

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76847-4 - Moral Development in a Global World: Research from a Cultural-Developmental Perspective

Lene Arnett Jensen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Moral Development in a Global World

Questions addressing people's moral lives, similarities and differences in the moral concepts of cultural groups, and how these concepts emerge in the course of development are of perennial interest. In a globalizing world, addressing what is universal and what is culturally distinctive about moral development is pressing. More than ever, well-substantiated knowledge of diverse peoples' moral compasses is needed. This book presents the cultural-developmental theory of moral psychology, findings from numerous countries, and four instruments for conducting cultural-developmental research. The central thesis is that humans are born with a shared moral heritage and that, as we develop from childhood into adulthood, we branch off in diverse directions shaped by culture – resulting in novelty and contention. An international group of eminent and cutting-edge scholars from anthropology, psychology, and linguistics addresses this timely topic and explores how gender, social class, and “culture wars” between liberals and conservatives play into moral development across cultures.

LENE ARNETT JENSEN is Associate Professor of Psychology at Clark University. She is the originator of the “cultural-developmental” theoretical approach to research on human psychology. This approach encompasses what is universal and what is culturally distinctive about human development. Unlike one-size-fits-all psychological theories of the twentieth century, the cultural-developmental approach provides a flexible and dynamic way to think about psychological development in today's global world. Dr. Jensen's research addresses moral development and cultural identity formation in the contexts of “culture war” tensions, migration, and globalization, and she has conducted research with her colleagues in Denmark, India, Thailand, Turkey, and the United States. Her recent books include *Bridging Cultural and Developmental Psychology: New Syntheses for Theory, Research, and Policy* (2012) and the *Oxford Handbook of Human Development and Culture* (2015).

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76847-4 - Moral Development in a Global World: Research from a Cultural-
Developmental Perspective

Lene Arnett Jensen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76847-4 - Moral Development in a Global World: Research from a Cultural-Developmental Perspective

Lene Arnett Jensen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Moral Development in a Global World

Research from a Cultural-Developmental Perspective

Edited by

Lene Arnett Jensen



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-76847-4 - Moral Development in a Global World: Research from a Cultural-
Developmental Perspective
Lene Arnett Jensen
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107037144

© Cambridge University Press 2015

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2015

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Moral development in a global world : research from a cultural-developmental perspective / edited by Lene Arnett Jensen.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-03714-4 (hardback)

1. Ethics – Cross-cultural studies. 2. Moral development – Cross-cultural studies.

3. Conduct of life – Cross-cultural studies. I. Jensen, Lene Arnett.

GN468.7.M67 2015

170 – dc23 2015005502

ISBN 978-1-107-03714-4 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76847-4 - Moral Development in a Global World: Research from a Cultural-Developmental Perspective

Lene Arnett Jensen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

<i>List of contributors</i>	page	vii
<i>Foreword</i>		xii
RICHARD A. SHWEDER		
<i>Acknowledgments</i>		xix
1 Theorizing and researching moral development in a global world		1
LENE ARNETT JENSEN		
2 Divinity in children's moral development: an Indian perspective		20
NIYATI PANDYA AND RACHANA BHANGAOKAR		
3 Finnish moral landscapes: a comparison of nonreligious, liberal religious, and conservative religious adolescents		46
ANNUKKA VAINIO		
4 An Indian moral worldview: developmental patterns in adolescents and adults		69
SHAGUFA KAPADIA AND RACHANA BHANGAOKAR		
5 Moral worldviews of American religious emerging adults: three patterns of negotiation between development and culture		92
LAURA M. PADILLA-WALKER AND LARRY J. NELSON		
6 Investigating the three ethics in emerging adulthood: a study in five countries		117
VALESCHKA M. GUERRA AND ROGER S. GINER-SOROLLA		
7 The dynamics of ethical co-occurrence in Hmong and American evangelical families: new directions for Three Ethics research		141
JACOB R. HICKMAN AND ALLISON DIBIANCA FASOLI		

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76847-4 - Moral Development in a Global World: Research from a Cultural-Developmental Perspective

