Moral Foundations Coding Protocol
Summer 2018

The coding process consists of 4 steps that need to be done for each sentence and article as a whole:

A. For each sentence in the article[1] (if the article has a title, treat the title as a sentence too):

(1) Identifying whether it contains a moral claim.

(2) Identifying the kind of claim that is present.

(3) Specifying whether the author agrees or disagrees with it.

(4) Specifying whether the statement favors or opposes a relevant policy or a point of view. These will differ depending on the specific issue in question.

B. For the whole article:

Evaluate the entire article and specify what you regard is its main moral claim. Keep in mind that it may or may not be the most frequent one (based on counting sentences with moral claims).

Step 1 Identifying a Moral Claim

A moral claim is a statement that says something is right or wrong, good or bad. Sometimes the claim is about the rightness or wrongness of an act (cheating, rioting, being fair). Other times the claim is about something society should do (promoting safety, preserving the family). The claim need not be explicit. Sometimes we use language that implies a moral judgment, rather than stating it explicitly. To say that waterboarding is "barbaric" is to imply that it's morally problematic. To say that a business was "looted" is to imply that goods were taken wrongfully, unjustly. Similarly, for undocumented immigrants, if the term used is "illegal" it implies a wrongful act that subverts authority and order. Moral claims are normative; they appeal to some norm or standard and tell us what the world ought to be like. Normative claims contrast with descriptive claims, which instead simply describe the way the world actually is.

When we think of morality we usually apply at the level of one's individual behavior: "what's the right thing for me to do?" When we think about it at the societal level, we apply it to the collective--"what's the right thing for us to do?" Because such decisions are usually controversial—people rarely all agree on the right course of action—moral judgments are part of every political debate. And because they are based on conviction rather than reason, the debate is often uncompromising and emotional.

Let's take stem cell research as an example. One common moral argument in favor of stem cell research is that the embryos needed for the stem cells will help lead to cures for diseases that cause widespread suffering. Another, opposed to stem cell research, says that because all life is sacred embryos cannot be sacrificed. The first argument is based on reducing harm, the second on protecting the sacredness--or purity--of life.

At the end of the codebook, you will find a set of common keywords associated with different types of moral claims. You can use the keywords as guidance to understand the moral frame

[1] The instructions in red were added for Stage 2 annotations. See NUSE 2020 paper for details.

types but you do not need to use the keywords as the main determinant for the presence of a claim. A moral claim may contain none of the keywords listed at the end of this codebook, and the presence of a keyword does not necessarily indicate the presence of a moral claim. For example, the sentence, "The parents grieved the loss of their son" does not contain any of the keywords but it nevertheless conveys a moral claim of harm. On the other hand, the sentence "the group decided to leave the event," contains a loyalty keyword (group) but clearly does not make a moral claim.

If you cannot make a definitive judgment about a sentence, leave it uncoded.

Step 2 Identifying the Kind of Moral Claim Being Made

There are five categories of moral claims, each with a vice and a virtue side. They can be identified by very different kinds of concerns.

1. Care/Harm: relates to the vulnerability of human beings. Examples of care terms include kindness, nurturing, protection, and safety. Harm terms include cruelty, neglect, exploitation, and killing.
2. Fairness/Injustice: relates to the equal application of rules or just allocation of benefits. Terms used to express the idea of fairness include justice, rights, tolerance, impartiality, and honesty. By contrast, terms used to express cheating include prejudice, discrimination, injustice, and exclusion.
3. Loyalty/Betrayal: relates to patriotism and self-sacrifice for the group. The loyalty side includes such terms as homeland, community, nation, family, and solidarity. Betrayal terms include foreign, immigrant, enemy, betrayal, and treason.
4. Authority/Subversion: applies to issues of clear lines of authority, in which the authority is respected and seen as legitimate. Examples of authority terms include honor, respect, tradition, control, and submission. Examples of subversion terms include defiance, dissent, disrespect, lawlessness, protest, obstruction, and riot.
5. Purity or Sanctity/Degradation: underlies religious ideals of striving to live in an elevated, less carnal nobler way. The body is seen as a temple that can be debased by immoral activities and contaminants. Examples of purity/sanctity terms include sacredness, modesty, decency, and innocence. Examples of degradation include disgust, indecency, sin, adultery, filth, obscenity, wickedness, and perversion.

