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Liberal–democratic values and philosophers' beliefs about moral expertise

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Abstract

In recent decades, the discipline of bioethics has grown rapidly, as has the practice of ethical consultation. Interestingly, this new recognition of the relevance of moral philosophy to our daily life has been accompanied by skepticism among philosophers regarding the existence of moral expertise or the benefits of philosophical training. In his recent article in *Bioethics*, William R. Smith suggested that this skepticism is rooted in philosophers' belief that moral expertise is inconsistent with liberal–democratic values, when in fact they are compatible. In this paper, we provide a unique opportunity to empirically examine Smith's observation by utilizing and extending global data on philosophers' beliefs about moral expertise, involving 4087 philosophers from 96 countries. Our findings support Smith's theoretical observation and show that societal levels of support for liberal–democratic values are associated with greater skepticism about moral expertise. We suggest that these findings might be explained by the cognitive process of motivated reasoning and an invalid inference of “is” from “ought.” Consequently, the potential tension between moral expertise and liberal–democratic values is invalidly used for rejecting the existence of moral expertise, while its main and valid implication is for how moral expertise should be applied in liberal–democratic settings.

KEYWORDS

cultural differences, experimental philosophy, liberal–democratic values, moral expertise, motivated reasoning

1 | INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the discipline of bioethics has grown rapidly, as has the practice of ethical consultation. Interestingly, this new recognition of the relevance of moral philosophy to our daily life has been accompanied by skepticism among philosophers regarding the existence of moral expertise or the benefits of

philosophical training.¹ In his recent article in *Bioethics*, William R. Smith suggested that this skepticism is rooted in the view that

¹For example, Cowley, C. (2012). Expertise, wisdom and moral philosophers: A response to Gesang. *Bioethics*, 26(6), 337–342. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8519.2010.01860.x>; Archard, D. (2011). Why moral philosophers are not and should not be moral experts. *Bioethics*, 25(3), 119–127. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8519.2009.01748.x>

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moral expertise is inconsistent with liberal and democratic values and argued that they are in fact compatible.²

In this paper, we provide a unique opportunity to empirically examine Smith's observation by analyzing how liberal-democratic values might influence philosophers' beliefs about moral expertise. We utilize and extend the data collected by Niv and Sulitzeanu-Kenan on philosophers' beliefs about moral expertise, which includes 4087 philosophers from 96 countries.³ Our findings support Smith's theoretical observation and show that societal levels of support for liberal-democratic values account for variance in philosophers' beliefs about moral expertise. Importantly, philosophers tend to share a common belief in their ability to analyze moral problems, a capacity that is believed to pose no threat to liberal-democratic values. However, philosophers from more liberal-democratic cultures tend to be more skeptical regarding their ability to judge moral problems, an ability that has been argued to raise substantial normative concerns vis-à-vis liberal-democratic values.

We suggest that these findings might be explained by the cognitive process of motivated reasoning⁴ in which philosophers' concerns regarding moral authority within a liberal-democratic context influence their beliefs about the existence and nature of moral expertise. To the extent that such an influence exists, it reflects an invalid inference of "is" from "ought": Philosophers should not be moral experts, and therefore, they are not. In other words, philosophers' beliefs are shaped by values (ought) that should be irrelevant for determining whether philosophers are moral experts or not (is). In line with Smith's argument, the potential effect of this psychological mechanism suggests that liberal-democratic values do not contradict the mere existence of moral expertise as commonly assumed. However, the tension between moral expertise and liberal-democratic values is indeed relevant and has valid implications for how moral expertise should be applied in liberal-democratic settings. Consequently, the literature on moral expertise should pay less attention to whether philosophers are moral experts and more attention to what the role of moral experts should be in decision-making and how philosophers as moral experts can improve it.

Our findings also offer practical insights regarding the adaptive public role that philosophers should have in varying cultural contexts and contribute to recent efforts to understand what shapes philosophers' beliefs. This is based on a much larger and culturally diverse sample than previous studies and indicates that recent findings in experimental philosophy on the cultural differences regarding basic philosophical ideas are common not only among laypeople but also among philosophers.

The paper proceeds as follows: In the next section, we review the debate about philosophers' moral expertise and its potential relationship with liberal-democratic values. We will then present the method and findings of our empirical analyses. Finally, we will discuss the potential implications of our findings and conclude.

2 | MORAL EXPERTISE AND LIBERAL-DEMOCRATIC VALUES

Generally speaking, there are two main views about philosophers' moral expertise.⁵ On the one hand, some scholars argue that philosophers, due to their extensive training in moral philosophy and logic, are more likely to know what is morally right.⁶ In other words, they are expert moral judges or moral problem solvers, providing more accurate moral judgments. On the other hand, a large number of scholars reject this view and maintain that the moral expertise of philosophers is narrower,⁷ namely, that they are merely expert moral analyzers who excel at analyzing, understanding, and conceptualizing moral problems.⁸

In a recent article, Smith has suggested that the skepticism about philosophers' moral judgment expertise is rooted in the potential tension between this type of moral expertise and liberal-democratic values.⁹ This tension was manifested in many normative concerns that have been raised in the literature regarding moral expertise.¹⁰ For example, scholars have been concerned that adherence to the dictates of moral experts violates a basic liberal principle, which seeks to minimize the role

⁵For an exception, see Cowley, op. cit. note 1; Cowley, C. (2005). A new rejection of moral expertise. *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy*, 8(3), 273–279. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11019-005-1588-x>

⁶For example, Singer, P. (1972). Moral experts. *Analysis*, 34(4), 115–117. <https://doi.org/10.1093/analysis/32.4.115>; Gordon, J. S. (2014). Moral philosophers are moral experts! A reply to David Archard. *Bioethics*, 28(4), 203–206. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8519.2012.02004.x>; Niv, Y. (2022). Beyond all-or-nothing approaches to moral expertise. *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 39(2), 282–296. <https://doi.org/10.1111/japp.12553>

It is noteworthy that these scholars do not attribute moral expertise exclusively to philosophers.

⁷For example, Archard, op. cit. note 1; Føllesdal, A. (2004). The philosopher as coach. In E. Kurz-Milcke & G. Gigerenzer (Eds.), *Experts in science and society* (pp. 181–199). Kluwer Academic Publishers.

⁸The distinction between expert moral analyzers versus judges is based on Driver, J. (2013). Moral expertise: Judgment, practice, and analysis. *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 30(1–2), 280–296. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265052513000137>

A similar distinction uses the term narrow vs. broad moral expertise Steinkamp, N. L., Gordijn, B., & ten Have, H. A. M. J. (2008). Debating ethical expertise. *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal*, 18(2), 173–192. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ken.0.0010>

⁹Smith, op. cit. note 2.