Lene Arnett Jensen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

vi	Contents	
8	How liberals and conservatives are alike and apart: a research autobiography LENE ARNETT JENSEN	170
	<i>Commentaries</i>	193
9	Taking culture and context into account in understanding moral development JOAN G. MILLER	195
10	The next step for the cultural-developmental approach: from moral reasoning to moral intentions and behavior GISELA TROMMSDORFF	204
	<i>Appendices</i>	219
A	Coding manual: Ethics of Autonomy, Community, and Divinity LENE ARNETT JENSEN	221
B	The Community, Autonomy, and Divinity Scale (CADS) VALESCHKA M. GUERRA AND ROGER S. GINER-SOROLLA	236
C	Ethical Values Assessment (EVA) LENE ARNETT JENSEN AND LAURA M. PADILLA-WALKER	239
D	Three Ethics Reasoning Assessment (TERA) LENE ARNETT JENSEN	242
	Index	249

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76847-4 - Moral Development in a Global World: Research from a Cultural-Developmental Perspective

Lene Arnett Jensen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contributors

RACHANA BHANGAOKAR is an assistant professor at the Department of Human Development and Family Studies, the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, India. Her research interests include cultural psychology, moral development, youth civic engagement, and positive youth development. She is the recipient of a number of awards, including a Fulbright Junior Research Fellowship at the University of Chicago. She was the co-investigator for a project funded by Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi, on the development of morality in Indian families. Currently, she is involved in two research projects on the interface of youth civic engagement with Gandhian philosophy and human rights funded by the Indian Council of Philosophical Research and University Grants Commission of New Delhi.

ALLISON DIBIANCA FASOLI is a visiting assistant professor at Middlebury College in Vermont, United States. She received her PhD from the Department of Comparative Human Development at the University of Chicago and BAs in Psychology and Philosophy from Middlebury College. Her research seeks to understand the nature of moral psychology by examining the role of culture in moral development. Her current work examines the social processes through which children reconstruct the moral concepts of their cultures.

ROGER S. GINER-SOROLLA is a professor of social psychology at the University of Kent, United Kingdom. He received his PhD from New York University in 1996. His research interests, funded by British and European agencies, cover the role of specific social emotions in such fields as morality, self-control, and intergroup relations. He is currently an associate editor of the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*. His publications on such emotions as anger, disgust, guilt, and shame can be found in *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *Psychological Science*, and *Psychological Bulletin*. He is the author of *Judging Passions: Moral Emotions in Persons and Groups* (2012). He is also a frequent contributor to the activities of the Center for Open Science, focusing on the role of publishing in encouraging replicable research and replication.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76847-4 - Moral Development in a Global World: Research from a Cultural-Developmental Perspective

Lene Arnett Jensen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii List of contributors

VALESCHKA MARTINS GUERRA is a lecturer in research methods and social psychology at the Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo, Brazil. As a PhD candidate in social psychology at the University of Kent, UK, she developed the CADS, an instrument to measure the three Ethics of Community, Autonomy, and Divinity. She has collected data with CADS in six different national cultures. Her research is published in international periodicals, such as the *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *Personality and Individual Differences*, and *Archives of Sexual Behavior*. Her primary research interests are in human values, religiosity, honor, well-being, and positive psychology. Additional interests are in human sexuality and cultural adaptation.

JACOB R. HICKMAN is an assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology at Brigham Young University, Utah, United States, where he specializes in psychological anthropology and cultural psychology. He did his graduate work at the University of Chicago in the Department of Comparative Human Development. He has conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Hmong communities in Southeast Asia and in the United States (Alaska, Wisconsin, and Minnesota) since 2004. His research interests include understanding how moral thinking, ritual practice, family life, religious movements, and subjectivities have been adapting to different social and political circumstances in the Hmong diaspora. In this research Hickman takes a person-centered ethnographic approach that integrates perspectives from psychology and anthropology in order to understand both cultural and psychological influences on morality and religious life.

