., specialisatie, doctorandus/promovendus, doctoraat).

Zonder externe bronnen te raadplegen, zijn de volgende zaken voor zover u weet legaal of illegaal? Omcirkel wat past, waarbij 1 = legaal; 2 = illegaal; 3 = weet ik niet

HET GEBRUIK VAN:	<i>legaal</i>	<i>illegaal</i>	<i>Weet ik niet</i>
XTC	1	2	3
cannabis	1	2	3
poppers	1	2	3
speed	1	2	3
paddo's	1	2	3
cocaïne	1	2	3
alcohol	1	2	3

Gelieve weer te geven in welke mate u voor- of tegenstander bent van de volgende zaken. Omcirkel wat past, waarbij 1 = Fervente tegenstander; 4 = Neutraal; 7 = Fervente voorstander

Stimuleren van het gebruik van het Nederlands:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Meer belastinggeld naar defensie:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strengere beperkingen voor pornografie op het internet:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Meer wijkagenten om overlast tegen te gaan:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Meer bindende EU-maatregelen die het milieu beschermen:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Het illegaal maken om tegen betaling seks te hebben met een prostituee:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Afschaffen van de vervroegde invrijheidsstelling bij goed gedrag:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Meer sociale huurwoningen:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Een verkorting van de periode waarbinnen abortus wordt toegestaan:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Een inburgeringsexamen voor immigranten:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hogere uitkeringen voor werklozen:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Meer belastinggeld naar ontwikkelingssamenwerking:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Meer aandacht voor de waarde van relaties in seksuele voorlichting op school:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Het verbieden van kleding die het gelaat bedekt:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Beter informeren en begeleiden van mensen met overmatige schulden:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Adverteren voor prostitutie illegaal maken:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strengere straffen voor mensen die geweld gebruiken:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Homoseksuele koppels die kinderen kunnen adopteren:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Welke politieke partij heeft, wat hun standpunten betreft, uw voorkeur? (OMCIRKEL)

1 CU

2 CDA

3 D66

4 GL

5 PvdD

6 PVV

7 PvdA

8 SGP

9 SP

10 VVD

11 Andere (gelieve te specificeren) _____

Wanneer u beslist of iets goed of fout is, in welke mate zijn de volgende overwegingen relevant voor uw besluitvorming? Gelieve elke uitspraak een score te geven binnen de volgende schaal:

0 = helemaal niet relevant (Deze overweging heeft niets te maken met mijn besluitvorming of ik iets goed of fout vind)

1 = niet erg relevant

2 = lichtjes relevant

3 = enigszins relevant

4 = heel relevant

5 = extreem relevant (Dit is een van de belangrijkste factoren bij mijn besluitvorming of ik iets goed of fout vind)

Of iemand al dan niet emotioneel geleden heeft:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of bepaalde mensen al dan niet anders werden behandeld dan anderen:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemands actie al dan niet van liefde voor zijn land getuigt:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemand al dan niet een gebrek aan respect toont voor autoriteiten:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemand al dan niet inging tegen de normen van reinheid en fatsoen:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemand al dan niet goed was in wiskunde:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemand al dan niet geeft om een zwakkere of kwetsbaardere:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemand al dan niet oneerlijk handelde:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemand al dan niet iets deed om zijn groep te verraden:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemand zich al dan niet voegt naar de tradities van de samenleving:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemand al dan niet iets walgelijks deed:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemand al dan niet wreedaardig was:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemands rechten al dan niet geschonden werden:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemand al dan niet een tekort aan loyaliteit had:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of een actie al dan niet chaos en wanorde veroorzaakte:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemand al dan niet handelde naar Gods goeddunken:	0	1	2	3	4	5

Gelieve de volgende zinnen te lezen en aan te geven in welke mate u het ermee eens of oneens bent, waarbij:

0 = Sterk mee oneens

1 = Matig mee oneens

2 = Lichtjes mee oneens

3 = Lichtjes mee eens

4 = Matig mee eens

5 = Sterk mee eens

Medelijden met zij die lijden is de cruciaalste deugd:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Wanneer de overheid wetten maakt moet het belangrijkste principe zijn dat iedereen eerlijk behandeld wordt:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Ik ben trots op de geschiedenis van mijn land:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Repect voor autoriteit is iets wat alle kinderen moeten leren:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Mensen zouden geen dingen mogen doen die walgelijk zijn, ook al doen ze er niemand mee kwaad:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Het is beter om goed te doen dan om slecht te doen:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Een van de ergste zaken die iemand kan doen is een weerloos dier pijn doen:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Gerechtigheid is de belangrijkste vereiste voor een samenleving:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Mensen moeten hun familieleden trouw zijn, ook al hebben ze iets fout gedaan:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Mannen en vrouwen hebben elk verschillende rollen te vervullen in de samenleving:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Ik zou bepaalde handelingen fout noemen, gebaseerd op het feit dat ze onnatuurlijk zijn:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Een mens vermoorden kan nooit goed zijn:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Ik vind het moreel fout dat rijke kinderen veel geld erven terwijl arme kinderen niets erven:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Het is belangrijker om een teamspeler te zijn dan om zichzelf uit te drukken:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Als ik een soldaat was en het oneens was met de bevelen van mijn overste, dan zou ik toch gehoorzamen omdat het mijn plicht is:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Kuisheid is een belangrijke en waardevolle deugd:	0	1	2	3	4	5

De volgende zaken beschrijven verschillende begrippen. Gelieve een score te geven voor de mate waarin u de omschreven begrippen walgelijk vindt, waarbij: 0 = Helemaal niet walgelijk; 6 = Extreem walgelijk.

Snoep stelen in een buurtwinkel:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Horen hoe twee vreemden seks hebben:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
In hondenpoep trappen:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Stelen van een buur:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Orale seks hebben:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Naast iemand zitten die rode zweren heeft op zijn arm:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Een student die spiekt om goede cijfers te halen:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Naar een pornofilm kijken:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Een hand geven aan een vreemde die zweterige handen heeft:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Een vriend bedriegen:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Te weten komen dat iemand die je niet graag hebt seksuele fantasieën heeft over u:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Schimmel zien op oude restjes in uw koelkast:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Iemands handtekening namaken op een wettelijk document:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Iemand die u net leren kennen hebt meenemen naar je kamer om seks te hebben:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Naast iemand staan die een slechte lijfgeur heeft:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Voorsteken in een rij om de laatste tickets te kopen voor een show:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Een vreemde van het andere geslacht die opzettelijk uw dij streelt in een lift:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Een kakkerlak over de vloer zien lopen:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Opzettelijk liegen tijdens een zakentransactie:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Anale seks hebben met iemand van het andere geslacht:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Per ongeluk iemands bloederige wond aanraken:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Appendix 2

Questionnaire: Moral attitudes towards sex and drugs (Belgium)

Gelieve de beweringen hieronder te lezen en aan te geven (omcirkelen) in welke mate u het ermee eens bent, waarbij: 1 = Sterk mee oneens; 4 = Neutraal; 7 = Sterk mee eens

Eric gaat naar een dance-feestje en overweegt Ecstasy te nemen, een illegaal stemmingsbeïnvloedend middel.

Ecstasy op deze manier gebruiken is moreel verkeerd: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Ecstasy op deze manier gebruiken zou legaal moeten zijn: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Megan hangt rond met vrienden en overweegt cannabis te roken, een illegaal maar gedoogd stemmingsbeïnvloedend middel.

Cannabis op deze manier gebruiken is moreel verkeerd: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Cannabis op deze manier gebruiken zou legaal moeten zijn: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

John is op vakantie en overweegt cocaïne te nemen, een illegaal stemmingsbeïnvloedend middel.