¹⁰Scholars have also raised more general concerns about the nature of morally worth action. For example, deferring to moral experts' judgments might devalue the moral worth of the proceeding action, which should be rooted in an autonomous reflection of the agent (Archard, op. cit. note 1). But some disagree; see Enoch, D. (2014). A defense of moral deference. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 111(5), 1–30. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2601807>; Driver, J. (2006). Autonomy and the asymmetry problem for moral expertise. *Philosophical Studies*, 128(3), 619–644. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-004-7825-y>

Others emphasize that understanding why a particular action is morally permissible (or not) is necessary for worthy moral action, and such understanding is not easily transmissible via deference; see Sliwa, P. (2017). Moral understanding as knowing right from wrong. *Ethics*, 127(3), 521–552. <https://doi.org/10.1086/690011>

Here again, some disagree, see Hills, A. (2009). Moral testimony and moral epistemology. *Ethics*, 120(1), 94–127. <https://doi.org/10.1086/648610>

²Smith, W. R. (Forthcoming). Moral expertise without moral elitism. *Bioethics*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bioe.13034>

³Niv, Y., & Sulitzeanu-Kenan, R. (2022). An empirical perspective on moral expertise: Evidence from a global study of philosophers. *Bioethics*, 36(9), 926–935. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bioe.13079>

⁴Kunda, Z. (1990). The case for motivated reasoning. *Psychological Bulletin*, 108(3), 480–498. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.108.3.480>

of moral authority in policymaking. As MacDougall explains, liberalism was a "solution to the problem of competing moral experts and competing claims to epistemic moral authority. It provided a way to live beside one another in the absence of agreement about what constituted the correct morality, or who constituted the experts capable of interpreting it."¹¹ Moreover, extending the dominance of moral experts in public decision-making is assumed to undermine democratic self-government. In a democratic context, an expert's judgment is one of many views, and democratic decisions should not be based on experts' dictates, but rather on a majority decision.¹² Lastly, deferring to moral experts might discourage citizens from developing their own moral capacities and sense of responsibility, which are crucial for a flourishing democracy.¹³ Smith wishes to show that this tension between moral expertise and liberal-democratic values can be resolved.¹⁴

Inspired by Smith's theoretical observation, in this paper, we empirically examine how philosophers' beliefs about moral expertise vary across cultures and especially levels of endorsement of liberal-democratic values. We believe that such a perspective might contribute to this debate not only by reflecting what philosophers across cultures think about this matter but also by revealing the possible processes that shape philosophers' beliefs about it. To do so, we utilize Niv and Sulitzeanu-Kenan's novel international data set on philosophers' beliefs about moral expertise.¹⁵

3 | METHOD

Our analysis relays on Niv and Sulitzeanu-Kenan's data set, which includes information about the beliefs of 4087 philosophers' in 96 countries regarding philosophers' moral expertise.¹⁶ To this data set, we added contextual information regarding the levels of endorsement of liberal-democratic values in each of the countries.

3.1 | Participants

In all, 4087 philosophers from 96 countries completed an online questionnaire regarding, inter-alia, their beliefs about moral expertise during 2020.¹⁷ Descriptive statistics of the sample are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1 Participants' personal and professional backgrounds.

	n	%	N	%
<i>Gender</i>			<i>Country of residence (Top 16)</i>	
Men	3060	74.87	United States	1012 24.76
Women	990	24.22	Italy	325 7.95
Other	37	0.91	United Kingdom	271 6.63
<i>Age</i>			Spain	197 4.82
20–29	101	2.47	Canada	182 4.45
30–39	931	22.78	Germany	174 4.26
40–49	1133	27.72	Brazil	161 3.94
50–59	893	21.85	Russia	118 2.89
60–69	598	14.63	Australia	94 2.3
70–79	344	8.42	Israel	94 2.3
80+	87	2.13	France	81 1.98
<i>Institution^a</i>			Argentina	75 1.84
University	3393	83.02	Poland	70 1.71
Research institute	348	8.51	Mexico	64 1.57
College	268	6.56	Colombia	63 1.54
Private company/ business	125	3.06	Netherlands	63 1.54
NGO	122	2.99	<i>Field of expertise^a</i>	
Government agency/ ministry	78	1.91	Moral Philosophy	1412 34.55
Other	247	6.04	Political Philosophy	1208 29.56
<i>Rank</i>			Epistemology	932 22.8
Professor Emeritus	260	6.36	Philosophy of Science	883 21.61
Full Professor	1294	31.66	Metaphysics	860 21.04
Associate Professor	864	21.14	Aesthetics	475 11.62
Assistant Professor	538	13.16	Logic	388 9.49
Postdoctoral Researcher	331	8.1	Other	1827 44.7
PhD Student	124	3.03	<i>Philosophical tradition^a</i>	
Adjunct Professor	187	4.58	Analytic	1994 48.79
Independent Researcher	285	6.97	Continental	1696 41.5
Other	204	4.99	Intellectual History	1157 28.31
<i>Department^a</i>			Other	716 17.52
Philosophy	2201	53.85	None	239 5.85
Political Science	264	6.46		
Bioethics	176	4.31		
Bioethics/Medicine	170	4.16		
Other	1135	27.77		

^aChoosing multiple options is possible.

Source: Niv & Sulitzeanu-Kenan, op. cit. note 3, p. 930.

¹¹MacDougall, D. R. (2013). Liberalism, authority, and bioethics commissions. *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics*, 34(6), 461–477. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11017-013-9271-3>

¹²D'Agostino, F. (1998). Expertise, democracy, and applied ethics. *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 15(1), 49–55. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5930.00072>

¹³Archard, op. cit. note. 1.

¹⁴Smith, op. cit. note 2.

¹⁵Niv & Sulitzeanu-Kenan, op. cit. note 3.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

3.2 | Measurements

3.2.1 | Beliefs about moral expertise

Niv and Sulitzeanu-Kenan suggest that moral expertise can be mapped into a two-dimensional matrix that captures the stances regarding philosophers' ability to analyze and judge moral problems.¹⁸ Ranking both dimensions high represents support for the view that philosophers possess a better ability both to analyze and judge moral problems and hence the view that they are expert moral judges. High ranking of the moral analysis dimension with a low rank for the moral judgment dimension represents the narrower view of philosophers' moral expertise according to which they are only expert moral analysts.

Beliefs about moral analysis ability were measured by the responses to four statements about philosophers' moral capacities ranging from 1 (*not having such capacities*) to 7 (*extensively having them*). Three statements were used to compute an index variable for respondents' stand regarding the moral analysis dimension: philosophers' ability to (1) identify decisions that have moral aspects or implications, (2) identify the moral values at stake or in conflict, and (3) map the moral implications of different courses of action (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.94$). Respondents' beliefs regarding the moral judgment dimension were measured by the responses to the statement that philosophers can point out the morally correct decision/action. Most respondents expressed strong beliefs in philosophers' moral analytic ability (median = 6, mean = 5.78, SD = 1.30), while respondents' mean belief in philosophers' moral judgment ability was lower and with greater variance (median = 5, mean = 4.45, SD = 1.77).¹⁹

3.2.2 | Analysis–judgment gap

Based on these two measures, we calculated the gap between respondents' scores for philosophers' analytic and judgment abilities.²⁰ A zero score for this variable represents an equal rank for both dimensions, that is, no deviation. Positive scores represent higher scores for analysis ability than judgment ability, while negative ones represent higher scores for judgment ability than analysis ability. In line with Niv and Sulitzeanu-Kenan's result of a strong relationship between beliefs in analytic and judgment abilities,²¹ the modal value of the analysis–judgment gap variable is zero, implying equal belief in the two abilities (median = 1, mean = 1.33, SD = 1.59; see Figure 1). Most of the deviations from zero are concentrated at the positive range, suggesting that a

