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# Lecture 1

#Central questions

In this course, we are investigating the universal human belief that there is a "right" and a "wrong" way to behave.

- .highlight[Moral psychology] is the \*scientific\* study of how humans distinguish right from wrong and act (or fail to act) accordingly.

In this course, we will be investigating questions like:

- How do we decide that a behavior is wrong?

- How do we judge if someone else is a good or bad person?

- How do we lie, cheat, steal, and hurt others with a clear conscience?

- Why do different groups of people come to different conclusions about what is right?

- How do we persuade others to reconsider their stance on moral issues?

Turiel Quote

>"Whereas conventions are determined by the social system in which they exist and constitute part of the definition of the social system, the moral domain refers to \*\*prescriptive judgments of justice, rights, and welfare pertaining to how people ought to relate to each other.\*\*"

-Turiel

# Descriptive definitions of morality

.left-column-big[- Many psychologists take \*\*functionalist\*\* approaches to defining morality, meaning they ask "what is the \*function\* of moral rules"?

>"Morality is a set of psychological adaptations that allow otherwise selfish individuals to reap the benefits of cooperation."

.right[-Joshua Greene, 2013]]

.right-column-small[![](images/Greene.jpeg)]

\*\*.large[Consider the following scenarios...]\*\*

A family's dog was killed by a car in front of their house.

They had heard that dog meat was delicious, so they cut up

the dog's body and cooked it and ate it for dinner. Nobody

saw them do this.

A woman is dying, and on her deathbed she asked her son to promise that he would visit her grave every week. But after the mother died, the son didn't keep his promise, because he was very busy.

A brother and sister like to kiss each other on the mouth. When nobody is around, they find a secret hiding place and kiss each other on the mouth, passionately.

Answer the follow questions:

1. Are these actions morally wrong?

2. Why or why not?

???

A woman is cleaning out her closet, and she finds her old American flag. She doesn't want the flag anymore, so she cuts it up into pieces and uses the rags to clean her bathroom.

A man goes to the supermarket once a week and buys a chicken. But before cooking the chicken, he has sexual intercourse with it. Then he cooks it and eats it.

## **SELF REPORT BEHAVIORS**

Index of moral behaviors…

Chadwick, Bromgard, Bromgard, & Trafimow, 2006

**Charitability**

3 helping build a home for the needy 3.60 0.56 1.659

14 donating blood 3.27 0.84 0.751

22 lending a hand to a person with a flat tire 3.03 0.69 0.090

40 helping a friend who is in need of laundry money by giving them some

money

2.77 0.79 0.625

47 buying newspapers from the person on the street 2.38 0.90 1.698

**Cooperativeness**

3 accepting that you were wrong and taking actions that were previously

opposite to your beliefs

3.27 0.76 1.614

12 agreeing to take an unplanned detour that the group wants to see 3.12 0.78 0.766

22 going with friends to a club that doesn’t play your type of music 3.02 0.72 0.200

38 helping your mom/dad bring in the groceries 2.85 0.71 0.761

48 paying attention in class 2.72 0.80 1.497

**Dishonesty** 1 cheating on wife/husband/girlfriend/boyfriend 3.85 0.52 1.518

17 borrowing/taking money from a roommate without asking 3.50 0.75 0.724

25 smoking weed and telling your mom you don’t 3.15 0.82 0.070

38 accepting more than the correct change when making a purchase 2.85 0.88 0.751

48 lying about your age to get into a nightclub 2.47 0.96 1.614

**Disloyalty** 1 having sex with a friend’s significant other 3.85 0.61 1.520

12 badmouthing a good friend behind their back 3.47 0.65 0.751

29 if you tell a secret someone told you 3.05 0.72 0.099

41 taking your friend’s ex’s side when they break up 2.73 0.97 0.747

46 saying bad things about your place of employment 2.38 0.83 1.455

**Friendliness** 3 helping a stranger pick up stuff they have dropped 3.43 0.62 1.642

13 helping someone find a lost dog 3.18 0.81 0.632

24 giving a compliment 3.00 0.71 0.096

38 speaking to the person behind the register at a gas station 2.83 0.72 0.784

47 waving back when a friend waves 2.67 0.80 1.430

**Honesty** 3 not cheating on a test even if you have the answers in front of you 3.65 0.68 1.436

13 correcting a cashier when they give you too much change 3.48 0.79 0.648

25 returning jewelry a friend lent you, but doesn’t remember you have it 3.35 0.76 0.045

43 when you buy something for a friend, giving them their change 3.17 0.78 0.790

46 telling your friend that an outfit is not becoming of her 3.05 0.77 1.347

**Loyalty** 3 staying faithful to a loved one 3.68 0.50 1.396

14 standing up for a friend when they are being teased or harassed 3.47 0.60 0.655

26 turning down a date with your best friend’s “ex” 3.30 0.74 0.055

41 maintaining a job when a salary increase is available somewhere else 3.10 0.88 0.651

48 keeping sacred induction rituals of your sorority or fraternity a secret 2.82 1.00 1.639