Cocaïne op deze manier gebruiken is moreel verkeerd: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Cocaïne op deze manier gebruiken zou legaal moeten zijn: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Claudia gaat uit en overweegt speed te nemen, een illegaal stemmingsbeïnvloedend middel

Speed op deze manier gebruiken is moreel verkeerd: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Speed op deze manier gebruiken zou legaal moeten zijn: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Hoe gelovig bent u? Omcirkel wat past, waarbij 1 = Helemaal niet gelovig; 4 = Enigszins gelovig; 7 = Heel gelovig

OMCIRKEL: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Hoe spiritueel bent u? Omcirkel wat past, waarbij 1 = Helemaal niet spiritueel; 4 = Enigszins spiritueel; 7 = Heel spiritueel

OMCIRKEL: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Kies de categorie die het nauwst aansluit bij uw religie of geloof. (OMCIRKEL)

- (1)Geen/atheïst/agnosticus
- (2)Boeddhist
- (3)Hindoe
- (4)Joods
- (5)Katholiek
- (6)Moslim
- (7)Protestant
- (8)Andere (gelieve te specificeren) _____

Indien u Protestant hebt aangeduid, kunt u zeggen tot welke kerk u behoort?

- (1)(Voorheen) Hervormd
- (2)(Voorheen) Gereformeerd
- (3)(Voorheen) Evangelisch-Luthers
- (4)Andere Gereformeerde kerken, namelijk (gelieve te specificeren) _____
- (5)Evangelische en Pinksterkerken, namelijk (gelieve te specificeren) _____
- (6)Overige kerken, namelijk (gelieve te specificeren) _____

Wat geloof betreft, kunt u zeggen hoe orthodox u bent? 1 = Orthodox; 7 = Liberaal

OMCIRKEL: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 8: niet van toepassing

Welk van de volgende opties beschrijft het best hoe vaak u tegenwoordig een religieuze dienst bijwoont? (OMCIRKEL)

- (1)Nooit of bijna nooit
- (2)Een paar keer per jaar
- (3)Ongeveer één keer per maand
- (4)Ongeveer elke week
- (5)Meer dan één keer per week

Welk van de volgende opties beschrijft het best hoe vaak u privé, op uw eigen, bidt? (OMCIRKEL)

- (1)Nooit of bijna nooit
- (2)Een paar keer per jaar
- (3)Ongeveer één keer per maand
- (4)Ongeveer elke week
- (5)Meerdere keren per week
- (6)Ongeveer één keer per dag
- (7)Meerdere keren per dag

Hoe goed beschrijven de volgende zaken u? Omcirkel wat past, waarbij 1 = Beschrijft me niet; 4 = Beschrijft me enigszins; 7 = Beschrijft me goed

Lichamelijk aantrekkelijk:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Komt uit een goede familie:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extravert en enthousiast:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Kritisch en ruziezoekend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Betrouwbaar en zelf-gedisciplineerd:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Angstig en gemakkelijk ontdaan:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Open voor nieuwe ervaringen en complex:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Gereserveerd en stil:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sympathiek en warm:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Slordig en achteloos:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Kalm en emotioneel stabiel:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Conventioneel en oncreatief:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Gelieve aan te geven in hoeverre u het eens of oneens bent met de volgende stellingen. Omcirkel wat past, waarbij 1 = Sterk mee oneens; 4 = Neutraal; 7 = Sterk mee eens

Ik doe bepaalde dingen die slecht zijn voor mij als ze leuk zijn: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Ik hou van wilde feestjes: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Ik zou graag nieuwe en opwindende ervaringen meemaken,
ook al zijn ze illegaal: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Hoe vaak drinkt u in een normale maand alcohol tot u dronken bent? (OMCIRKEL)

- (1)Nooit
- (2)Eén of twee keer per maand
- (3)Enkele keren per maand
- (4)Meerdere keren per maand
- (5)Dagelijks of bijna dagelijks

Hoe vaak gebruikt u in een normale maand recreatieve drugs (zoals cannabis, paddo's, poppers, enzovoort)? (OMCIRKEL)

- (1)Nooit
- (2)Eén of twee keer per maand
- (3)Enkele keren per maand
- (4)Meerdere keren per maand
- (5)Dagelijks of bijna dagelijks

Hoe zou u uw seksuele geaardheid omschrijven? (OMCIRKEL)

- (1)Exclusief heteroseksueel
- (2)Hoofdzakelijk heteroseksueel
- (3)Biseksueel
- (4)Hoofdzakelijk homoseksueel
- (5)Exclusief homoseksueel

Gelieve eerlijk te antwoorden op de volgende vragen:

Met hoeveel verschillende partners hebt u de laatste 12 maanden seks gehad? (OMCIRKEL)

0 1 2 3 4 5-6 7-9 10-19 20 of meer

Met hoeveel verschillende partners hebt u seksuele betrekkingen gehad op één en slechts één enkele gelegenheid (one-night-stand)? (OMCIRKEL)

0 1 2 3 4 5-6 7-9 10-19 20 of meer

Met hoeveel verschillende partners hebt u seksuele betrekkingen gehad zonder dat u geïnteresseerd was in een langetermijnrelatie met deze persoon? (OMCIRKEL)

0 1 2 3 4 5-6 7-9 10-19 20 of meer

Seks zonder liefde is Oké. (1 = Sterk mee oneens; 9 = Sterk mee eens)

OMCIRKEL: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Ik kan me inbeelden dat ik me gemakkelijk voel en kan genieten van "vrijblijvende" seks met verschillende partners. (1 = Sterk mee oneens; 9 = Sterk mee eens)

OMCIRKEL: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Ik wil *geen* seks hebben met iemand voordat ik zeker weet dat we een serieuze langetermijnrelatie zullen hebben. (1 = Sterk mee oneens; 9 = Sterk mee eens)

OMCIRKEL: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Hoe vaak fantaseert u over het hebben van seks met iemand waarmee u *geen* toegewijde romantische relatie hebt? (OMCIRKEL)

- 1 – nooit
- 2 – heel zelden
- 3 – eenmaal om de twee of drie maanden
- 4 – ongeveer één keer per maand
- 5 – ongeveer één keer om de twee weken
- 6 – ongeveer één keer per week
- 7 – meerdere keren per week
- 8 – bijna iedere dag
- 9 – ten minste één keer per dag

Hoe vaak bent u seksueel geprikkeld wanneer u in contact bent met iemand waarmee u *geen* toegewijde romantische relatie hebt? (OMCIRKEL)

- 1 – nooit
- 2 – heel zelden
- 3 – eenmaal om de twee of drie maanden
- 4 – ongeveer één keer per maand
- 5 – ongeveer één keer om de twee weken
- 6 – ongeveer één keer per week
- 7 – meerdere keren per week
- 8 – bijna iedere dag
- 9 – ten minste één keer per dag

Hoe vaak hebt u in het algemeen spontane fantasieën over seks met iemand die u nog maar pas leren kennen hebt? (OMCIRKEL)

- 1 – nooit
- 2 – heel zelden
- 3 – eenmaal om de twee of drie maanden
- 4 – ongeveer één keer per maand
- 5 – ongeveer één keer om de twee weken
- 6 – ongeveer één keer per week
- 7 – meerdere keren per week
- 8 – bijna iedere dag
- 9 – ten minste één keer per dag

Welke van de volgende opties beschrijft het best uw burgerlijke staat? (OMCIRKEL)

- (1) Nooit getrouwd
- (2) Huidig eerste huwelijk
- (3) Huidig in een tweede of later huwelijk
- (4) Gescheiden van tafel en bed
- (5) Gescheiden
- (6) Weduwe/weduwnaar

Welke van de volgende opties beschrijft het best de burgerlijke staat van uw moeder? (OMCIRKEL)

- (1) Nooit getrouwd
- (2) Nu in haar eerste huwelijk met mijn biologische vader
- (3) Nu in haar eerste huwelijk met iemand anders dan mijn biologische vader
- (4) Nu in haar tweede of later huwelijk, met mijn biologische vader
- (5) Nu in haar tweede of later huwelijk met iemand anders dan mijn biologische vader
- (6) Gescheiden van tafel en bed
- (7) Gescheiden
- (8) Weduwe
- (9) Geen van bovenstaande