A sentence may have more than one moral claim, in which case you need to select and annotate the sentence as many times as the number of moral claims.

Step 3 Specifying Author's Support or Rejection of the Claim

Once you identify a specific moral claim, you then specify if the article author supports or rejects it. For example, you may identify the following sentence as a moral claim based on care: ''for many Americans, stem cell research offers the promise of reducing human suffering.'' You would code this as agreement with the claim because of the author's use of the phrase, "many Americans."

An example of an unsupported claim is ‘‘Some people believe that despite its worthy ends, stem-cell research is wrong because it involves the destruction of human embryos. These views are shortsighted.’’ Here the statement includes a harm claim (destruction of embryos) against stem cell research, but because the author rejects that view as shortsighted, you would code it as rejection of the claim.

If the statement is simply a moral claim *stated by the author herself*, such as in an opinion column, that claim is obviously supported by the author and should be coded as such. If the author is *quoting a moral claim made by someone else*, look in the immediate surrounding sentences to see if the author supports or opposes it. If it is difficult to determine the author's position, then select NA.

Step 4 Specifying Author's Support or Rejection of a Policy or Issue

The final coding task is to specify whether the statement explicitly favors or opposes a specific policy or issue in question. If you cannot determine this, select NA (not applicable).

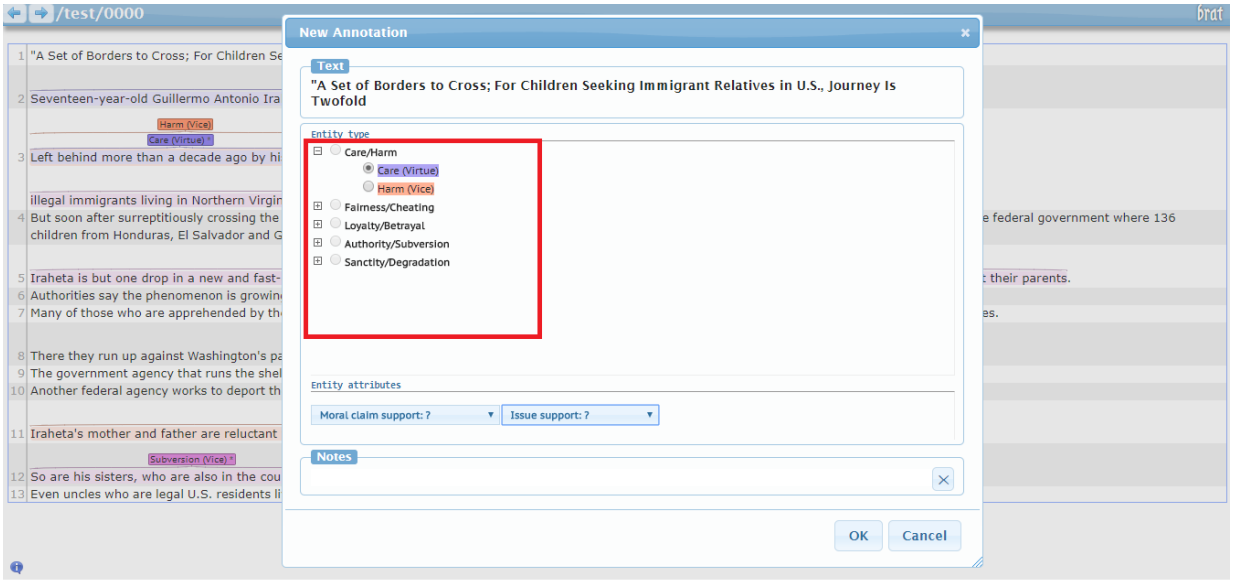
a. For *immigration* it would be whether the statement favors or opposes immigration reform. The specifics of policies change depending on the period studied (e.g., path to citizenship, legal status for children of unregistered immigrant born in the US—DACA), but the general policy of reform is the same in all cases.
b. For *same-sex marriage* whether a statement is in support of or opposed to legal recognition of the union of same-sex partners.
c. For *smoking*, whether the statement favors or opposes restrictions on smoking.
d. For *racial unrest in Baltimore*, whether the statement holds black residents responsible for the damage and destruction that took place in the protests and riots that took place after the death of Freddie Gray.