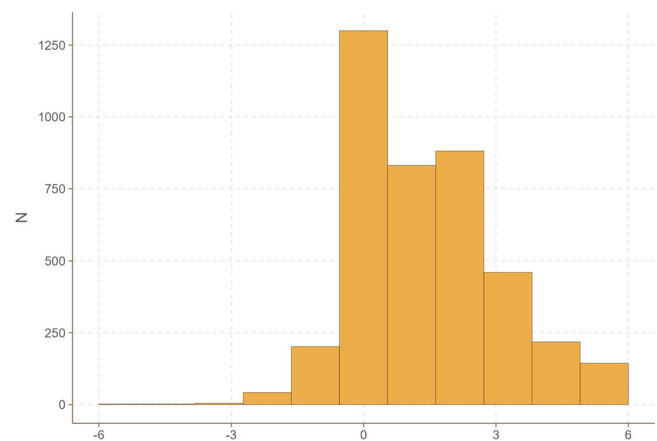


FIGURE 1 Distribution of the analysis–judgment gap.

greater belief in analytic than judgment abilities is much more common than the opposite (only 9.03%).

3.2.3 | Endorsement of liberal–democratic values

Niv and Sulitzeanu-Kenan's study does not include individual-level measures of endorsement of liberal–democratic values. Thus, we use country-level data as a proxy measure. While it might not perfectly represent the values of each respondent, it can represent the culture in which they live and its norms. We assume that the average endorsement of these values in a society can represent, to some extent, the attitudes of philosophers in that country.²² We use two distinct indicators for the level of endorsement of liberal–democratic values, which are common in such political and social analysis.

3.2.4 | Individualism

Hofstede's studies of national culture offer a classification of countries on a collectivism–individualism scale. For that purpose, individualism is defined as a preference for a loosely -knit social framework in which individuals are expected to take care only of themselves and their close relatives. This individualistic perspective can be associated with liberal values. The scale ranks countries from 0 to 100, where higher scores represent more individualistic cultures. Hofstede's original data are from the 1970s, but they were updated and extended in 2010.²³ We used

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Respondent's score for moral judgment was subtracted from his/her score for moral analysis.

²¹Niv & Sulitzeanu-Kenan, op. cit. note 3.

²²Although more educated people, including philosophers, tend to be more liberal, as Welzel shows, this is relative to one's country population (Welzel, C. (2013). *Freedom rising: Human empowerment and the quest for emancipation*. Cambridge University Press). Therefore, while we might not be able to estimate philosophers' exact levels of endorsement of liberal–democratic values, we can use the average endorsement in their country to locate them relative to philosophers from other countries.

²³Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind—Intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival* (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill.

the Hofstede Insights website to extract individualism scores for the countries in our data set based on Hofstede and his colleagues' 2010 data.²⁴ It covers 87 countries in our data set, resulting in 4071 observations (99.6% of the philosophers' sample).

3.2.5 | Emancipative Values Index

The Emancipative Values Index was designed by Welzel as a measure of people's attitudes toward freedom, a core idea in liberal democracies.²⁵ These values emphasize people's equal right to pursue specific values of their choice. The index is based on respondents' answers to a list of 12 items and, in its final form, it ranges from 0 to 1, in which a higher score represents higher support of emancipative values. Comprehensive and up-to-date data on this index are available via the joint European Value Study (EVS) and the World Value Survey (WVS) data set—one of the leading sources on values around the globe.²⁶ As of February 2021, this data set includes records for 79 countries (based on 127,358 observations). This covers only 66 of the countries included in our data, reducing the valid observations to 3596 (88% of the philosophers' sample). Countries' average scores for the Emancipative Values Index were extracted using the WVS online analysis tool.²⁷

These two measurements of liberal–democratic values are strongly, but not perfectly, correlated ($r = 0.76$ $p < 0.05$).

3.2.6 | Individual-level attributes

We use additional personal and professional information that is available in the original data set as control variables: gender, age, position in a philosophy department, work in the field of moral philosophy, and association with the continental or analytic traditions (see descriptive statistics in Table 1).

4 | RESULTS

We begin our analysis with an examination of country differences in philosophers' beliefs about philosophers' moral expertise. Figure 2 presents countries' average rankings of moral analysis ability (in blue), moral judgment ability (in red), and the analysis–judgment gap (in

yellow). In most countries, the average ranking for moral analysis is relatively high, between 5.5 and 6 (on a 1–7 scale). More substantial country differences appear to exist regarding moral judgment: Countries on the left side of Figure 2, such as Slovakia, Ukraine, India, and Romania, have an average ranking of more than 5 for moral judgment ability. Countries on the right side of the figure, such as the United Kingdom, Austria, Finland, Canada, and the United States, have a lower average ranking, close to or lower than 4. Consequently, countries on the right side show a higher average analysis–judgment gap. The average gap increases from around zero points for countries on the left side up to almost two points for countries on the right side. The 95% confidence intervals for the average analysis–judgment gap—shown at the bottom of Figure 2—indicate that, in most countries, these gaps are statistically significant.

Given the preliminary evidence for country differences, we proceed by examining whether these differences are associated with liberal–democratic values. Figure 3 presents the average moral analysis and judgment ranking in each quarter of the individualism scale (four intervals of 25 points on the 0–100 scale). It offers a preliminary indication for the complex connection between philosophers' beliefs about moral expertise and liberal–democratic values. On the one hand, we see small and insignificant differences in the average ranking of philosophers' moral analysis ability across the individualism quarters, which ranges from 5.69 to 5.86. On the other hand, we see significant differences in average moral judgment ranking, as it decreases from 4.99 for the lowest quarter of individualism up to 4.19 in the highest one. Consequently, respondents from countries with higher individualism scores tend to report lower beliefs in moral judgment ability, compared with their belief in analytic ability.

Similar patterns emerge when using the Emancipative Values Index. Figure 4 shows respondents' average moral analysis and judgment ranking by their countries' average scores of the Emancipative Values Index (grouped by five intervals of 0.2, but since there are no respondents from countries with average Emancipative Values Index scores lower than 0.2 or higher than 0.8, only three bars are presented). As the figure shows, the average ranking for moral analysis starts at 5.36 for the lowest Emancipative Values Index scores, increases to 5.88, and then decreases to 5.74 for the highest Emancipative Values Index scores. These differences are statistically significant but do not present a clear linear relationship. Moreover, the average ranking for moral judgment monotonically and significantly decreases from 4.86 to 4.2 across the Emancipative Values Index scores. Respondents' average ranking for moral analysis is higher than their ranking for moral judgment, and the gap between these two capacities increases as respondents are from countries with higher Emancipative Values Index scores.