Welke van de volgende opties beschrijft het best de burgerlijke staat van uw vader? (OMCIRKEL)

- (1) Nooit getrouwd
- (2) Nu in zijn eerste huwelijk met mijn biologische moeder
- (3) Nu in zijn eerste huwelijk met iemand anders dan mijn biologische moeder
- (4) Nu in zijn tweede of later huwelijk met mijn biologische moeder
- (5) Nu in zijn tweede of later huwelijk met iemand anders dan mijn biologische moeder
- (6) Gescheiden van tafel en bed
- (7) Gescheiden
- (8) Weduwnaar
- (9) Geen van bovenstaande

Indien uw ouders ooit gescheiden zijn, in welk jaar zijn ze dan gescheiden? VUL IN: _____

Als u nog nooit getrouwd bent, hoe waarschijnlijk denkt u dat het is dat u ooit trouwt? Omcirkel wat past, waarbij 1 = Niet waarschijnlijk; 4 = Enigszins waarschijnlijk; 7 = Heel waarschijnlijk

OMCIRKEL: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Als u nog nooit getrouwd bent en in de veronderstelling dat u zou gaan trouwen, wat zou dan uw ideale trouweeftijd zijn? (Of als u al getrouwd bent, hoe oud was u toen u de eerste keer trouwde?)

VUL IN: _____

Als u nog nooit getrouwd bent en in de veronderstelling dat u zou gaan trouwen op de door u aangegeven ideale trouwleeftijd, wat zou dan de ideale leeftijd zijn van uw partner? (Of als u al getrouwd bent, hoe oud was uw partner toen u de eerste keer trouwde?)

VUL IN: _____

Hebt u kinderen? (OMCIRKEL) Ja Nee

Als u kinderen hebt, hoeveel hebt u er? VUL IN: _____

Als u nog nooit kinderen hebt gehad, hoe waarschijnlijk denkt u dat het is dat u ooit kinderen krijgt?
(OMCIRKEL)

- 1 Niet waarschijnlijk
- 2 Enigszins waarschijnlijk
- 3 Heel waarschijnlijk

Als u nog nooit kinderen hebt gehad, maar u denkt wel dat u ooit kinderen zult krijgen, hoe waarschijnlijk is het dan dat u kinderen krijgt voordat u getrouwd bent?

- 1 Ik zou zeker niet getrouwd zijn
- 2 Enigszins waarschijnlijk dat ik niet getrouwd zou zijn
- 3 Enigszins waarschijnlijk dat ik getrouwd zou zijn
- 4 Ik zou zeker getrouwd zijn

Hoeveel eigen kinderen zou u willen hebben? (OMCIRKEL)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 of meer

Als u nog nooit kinderen hebt gehad en in de veronderstelling dat u kinderen zou krijgen, wat zou dan uw ideale leeftijd zijn om uw eerste kind te krijgen? (Of als u al kinderen hebt, hoe oud was u toen u uw eerste kind kreeg?)

VUL IN: _____

Als u zichzelf over tien of vijftien jaar inbeeldt, hoe vaak denkt u dat u religieuze diensten zult bijwonen? (OMCIRKEL)

- (1) Nooit of bijna nooit
- (2) Enkele keren per jaar
- (3) Ongeveer één keer per maand
- (4) Ongeveer iedere week
- (5) Meer dan één keer per week

Als u zou trouwen, denkt u dat uw kansen hoger of lager liggen dan bij andere mensen om binnen de 15 jaar te scheiden? Omcirkel wat past, waarbij 1 = Veel lager; 4 = Rond het gemiddelde; 7 = Veel hoger

OMCIRKEL: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Als u zou gaan trouwen, welk percentage waarschijnlijkheid denkt u dat u zou hebben om binnen de 15 jaar te scheiden?

VUL IN: _____

Als u getrouwd was en kinderen had en uw echtgeno(o)t(e) gedroeg zich op een manier die u onaanvaardbaar vindt, hoe waarschijnlijk zou het zijn dat u wilt scheiden? Omcirkel wat past, waarbij 1 = Niet waarschijnlijk; 4 = Enigszins waarschijnlijk; 7 = Heel waarschijnlijk

OMCIRKEL: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

In welk land woonde u hoofdzakelijk gedurende uw kinderjaren? (OMCIRKEL)

(1)Nederland

(2)België

Andere (gelieve te specificeren) _____

Toen u opgroeide, hoe welgesteld waren uw ouders dan in vergelijking met anderen? Omcirkel wat past, waarbij 1 = Helemaal niet welgesteld; 4 = Rond het gemiddelde; 7 = Heel welgesteld

OMCIRKEL: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Kies de categorie die de religie of het geloof het best beschrijft waarmee u bent opgevoed toen u kind was. (OMCIRKEL)

- (1) Geen/atheïst/agnosticus
- (2) Boeddhist
- (3) Hindoe
- (4) Joods
- (5) Katholiek
- (6) Moslim
- (7) Protestant
- (8) Andere (gelieve te specificeren) _____

Indien u Protestant hebt aangeduid, kunt u zeggen welke kerk het best deze beschrijft waarmee u bent opgevoed toen u kind was?

- (1) (Voorheen) Hervormd
- (2) (Voorheen) Gereformeerd
- (3) (Voorheen) Evangelisch-Luthers
- (4) Andere Gereformeerde kerken, namelijk (gelieve te specificeren) _____
- (5) Evangelische en Pinksterkerken, namelijk (gelieve te specificeren) _____
- (6) Overige kerken, namelijk (gelieve te specificeren) _____

Wat geloof betreft, kunt u zeggen hoe orthodox u bent opgevoed? 1 = Orthodox; 7 = Liberaal

OMCIRKEL: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 8: niet van toepassing

Welk van de volgende opties beschrijft het best hoe vaak u als kind een religieuze dienst bijwoonde? (OMCIRKEL)

- (1) Nooit of bijna nooit
- (2) Enkele keren per jaar
- (3) Ongeveer één keer per maand
- (4) Ongeveer iedere week
- (5) Meer dan één keer per week

Wat is de hoogste opleidingsgraad van uw vader? (OMCIRKEL)

- (1) Geen diploma secundair onderwijs derde graad
- (2) Diploma secundair onderwijs derde graad
- (3) Hogeschool zonder diploma
- (4) Hogeschool met diploma
- (5) Bachelor of Kandidatuur zonder diploma

- (6) Bachelor of Kandidatuur met diploma
- (7) Master of Licentiaat zonder diploma
- (8) Master of Licentiaat met diploma
- (9) Postuniversitair (e.g., specialisatie, doctorandus/promovendus, doctoraat).

Wat is de hoogste opleidingsgraad van uw moeder? (OMCIRKEL)

- (1) Geen diploma secundair onderwijs derde graad
- (2) Diploma secundair onderwijs derde graad
- (3) Hogeschool zonder diploma
- (4) Hogeschool met diploma
- (5) Bachelor of Kandidatuur zonder diploma
- (6) Bachelor of Kandidatuur met diploma
- (7) Master of Licentiaat zonder diploma
- (8) Master of Licentiaat met diploma
- (9) Postuniversitair (e.g., specialisatie, doctorandus/promovendus, doctoraat).