**Uncharitability** 2 having millions of dollars and not helping one person in need of something 3.55 0.75 1.461

13 not giving tips for any kind of service 3.15 0.73 0.648

26 not giving a ride to a friend who needs it 2.88 0.74 0.100

37 eating out alone because you know your friend is broke 2.45 0.96 0.774

48 not wanting anyone over for dinner 2.02 0.87 1.648

**Uncooperativeness** 1 not pulling over for an ambulance that is trying to pass you 3.63 0.55 1.762

14 continuing to ask someone on a date when they have asked you not to 3.25 0.88 0.705

28 skipping scheduled appointments 2.98 0.77 0.046

39 ditching one friend because another has more plans that night 2.78 0.90 0.602

48 going to the place you want to eat all the time 2.42 0.91 1.604

**Unfriendliness** 2 yelling at the store clerk for no good reason 3.62 0.74 1.311

14 giving someone dirty looks because of their clothing, hair, etc. 3.35 0.78 0.731

30 providing customer service without a “hello,” “thank you,” or “goodbye” 3.00 0.86 0.020

40 not holding a door for someone who is following you into a building 2.68 0.77 0.707

46 not saying “hello” to old teachers or professors 2.37 0.80 1.373

MORAL IDENTITY SCALE

Aquino & Reed 2002

Participants were firstly showed 10 positive moral-related adjectives (“faithful”, “honest”, “filial”,

“responsible”, “generous”, “polite”, “kind”, “helpful”, “fair”,

“loyal”). Then, they were asked to imagine a person who

has these characteristics…. And answer…

1. It would make me feel good to be a person who has these characteristics. .00 .62

2. Being someone who has these characteristics is an important part of who I am. .22 .70

3. A big part of my emotional well-being is tied up in having these characteristics. .04 .21

4. I would be ashamed to be a person who has these characteristics. (R) .25 .59

5. Having these characteristics is not really important to me. (R) .08 .71

6. Having these characteristics is an important part of my sense of self. .40 .61

7. I strongly desire to have these characteristics. .32 .66

8. I often buy products that communicate the fact that I have these characteristics. .66 .02

9. I often wear clothes that identify me as having these characteristics. .67 .06

10. The types of things I do in my spare time (e.g., hobbies) clearly identify me as having these characteristics. .60 .26

11. The kinds of books and magazines that I read identify me as having these characteristics. .63 .09

12. The fact that I have these characteristics is communicated to others by my membership in certain organizations. .72 .16

13. I am actively involved in activities that communicate to others that I have these characteristics. .69 .22

Listed below are some characteristics that might describe a person: caring, compassionate, fair, friendly, generous, helpful,

hardworking, honest, kind.

The person with these characteristics could be you or it could be someone else. For a moment, visualize in your mind the

kind of person who has these characteristics. Imagine how that person would think, feel, and act. When you have a clear

image of what this person would be like, answer the following questions.

1. It would make me feel good to be a person who has these characteristics.

I 2. Being someone who has these characteristics is an important part of who I am.

S 3. I often wear clothes that identify me as having these characteristics.

I 4. I would be ashamed to be a person who had these characteristics. (R)

S 5. The types of things I do in my spare time (e.g., hobbies) clearly identify me as having these characteristics.

S 6. The kinds of books and magazines that I read identify me as having these characteristics.

I 7. Having these characteristics is not really important to me. (R)

S 8. The fact that I have these characteristics is communicated to others by my membership in certain organizations.

S 9. I am actively involved in activities that communicate to others that I have these characteristics.

I 10. I strongly desire to have these characteristics.

I ¼ internalization, S ¼ symbolization, R ¼ reverse coded.

## Hypothetical moral dilemmas

Defining issues test (Rest et al., 1974)

DIT-1

(1) Should Heinz steal a drug from an inventor in town to save his wife who is dying and needs the drug? (2) Should a man who escaped from prison but has since been leading an exemplary life be reported to authorities?   
(3) Should a student newspaper be stopped by a Principal of a high school when the newspaper stirs controversy in the community?   
(4) Should a doctor give an overdose of pain-killer to a suffering patient?   
(5) Should a minority member be hired for a job when the community is biased?   
(6) Should students take over an administration building in protest of the Vietnam war?

DIT-2

(1) a father contemplates stealing food for his starving family from the warehouse of a rich man hoarding food;   
(2) a newspaper reporter must decide whether to report a damaging story about a political candidate; (3) a school board chair must decide whether to hold a contentious and dangerous open meeting;   
(4) a doctor must decide whether to give an overdose of pain-killer to a suffering but frail patient;   
(5) college students demonstrate against U.S. foreign policy.