To estimate the relationship between liberal–democratic values and philosophers' beliefs in a more controlled way, we conducted a set of regression analyses that control for personal and professional attributes. Due to the hierarchal structure of the data that combines individual- and country-level data, we used

²⁴Cultural values change over time, but not so dramatically in the short haul. Moreover, while cultural changes exist in the long haul, countries' relative ranking tends to be quite stable over time (Beugelsdijk, S., & Welzel, C. (2018). Dimensions and dynamics of national culture: Synthesizing Hofstede with Inglehart. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 49(10), 1469–1505. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022118798505>). Therefore, using 2010 data is not expected to significantly bias our analysis. In any case, the alternative measure that we use for liberal–democratic values—the Emancipative Values Index—is more current.

²⁵Welzel, op. cit. note 22.

²⁶EVS/WVS. (2020). *European values study and world values survey: Joint EVS/WVS 2017–2021 Dataset (Version 1.0.0)*. JD Systems Institute & WVSA. <https://doi.org/10.14281/18241.2>

²⁷<https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSONline.jsp>

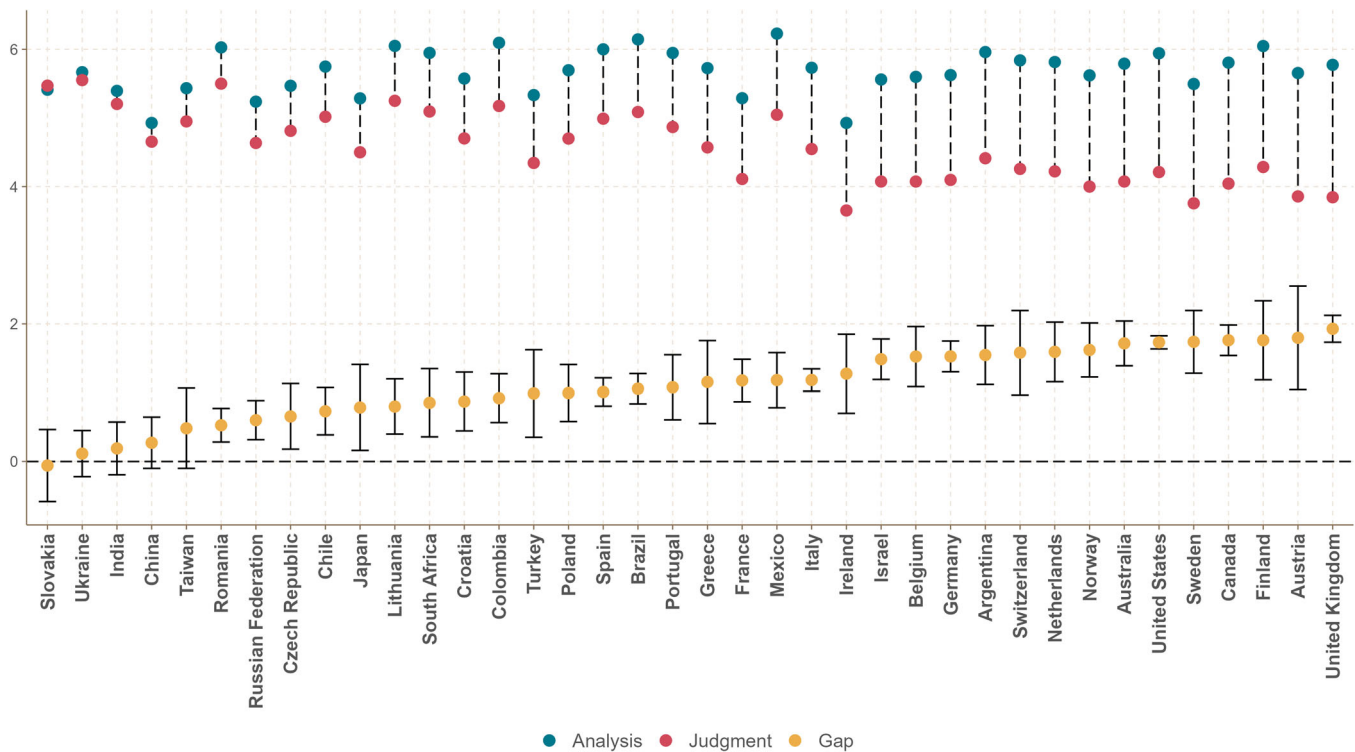


FIGURE 2 Moral analysis, moral judgment, and the analysis–judgment gap by country of residence. Countries are ordered by their average analysis–judgment gap. 95% confidence intervals are presented for the analysis–judgment gap. Only countries with more than 20 respondents are shown (in total, 38 countries are displayed; their sample size ranges from 20 to 1012, mean = 100.7, SD = 167.4).

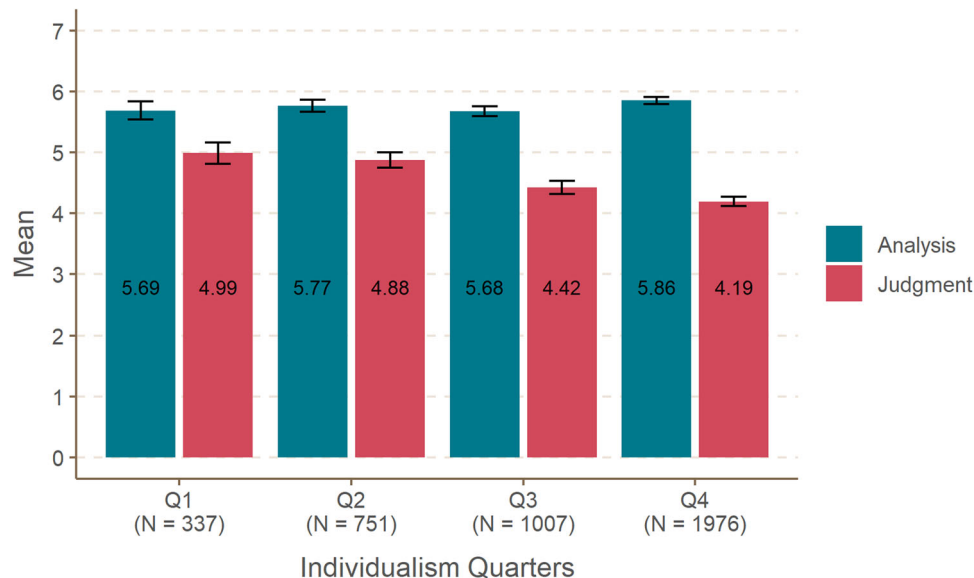


FIGURE 3 Average ranking for moral analysis and judgment capacities by individualism scores of respondents' country of residence, with 95% confidence intervals.

random-effect models. Table 2 presents the estimated associations between individualism and moral analysis (model 1), and moral judgment ranking (models 2–3). While the individualism scale has a negligible and insignificant association with moral analysis (model 1), it has a negative and significant association

with moral judgment (model 2). For every point increase in the individualism score (which ranged from 0 to 100), we can expect a 0.015-point decrease in the moral judgment ranking. Given that Niv and Sulitzeanu-Kenan found that philosophers' beliefs about moral analysis and moral judgment abilities are strongly