Gelieve weer te geven in welke mate u voor-of tegenstander bent van de volgende zaken. Omcirkel wat past, waarbij 1 = Fervente tegenstander; 4 = Neutraal; 7 = Fervente voorstander

Stimuleren van het gebruik van het Nederlands:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Meer belastinggeld naar defensie:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strengere beperkingen voor pornografie op het internet:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Meer wijkagenten om overlast tegen te gaan:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Meer bindende EU-maatregelen die het milieu beschermen:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Afschaffen van de vervroegde invrijheidsstelling bij goed gedrag:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Meer sociale huurwoningen:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Een verlenging van de periode waar binnen abortus wordt toegestaan:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Een inburgeringexamen voor immigranten:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hogere uitkeringen voor werklozen:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Meer belastinggeld naar ontwikkelingssamenwerking:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Meer aandacht voor de waarde van relaties in seksuele voorlichting op school:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Het verbieden van kleding die het gelaat bedekt:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Beter informeren en begeleiden van mensen met overmatige schulden:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strengere straffen voor mensen die geweld gebruiken:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Homoseksuele koppels die kinderen kunnen adopteren:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Welke politieke partij heeft, wat hun standpunten betreft, uw voorkeur? (OMCIRKEL)

- 1 Belg.Alliantie
- 2 CD&V
- 3 Groen!
- 4 LSP
- 5 N-VA
- 6 Open VLD
- 7 PVDA+
- 8 sp.a
- 9 UF
- 10 Vlaams Belang
- Andere (gelieve te specificeren)

Wanneer u beslist of iets goed of fout is, in welke mate zijn de volgende overwegingen relevant voor uw besluitvorming? Gelieve elke uitspraak een score te geven binnen de volgende schaal:

0 = helemaal niet relevant (Deze overweging heeft niets te maken met mijn besluitvorming of ik iets goed of fout vind)

1 = niet erg relevant

2 = lichtjes relevant

3 = enigszins relevant

4 = heel relevant

5 = extreem relevant (Dit is een van de belangrijkste factoren bij mijn besluitvorming of ik iets goed of fout vind)

Of iemand al dan niet emotioneel geleden heeft:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of bepaalde mensen al dan niet anders werden behandeld dan anderen:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemands actie al dan niet van liefde voor zijn land getuigt:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemand al dan niet een gebrek aan respect toont voor autoriteiten:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemand al dan niet inging tegen de normen van reinheid en fatsoen:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemand al dan niet goed was in wiskunde:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemand al dan niet geeft om een zwakkere of kwetsbaardere:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemand al dan niet oneerlijk handelde:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemand al dan niet iets deed om zijn groep te verraden:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemand zich al dan niet voegt naar de tradities van de samenleving:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemand al dan niet iets walgelijks deed:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemand al dan niet wreedaardig was:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemands rechten al dan niet geschonden werden:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemand al dan niet een tekort aan loyaliteit had:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of een actie al dan niet chaos en wanorde veroorzaakte:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Of iemand al dan niet handelde naar Gods goeddunken:	0	1	2	3	4	5

Gelieve de volgende zinnen te lezen en aan te geven in welke mate u het ermee eens of oneens bent, waarbij:

0 = Sterk mee oneens

1 = Matig mee oneens

2 = Lichtjes mee oneens

3 = Lichtjes mee eens

4 = Matig mee eens

5 = Sterk mee eens

Medelijden met zij die lijden is de cruciaalste deugd:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Wanneer de overheid wetten maakt moet het belangrijkste principe zijn dat iedereen eerlijk behandeld wordt:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Ik ben trots op de geschiedenis van mijn land:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Repect voor autoriteit is iets wat alle kinderen moeten leren:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Mensen zouden geen dingen mogen doen die walgelijk zijn, ook al doen ze er niemand mee kwaad:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Het is beter om goed te doen dan om slecht te doen:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Een van de ergste zaken die iemand kan doen is een weerloos dier pijn doen:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Gerechtigheid is de belangrijkste vereiste voor een samenleving:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Mensen moeten hun familieleden trouw zijn, ook al hebben ze iets fout gedaan:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Mannen en vrouwen hebben elk verschillende rollen te vervullen in de samenleving:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Ik zou bepaalde handelingen fout noemen, gebaseerd op het feit dat ze onnatuurlijk zijn:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Een mens vermoorden kan nooit goed zijn:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Ik vind het moreel fout dat rijke kinderen veel geld erven terwijl arme kinderen niets erven:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Het is belangrijker om een teamspeler te zijn dan om zichzelf uit te drukken:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Als ik een soldaat was en het oneens was met de bevelen van mijn overste, dan zou ik toch gehoorzamen omdat het mijn plicht is:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Kuisheid is een belangrijke en waardevolle deugd:	0	1	2	3	4	5

De volgende zaken beschrijven verschillende begrippen. Gelieve een score te geven voor de mate waarin u de omschreven begrippen walgelijk vindt, waarbij: 0 = Helemaal niet walgelijk; 6 = Extreem walgelijk.

Snoep stelen in een buurtwinkel:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Horen hoe twee vreemden seks hebben:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
In hondenpoep trappen:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Stelen van een buur:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Orale seks hebben:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Naast iemand zitten die rode zweren heeft op zijn arm:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Een student die spiekt om goede cijfers te halen:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Naar een pornofilm kijken:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Een hand geven aan een vreemde die zweterige handen heeft:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Een vriend bedriegen:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Te weten komen dat iemand die je niet graag hebt seksuele fantasieën heeft over u:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Schimmel zien op oude restjes in uw koelkast:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Iemands handtekening namaken op een wettelijk document:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Iemand die u net leren kennen hebt meenemen naar je kamer om seks te hebben:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Naast iemand staan die een slechte lijfgeur heeft:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Voorsteken in een rij om de laatste tickets te kopen voor een show:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Een vreemde van het andere geslacht die opzettelijk uw dij streelt in een lift:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Een kakkerlak over de vloer zien lopen:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Opzettelijk liegen tijdens een zakentransactie:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Anale seks hebben met iemand van het andere geslacht:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Per ongeluk iemands bloederige wond aanraken:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Appendix 3

Questionnaire: Drunken sailor (chapters five and six)

Version 1 Order 1

You will see four stories; please read them carefully. After you have read each story we will ask you a few questions.

Mr. Williams is an officer on a cargo ship in 2010, carrying goods along the Atlantic coastline. All the crew members are American but the ship is mostly in international waters. When a ship is in international waters, it has to follow the law of the state whose flag it sails under and each ship can sail under only one flag. This ship does not sail under the U.S. flag. The law of this ship's flag state allows both whipping and food deprivation as a punishment. On this ship, whipping is always used to discipline sailors who disobey orders or who are drunk on duty; as a consequence everyone on this ship has come to think that whipping is an appropriate punishment. Food deprivation however is never used to discipline sailors and no one on this ship thinks food deprivation is an appropriate punishment. One night, while the ship is in international waters, Mr. Williams finds a sailor drunk at a time when the sailor should have been on watch. After the sailor sobers up, Mr. Williams punishes the sailor by giving him 5 lashes with a whip. This does not go against the law of the flag state.

QUESTION 1: Is it morally permissible for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor?

1. Yes, it is morally permissible
2. Yes, it is morally permissible but it is wrong for reasons that have nothing to do with morality (e.g., it might be unlawful)
3. No, it is morally wrong (whether it is right or wrong in other ways or not)

QUESTION 2: Why is it morally wrong for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 1. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 2: Why is it morally permissible for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor? Please briefly

list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 1. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 2a: Why is it morally permissible for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 1. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 2b: In what other ways is it wrong for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 1. (Write a minimum of one word.)

Mr. Johnson is an officer on another cargo ship in 2010, carrying goods along the Atlantic coastline. All the crew members are American but the ship is mostly in international waters. When a ship is in international waters, it has to follow the law of the state whose flag it sails under and each ship can sail under only one flag. This ship does not sail under the U.S. flag. The law of this ship's flag state allows both whipping and food deprivation as a punishment. On this ship, food deprivation is always used to discipline sailors who disobey orders or who are drunk on duty; as a consequence everyone on this ship has come to think that food deprivation is an appropriate punishment. Whipping however is never used to discipline sailors and no one on this ship thinks whipping is an appropriate punishment. One night, while the ship is in international waters, Mr. Johnson finds a sailor drunk at a time when the sailor should have been on watch. After the sailor sobers up, Mr. Johnson punishes the sailor by giving him 5 lashes with a whip. This does not go against the law of the flag state.