LENE ARNETT JENSEN is an associate professor of psychology at Clark University in Massachusetts, United States. She aims through scholarship and professional collaboration to move the discipline of psychology toward understanding human development in terms of both what is universal and what is cultural. She calls this a cultural-developmental approach. Her research addresses moral development and cultural identity formation in the contexts of “culture war” tensions, migration, and globalization. She and her colleagues have conducted research in different countries, including Denmark, India, Thailand, Turkey, and the United States. Her books and monographs include *New Horizons in Developmental Theory and Research* (2005, with Reed Larson), *Immigrant Civic Engagement: New Translations* (2008, with Constance Flanagan), *Bridging Cultural and Developmental Psychology: New Syntheses for Theory, Research, and Policy* (2012), and the *Oxford Handbook of Human Development and Culture* (2015). She served as Editor-in-Chief of *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development* from 2004 to 2014 and as conference chair for the 2012 biennial Conference of the

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76847-4 - Moral Development in a Global World: Research from a Cultural-Developmental Perspective

Lene Arnett Jensen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

List of contributors ix

Society for Research on Adolescence. A native of Denmark, Dr. Jensen has resided in a number of countries, including Belgium, India, and France. She lives in Massachusetts, United States, with her husband and twin children.

SHAGUFA KAPADIA is a professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies and the Director of the Women's Studies Research Center at the Faculty of Family and Community Sciences, the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, India. Her theoretical perspective encompasses cultural and developmental issues among children, adolescents, and emerging adults. She has conducted research on morality, immigrant acculturation, and gender issues. In 2009 she was Visiting Psychology Faculty at James Madison University, Virginia, United States. She is on the review and editorial boards of a number of journals, including *Psychological Studies* and *Culture and Psychology*. She is also a founding board member of the Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood and the India coordinator of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development. She has received a number of prestigious awards and fellowships, including the Shastri Indo-Canadian Faculty Research Award (2006–7 and 2009–10) and the Fulbright Senior Research Fellowship (2003–4).

JOAN G. MILLER is a professor and the director of Undergraduate Studies in the Department of Psychology at the New School for Social Research in New York, United States. She is a fellow of the Association for Psychological Science and served as past newsletter editor for the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development. She obtained her doctorate in human development from the University of Chicago and has held past faculty positions at Yale University and the University of Michigan. Her research interests center on culture and basic psychological theory, with a focus on interpersonal motivation, moral development, family and friend relationships, and theory of mind.

LARRY J. NELSON is a professor in the School of Family Life at Brigham Young University, Utah, United States. He examines factors that contribute to flourishing or floundering during the third decade of life. He has published more than 70 peer-reviewed journal articles and chapters in edited books on topics including conceptions of adulthood, social withdrawal, and the role of parents and culture in the transition to adulthood. His professional citizenship contributions include service on the Governing Counsel of the Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood and the editorial board of *Emerging Adulthood* as well as being the editor of a series of books on emerging adulthood. He is a devoted teacher-scholar who has received numerous awards for excellence in teaching, including being rated as one of "The Best 300 Professors" in the United States by the Princeton Review.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76847-4 - Moral Development in a Global World: Research from a Cultural-Developmental Perspective

Lene Arnett Jensen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

x List of contributors

LAURA M. PADILLA-WALKER is an associate professor in the School of Family Life at Brigham Young University, Utah, United States. Her research focuses on how parents and other socialization agents, such as media and siblings, help to foster prosocial and moral development during adolescence and emerging adulthood. She has published more than 50 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters and has co-edited a volume entitled *Prosocial Development: A Multidimensional Approach* (2014). She is currently an associate editor of the journal *Emerging Adulthood*.

NIYATI PANDYA is a PhD student in the Department of Psychology at Clark University, Massachusetts, United States. She holds an MS in Human Development and Family Studies from the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, India. Her research interests focus on examining the role of culture and development in moral reasoning, particularly in the Indian context. She is also interested in how intracultural differences of social class and religion shape moral reasoning. Her research takes the cultural-developmental approach to study moral reasoning across the life span, with recent work including longitudinal and cross-sectional analysis. She has received travel awards from the Society for Research on Adolescence, and one of her posters was selected as the model poster for submissions to the 2014 conference.

RICHARD A. SHWEDER is a cultural anthropologist and the Harold Higgins Swift Distinguished Service Professor in the Department of Comparative Human Development at the University of Chicago, United States. He is author of *Thinking Through Cultures: Expeditions in Cultural Psychology* and *Why Do Men Barbecue? Recipes for Cultural Psychology* and editor of many books in the areas of cultural psychology, psychological anthropology, and comparative human development. His recent research examines the scopes and limits of pluralism and the multicultural challenge in Western liberal democracies. He has co-edited two books on this topic (with Martha Minow and Hazel Markus) entitled *Engaging Cultural Differences: The Multicultural Challenge in Liberal Democracies* and *Just Schools: Pursuing Equality in Societies of Difference*.