How to annotate with BRAT

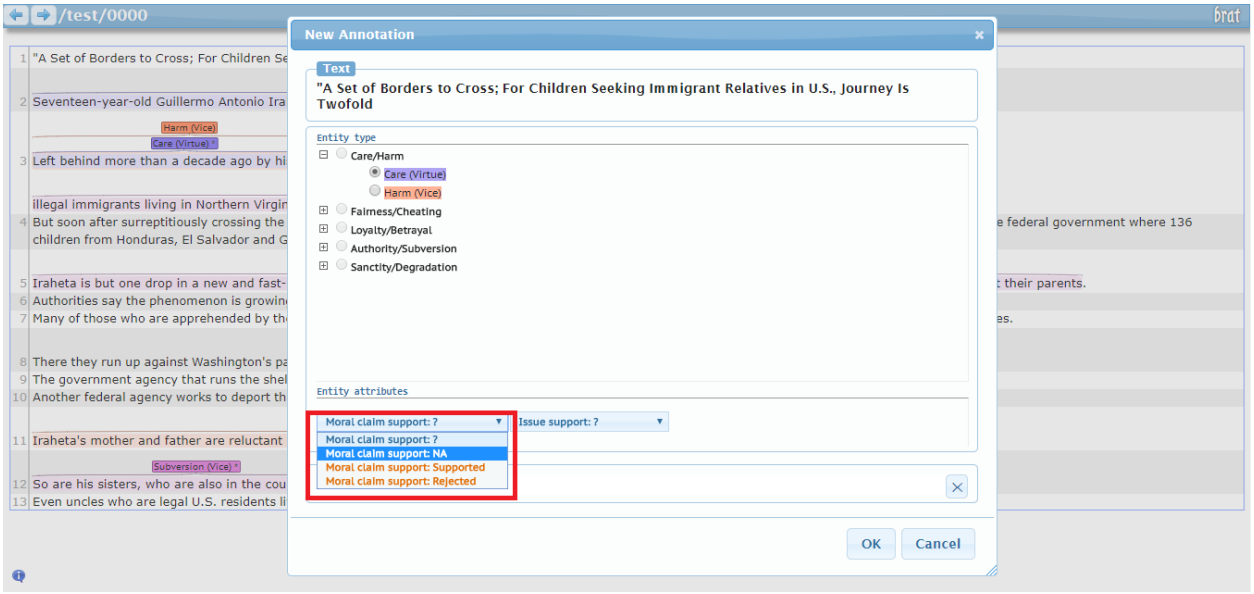
Login
Username:
Password:

First, read each sentence, and if there is a moral claim (step 1), then add annotations at the sentence level (steps 2-4 in the protocol). After you are done with reading the article, decide whether the article as a whole is making a moral claim (step 1), and if it is, select the word “ARTICLE” at the top and add annotations about the overall moral claim in the article.

