

Universe and You: A Search for Universal Moral Values

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Introduction

- Difficulties in intercultural and multicultural communication arise often because of differing moral values.
- Some scholars have proposed the idea of universal moral values held by all human beings.
- The discovery of a set of universal moral values would help people to better understand other perspectives and moral systems.
- This paper will synthesize and compare the moral values literature from six different disciplines prevalent in moral values research: philosophy/ethics, religion, communication, developmental psychology, evolutionary psychology, and anthropology.

Literature Review

- Philosophy/ethics research includes teachings from Aristotle (2002), as well as modern ethicists and ethical teachings of the Dalai Lama (2001) (separate from religious teachings).
- Religion research includes different teachings of The Golden Rule in religious texts (Confucius & Lau, 1979; ESV Bible, 2018, Luke 6:31; Vidyalankar, 1998) as well as other research on the religious values of the world's major religions (Oppelt, 2012; "Summary of Religions and Beliefs: University of Bolton," n.d.).
- Communication research involves a search for universal ethical principles (moral values) that everyone should follow to ensure ethical communication (Chen & Starosta, 2005; Kale, 2003).
- Developmental psychology research includes the empirical research contributions of Kohlberg (1958) and Gilligan (1982), who have established an ethic of justice and ethic of care dichotomy in the field.
- Evolutionary psychology research proposes Moral Foundations Theory (Haidt & Joseph, 2007), which suggests five main moral intuitions that can be translated into moral values: care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation.
- Anthropology research also proposes the "Big Three" of Morality (Shweder et al, 1997): the ethic of autonomy, the ethic of community, and the ethic of sanctity, which are all comprised of a few moral values per ethic.

Methodology

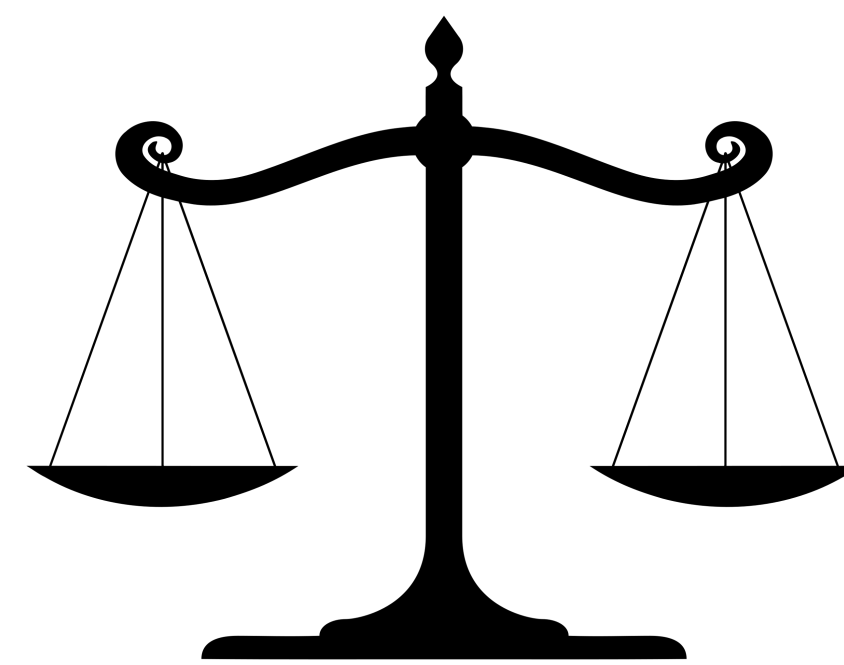
- This paper synthesizes the literature across six different disciplines.
- These disciplines were selected as the disciplines most involved in moral values research, but it is not an exhaustive list.
- The six disciplines being compared are philosophy/ethics, religion, communication, developmental psychology, evolutionary psychology, and anthropology.
- After comparing the most prevalent moral values across disciplines, this paper proposes a list of the most likely contenders for universal moral values.

More Information

Further questions can be sent to Jillian Meyer at jillianleemeyer@gmail.com.

What are YOUR moral values?