GISELA TROMMSDORFF is head of the Division of Developmental and Cross-Cultural Psychology at the University of Konstanz and Research Professor at the German Institute for Economic Research in Berlin. She is a member of several scientific and advisory committees, including the German Institute for Japanese Studies in Tokyo and the Research Center for Psychological Science in Taiwan. She also serves on several editorial boards, including for the *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* and the *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*. She has published more than 20 books (co-edited), 145 book chapters, and 100 journal articles. Her research interests center on

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76847-4 - Moral Development in a Global World: Research from a Cultural-Developmental Perspective

Lene Arnett Jensen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

List of contributors xi

intergenerational relations, transmission of values, and socioemotional development in cultural contexts. She is the president of the German-Japanese Society for Social Sciences and a recipient of the Federal Cross of Merit, 1st Class, Federal Republic of Germany.

ANNUKKA VAINIO works as Principal Research Scientist at Natural Resources Institute Finland where she conducts research on sustainable consumption. She is also Docent in Social Psychology at the University of Helsinki. Her publications focus on morality, justice, and environmental responsibility. Her newest research examines moral reasoning in the context of climate change.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76847-4 - Moral Development in a Global World: Research from a Cultural-Developmental Perspective

Lene Arnett Jensen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Foreword

Richard A. Shweder

I have been fortunate over the years to have several brilliant predoctoral and postdoctoral students who have creatively developed and applied the “Big Three” framework and made it both visible and theoretically and empirically accessible to researchers in the fields of cognitive, developmental, and social psychology. Lene Jensen, the editor of this volume, was the first moral psychologist to see the relevance of the Big Three of morality (Autonomy, Community, Divinity) for “culture war” issues in the United States – as a way of characterizing the tensions between liberal and conservative views of the world and as a way of describing the ontogenetic development or life course trajectories of moral thinking in liberal and conservative communities around the globe. *Moral Development in a Global World: Research from a Cultural-Developmental Perspective* adds substance to that insight through a series of comparative studies of moral development, including critical reflections on the Big Three framework by scholars from around the world.

The chapters in this volume explore the empirical and theoretical dimensions of the Big Three. These chapters are especially significant for two reasons. The first is their developmental focus on cultural variations in the life course trajectories of the Big Three and their interconnections. In some moral communities (for example, among Evangelical Christians in New England), the developmental story is about how Autonomy reasoning in children becomes the basis for the development of Divinity reasoning (via a process of social communication from parents to children), whereas in other communities (for example, among low- and high-socioeconomic-status Indians from Baroda) younger children display higher levels of Divinity thinking than do older children. In general, the researchers also discover that gender differences in these trajectories are relatively minor or nonexistent. Ditto for the relative salience of Autonomy, Community, and Divinity thinking in the moral judgments of males and females in any particular cultural group, which is noteworthy given the history of debates in moral psychology about gender differences in moral reasoning. In light of these and other studies, the claim that males and females speak with different moral voices seems overblown. That is just one take-home message. There are many others.

xii

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76847-4 - Moral Development in a Global World: Research from a Cultural-Developmental Perspective

Lene Arnett Jensen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Foreword xiii

For example, one commends the collection for its distinctive attention to the Ethic of Divinity. The Ethics of Autonomy and Community (and cognate notions of individualism and collectivism, or independent and interdependent selves) are much discussed in the moral psychology literature, and that is true of this collection as well. The Ethic of Divinity, however, is a subdomain of moral thinking that has not been treated with equal regard in psychology in general or in developmental psychology in particular. We live in a world in which globalization (with its ecumenical, border-erasing, universalizing impulse) and ethnic and religious nationalism (with their localizing, border-patrolling, parochial impulses to revivify thick cultural identities) seem to go hand in hand. Nor has the rise of modernity in the “West” and its global expansion brought an end to the spiritual side of human nature or to the transcendental goods favored by religious traditions. It is a great virtue that the present chapters examine the Ethic of Divinity or in some cases even place the Ethic of Divinity on the center of the morality stage.