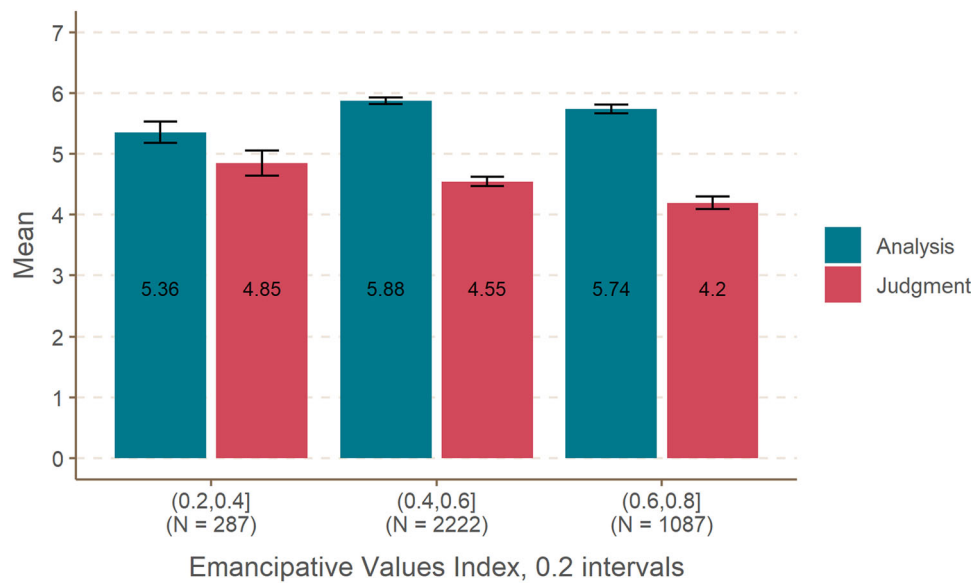


FIGURE 4 Average ranking for moral analysis and judgment capacities by Emancipative Values Index scores of respondents' country of residence, with 95% confidence intervals.

correlated,²⁸ model 3 adds respondents' beliefs about moral analysis as an additional independent variable. The association between the individualism scale and moral judgment remains almost identical.

Substantively similar results are obtained by estimating the associations between the Emancipative Value Index and the two dimensions of moral expertise (see Table 3). While the Emancipative Value Index has a negligible negative and insignificant association with moral analysis (model 1), it has a negative and significant association with moral judgment (model 2). Moving from the Emancipative Values Index score of 0 (lowest) to 1 (highest), we can expect a 3.524-point decrease in the moral judgment ranking. As model 3 indicates, this significant association remains even when controlling for respondents' beliefs about moral analysis. Overall, the findings from Tables 2 and 3 are in line with the preliminary findings that were presented in Figures 3 and 4.

While these results are correlational, there are good theoretical reasons to believe that they manifest a causal relationship. Despite the challenges of testing causality in such observational data, we can rule out concerns regarding the temporal order of this relationship. We are using country-level data for measuring liberal-democratic values, which represent the average endorsement of these values in each country. Since philosophers are only a small group in each country, we can assume that their views of moral expertise have limited to null influence on the values of their country. However, the main challenge in identifying the causal relationship between liberal-democratic values and belief in moral judgment ability is omitted variable bias or potential confounding factors.

To this end, we have analyzed the effect of liberal-democratic values in immigrant philosophers' *country of birth* on their beliefs about moral expertise (see the full analysis in the Appendix). This analysis is expected to reduce the potential effect of confounders as

well as potential selection bias, which might occur if respondents choose to immigrate to a country whose culture fits their prior beliefs. The results of this analysis suggest that immigrant philosophers' beliefs about moral expertise are associated with the levels of liberal-democratic values in their country of birth, but not with these values in their country of residence, which have only negligible and insignificant effect. Overall, these findings offer additional support for the causal relationship between liberal-democratic values and beliefs about moral judgment ability.

5 | DISCUSSION

In this paper, we have empirically examined how philosophers' beliefs about moral expertise are associated with an endorsement of liberal-democratic values and vary across cultures. Our empirical analyses, based on a large international sample of philosophers, illuminate the complex connection between the two. On the one hand, we have found no evidence for a relationship between liberal-democratic values and philosophers' beliefs about their and their colleagues' ability to analyze moral problems, a capacity that is believed to pose no threat to liberal-democratic values. On the other hand, philosophers from countries in which liberal-democratic values are more strongly endorsed tend to be more skeptical regarding their and their colleagues' moral judgment capacity.

Our findings provide empirical support for Smith's theoretical observation about the relationship between liberal-democratic values and philosophers' skepticism about moral expertise.²⁹ Moreover, we believe that these findings may also offer a potential cognitive

²⁸Niv & Sulitzeanu-Kenan, op. cit. note 3.

²⁹Smith, op. cit. note 2.

TABLE 2 Random-effect regressions estimate for the associations between individualism and moral analysis and moral judgment.

	Moral analysis	Moral judgment	
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Individualism	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.015*** (0.002)	-0.014*** (0.002)
Men	-0.290*** (0.046)	-0.267*** (0.063)	-0.064 (0.054)
Age	-0.006*** (0.002)	0.006** (0.002)	0.010*** (0.002)
Philosophy Department (dummy)	0.032 (0.042)	0.085 (0.056)	0.061 (0.048)
Moral Philosophy (dummy)	0.251*** (0.042)	0.276*** (0.057)	0.102* (0.049)
Analytic Tradition (dummy)	0.179*** (0.045)	-0.231*** (0.061)	-0.354*** (0.052)
Continental Tradition (dummy)	0.039 (0.044)	0.113 (0.059)	0.083 (0.051)
Moral Analysis			0.704*** (0.018)
Constant	6.066*** (0.135)	5.188*** (0.169)	0.915*** (0.188)
Observations	4071	4071	4071
Log likelihood	-6782.652	-8002.703	-7362.717
Akaike information criterion	13,585.310	16,025.410	14,747.430
Bayesian information criterion	13,648.420	16,088.520	14,816.860

Note: Standard errors are given in parentheses.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

explanation for this skepticism. Meyers,³⁰ and more recently, Niv have argued that the view of philosophers as strictly moral analyzers is inconsistent with the close connection between the capacity to understand and the capacity to judge.³¹ Niv suggests that as we believe that the physician who better understands and diagnoses an illness is also better at judging how to treat it, so are those who better understand moral problems also better at deciding what the proper moral solution is.³² Consequently, if one accepts that philosophers are better moral analyzers, one must accept that they are also better moral judges. Niv argues that this understanding–judgment connection applies to the moral domain as far as we accept that there are better and worse moral

TABLE 3 Random-effect regressions estimate for the associations between the Emancipative Values Index and moral analysis and moral judgment.

	Moral analysis	Moral judgment	
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Emancipative Values Index	-0.202 (0.427)	-3.524*** (0.512)	-3.411*** (0.461)
Men	-0.282*** (0.049)	-0.252*** (0.067)	-0.056 (0.057)
Age	-0.005*** (0.002)	0.007** (0.002)	0.011*** (0.002)
Philosophy Department (dummy)	0.025 (0.044)	0.081 (0.060)	0.062 (0.051)
Moral Philosophy (dummy)	0.257*** (0.045)	0.273*** (0.061)	0.092 (0.052)
Analytic Tradition (dummy)	0.183*** (0.048)	-0.201** (0.065)	-0.328*** (0.056)
Continental Tradition (dummy)	0.037 (0.046)	0.130* (0.063)	0.102 (0.054)
Moral Analysis			0.702*** (0.019)
Constant	6.103*** (0.242)	6.215*** (0.296)	1.945*** (0.290)
Observations	3596	3596	3596
Log likelihood	-5956.101	-7060.646	-6508.060
Akaike information criterion	11,932.200	14,141.290	13,038.120
Bayesian information criterion	11,994.080	14,203.170	13,106.180

Note: Standard errors are given in parentheses.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

judgments—minimal meta-ethical assumptions that many, if not most, philosophers will be willing to accept.