## Moral theories

-Haidt/ Graham’s moral foundations theory

-Janoff-Bulman’s/Carnes Model of moral motives (MMM) – Group based morality

-Rai/Fiske’s Moral psychology is relationship regulation model

-Oliver Scott Curry -morality as cooperation theory

- Morality is just care/harm Kurt Gray

# Six moral theories

- Morality is not social conventions

- Moral foundations theory

- Morality is relationship regulation

- Morality motives model - Whether an action is moral cannot be determined outside of its social-relational context

- Morality is cooperation

- Morality is just care/harm

- \*\*Moral absolutism\*\*: actions are intrinsically moral or immoral, e.g., killing is always wrong

- \*\*Moral universalism\*\*: there is a system of morality that applies universally

- \*\*Moral relativism\*\*

#Moral psychology is relationship regulation

- According to relational models theory, there are four types of mental models for relationships:

- \*\*Communal sharing\*\*: individuals treat each other as equivalent, give and receive according to need, long term, e.g., families, teams

- \*\*Authority ranking\*\*: individuals are ranked along a social dimension, those who are higher in rank must protect those lower in rank, e.g., adults and children, military officers and soldiers

- \*\*Equality matching\*\*: relationship based on balance and reciprocity, requires record keeping to know what has been exchanged, turn-based, e.g., exchanging Christmas cards

- \*\*Market pricing\*\*: based on proportionality, each person gets what they deserve, e.g., buying and selling

---

#Moral psychology is relationship regulation

Two people can employ different relational mental models at different times, e.g., "Two friends may share tapes and records freely with each other (CS), work on a task at which one is an expert and imperiously directs the other (AR), divide equally the cost of gas (EM), and transfer a bicycle from one to the other for a market-value price (MP)" - Goldman (1993, pp. 344-345).

#Model of moral motives

- \*\*Proscriptive morality\*\*: what we \*should not\* do; requires us to overcome the temptation or desire to doing something bad

- \*\*Prescriptive morality:\*\* what we \*should\* do; requires us to be motivated to do something good

<center>![](images/MMM.JPG)

# Abstract moral rules

```{r, include = FALSE}

library(tidyverse)

library(kableExtra)

```

```{r, echo = FALSE}

Foundation <- c(".small[\*\*Care/ Harm\*\*]", ".small[\*\*Fairness/ Cheating\*\*]", ".small[\*\*Ingroup/ Betrayal\*\*]", ".small[\*\*Authority/ Subversion\*\*]", ".small[\*\*Purity/ Degradation\*\*]")

Definition <- c(".small[Do not harm.]", ".small[Treat others fairly.]", ".small[Be loyal.]", ".small[Respect authority and tradition.]", ".small[Do not violate purity norms.]")

Adaptation <- c(".small[Protect vulnerable children.]", ".small[Benefit from partnerships.]", ".small[Form coalitions.]", ".small[Forge relationships within hierarchies.]", ".small[Avoid communicable diseases.]")

Triggers <- c(".small[Suffering, pictures of baby seals]", ".small[Deception, marital infidelity]", ".small[Treason, sports teams]", ".small[Respect for bosses, parents]", ".small['Deviant' sexual behavior, food]")

Emotions <- c(".small[Compassion for victim; anger at perpretator]", ".small[Anger, gratitude, guilt]", ".small[Group pride, rage at traitors]", ".small[Respect, fear]", ".small[Disgust]")

cbind(Foundation, Definition, Adaptation, Triggers, Emotions) %>% kbl(caption = "Adaptations and triggers of moral intuitions according to MFT")

```

.footnote[Graham et al. (2013)]

???

An act could violate more than one moral principle, e.g., marital infidelity: harm, fairness, and purity

#Major assignments

<br>

.left-column-big[

```{r, echo = FALSE}

Assignment <- c("Midterm exam", "Final paper", "Quizzes (25 points x4)", "Homework (20 points x4)", "Participation", "")

Points <- c(rep("100 points", 3), "80 points", "20 points", "= 400 points")

grade\_table <- cbind(Assignment, Points) %>%

as.data.frame()

grade\_table %>% kbl()

```

]

.right-column-small[- Midterm exam is week 6 and the final paper is due during finals week

- Alternating homeworks and quizzes due on Sundays]

#Defining morality

- The purpose of morality is to prevent conflict and to allow for efficient cooperation

"Morality turns out to be a collection of biological and cultural solutions to the problems of cooperation and conflict recurrent in human social life" .right[-Oliver Scott Curry, 2016]

SOCIAL DOMAIN THEORY

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#Descriptive definitions of morality

- A descriptive moral theory describes which abstract guiding principles or concrete actions are endorsed by an individual or a group as moral

--

- .highlight[Discussion question:] If you wanted to study the morality of a society through observational methods only, what would you do?

--

+ You might look at laws, religious texts, etiquette books, observe behavior, etc.

+ But how do we determine moral rules (e.g., do not punch your teacher) from social conventions (e.g., wearing a uniform to school)?

.left-column-big[Moral rules are different from social conventions

>"Social-convential acts, in themselves are arbitrary in that they are not instrinsically prescriptive. For example... mode of dress is arbitrarily designated, that is, an alternative mode of dress could be designated to serve the same function. In the moral domain... the existence of social regulation is not neccesary for an individual to view an event as a moral transgression."

.right[-Larry Nucci, 1981]]

.right-column-small[![](images/Nucci.jpg)]

<center><b>Larry Nucci</b>, <i>Developmental Psychologist </i></center>

???

Social conventions are arbitrarily designated and can be replaced with another rule to serve the same function, e.g., a dress code (blue pants will serve the same function as yellow pants), whereas moral rules are moral even when there are not explicit laws prohibiting the action from taking place