A thumbnail sketch or bare-bones summary of the Big Three framework might read as follows: in the social communicative contexts in which one’s moral judgments must be accounted for, justified, and explained, the moral truths or goods embraced around the world are many, not one. The moral character of an action or practice is typically established by connecting that action through a chain of factual, means-ends, and causal reasoning to some argument-ending “terminal good”: that point in the provision of a verbal justification at which the goodness of the action seems obvious and nothing more needs to be said or can be said by way of justification. On a worldwide scale, the argument-ending terminal goods that play a part in the deliberative moral justifications privileged in various cultural communities are rich and diverse and include such valued ends as personal freedom, family privacy, equity, just deserts, harm avoidance, loyalty, benevolence, courage, piety, duty, respect, gratitude, sympathy, modesty, chastity, purity, and sanctity.

The Big Three is a classification of these goods into a smaller set. At its core, the Big Three (Autonomy, Community, Divinity) is a theory about the different aspects of the self (as a preference structure, as an office holder in a particular community, or as connected to a sacred realm) that are made salient and institutionalized in different traditions of value and belief and that are made manifest in everyday life in the customary practices of any cultural community. The scheme is an induction of the different clusters of moral goods or virtues associated with each of those aspects of the self and a theory of the inherent multiplicity of the moral domain.

Replication and generalization are both virtues in science. One of the great virtues of the chapters in this volume is the respect shown for disciplined inquiry, replication of findings, and the scope and limits of generalizations in the psychological sciences. As a result of these studies, which were conducted

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76847-4 - Moral Development in a Global World: Research from a Cultural-Developmental Perspective

Lene Arnett Jensen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xiv Foreword

across diverse population samples using somewhat diverse methods, a compelling case can be made for the robustness of the Big Three framework. Working in different cultural regions and national sites, the authors discover the presence of all three ethics and are able to put the Big Three and the cultural-developmental approach to work to illuminate the particular processes of moral development at play in each cultural context. The universal and the particular go hand in hand, and that which is ecumenical or global (the Big Three) makes it possible to understand that which is parochial or local in moral attitudes toward particular sorts of actions.

One of my central claims of the Big Three approach is that the illiberality of an action or cultural practice is not necessarily a measure of its immorality. This is both an eye-opening insight and a very big claim. Much academic research in North America and Western Europe on the psychology of morality has limited itself to the study of the liberal values associated with the Ethic of Autonomy and has even tended to define the very meaning of the domain of morality in liberal terms, leaving little space for either the Ethic of Community (and reducing it to mere “convention” or the conditioning of habits) or the Ethic of Divinity (and reducing it to religion, which has not been a topic of interest for most academic psychologists despite its universality and importance as a motivator of human behavior).

Liberalism itself is based on the principle of equal regard for all persons viewed as individuals and not as social categories or members attached to particular “in-groups.” Varieties of liberal thought about the meaning of equal regard for persons implicate such moral aspirations as expressive liberty, merit-based justice, equal opportunity, harm avoidance, and the benevolent safeguarding of the vulnerable so as to assist them in becoming self-governing individuals regardless of social-status-defining characteristics such as gender, religion, ethnicity, social class, or group membership. In my view, liberalism’s ideological home is the Ethic of Autonomy with its emphasis on rights to noninterference and the liberty to make self-determined “free choices” (short of harming others or denying them equal opportunity or their just deserts). In contrast, according to the Big Three, the reach of the domain of morality is much broader than the core moral concepts of liberalism; the moral domain also encompasses the normative concepts mentioned earlier, such as loyalty, duty, the hierarchical interdependency of social statuses, purity, sanctity, and pollution.

But what makes a judgment a moral judgment at all? What makes it a judgment of a moral kind? This is hardly a settled issue in the moral philosophy literature, but one possible definition of the moral domain might go like this: a moral judgment is the expressed or (more typically) implied judgment that person *P* *ought to do X* under such and such circumstances, where the doing of *X* under those circumstances is thought to be the right thing to do because it is

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76847-4 - Moral Development in a Global World: Research from a Cultural-Developmental Perspective

Lene Arnett Jensen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

presumed to be productive of some objective good. In other words, members of every cultural community behave as if they assume they are parties to an agreement to uphold a certain ideal way of life, to praise or permit certain kinds of actions and practices and to condemn and prohibit others. Characteristically, judgments that are moral judgments presuppose the existence of an objective normative reality (a realm of moral truths – the touchstones of an objective moral charter) that serves as an ostensible nonsubjective standard for judging what is right and wrong.