Moreover, Niv and Sulitzeanu-Kenan's original empirical study on philosophers' beliefs about moral expertise shows that overall, philosophers' beliefs manifest a strong and statistically significant association between moral analysis and judgment abilities.³³ Consequently, the view of moral expertise, which holds that philosophers are better moral analyzers but not judges, is a clear deviation from this robust pattern, and thus counterintuitive to what most philosophers believe. What both studies do not yet offer is an explanation for this deviation. The findings of this study may address this gap, at least partially, by showing that some of the disjunction between beliefs in moral analytic and moral judgment abilities can be explained by the endorsement of liberal–democratic values. These values have been found to decrease

³⁰Meyers, C. (2018). Ethics expertise: What it is, how to get it, and what to do with it. In J. C. Watson & L.K. Guidry-Grimes (Eds.), *Moral expertise* (pp. 53–70). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-92759-6_3

³¹Niv, op. cit. note 6.

³²It is noteworthy that some scholars criticize this link between clinical diagnosis and treatment (see Veatch, R. (2008). *Patient, heal thyself: How the "new medicine" puts the patient in charge*. Oxford University Press).

³³Niv & Sulitzeanu-Kenan, op. cit. note 3.

the confidence of philosophers in their moral judgment ability, even when controlling for their stand regarding their moral analysis capacity.

How can this relationship between liberal–democratic values and philosophers' skepticism about moral expertise be explained? A potential explanation can be drawn from Zagzebski's discussion of moral expertise. In her book about epistemic authority, she devotes a chapter to moral authority with a focus on the problem of moral testimony and moral deference, where she also briefly comments on the debate about whether there are expert moral judges:

[T]here is a (probably reasonable) fear that the public recognition of lack of equality in the ability to make moral judgments will lead to the treatment of persons as unequal in dignity... if there are experts in the moral domain, they will expect us to believe what they tell us about the moral, and if they can do that, it is but a short step to telling us what to do or such is the fear. The conclusion is that there had better not be any moral experts.³⁴

In other words, Zagzebski suggests that the reluctance to accept that philosophers may possess an enhanced ability to judge moral problems is the result of the normative implications in which "some deep values are at stake."³⁵ However, such a line of reasoning, though descriptively feasible, expresses an invalid inference of "is" from "ought": Philosophers should not be moral experts; therefore, they are not. Using Yoder's classification of arguments against moral expertise, this invalid inference is based on falsely conflating moral arguments against moral expertise and conceptual arguments. As he explains, "[r]egardless of whether expertise in ethical matters exists or is possible, one could argue that society should or should not recognize anyone as such an expert."³⁶

Zagzebski's suggestion seems reasonable considering the well-known phenomenon of motivated reasoning. As Kunda explains, motivation influences people's reasoning: When people are motivated to arrive at the most accurate conclusions, they tend to use the evidence and cognitive tools that are considered the most appropriate.³⁷ However, when they are motivated to arrive at a specific conclusion (i.e., motivated by "directional" goals), they use cognitive mechanisms, including selective processing of information and the use of specific inferential rules, that may yield the desired conclusion. This process of motivated reasoning occurs unconsciously under the self-illusion of objectivity.

Values have been found to play a role in motivated reasoning and related biases. People's values and ideology affect how they interpret new information, including evidence.³⁸ Motivated reasoning also affects normative judgments, for example, regarding issues of moral

responsibility.³⁹ Experts are also susceptible to motivated reasoning in their professional decision-making and evaluations, including legal experts⁴⁰ and scientists.⁴¹ Even philosophers have been found to evaluate arguments in philosophy of religion in line with their religious beliefs.⁴² Therefore, it is possible that philosophers' values unconsciously affect their beliefs and reasoning, even when such values are logically irrelevant or should not be taken into consideration.

The conclusion that at least part of the documented skepticism regarding philosophers' moral expertise is due to invalid inference, driven by motivated reasoning, carries implications for the general debate on moral expertise. One such consequence is to devote fewer efforts to examining whether philosophers are moral experts and more to the implications of their expertise, including how they can improve moral decision-making. Moreover, adequately resolving the tension between liberal–democratic values and moral judgment expertise may lie in adjudicating and regulating the *application* of these abilities, rather than through invalid inference as to their existence.

We further seek to clarify that in this conclusion, we are not directly addressing any argument against philosophers' moral expertise or taking a stand about its adequacy to liberal and democratic values. We simply claim that moral arguments against moral expertise ("ought" arguments), which hold that such expertise is inconsistent with liberal and democratic values, cannot be counted as conceptual or empirical arguments about the mere existence of moral expertise ("is" arguments). Based on our empirical findings, we argue that at least a part of the skepticism about moral expertise appears to stem from this confusion between moral and conceptual arguments and posit that this confusion might be explained by the psychological phenomenon of motivated reasoning. By resolving this confusion, we might expect a greater consensus about the existence of moral expertise (i.e., fewer conceptual arguments against it) and shift the attention to the conditions in which moral expertise may fit liberal and democratic principles (i.e., focusing on moral arguments against moral expertise and their critics).

Beyond the potential contribution of this study to the debate on philosophers' moral expertise, it alludes to some practical implications.

³⁹Ditto, P. H., Pizarro, D. A., & Tannenbaum, D. (2009). Motivated moral reasoning. *Psychology of Learning and Motivation*, 50, 307–338. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0079-7421\(08\)00410-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0079-7421(08)00410-6)

⁴⁰Sulitzeanu-Kenan, R., Kremnitzer, M., & Alon, S. (2016). Facts, preferences, and doctrine: An empirical analysis of proportionality judgment. *Law and Society Review*, 50(2), 348–382. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lasr.12203>; Sood, A. M. (2013). Motivated cognition in legal judgments—An analytic review. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 9(1), 307–325. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-lawsocsci-102612-134023>

⁴¹Holman, L., Head, M. L., Lanfear, R., & Jennions, M. D. (2015). Evidence of experimental bias in the life sciences: Why we need blind data recording. *PLOS Biology*, 13(7), e1002190. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.1002190>; Hergovich, A., Schott, R., & Burger, C. (2010). Biased evaluation of abstracts depending on topic and conclusion: Further evidence of a confirmation bias within scientific psychology. *Current Psychology*, 29(3), 188–209. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-010-9087-5>

⁴²De Cruz, H. (2018). Religious beliefs and philosophical views: A qualitative study. *Res Philosophica*, 95(3), 477–504. <https://doi.org/10.11612/resphil.1644>; De Cruz, H., & De Smedt, J. (2016). How do philosophers evaluate natural theological arguments? An experimental philosophical investigation. In H. De Cruz & R. Nichols (Eds.), *Advances in religion, cognitive science, and experimental philosophy* (pp. 119–142). Bloomsbury Academic; Tobia, K. (2016). Does religious belief infect philosophical analysis? *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 6(1), 56–66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599X.2014.1000952>; De Cruz, H. (2014). Cognitive science of religion and the study of the theological concepts. *Topoi*, 33(2), 487–497. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11245-013-9168-9>

³⁴Zagzebski, L. T. (2012). *Epistemic authority: A theory of trust, authority, and autonomy in belief* (pp. 164–165). Oxford University Press.

