Morality: What Is It?

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Four relational models

Communal Sharing
  Equivalence relation; categorical

Authority Ranking
  Linear ordering; ordinal

Equality Matching
  Ordered Abelian group; interval

Market Pricing
  Archimedean ordered field; ratio
Four Fundamental Forms of Sociality

Universal coordination structures:
  Function in all cultures;
  Organize all domains and aspects of sociality.

Must be implemented through culture-specific
  Precedents,
  Prototypes,
  Precepts,
  Principles,
  Practices.
Communal Sharing

Love,
Compassion, Empathy.
Ethic is ‘one for all, all for one’ and ‘unconditional love.’
Mutual altruistic help based on shared collective identity.
Motivation to affiliative, belong, identify, be cohesive.
Conformity and tradition: we must all be the same.

“No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of
the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if
promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were. Any
man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore
never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."
John Donne 1624,
Meditation XVII of Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions.
Unity

The motive to care for and support the integrity of in-groups by avoiding or eliminating threats of contamination and providing aid and protection based on need or empathic compassion.
Authority Ranking

Obedience to the will of superiors;
respect, deference, filial piety ‘upwards’.
Pastoral protective responsibility ‘down’.
Hierarchy

The motive to respect rank in social groups where superiors are entitled to deference and respect but must also lead, guide, direct, and protect subordinates.
Equality Matching

Equality.
Strict reciprocity.
Eye-for-an-eye, tooth-for-a-tooth vengeance. ‘Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.’
Rawls’s veil of ignorance with equal chance of occupying any social role.
Motivation to be even, on the same level.
Equality

The motive for balanced in-kind reciprocity, equal treatment, even shares, equal say, and equal opportunity.
Market Pricing

Morality of proportional justice
(e.g., in rewards and punishments, so that punishments are conceived as ‘paying for’ transgressions.

Evaluation of rationality: costs and benefits, ‘expected’ consequences (summing the probability X magnitude of all outcomes), efficiency.

Utilitarian calculus of the greatest good for the greatest number.
All good and bad consequences are fungible.

Allows punishment that is not ‘in kind’, such as fines or prison terms calculated to take into account qualitatively diverse aggravating and mitigating factors.
Proportionality

The motive for rewards and punishments to be proportionate to merit, benefits to be calibrated to contributions, and judgments to be based on a utilitarian calculus of costs and benefits.
Freedom, liberty, rights

Limits
to relational responsibilities, obligations, or constraints.
Four levels of relational morality, consisting of evaluations of people’s

1. Qualities as potential relational partners.

2. Performance in relational models:
   a. CS,
   b. AR,
   c. EM,
   d. MP.

3. Using the correct relational model.

The four moral motives are universal, but cultures, ideologies, and individuals differ in where they activate these motives and how they implement them:

That’s why individuals within cultures genuinely and adamantly disagree about what’s right and wrong.

That’s why there are such fundamental conflicts between cultures in judgments of good and evil, and in actions.
Unlike existing theories (Turiel, 1983; Hauser, 2006; Haidt, 2007), relationship regulation theory predicts that any action, including violence, unequal treatment, depriving people of any freedom, and “impure” acts, may be perceived as morally correct depending on the moral motive employed and how the relevant social relationship is construed.
1. Using the correct RM

Paying for dinner.
Offer to buy.
Commanding how to vote.
Helping yourself to your commanding officer’s popcorn, taking a drink from his beer.
Driving off from the dealer’s showroom for the day with a car.
2. Quasi-moral evaluations: general across relational models

- How suitable is the person as a partner?
  - Competence.
  - Trustworthiness.
  - Motivation.
  - Thoughts, memories, feelings, intentions, desires, other mental qualities and subjective states.

- Qualities evaluated may be general or specific to a prospective type of relationship.
3. Relational performance

A. Extraordinary performance (supererogation).

B. Failure to perform,
   - e.g., laziness in contributing to CS task;
   - perfunctory, slack obedience;
   - taking too long a turn on the swing.

C. Violation of constitutive conditions:
   - E.g., incest, treason, cheating.
A more fine-grained analysis of performance:
Constitutive Phases -
What morality concerns

1. Creation:
Action that is intended to form new relationships, either between strangers, or in a way that fundamentally changes a pre-existing relationship.
2. **Conduct**

Enhancement, Modulation, and Transformation

Action that comprises the relationship itself — enacting, testing, enforcing, reinforcing, enhancing, honoring, attenuating, or transforming it. Brings the relationship closer to its ideal state.
3. **Protection:**
Defending self for the sake of relationship partners, and defending partners because of the relationship.
4. Redress and rectification:
Restorative, to return the relationship to its ideal or equilibrium state.
5. **Termination:**
Duty to end a relationship.
Mourning:
Obligations resulting from the loss of an important relationship due to the other’s departure, defection or death.
Another level of morality

*Example:*

1. Parenthood is good, including adoption.
2. Marriage is good, and committed, long-term relationships are good, too.
3. Romantic, loving sexual relationships are good.