QUESTION 3: Is it morally permissible for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor?

1. Yes, it is morally permissible
2. Yes, it is morally permissible but it is wrong for reasons that have nothing to do with morality (e.g., it might be unlawful)
3. No, it is morally wrong (whether it is right or wrong in other ways or not)

QUESTION 4: Why is it morally wrong for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 3. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 4: Why is it morally permissible for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 3. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 4a: Why is it morally permissible for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 3. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 4b: In what other ways is it wrong for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 3. (Write a minimum of one word.)

Marc and Eric are sailors on Mr. Williams ship. They both know that on Mr. Johnsons ship whipping is never practiced and that no one on Mr. Johnsons ship thinks that whipping is an appropriate punishment. They also know that food deprivation is always practiced on Mr. Johnsons ship and that everyone on Mr. Johnsons ship has come to think that food deprivation is an appropriate punishment. Of course, on their own ship, it is just the other way around: everybody on Marc and Eric's ship thinks that whipping is an appropriate punishment. Hence, even though Marc and Eric are sailors on Mr. Williams ship, they are both fully informed about the different practices and sensibilities on Mr. Johnsons ship. They have heard that Mr. Johnson

whipped a sailor on his ship. Marc says to Eric: what Mr. Johnson did was morally permissible.

QUESTION 5: Is what Marc says true or false?

1. True
2. False
3. Neither

QUESTION 6: Why is it true what Marc says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 6: Why is it false what Marc says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 6: Why is it neither true nor false what Marc says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

Peter and Steve are sailors on Mr. Johnson's ship. They both know that on Mr. Williams' ship food deprivation is never practiced and that no one on Mr. Williams' ship thinks that food deprivation is an appropriate punishment. They also know that whipping is always practiced on Mr. Williams' ship and that everyone on Mr. Williams' ship has come to think that whipping is an appropriate punishment. Of course, on their own ship, it is just the other way around: no one on Peter and Steve's ship thinks that whipping is an appropriate punishment. Hence, even though Peter and Steve are sailors on Mr. Johnson's ship, they are both fully informed about the different practices and sensibilities on Mr. Williams' ship. They have heard that Mr. Williams whipped a sailor on his ship. Peter says to Steve: what Mr. Williams did was morally permissible.

QUESTION 7: Is what Peter says true or false?

1. True
2. False
3. Neither

QUESTION 8: Why is it true what Peter says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 8: Why is it false what Peter says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 8: Why is it neither true nor false what Peter says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

Version 1 Order 2

You will see four stories; please read them carefully. After you have read each story we will ask you a few questions.

Mr. Johnson is an officer on a cargo ship in 2010, carrying goods along the Atlantic coastline. All the crew members are American but the ship is mostly in international waters. When a ship is in international waters, it has to follow the law of the state whose flag it sails under and each ship can sail under only one flag. This ship does not sail under the U.S. flag. The law of this ship's flag state allows both whipping and food deprivation as a punishment. On this ship, food deprivation is always used to discipline sailors who disobey orders or who are drunk on duty; as a consequence everyone on this ship has come to think that food deprivation is an appropriate

punishment. Whipping however is never used to discipline sailors and no one on this ship thinks whipping is an appropriate punishment. One night, while the ship is in international waters, Mr. Johnson finds a sailor drunk at a time when the sailor should have been on watch. After the sailor sobers up, Mr. Johnson punishes the sailor by giving him 5 lashes with a whip. This does not go against the law of the flag state.

QUESTION 1: Is it morally permissible for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor?

1. Yes, it is morally permissible
2. Yes, it is morally permissible but it is wrong for reasons that have nothing to do with morality (e.g., it might be unlawful)
3. No, it is morally wrong (whether it is right or wrong in other ways or not)

QUESTION 2: Why is it morally wrong for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 1. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 2: Why is it morally permissible for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 1. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 2a: Why is it morally permissible for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 1. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 2b: In what other ways is it wrong for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 1. (Write a minimum of one word.)

Mr. Williams is an officer on another cargo ship in 2010, carrying goods along the Atlantic coastline. All the crew members are American but the ship is mostly in international waters. When a ship is in international waters, it has to follow the law of the state whose flag it sails under and each ship can sail under only one flag. This ship does not sail under the U.S. flag. The law of this ship's flag state allows both whipping and food deprivation as a punishment. On this ship, whipping is always used to discipline sailors who disobey orders or who are drunk on duty; as a consequence everyone on this ship has come to think that whipping is an appropriate punishment. Food deprivation however is never used to discipline sailors and no one on this ship thinks food deprivation is an appropriate punishment. One night, while the ship is in international waters, Mr. Williams finds a sailor drunk at a time when the sailor should have been on watch. After the sailor sobers up, Mr. Williams punishes the sailor by giving him 5 lashes with a whip. This does not go against the law of the flag state.

QUESTION 3: Is it morally permissible for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor?

1. Yes, it is morally permissible
2. Yes, it is morally permissible but it is wrong for reasons that have nothing to do with morality (e.g., it might be unlawful)
3. No, it is morally wrong (whether it is right or wrong in other ways or not)

QUESTION 4: Why is it morally wrong for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 3. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 4: Why is it morally permissible for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 3. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 4a: Why is it morally permissible for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 3. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 4b: In what other ways is it wrong for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 3. (Write a minimum of one word.)

[Subsequent scenarios and questions 5 – 8 are exactly as as in version 1, order 1]

Version 1 Order 3

[First two scenarios and questions 1 - 4 are exactly as in version 1, order 1]

Peter and Steve are sailors on Mr. Johnsons ship. They both know that on Mr. Williams ship food deprivation is never practiced and that no one on Mr. Williams ship thinks that food deprivation is an appropriate punishment. They also know that whipping is always practiced on Mr. Williams ship and that everyone on Mr. Williams ship has come to think that whipping is an appropriate punishment. Of course, on their own ship, it is just the other way around: no one on Peter and Steves ship thinks that whipping is an appropriate punishment. Hence, even though Peter and Steve are sailors on Mr. Johnsons ship, they are both fully informed about the different practices and sensibilities on Mr. Williams ship. They have heard that Mr. Williams whipped a sailor on his ship. Peter says to Steve: what Mr. Williams did was morally permissible.

QUESTION 5: Is what Peter says true or false?

- 1.True
- 2.False
- 3.Neither

QUESTION 6: Why is it true what Peter says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 6: Why is it false what Peter says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 6: Why is it neither true nor false what Peter says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

Marc and Eric are sailors on Mr. Williams ship. They both know that on Mr. Johnsons ship whipping is never practiced and that no one on Mr. Johnsons ship thinks that whipping is an appropriate punishment. They also know that food deprivation is always practiced on Mr. Johnsons ship and that everyone on Mr. Johnsons ship has come to think that food deprivation is an appropriate punishment. Of course, on their own ship, it is just the other way around: everybody on Marc and Eric's ship thinks that whipping is an appropriate punishment. Hence, even though Marc and Eric are sailors on Mr. Williams ship, they are both fully informed about the different practices and sensibilities on Mr. Johnsons ship. They have heard that Mr. Johnson whipped a sailor on his ship. Marc says to Eric: what Mr. Johnson did was morally permissible.

QUESTION 7: Is what Marc says true or false?

- 1.True
- 2.False
- 3.Neither

QUESTION 8: Why is it true what Marc says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 8: Why is it false what Marc says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 8: Why is it neither true nor false what Marc says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

Version 1 Order 4

[First two scenarios and questions 1 - 4 are exactly as in version 1, order 2]

[Subsequent scenarios and questions 5 – 8 are exactly as as in version 1, order 3]

Version 1 Order 5

You will see four stories; please read them carefully. We will ask you a few questions about these stories.