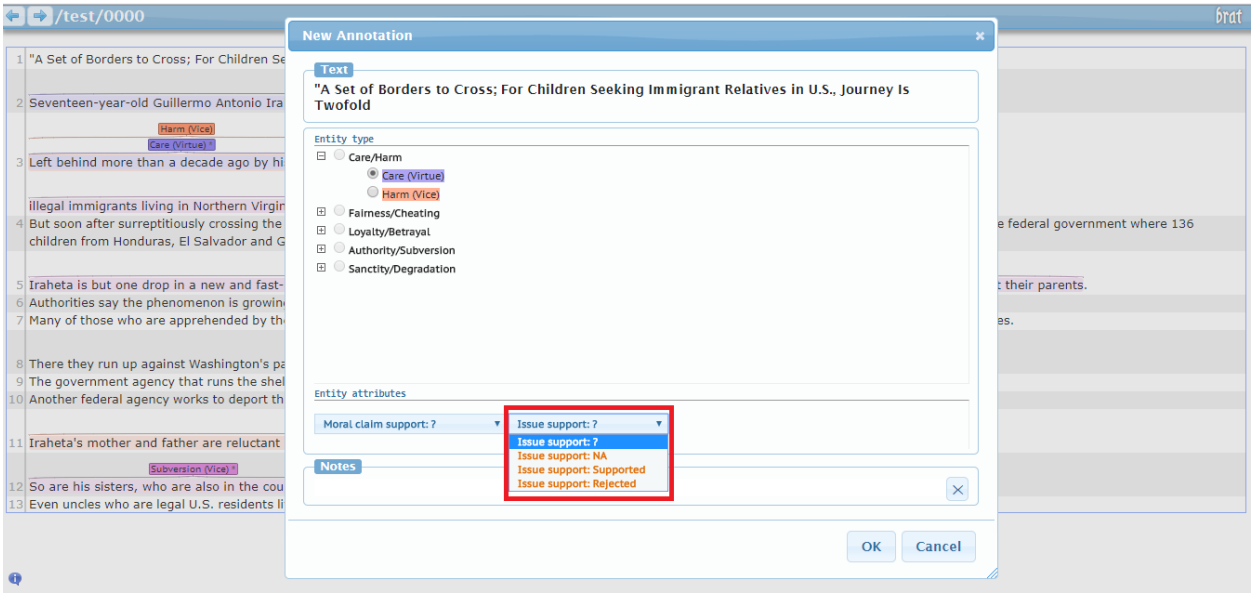
Step 2



Step 3



Step 4



[Brat Manual]

Moral foundations common keywords

%	
01	Care (HarmVirtue)
02	Harm (HarmVice)

03 Fairness (FairnessVirtue)
04 Injustice (FairnessVice)
05 Loyalty (IngroupVirtue)
06 Betrayal (IngroupVice)
07 Authority (AuthorityVirtue)
08 Subversion (AuthorityVice)
09 Purity (PurityVirtue)
10 Degradation (PurityVice)

%

safe*	01	kill	02
peace*	01	kills	02
compassion*	01	killer*	02
empath*	01	killed	02
sympath*	01	killing	02
care	01	endanger*	02
caring	01	cruel*	02
protect*	01	brutal*	02
shield	01	abuse*	02
shelter	01	damag*	02
amity	01	ruin*	02 10
secur*	01	ravage	02
benefit*	01	detriment*	02
defen*	01	crush*	02
guard*	01	attack*	02
preserve	01 07 09	annihilate*	02
		destroy	02
harm*	02	stomp	02
suffer*	02	abandon*	02 06
war	02	spurn	02
wars	02	impair	02
warl*	02	exploit	02 10
warring	02	exploits	02 10
fight*	02	exploited	02 10
violen*	02	exploiting	02 10
hurt*	02	wound*	02

