

TOWARDS THE VIRTUE-RESPECT UNIVERSAL RELATIONSHIP

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I am the first to vindicate Aristotle's Virtue eudaimonia theory on measured data in twenty five centuries.

Here I make the hypothesis that the mediating force in the increased Life Satisfaction is *Respect of Others*.

1. THE STAKES ARE HIGH

The social instincts and processes of human beings are significantly more sophisticated than those of gorillas. In gorillas, respect is not the right concept but *social dominance* is the right concept. Here dominant males have differing advantages to subordinate males.

In human societies, these sorts of hierarchies form in street gangs and some criminal organisations as well. But this is not our primary method of producing societies. Instead, we rely on moral virtues and character as the primary method to tabulate respect.

I would thus like to suggest that in human societies, the *norm* that has developed to accomodate ancient evolved neurobiological systems of the subcortical regions always included an equilibrium of need for respect among many people and this was primarily modulated by virtues.

I believe other theories of 'status symbols' such as money and other features are secondary to human civilisation and virtues and Character are the primary mechanism for social respect of individuals.

2. HOW IMPORTANT IS RESPECT FOR LIFE SATISFACTION

The correlations for the world are:

- $c(LS, Resp) = 0.11$
- $c(Pos, Resp) = 0.36$
- $c(Neg, Resp) = -0.20$

So we all need respect for life satisfaction, positive affect, and reduced negative affect.

Before going further, let me remind you of some of the basics about affect. Recall that seven systems govern our emotions: SEEKING, CARE, PLAY, FEAR, ANGER, LUST, PANIC. Now action of SEEKING, CARE, PLAY are positive affect; those of the rest are negative affect. So positive and negative affect are independent in mammals and humans. This independence is a celebrated result from the 1960s, and is a highly nontrivial fact. They are not opposites of each other.

As you see above, both affects and life satisfaction are influenced by Respect variable.

The obvious inference is that increasing respect for an individual will increase life satisfaction. Thus a central important question is what can a person do in order that he or she has increased respect?

We are interested in universally valid answer to this question.

The theory that I will put forth is that it has always been the function of *virtue* to draw respect from others in human history in every time and every place, and that is the natural answer that is canonical for human nature.

3. AN APPROXIMATE EMPIRICAL CHECK

Unfortunately the World Values Survey does not have data for 'I feel respected by others'.

We will thus use a proxy for being respected by others. We will take people who *teach their kids to have respect and tolerance for others* and assume they are exactly identical to those who feel respected by others.

Then we will use "Justifiable to steal" as the proxy for Virtue.

We have the following results.

$$P(Resp|Virt) = 0.6335$$

and

$$P(Resp|NonVirt) = 0.5855$$

With appropriate identifications, the result is that there is a 4.8% increase in feeling respected given virtuous than not.

We present this as concrete empirical support for our general picture.

(a) Human beings have need for Respect from Others (b) Human beings cultivate Virtues in order to attract Respect (c) Higher Respect improves Life Satisfaction.

4. MORAL VIRTUES DRAW RESPECT EVERYWHERE

We hold that Respect of people are primarily drawn by moral Virtues of the person. As is well-known, Virtues are not moral opinions but rather matters of habituation.

I am quite pleased with the positive psychology school, with Martin Seligman, Robert Emmons, Ed Diener, and many others. But I am also interested in Human Nature from the natural point of view. Aristotle's theory of virtues was not the first. In 1300 BC there were texts from Egypt regarding virtuous character and also in China and India virtues were prominent. My theory differs from theirs in using modern measurable concepts. The basic cycle is that all humans want to have high life satisfaction, which requires among other things Respect of others, and habituation of Virtues is a naturally evolved manner of attracting Respect of others.

There have been numerous modern ideologies and ancient religions regarding respectability. Our major claim is that the natural among all methods is habituation to virtues which has evolutionary history behind it. In particular, we do not habituate Virtues in order to meet short term instrumental needs but in order to achieve long term life satisfaction by drawing respect which is an important psychological need.

5. VIRTUOUS CHARACTER EXPENDS EFFORT TO FINE TUNE SELF-INTERESTS AND SOCIAL INTERESTS

I will present an informal common sense discussion of this topic. I never liked the interminable selfish versus altruism debate that raged forever in biology. I always thought that we are social beings, have social needs of friendships and lovers beyond relationship with kin, and then we have national consciousness, and now human consciousness where we belong to a global community of human race. These belongings require a balancing of our self-interest with the interests of the communities. Effort spent in virtues can be thought of as acclimatising our sense of community to a larger sphere. Now we spend time and energy doing things in these. We do have some sense that our energy and time and effort require some reward, and these rewards come in various ways. Some of the rewards are *purely internal* where our sense of self expands with the broadening of our community. But it is the uncontrollable part, the respect of others toward us, that is the reward for our efforts.

There is a balance here; we hate it when we are sacrificing our lives for everyone else and are treated like a doormat in exchange. These are the dangers of imbalance. So we do need to protect our selves. We then find balance that works for us, social responsibility with some respect drawn to ourselves. And that is a primary psychological necessity that is required for life satisfaction.

Now striking this balance is an expensive affair if one has to use trial and error to discover them; this is where a developed civilised culture is our friend. We fit into some prepared situations without doing all the trials and errors to discover the right balance. This is cultural colour on adaptive evolutionary solutions to particular problems. There is a great deal of assistance from our genetic material. We find this comfortable overall.

There are all sorts of predatory cats in every society who will harm naively moral people but roughly they are a small minority, so statistically the drive is toward morally virtuous character.

There is more to this story. Our 'world' in our head is the social world; virtuous character is more natural for those whose world is larger numerically. Virtues are naturally rational for engaging with a large society for there virtues have norms by tradition. The important thing in all this is that we claim these phenomena are culture-independent and global.