Mr. Williams is an officer on a cargo ship in 2010, carrying goods along the Atlantic coastline. All the crew members are American but the ship is mostly in international waters. When a ship is in international waters, it has to follow the law of the state whose flag it sails under and each ship can sail under only one flag. This ship does not sail under the U.S. flag. The law of this ship's flag state allows both whipping and food deprivation as a punishment. On this ship, whipping is always used to discipline sailors who disobey orders or who are drunk on duty; as a consequence everyone on this ship has come to think that whipping is an appropriate punishment. Food deprivation however is never used to discipline sailors and no one on this ship thinks food deprivation is an appropriate punishment. One night, while the ship is in international waters, Mr. Williams finds a sailor drunk at a time when the sailor should have been on watch. After the sailor sobers up, Mr. Williams punishes the sailor by giving him 5 lashes with a whip. This does not go against the law of the flag state.

Peter and Steve are sailors on Mr. Johnsons ship. He is an officer on another cargo ship in 2010, carrying goods along the Atlantic coastline. As is the case on Mr. Williams ship, all the crew members on Mr. Johnsons ship are American but the ship is mostly in international waters. This ship does not sail under the U.S. flag. The law of this ship's flag state allows both whipping and food deprivation as a punishment. On this ship, food deprivation is always used to discipline

sailors who disobey orders or who are drunk on duty; as a consequence everyone on this ship has come to think that food deprivation is an appropriate punishment. Whipping however is never used to discipline sailors and no one on this ship thinks whipping is an appropriate punishment. Peter and Steve both know that on Mr. Williams ship food deprivation is never practiced and that no one on Mr. Williams ship thinks that food deprivation is an appropriate punishment. They also know that whipping is always practiced on Mr. Williams ship and that everyone on Mr. Williams ship has come to think that whipping is an appropriate punishment. Of course, on their own ship, it is just the other way around: no one on Peter and Steve's ship thinks that whipping is an appropriate punishment. Hence, even though Peter and Steve are sailors on Mr. Johnson's ship, they are both fully informed about the different practices and sensibilities on Mr. Williams ship. They have heard that Mr. Williams whipped a sailor on his ship. Peter says to Steve: what Mr. Williams did was morally permissible.

QUESTION 1: Is what Peter says true or false?

1. True
2. False
3. Neither

QUESTION 2: Why is it true what Peter says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 2: Why is it false what Peter says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 2: Why is it neither true nor false what Peter says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

We have seen that Mr. Johnson is an officer on a cargo ship in 2010, carrying goods along the Atlantic coastline. All the crew members are American but the ship is mostly in international waters. When a ship is in international waters, it has to follow the law of the state whose flag it sails under and each ship can sail under only one flag. This ship does not sail under the U.S. flag. The law of this ship's flag state allows both whipping and food deprivation as a punishment. As stated before, on this ship, food deprivation is always used to discipline sailors who disobey orders or who are drunk on duty; as a consequence everyone on this ship has come to think that food deprivation is an appropriate punishment. Whipping however is never used to discipline sailors and no one on this ship thinks whipping is an appropriate punishment. Now what happened on Mr. Williams ship also happened on Mr. Johnson's ship: One night, while the ship is in international waters, Mr. Johnson finds a sailor drunk at a time when the sailor should have been on watch. After the sailor sobers up, Mr. Johnson punishes the sailor by giving him 5 lashes with a whip. This does not go against the law of the flag state.

Marc and Eric are sailors on Mr. Williams ship. They both know that on Mr. Johnson's ship whipping is never practiced and that no one on Mr. Johnson's ship thinks that whipping is an appropriate punishment. They also know that food deprivation is always practiced on Mr. Johnson's ship and that everyone on Mr. Johnson's ship has come to think that food deprivation is an appropriate punishment. Of course, on their own ship, it is just the other way around: everybody on Marc and Eric's ship thinks that whipping is an appropriate punishment. Hence, even though Marc and Eric are sailors on Mr. Williams ship, they are both fully informed about the different practices and sensibilities on Mr. Johnson's ship. They have heard that Mr. Johnson whipped a sailor on his ship. Marc says to Eric: what Mr. Johnson did was morally permissible.

QUESTION 3: Is what Marc says true or false?

1. True
2. False
3. Neither

QUESTION 4: Why is it true what Marc says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 4: Why is it false what Marc says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 4: Why is it neither true nor false what Marc says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

Recall that Mr. Johnson punished a sailor for being drunk while he should have been on watch, by giving him 5 lashes with a whip. This does not go against the law of the flag state. On this ship, food deprivation is always used to discipline sailors who disobey orders or who are drunk on duty; as a consequence everyone on this ship has come to think that food deprivation is an appropriate punishment. Whipping however is never used to discipline sailors and no one on this ship thinks whipping is an appropriate punishment.

QUESTION 5: Is it morally permissible for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor?

1. Yes, it is morally permissible
2. Yes, it is morally permissible but it is wrong for reasons that have nothing to do with morality (e.g., it might be unlawful)
3. No, it is morally wrong (whether it is right or wrong in other ways or not)

QUESTION 6: Why is it morally wrong for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 3. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 6: Why is it morally permissible for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 3. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 6a: Why is it morally permissible for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 3. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 6b: In what other ways is it wrong for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 3. (Write a minimum of one word.)

Recall that Mr. Williams punished a sailor for being drunk while he should have been on watch, by giving him 5 lashes with a whip. This does not go against the law of the flag state. On this ship, whipping is always used to discipline sailors who disobey orders or who are drunk on duty; as a consequence everyone on this ship has come to think that whipping is an appropriate punishment. Food deprivation however is never used to discipline sailors and no one on this ship thinks food deprivation is an appropriate punishment.

QUESTION 7: Is it morally permissible for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor?

1. Yes, it is morally permissible
2. Yes, it is morally permissible but it is wrong for reasons that have nothing to do with morality (e.g., it might be unlawful)
3. No, it is morally wrong (whether it is right or wrong in other ways or not)

QUESTION 8: Why is it morally wrong for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 1. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 8: Why is it morally permissible for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 1. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 8a: Why is it morally permissible for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 1. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 8b: In what other ways is it wrong for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 1. (Write a minimum of one word.)

Version 1 Order 6

You will see four stories; please read them carefully. We will ask you a few questions about these stories.

Mr. Johnson is an officer on a cargo ship in 2010, carrying goods along the Atlantic coastline. All the crew members are American but the ship is mostly in international waters. When a ship is in international waters, it has to follow the law of the state whose flag it sails under and each ship can sail under only one flag. This ship does not sail under the U.S. flag. The law of this ship's flag state allows both whipping and food deprivation as a punishment. On this ship, food deprivation is always used to discipline sailors who disobey orders or who are drunk on duty; as a consequence everyone on this ship has come to think that food deprivation is an appropriate punishment. Whipping however is never used to discipline sailors and no one on this ship thinks whipping is an appropriate punishment. One night, while the ship is in international waters, Mr. Johnson finds a sailor drunk at a time when the sailor should have been on watch. After the sailor sobers up, Mr. Johnson punishes the sailor by giving him 5 lashes with a whip. This does not go against the law of the flag state.