03 Fairness (FairnessVirtue)
04 Injustice (FairnessVice)

fair	03	reasonable	03
fairly	03	constant	03

fairness	03	honest*	03
fair-*	03		
fairmind*	03		
fairplay	03	unfair*	04
equal*	03	unequal*	04
justice	03	bias*	04
justness	03	unjust*	04
justifi*	03	injust*	04
reciproc*	03	bigot*	04
impartial*	03	discriminat*	04
egalitar*	03	disproportion*	04
rights	03	inequitable	04
equity	03	prejud*	04
evenness	03	dishonest	04
equivalent	03	unscrupulous	04
unbias*	03	dissociate	04
tolerant	03	preference	04
equable	03	favoritism	04
balance*	03	segregat*	04 05
homologous	03	exclusion	04
unprejudice*	03	exclud*	04

05 Loyalty (IngroupVirtue)
06 Betrayal (IngroupVice)

together	05	foreign*	06
nation*	05	enem*	06

homeland*	05	betray*	06 08
family	05	treason*	06 08
families	05	traitor*	06 08
familial	05	treacher*	06 08
group	05	disloyal*	06 08
loyal*	05 07	individual*	06
patriot*	05	apostasy	06 08 10
communal	05	apostate	06 08 10
commune*	05	deserted	06 08
communit*	05	deserter*	06 08
communis*	05	deserting	06 08
comrad*	05	deceiv*	06
cadre	05	jilt*	06
collectiv*	05	imposter	06
joint	05	miscreant	06
unison	05	spy	06
unite*	05	sequester	06
fellow*	05	renegade	06
guild	05	terroris*	06
solidarity	05	immigra*	06
devot*	05		
member	05		
cliqu*	05		
cohort	05		
ally	05		
insider	05		

07 Authority (AuthorityVirtue)
08 Subversion (AuthorityVice)

obey*	07	serve	07
obedien*	07	abide	07

duty	07	defere*	07
law	07	defer	07
lawful*	07	revere*	07
legal*	07	venerat*	07
duti*	07	comply	07
honor*	07		
respect	07		
respectful*	07	defian*	08
respected	07	rebel*	08
respects	07	dissent*	08
order*	07	subver*	08
father*	07	disrespect*	08
mother	07	disobe*	08
motherl*	07	sediti*	08
mothering	07	agitat*	08
mothers	07	insubordinat*	08
tradition*	07	illegal*	08
hierarch*	07	lawless*	08
authorit*	07	insurgent	08
permit	07	mutinous	08
permission	07	defy*	08
status*	07	dissident	08
rank*	07	unfaithful	08
leader*	07	alienate	08
class	07	defector	08
bourgeoisie	07	heretic*	08 10
caste*	07	nonconformist	08
position	07	oppose	08
complian*	07	protest	08
command	07	refuse	08
supremacy	07	denounce	08
control	07	remonstrate	08
submi*	07	riot*	08
allegian*	07	obstruct	08

09 Purity (PurityVirtue) 10 Degradation (PurityVice)

piety	09	indecen*	10
pious	09	sin	10
purity	09	sinful*	10
pure*	09	sinner*	10

clean*	09	sins	10
steril*	09	sinned	10
sacred*	09	sinning	10
chast*	09	slut*	10
holy	09	whore	10
holiness	09	dirt*	10
saint*	09	impiety	10
wholesome*	09	impious	10
celiba*	09	profan*	10
abstention	09	gross	10
virgin	09	repuls*	10
virgins	09	sick*	10
virginity	09	promiscu*	10
virginal	09	lewd*	10
austerity	09	adulter*	10
integrity	09	debauche*	10
modesty	09	defile*	10
abstinen*	09	tramp	10
abstemiousness	09	prostitut*	10
upright	09	unchaste	10
limpid	09	intemperate	10
unadulterated	09	wanton	10
maiden	09	profligate	10
virtuous	09	filth*	10
refined	09	trashy	10
decen*	09	obscen*	10
immaculate	09	lax	10
innocent	09	taint*	10
pristine	09	stain*	10
church*	09	tarnish*	10
		debase*	10
		desecrat*	10
disgust*	10	wicked*	10
deprav*	10	blemish	10
disease*	10	exploitat*	10
unclean*	10	pervert	10
contagio*	10	wretched*	10