Ethanol has increased the demand for corn which has resulted in a doubling of corn prices in the past year; however, creating significant amounts of energy from food crops would deplete the amount of land available for growing actual food for people to eat. In addition, the ethanol industry burns large amounts of gasoline to produce this alternative fuel which could end up containing less energy than the gasoline consumed to produce it. Do the gains of using ethanol as an alternative fuel outweigh the losses? If so, how? Corn ethanol cost benefit analyses

The ethical issue of using a food source as fuel will perhaps never be justifiable, nor should it be. The so-called green triangle that justifies green gas production of combustion engines ran by ethanol fuel mixtures with green gas consumption of corn plants is not conclusive either. A report published by Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis in 2008 notes that “Using all corn grown in the U.S. to produce ethanol would replace only 12 percent of the gasoline used for transportation in the U.S.”. Therefore, the benefits of corn ethanol are limited at best.

The alternative energy industry as a whole however, provides a domestic fuel source, creates good permanent jobs, ass to our national security, and brings us closer to consuming renewable sources of energy. Maybe the value of ethanol production should be considered within such a larger context. As one of the early first steps, ethanol certainly leaves much to be desired. Without the benefit of a larger context it is easy to argue that corn ethanol do not benefit the American population as a whole, but rather a limited group of farmers that sell to producers of corn ethanol.

The congressional mandate to produce 36 billion gallons of biofuel by 2022 is only comprehensible with in this wider point of view. To achieve this goal the technology has to improve cellulosic ethanol and cannot relay of corn ethanol alone. So if investments in corn ethanol secure the under pining of an industry that transforms the content of municipality landfill and farming byproducts into a source of energy then it is justifiable.

https://www.stlouisfed.org/publications/re/articles/?id=33

<http://elonuniversity.contentdm.oclc.org/utils/getdownloaditem/collection/p15446coll7/id/62/filename/63.pdf/mapsto/pdf>

I am sorry Anish, I can’t decide exactly which question you were writing about. But, if you mean to say that farm subsidies can be justified as a form of providing national security, I think I can agree with you. Farming has risks, same as anything else, but some of these risks are very hard to plan for by each individual farming operation. Allowing market forces to work freely can jeopardize the food supply stability that the society as a whole needs to thrive.

Hi Mohammed,

A little difficult to fallow your point here, but I think you mean to say that the farm bill has grown into something that encompasses more than protection of farmers. I can agree with that. It is certainly expedite to vote for farm bill rather then vote against it. This means more and more politicians add to the bill with amendments and riders. That is a valid observation.

Hi Denise,

I can see the risk factors you mentioned. So what makes farming so unique to qualify for protection? After all risk is a normal part of all industries. Anish (I think) contributes this to national security implications of food availability and cost.

Casey

Hi Erica,

I understand your point about the importance of food security. But we did study that open trade benefits everyone. So would you set a limit on the government protecting the farmers? How about none food farming like grape production for wine industry?

Casey

* How would you define "normal" and "abnormal?
* What criteria should be used to determine "normal" or "abnormal" behavior?

Normal is boring. Normal is plain Jane and ordinary. And, as the opening pages of chapter 15 point out much of our creativity as humans lies within the abnormality of individuals in our societies. Our athletes, artists, and scientist each stand out from the ordinary in one way or another. Only when the distinction from the general average becomes stressful and encroaches in other phases of our lives does it become a psychological ailment.

For example, page 616 talks about obsessive disorder. I am sure all of us would appreciate an engineer in a nuclear facility who obsessively checks the various gauges, insures a smooth production of energy, and diminishes risk of failures and explosions. The fact that he/she can concentrate so deeply is a unique characteristic that we seek in such an individual. But, if his/her focus on the proper functioning of the system does not end at the end of the shift and spill out into the other parts of daily life, causing disruptions and stress then we have a problem.

Another factor of normalcy is that it changes. Therefore, we need to be careful when labeling a distinguishing behavior. Not only are culture, environment, and traditions defining factors of normalcy but also our growth of general body of knowledge about ourselves. We explain the shy and detached behavior of Muslim women with their cultural emesis on modesty, the capacity of Sherpa’s to work in high altitude to their environment, and as the book explains on page 606 our general knowledge of human behavior caused us to remove homosexuality from the list of disorders.

When it comes to diagnosis of abnormal behavior the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnosis and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders offers five levels of almost 300 categorized disorders. As we evaluate the exhibited behavior and try to match it to any one of the various disorders, we have to be mindful of how judgmental we can be. Once diagnostic label is associated with a person, it is hard not to link every other characteristic with that disorder. Page 612 goes deeper into the problem of labeling and describes a study in which observers were more readily marked an interviewee as abnormal if they were told the interview was with a psychologist. Whereas, the same video presented as a job interview was deemed ordinary.

Hi Nichole,

I think what Ali is pointing to is the fact that many abnormal natural observations are in time explained. On first observation of salmon swimming upstream can exemplify abnormal behavior. But with time and understanding of salmon reproductive system can we explain the observation. After such time (a gap to study) the abnormal turns to normal.

Hi Hareem,

What if one exceeds the standards of the society without stress and without causing disruption in functionality in other areas of daily life? Would you consider that person abnormal?

Hi Amanda,

Your definition was very much to the point. So I like to ask: If a French physician was diagnosing an average French man in an interview what do you think lead him to conclude that the patient exhibited abnormal behavior?

Hi Annam,

I appreciate you recognition of the narrow definition of normal in the eyes of beholder. As I read the first part of the chapter, I kept thinking how difficult it must be to want to move if you are a psychiatrist. A dentist that moves from Japan to Germany goes through a few tests and starts practicing. But how would a Chinese psychiatrist qualify to work in a Scandinavian country?