Justice



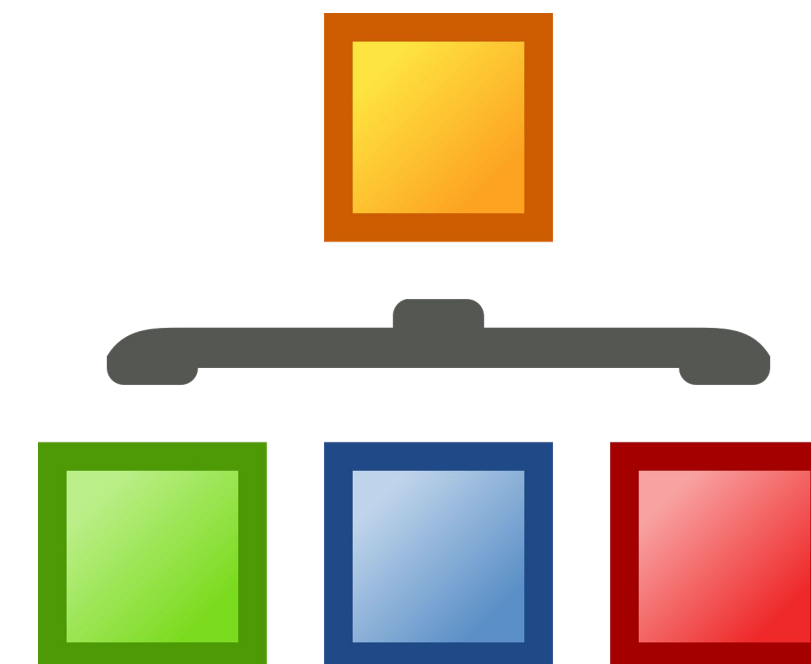
Care/Harm



Sanctity



Authority



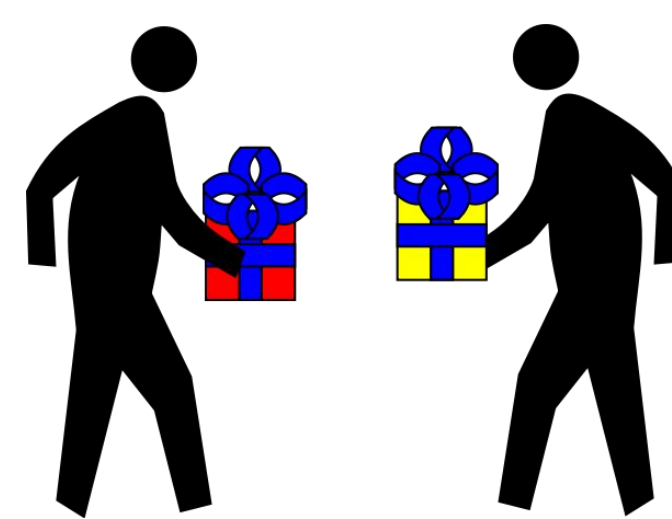
Honesty



Tolerance



Reciprocity



Loyalty



Forgiveness



Harmony



Results

Justice

- Philosophy/ethics
 - Aristotle's (2002) four cardinal virtues
 - Sissela Bok's (2002) ethical theory
- Religion
 - The Golden Rule (ESV Bible, 2018, Luke 6:31)
- Communication
 - Chen and Starosta's (2005) communication "Golden Rule"
- Developmental Psychology
 - Kohlberg's (1958) stages of moral development
- Evolutionary Psychology
 - Haidt and Joseph's (2007) fairness/cheating moral foundation
- Anthropology
 - Shweder et al's (1997) justice value within ethic of autonomy

Care/Harm

- Philosophy/ethics
 - Sissela Bok's (2002) care duty
 - Christians and Traber's (1997) ethical principle of not harming the innocent
- Religion
 - The Golden Rule (Confucius & Lau, 1979; Rockhill, 2015)
 - Judaism and Jainism care values ("Summary of Religions and Beliefs: University of Bolton," n.d.)
- Communication
 - David Kale's (2003) ethical principles for communication
- Developmental Psychology
 - Gilligan's (1982) stages of moral development
- Evolutionary Psychology
 - Charles Darwin's (1871) naturally selected sympathy trait
 - Haidt and Joseph's (2007) care/harm moral foundation
- Anthropology
 - Shweder et al's (1997) harm value within ethic of autonomy

Sanctity

- Philosophy/ethics (Aristotle, 2002)
- Religion (Smith, 2004, 89:5-7; "Summary of Religions and Beliefs: University of Bolton," n.d.)
- Communication (Christians & Traber, 1997)
- Evolutionary Psychology (Haidt & Joseph, 2004; Haidt & Joseph, 2007)
- Anthropology (Shweder et al, 1997)

Authority

- Religion (Oppelt, 2012; "Summary of Religions and Beliefs: University of Bolton," n.d.)
- Evolutionary Psychology (Darwin, 1871; Haidt & Joseph, 2007)
- Anthropology (Shweder et al, 1997)

Discussion

- Future research should seek the prevalence of these moral values in disciplines both incorporated and left out of this study.
- This research is limited by the disciplines selected for moral values research. Other disciplines may shine light on other moral values not at the forefront of the selected research.