Now, consider an instance of these three . . .
Mia Farrow & Andre Previn marry; they adopt a girl, Soon-Yi Previn, and later divorce.

Mia Farrow and Woody Allen form a long-term relationship; Farrow gives birth to Allen’s child & they adopt another together.

Farrow finds nude photos of Soon-Yi in Woody Allen’s apartment.

Woody Allen and Soon-Yi Previn marry.
Desirable, morally appropriate dyadic relationships

- Parenthood
- Marriage
- Romantic Sex
This combination of relationships is morally transgressive.
Combinatorial morality

Evaluation of triads:

Sexual taboos: celibate priests, blood brothers. . .
My subordinate cannot serve another master.
It’s unfair to charge me a higher price than other customers pay, or other sellers offer.
My friend should not befriend my enemy.

Recursion:
if A transgresses against B,
C should punish A;
if C does not punish A, D should punish C . . .
The moral obligation
to kill your daughter or sister
because she was kidnapped
and might have been raped
which would bring shame and dishonor
on the entire family;

*If you failed to do this,*
no one would respect you,
or eat with you, or invite you into their home,
or marry your children:

You would have failed to uphold
the most important moral code of your society.
Hamlin, Wynn, & Bloom studies

Infants at 10, 6, and 3 months prefer an agent that helped another agent trying to go up a hill, compared to an agent that pushed the same agent back down the hill or to a novel agent.

Showed a puppet who either helped or hindered another puppet who previously either had helped or had hindered another puppet’s attempt to open a box.

At both 19 months and 8 months infants preferred the puppet who helped a helpful puppet to one who hindered the helpful puppet.

At both ages infants preferred a puppet who ‘punished’ an antisocial puppet to a puppet who helped an antisocial puppet.
Other aspects of relational morality

Distinct forms of redress for each RM.

Distinct forms of punishment for each RM.

Universal proclivity to interpret suffering and misfortune as moral events – implying transgressions of social relationships.
What’s distinctive about the relational approach

• Moral philosophy has focused on abstract, general rules that are more or less based on logical principles.
• But moral psychology actually is about navigating and coordinating social relationships;
• Hence moral transgressions are relational transgressions.
• Morality is derived from and operates within social relationships,
• so what is moral depends on what the social relations (if any) are among the persons.
• Thus, norms have no core ‘contents’.
• Instead, moralities are based on the structures of relationships.
The relational framework

- Explains why the main focus of morality is transgression, while supererogation is less salient.
- Explains why morality is not a function of the morphology of the act, e.g., harm.
- Integrates with moral development.
- Explains morality as a product of natural selection: morality is an adaptation to evaluate and act to protect adaptive social relationships.
• Explains the integral role of **moral emotions**, which are motives that have evolved as adaptations to seek, sustain, and redress fitness-enhancing relationships.

• Encompasses **religious moralities** rooted in relations with gods, spirits, ancestors, witches, protective beings, etc.

• Including the universal and pervasive disposition to **interpret misfortune** as the consequence of transgression: suffering explained by wrong-doing.
• Permits explanation of the desire to punish third parties for wrongs against others.
• Integrates quasi-moral evaluations.
• Explains moral violence; e.g.
  – vengeance,
  – honor killing of own daughter/sister.
• Shows how we understand other cultures’ moral codes,
• But often judge other cultures’ practices as wrong.
• Explains the nature of moral relativism,
• Yet shows that there are natural laws:
  – Objective standards based on
    • Innate ideas structured by natural selection,
    • Embodied in specific neural anatomy and neurochemistry,
    • Universally understood.
  – Intrinsically motivated ends in themselves.
  – With unique and distinctive logical structures, well defined in formal analytic terms:
• There are precisely four moral models.
• What’s universal are the four RMs and their conformation systems.

What varies across cultures are
   – The relative importance of the four RMs;
   – The domains in which people use each RM;
   – How people implement RMs in each domain,
   – Hence, the human qualities that are important in culturally significant relational partners.
   – Aspects of the syntax for combining relationships.