³⁵Ibid: 164. She does not develop this idea further.

³⁶Yoder, S. D. (1998). The nature of ethical expertise. *The Hastings Center Report*, 28(6), 11–19. p. 12. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3528262>

³⁷Kunda, op. cit. note 4.

³⁸MacCoun, R. J., & Paletz, S. (2009). Citizens' perceptions of ideological bias in research on public policy controversies. *Political Psychology*, 30(1), 43–65. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2008.00680.x>

The cultural differences identified among philosophers might also be shared by non-philosophers. If that is true, in some cultures, citizens might lean toward the view of philosophers as expert moral judges while in others they might not. In some cultures, the view that philosophers are better judges of moral problems might raise more normative concerns than in others. Hence, the actual public role of philosophers should vary across countries, based on each country's values and the trust of its citizens in philosophers' moral capacities. Lessons from these findings can also be drawn to other putative moral experts or authorities, for example, in the clinical setting (clinical ethics consultants) and what role they should hold. For example, various scholars have emphasized that moral expertise in the clinical setting should not be about determining what is morally right, which might be inconsistent with liberal and democratic values. Rather, it should focus on helping others to recognize and analyze the moral dilemmas that they encounter and possibly making recommendations that make explicit the values and experiences that motivate them.⁴³

Lastly, our findings can contribute to the bioethical literature as well as to attempts to examine the universality of philosophical beliefs and intuitions. A growing number of studies in experimental philosophy have found cultural variations in philosophical intuitions and understanding of basic philosophical concepts, for example, in philosophy of language, epistemology, ethics, and action theory.⁴⁴ We have found clear evidence for cultural variations in philosophers' beliefs about moral expertise. In contrast to previous studies, which examined potential cultural differences among laypeople, our findings show evidence of such differences among philosophers. These findings are somewhat more surprising, as one might expect greater congruence among philosophers, who, like other experts, are members of an epistemic community⁴⁵ and mutually influence each other.

6 | CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, we empirically examined how philosophers' beliefs about moral expertise are associated with an endorsement of liberal-democratic values and vary across cultures. In line with Smith's theoretical observation,⁴⁶ we found a significant relationship between liberal-democratic values and philosophers' skepticism about moral expertise. We suggested that these findings might explain at least a part of the skepticism about moral expertise, which appears to stem from a confusion between conceptual arguments against moral expertise and moral arguments against its adequacy to liberal and democratic settings.

We further posit that this confusion might be explained by the psychological phenomenon of motivated reasoning. By resolving this confusion, we might expect a greater consensus about the existence of moral expertise and shift the attention to the conditions in which moral expertise may fit liberal and democratic principles. We also discussed how our findings offer practical insights regarding the adaptive public role that philosophers should have in varying cultural contexts and contribute to recent efforts to understand what shapes philosophers' beliefs.

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APPENDIX A: ADDRESSING THE CAUSAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LIBERAL-DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND PHILOSOPHERS' BELIEFS

Our main analysis shows that philosophers from countries with higher levels of liberal-democratic values tend to be more skeptical regarding philosophers' moral judgment capacity and stronger advocates of the view that they are only expert moral analyzers. However, does this correlational result reflect a causal relationship? Proving causality, in this case, is challenging, given the observational nature of the data. Yet, we can offer additional support for the causal relationship between liberal-democratic values and belief in philosophers' moral abilities.

For a start, we can rule out concerns regarding the temporal order of this relationship. We are using country-level data for measuring liberal-democratic values, which represent the average endorsement of these values in each country. Since philosophers are only a small group in each country, we can assume that their views of moral expertise have limited to null influence on the values of their country. Therefore, the main challenge in proving causality in our case is to eliminate the influence of potential confounding factors.

In economics, the epidemiological approach is used to isolate the effects of culture from those of environmental factors such as institutional or structural settings.⁴⁷ These settings might

⁴³E.g., Kovács, J. (2010). The transformation of (bio)ethics expertise in a world of ethical pluralism. *Journal of Medical Ethics*, 36(12), 767–770. <https://doi.org/10.1136/jme.2010.036319>; McClimans, L., & Slowther, A. (2016). Moral expertise in the clinic: Lessons learned from medicine and science. *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*, 41(4), 401–415. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jmp/jhw011>; Illis, A. S., & Sheehan, M. (2016). Expertise, ethics expertise, and clinical ethics consultation: Achieving terminological clarity. *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*, 41(4), 416–433. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jmp/jhw014>

⁴⁴For a review, see Machery, E. (2017). *Philosophy within its proper bounds*. Oxford University Press.

⁴⁵Haas, P. M. (1992). Introduction: Epistemic communities and international policy coordination. *International Organization*, 46(1), 1–35.

⁴⁶Smith, op. cit. note 2.

⁴⁷Simpser, A. (2020). The culture of corruption across generations: An empirical study of bribery attitudes and behavior. *The Journal of Politics*, 82(4), 1373–1389. <https://doi.org/10.1086/708501>; Fernández, R. (2011). Does culture matter? In J. Benhabib, A. Bisin & M. O. Jackson (Eds.), *Handbook of social economics* (Vol. 1, pp. 481–510). Elsevier. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-444-53187-2.00011-5>

influence the opportunities that people face and shape their behavior and views. According to this approach, second-generation immigrants are compared with locally born citizens, using cultural factors about immigrants' countries of ancestry as explanatory variables. In this way, it is possible to compare individuals who share an institutional environment but differ in their cultural heritage.

Our data do not identify second-generation immigrants among philosophers, but rather first-generation immigrants, and we lack information about the amount of time that they have resided in their current country. This entails that some of the immigrant philosophers may have been affected not only by the cultural values of their parents but also by the institutions and incentive structures of their

native country. However, focusing our analysis on the effect of liberal-democratic values in immigrant philosophers' *country of birth* on their beliefs about moral expertise is expected to reduce the potential effect of confounders such as institutions and incentive structures. This analysis also enables us to address potential selection bias, which might occur if respondents choose to immigrate to a country whose culture fits their prior beliefs.