Marc and Eric are sailors on Mr. Williams ship. He is an officer on another cargo ship in 2010, carrying goods along the Atlantic coastline. As is the case on Mr. Johnsons ship, all the crew members on Mr. Williams ship are American but the ship is mostly in international waters. This ship does not sail under the U.S. flag. The law of this ship's flag state allows both whipping and food deprivation as a punishment. On this ship, whipping is always used to discipline sailors who disobey orders or who are drunk on duty; as a consequence everyone on this ship has come to think that whipping is an appropriate punishment. Food deprivation however is never used to discipline sailors and no one on this ship thinks food deprivation is an appropriate punishment. Marc and Eric both know that on Johnsons ship whipping is never practiced and that no one on Mr. Johnsons ship thinks that whipping is an appropriate punishment. They also know that food deprivation is always practiced on Mr. Johnsons ship and that everyone on Mr. Williams ship has come to think that food deprivation is an appropriate punishment. Of course, on their own ship, it is just the other way around: everyone on Marc and Eric's ship thinks that whipping is an appropriate punishment. Hence, even though Marc and Eric are sailors on Mr. Williams ship, they are both fully informed about the different practices and sensibilities on Mr. Johnsons ship. They have heard that Mr. Johnson whipped a sailor on his ship. Marc says to Eric: what Mr. Johnson did was morally permissible.

QUESTION 1: Is what Marc says true or false?

1. True

- 2.False
- 3.Neither

QUESTION 2: Why is it true what Marc says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 2: Why is it false what Marc says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 2: Why is it neither true nor false what Marc says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

We have seen that Mr. Williams is an officer on another cargo ship in 2010, carrying goods along the Atlantic coastline. All the crew members are American but the ship is mostly in international waters. When a ship is in international waters, it has to follow the law of the state whose flag it sails under and each ship can sail under only one flag. This ship does not sail under the U.S. flag. The law of this ship's flag state allows both whipping and food deprivation as a punishment. As stated before, on this ship, whipping is always used to discipline sailors who disobey orders or who are drunk on duty; as a consequence everyone on this ship has come to think that whipping is an appropriate punishment. Food deprivation however is never used to discipline sailors and no one on this ship thinks food deprivation is an appropriate punishment. Now what happened on Mr. Johnsons ship also happened on Mr. Williams ship: One night, while the ship is in international waters, Mr. Williams finds a sailor drunk at a time when the sailor should have been on watch. After the sailor sobers up, Mr. Williams punishes the sailor by giving him 5 lashes with a whip. This does not go against the law of the flag state.

Peter and Steve are sailors on Mr. Johnsons ship. They both know that on Mr. Williams ship food deprivation is never practiced and that no one on Mr. Williams ship thinks that food deprivation is an appropriate punishment. They also know that whipping is always practiced on Mr. Williams ship and that everyone on Mr. Williams ship has come to think that whipping is an appropriate punishment. Of course, on their own ship, it is just the other way around: no one on Peter and Steves ship thinks that whipping is an appropriate punishment. Hence, even though Peter and Steve are sailors on Mr. Johnsons ship, they are both fully informed about the different practices and sensibilities on Mr. Williams ship. They have heard that Mr. Williams whipped a sailor on his ship. Peter says to Steve: what Mr. Williams did was morally permissible.

QUESTION 3: Is what Peter says true or false?

- 1.True
- 2.False
- 3.Neither

QUESTION 4: Why is it true what Peter says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 4: Why is it false what Peter says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 4: Why is it neither true nor false what Peter says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

[Subsequent scenarios and questions 5 – 8 are exactly as as in version 1, order 5]

Version 1 Order 7

[First two scenarios and questions 1 - 4 are exactly as in version 1, order 1]

Recall that Mr. Williams punished a sailor for being drunk while he should have been on watch, by giving him 5 lashes with a whip. This does not go against the law of the flag state. On this ship, whipping is always used to discipline sailors who disobey orders or who are drunk on duty; as a consequence everyone on this ship has come to think that whipping is an appropriate punishment. Food deprivation however is never used to discipline sailors and no one on this ship thinks food deprivation is an appropriate punishment.

QUESTION 5: Is it morally permissible for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor?

1. Yes, it is morally permissible
2. Yes, it is morally permissible but it is wrong for reasons that have nothing to do with morality (e.g., it might be unlawful)
3. No, it is morally wrong (whether it is right or wrong in other ways or not)

QUESTION 6: Why is it morally wrong for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 1. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 6: Why is it morally permissible for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 1. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 6a: Why is it morally permissible for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 1. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 6b: In what other ways is it wrong for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 1. (Write a minimum of one word.)

Recall that Mr. Johnson punished a sailor for being drunk while he should have been on watch, by giving him 5 lashes with a whip. This does not go against the law of the flag state. On this ship, food deprivation is always used to discipline sailors who disobey orders or who are drunk on duty; as a consequence everyone on this ship has come to think that food deprivation is an appropriate punishment. Whipping however is never used to discipline sailors and no one on this ship thinks whipping is an appropriate punishment.

QUESTION 7: Is it morally permissible for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor?

1. Yes, it is morally permissible
2. Yes, it is morally permissible but it is wrong for reasons that have nothing to do with morality (e.g., it might be unlawful)
3. No, it is morally wrong (whether it is right or wrong in other ways or not)

QUESTION 8: Why is it morally wrong for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 3. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 8: Why is it morally permissible for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 3. (Write a minimum of one

word.)

QUESTION 8a: Why is it morally permissible for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 3. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 8b: In what other ways is it wrong for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 3. (Write a minimum of one word.)

Version 1 Order 8

[First two scenarios and questions 1 - 4 are exactly as in version 1, order 6]

[Subsequent scenarios and questions 5 - 8 are exactly as as in version 1, order 7]

Version 2 Order 1

You will see four stories; please read them carefully. After you have read each story we will ask you a few questions.

Mr. Williams is an officer on a cargo ship in 2010, carrying goods along the Atlantic coastline. All the crew members are American but the ship is mostly in international waters. When a ship is in international waters, it has to follow the law of the state whose flag it sails under and each ship can sail under only one flag. This ship does not sail under the U.S. flag. The law of this ship's flag state allows both whipping and food deprivation as a punishment. On this ship, whipping is always used to discipline sailors who disobey orders or who are drunk on duty. Food deprivation however is never used to discipline sailors. One night, while the ship is in international waters, Mr. Williams finds a sailor drunk at a time when the sailor should have been on watch. After the sailor sobers up, Mr. Williams punishes the sailor by giving him 5 lashes with a whip. This does not go against the law of the flag state.

QUESTION 1: Is it morally permissible for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor?

1. Yes, it is morally permissible
2. Yes, it is morally permissible but it is wrong for reasons that have nothing to do with morality (e.g., it might be unlawful)
3. No, it is morally wrong (whether it is right or wrong in other ways or not)

QUESTION 2: Why is it morally wrong for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 1. (Write a minimum of one

word.)

QUESTION 2: Why is it morally permissible for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 1. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 2a: Why is it morally permissible for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 1. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 2b: In what other ways is it wrong for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 1. (Write a minimum of one word.)

Mr. Johnson is an officer on another cargo ship in 2010, carrying goods along the Atlantic coastline. All the crew members are American but the ship is mostly in international waters. When a ship is in international waters, it has to follow the law of the state whose flag it sails under and each ship can sail under only one flag. This ship does not sail under the U.S. flag. The law of this ship's flag state allows both whipping and food deprivation as a punishment. On this ship, food deprivation is always used to discipline sailors who disobey orders or who are drunk on duty. Whipping however is never used to discipline sailors. One night, while the ship is in international waters, Mr. Johnson finds a sailor drunk at a time when the sailor should have been on watch. After the sailor sobers up, Mr. Johnson punishes the sailor by giving him 5 lashes with a whip. This does not go against the law of the flag state.

QUESTION 3: Is it morally permissible for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor?

1. Yes, it is morally permissible
2. Yes, it is morally permissible but it is wrong for reasons that have nothing to do with morality (e.g., it might be unlawful)
3. No, it is morally wrong (whether it is right or wrong in other ways or not)

QUESTION 4: Why is it morally wrong for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 3. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 4: Why is it morally permissible for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 3. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 4a: Why is it morally permissible for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 3. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 4b: In what other ways is it wrong for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 3. (Write a minimum of one word.)

Marc and Eric are sailors on Mr. Williams ship. They both know that on Mr. Johnson's ship whipping is never practiced. They also know that food deprivation is always practiced on Mr. Johnson's ship. Of course, on their own ship, it is just the other way around: whipping is always practiced on Marc and Eric's ship. Hence, even though Marc and Eric are sailors on Mr. Williams ship, they are both fully informed about the different practices on Mr. Johnson's ship. They have heard that Mr. Johnson whipped a sailor on his ship. Marc says to Eric: what Mr. Johnson did was morally permissible.

QUESTION 5: Is what Marc says true or false?

- 1.True
- 2.False
- 3.Neither

QUESTION 6: Why is it true what Marc says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 6: Why is it false what Marc says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 6: Why is it neither true nor false what Marc says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

Peter and Steve are sailors on Mr. Johnsons ship. They both know that on Mr. Williams ship food deprivation is never practiced. They also know that whipping is always practiced on Mr. Williams ship. Of course, on their own ship, it is just the other way around: whipping is never practiced on Peter and Steves ship. Hence, even though Peter and Steve are sailors on Mr. Johnsons ship, they are both fully informed about the different practices on Mr. Williams ship. They have heard that Mr. Williams whipped a sailor on his ship. Peter says to Steve: what Mr. Williams did was morally permissible.

QUESTION 7: Is what Peter says true or false?

- 1.True
- 2.False
- 3.Neither

QUESTION 8: Why is it true what Peter says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 8: Why is it false what Peter says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 8: Why is it neither true nor false what Peter says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

Version 2 Order 2

You will see four stories; please read them carefully. After you have read each story we will ask you a few questions.

Mr. Johnson is an officer on a cargo ship in 2010, carrying goods along the Atlantic coastline. All the crew members are American but the ship is mostly in international waters. When a ship is in international waters, it has to follow the law of the state whose flag it sails under and each ship can sail under only one flag. This ship does not sail under the U.S. flag. The law of this ship's flag state allows both whipping and food deprivation as a punishment. On this ship, food deprivation is always used to discipline sailors who disobey orders or who are drunk on duty. Whipping however is never used to discipline sailors. One night, while the ship is in international waters, Mr. Johnson finds a sailor drunk at a time when the sailor should have been on watch. After the sailor sobers up, Mr. Johnson punishes the sailor by giving him 5 lashes with a whip. This does not go against the law of the flag state.

QUESTION 1: Is it morally permissible for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor?

1. Yes, it is morally permissible
2. Yes, it is morally permissible but it is wrong for reasons that have nothing to do with morality (e.g., it might be unlawful)
3. No, it is morally wrong (whether it is right or wrong in other ways or not)

QUESTION 2: Why is it morally wrong for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 1. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 2: Why is it morally permissible for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 1. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 2a: Why is it morally permissible for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 1. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 2b: In what other ways is it wrong for Mr. Johnson to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 1. (Write a minimum of one word.)

Mr. Williams is an officer on another cargo ship in 2010, carrying goods along the Atlantic coastline. All the crew members are American but the ship is mostly in international waters. When a ship is in international waters, it has to follow the law of the state whose flag it sails under and each ship can sail under only one flag. This ship does not sail under the U.S. flag. The law of this ship's flag state allows both whipping and food deprivation as a punishment. On this ship, whipping is always used to discipline sailors who disobey orders or who are drunk on duty. Food deprivation however is never used to discipline sailors. One night, while the ship is in international waters, Mr. Williams finds a sailor drunk at a time when the sailor should have been on watch. After the sailor sobers up, Mr. Williams punishes the sailor by giving him 5 lashes with a whip. This does not go against the law of the flag state.

QUESTION 3: Is it morally permissible for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor?

1. Yes, it is morally permissible
2. Yes, it is morally permissible but it is wrong for reasons that have nothing to do with morality (e.g., it might be unlawful)
3. No, it is morally wrong (whether it is right or wrong in other ways or not)

QUESTION 4: Why is it morally wrong for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 3. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 4: Why is it morally permissible for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 3. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 4a: Why is it morally permissible for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 3. (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 4b: In what other ways is it wrong for Mr. Williams to whip the sailor? Please briefly list all the reasons you thought of while you were answering question 3. (Write a minimum of one word.)

[Subsequent scenarios and questions 5 – 8 are exactly as as in version 2, order 1]

Version 2 Order 3

[First two scenarios and questions 1 - 4 are exactly as in version 2, order 1]

Peter and Steve are sailors on Mr. Johnsons ship. They both know that on Mr. Williams ship food deprivation is never practiced. They also know that whipping is always practiced on Mr. Williams ship. Of course, on their own ship, it is just the other way around: whipping is never practiced on Peter and Steves ship. Hence, even though Peter and Steve are sailors on Mr. Johnsons ship, they are both fully informed about the different practices on Mr. Williams ship. They have heard that Mr. Williams whipped a sailor on his ship. Peter says to Steve: what Mr. Williams did was morally permissible.

QUESTION 5: Is what Peter says true or false?

- 1.True
- 2.False
- 3.Neither

QUESTION 6: Why is it true what Peter says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 6: Why is it false what Peter says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 6: Why is it neither true nor false what Peter says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

Marc and Eric are sailors on Mr. Williams ship. They both know that on Mr. Johnsons ship whipping is never practiced. They also know that food deprivation is always practiced on Mr. Johnsons ship. Of course, on their own ship, it is just the other way around: whipping is always practiced on Marc and Eric's ship. Hence, even though Marc and Eric are sailors on Mr. Williams ship, they are both fully informed about the different practices on Mr. Johnsons ship. They have heard that Mr. Johnson whipped a sailor on his ship. Marc says to Eric: what Mr. Johnson did was morally permissible.

QUESTION 7: Is what Marc says true or false?

- 1.True
- 2.False
- 3.Neither

QUESTION 8: Why is it true what Marc says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 8: Why is it false what Marc says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

QUESTION 8: Why is it neither true nor false what Marc says? (Write a minimum of one word.)

Version 2 Order 4

[First two scenarios and questions 1 - 4 are exactly as in version 2, order 2]

[Subsequent scenarios and questions 5 – 8 are exactly as as in version 2, order 3]

Demographic and control questions

What is your gender?

1. Male
2. Female

What is your age?

Why was the sailor punished?

1. He burned the flag
2. He was drunk when he should have been on watch
3. He had used violence

What is your highest level of education?

1. Less than K12 or no secondary level diploma
2. K-12 or secondary level diploma
3. Some high school
4. High school diploma
5. Some college
6. 2-year college degree
7. 4-year college degree
8. Bachelor-level degree
9. Master-level degree (MS, MA, etc...)
10. Doctorate-level degree (PhD)
11. Other

What is the annual income in your household?

1. Under \$2,500
2. \$2,500 to \$12,499
3. \$12,500 to \$24,999
4. \$25,000 to \$37,999
5. \$38,000 to \$49,999
6. \$50,000 to \$74,999
7. \$75,000 to \$99,999
8. \$100,000 or more

What country do you live in?

ZIP/Postal Code:

What languages do you speak? Please also indicate your first language, this is the language you speak the best.

Indicate on this scale from 0 to 6 if you consider yourself liberal or conservative. Select the one number that seems most appropriate to you.

- 1.0 Extremely Liberal
- 2.1 Moderately Liberal
- 3.2 Slightly Liberal
- 4.3 Neither Liberal or Conservative
- 5.4 Slightly Conservative
- 6.5 Moderately Conservative
- 7.6 Extremely Conservative

Indicate on this scale from 0 to 6 if you consider yourself a Republican or a Democrat. Indicate the one number that seems most appropriate to you.

- 1.0 Extremely Republican
- 2.1 Moderately Republican
- 3.2 Slightly Republican
- 4.3 Neither Republican or Democrat
- 5.4 Slightly Democrat
- 6.5 Moderately Democrat
- 7.6 Extremely Democrat

Have you ever taken this survey before?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

Do you have any comments about this study? (This is optional)

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