25.4% ($n = 1038$) of the respondents in the data are immigrants who reported living in a country that is not their country of birth. The following table estimates the relationship between individualism scores in respondents' country of birth and in the country of residence—and beliefs in moral judgment ability. Model 1 focuses on “local” respondents whose country of birth is also their country of

	Moral judgment				
	Locals (1)	Immigrants		(4)	(5)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Moral Analysis	0.693*** (0.021)	0.716*** (0.036)	0.690*** (0.036)	0.696*** (0.036)	0.697*** (0.037)
Individualism (Country of Residence)	-0.017*** (0.001)	-0.005** (0.002)		-0.004 (0.002)	
Individualism (Country of Birth)			-0.012*** (0.002)	-0.011*** (0.002)	-0.010*** (0.002)
Men	-0.052 (0.062)	-0.062 (0.108)	-0.036 (0.106)	-0.050 (0.107)	-0.008 (0.111)
Age	0.011*** (0.002)	0.009* (0.004)	0.012*** (0.004)	0.013*** (0.004)	0.013*** (0.004)
Philosophy Department	0.087 (0.055)	-0.045 (0.097)	-0.024 (0.096)	-0.028 (0.097)	-0.071 (0.102)
Moral Philosophy	0.112* (0.056)	0.060 (0.100)	0.068 (0.098)	0.057 (0.099)	0.050 (0.102)
Analytic Tradition	-0.373*** (0.060)	-0.325** (0.106)	-0.220* (0.106)	-0.212* (0.107)	-0.209 (0.111)
Continental Tradition	0.103 (0.058)	0.065 (0.104)	0.087 (0.102)	0.080 (0.103)	0.022 (0.106)
Constant	1.149*** (0.184)	0.264 (0.320)	0.533 (0.313)	0.681* (0.330)	-0.030 (0.413)
Country of residence fixed-effect	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	3043	1028	1019	1011	1019
R^2	0.320	0.297	0.312	0.316	0.366
Adjusted R^2	0.318	0.291	0.307	0.310	0.309
Residual standard error	1.457 ($df = 3034$)	1.504 ($df = 1019$)	1.478 ($df = 1010$)	1.477 ($df = 1001$)	1.475 ($df = 935$)
F statistic	178.302*** ($df = 8; 3034$)	53.756*** ($df = 8; 1019$)	57.311*** ($df = 8; 1010$)	51.31*** ($df = 9; 1001$)	6.490*** ($df = 83; 935$)

Note: Standard errors are given in parentheses.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

residence. As we can see, each additional point in the individualism scale leads to a 0.017-point decrease in respondents' ranking of philosophers' moral judgment capacity.

Models 2–5 in the above table focus on immigrant respondents. Model 2 estimates the relationship between individualism in their country of residence and beliefs in moral judgment ability: each additional point on the individualism scale leads to a 0.005-point decrease in respondents' ranking of philosophers' moral judgment capacity—a three times smaller association compared to locally born philosophers. Model 3 estimates the relationship between individualism in the country of birth and moral judgment ability: each additional point on the individualism scale is associated with a 0.012-point decrease in respondents' ranking of philosophers' moral judgment capacity. Model 4 includes the individualism score for both respondents' country of birth and

residence. The results suggest that immigrant philosophers' beliefs about moral expertise are associated with the levels of liberal–democratic values in their country of birth, but not with these values in their country of residence, which have only negligible and insignificant effect.

Model 5 includes a fixed effect for respondents' country of residence. It allows for examining the effect of the individualism score in respondents' country of birth while controlling for contextual variations in their country of residence. This specification essentially estimates the association between individualism levels in immigrant philosophers' country of birth, controlling for both individual-level attributes and country of residence attributes. In this model, the individualism score of respondent's country of birth operates as an individual-level variable. This analysis indicates that the effect of individualism in immigrants' countries of birth on their beliefs about

	Moral judgment				
	Locals (1)	Immigrants (2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Moral Analysis	0.696*** (0.022)	0.691*** (0.043)	0.686*** (0.038)	0.671*** (0.046)	0.694*** (0.040)
Emancipative Values Index (Country of Residence)	–4.244*** (0.344)	–1.192 (0.633)		–0.764 (0.667)	
Emancipative Values Index (Country of Birth)			–2.823*** (0.506)	–2.531*** (0.610)	–2.526*** (0.568)
Men	0.005 (0.065)	–0.121 (0.125)	0.015 (0.114)	–0.052 (0.135)	0.038 (0.119)
Age	0.008*** (0.002)	0.012** (0.004)	0.010* (0.004)	0.014** (0.005)	0.011** (0.004)
Philosophy Department	0.110 (0.058)	–0.084 (0.111)	0.027 (0.104)	–0.053 (0.121)	–0.025 (0.110)
Moral Philosophy	0.084 (0.059)	0.014 (0.115)	0.076 (0.107)	0.032 (0.126)	0.060 (0.112)
Analytic Tradition	–0.427*** (0.063)	–0.214 (0.121)	–0.335** (0.114)	–0.217 (0.132)	–0.289* (0.120)
Continental Tradition	0.163** (0.061)	0.163 (0.118)	0.051 (0.110)	0.152 (0.127)	–0.004 (0.114)
Constant	2.414*** (0.248)	0.581 (0.511)	1.477*** (0.398)	1.660** (0.594)	–1.091 (0.946)
Country of residence fixed effect	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	2778	818	871	674	871
R ²	0.311	0.269	0.314	0.282	0.378
Adjusted R ²	0.309	0.261	0.307	0.272	0.312
Residual standard error	1.469 (df = 2769)	1.531 (df = 809)	1.484 (df = 862)	1.518 (df = 664)	1.479 (df = 787)
F statistic	156.011*** (df = 8; 2769)	37.140*** (df = 8; 809)	49.264*** (df = 8; 862)	28.912*** (df = 9; 664)	5.756*** (df = 83; 787)

Note: Standard errors are given in parentheses.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

moral expertise holds even when controlling for such contextual factors as their country of residence; thus, it offers robust evidence for this effect.

As in our main analysis regarding the individualism scale, we also further examined the causal connection between the Emancipative Values Index and the judgment capacity. The following table compares the effect of respondents' country of birth and residence using the Emancipative Values Index. Model 1 focuses on "local" respondents whose country of birth is also their country of residence. As we can see, moving from the lowest score of the Emancipative Values Index (0) to the highest (1) leads to a 4.244-point decrease in respondents' ranking of philosophers' moral judgment capacity. Models 2-4 focus on immigrant respondents. Model 2 estimates the relationship between the Emancipative Values Index in their country of residence and beliefs in moral judgment ability: moving from the lowest score of the Emancipative Values Index (0) to the highest (1) leads to a 1.192-point decrease in respondents' ranking of philosophers' moral judgment capacity. Model 3 estimates the relationship between the Emancipative Values Index in their country of birth and moral judgment ability: moving from the lowest score of the Emancipative Values Index (0) to the highest (1) is associated with a 2.832-point decrease in respondents' ranking of philosophers' moral judgment capacity. Model 4 includes the Emancipative Values Index scores for both respondents' country of birth and residence.

While the Emancipative Values Index scores for respondents' country of residence are not significantly associated with their ranking for philosophers' moral judgment capacity, the scores of their country of birth are significantly and negatively associated with their beliefs. Model 5, which includes a fixed effect for respondents' country of residence, further indicates that the effect of Emancipative Values Index scores in immigrants' countries of birth on their beliefs about moral expertise persists even when controlling for such contextual factors as their country of residence.

Overall, these findings offer additional support for the causal relationship between liberal-democratic values and beliefs about moral judgment ability.

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