In some moral communities the posited moral charter is quite concrete and specific, in the sense that it sets forth clear and determinate instructions, principles, or commands for the actual behavior of the members of a group (do's and don'ts such as "thou shall not bow down before carved images" or "thou shall never use physical punishment to discipline a child" or "thou shall always permit widows to remarry if they want to, but never require them to do so"). The Big Three can be viewed as a moral charter as well, albeit one that is far more abstract in its posit of a heterogeneous set of moral "goods" such as justice, loyalty, and sanctity, which are classified and summarized as "autonomy," "community," and "divinity."

It is especially noteworthy that there is considerable cross-cultural and intra-cultural variation in the degree to which all the social norms of a society are moralized and viewed as manifestations of an objective moral charter. Indeed, that criterion itself may be one mark of the difference between liberal and conservative cultural communities. One is delighted that several of the chapters in this volume elaborate on specific ways this is the case. It is also noteworthy that what is viewed as an objective moral issue in some traditions of value (for example, the particular restrictions on diet or clothing among some Jews, Hindus, or Muslims) may be viewed as a subjective issue (a mere opinion, convention, preference, or distinctive taste of a group or a person) in some other traditions of value. Drawing this fact to our attention, and doing so with evidence on a global scale, is one of the features of this book that makes it so innovative and path-breaking for researchers of moral development.

Regardless of the scope of the moral charter – whether it encompasses all social norms or only a few, whether it is concrete or abstract in its prescriptions – perceived objectivity is one feature of those judgments that count as moral judgments. In other words, judgments that are moral judgments purport to represent normative requirements (obligations, duties, rights, prohibitions) that are, and always have been, binding on all persons or groups to whom they apply, and they are obligatory regardless of a person's or people's subjective or conventional acceptances or personal likes and dislikes. In other words, this feature of perceived or purported objectivity is an ontological claim, not only an epistemological one.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76847-4 - Moral Development in a Global World: Research from a Cultural-Developmental Perspective

Lene Arnett Jensen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xvi Foreword

Of course, any developmental study of moral thinking will want to document the epistemologies or mental processes at play as moral motives, reactions, and judgments get formed, including (perhaps even especially) the way metaphysical beliefs are acquired in childhood and adolescence. On the basis of my own fieldwork experiences in a Hindu temple town on the east coast of India, I have in mind the acquisition in childhood of such metaphysical beliefs as these: moral careers extend over many lifetimes, you are reborn into the world bearing spiritual debts, and nature itself is just and governed by moral laws that guarantee that in the long run “you reap what you sow.” Consequently, according to temple town residents, one’s position in society is not an example of “there but for fortune goes you or goes I” but is rather a matter of personal responsibility, carrying with it implications for one’s future behavior and demanding morally relevant self-control in order to unburden oneself of spiritual debts and improve one’s prospects in this and future lives. The study of moral judgments must address both the ontological and epistemological sides of the moral psychology of any cultural community. Happily, the research projects reported in this book often focus on the acquisition of these kinds of morally relevant beliefs of members of different cultural communities and draw them to our attention.

Undoubtedly, the coding schemes used for identifying moral concepts in everyday conversations and in interview responses and for classifying them as autonomy-based, community-based, or divinity-based will forever be objects of criticism and progressive development. Good theory and good evidence are likely to interact with each other as new measures get devised. Given the distinctive recognition in this volume of the inclusion of the Ethic of Divinity within the moral domain and the obvious importance of the study of religion in the contemporary world, permit me to use this occasion to briefly comment on what I view as productive approaches to the study of that subdomain of the Big Three.

In addition to the Big Three of morality, I suspect there may also be a “Big Three” of religion. In the history of thought about the religions of the world, it seems to me theorists tend to come in three kinds. There are those who define religion by focusing on the concepts of the soul, the sacred, and superior or supernatural beings. The soulful, the sacred, and the supernatural are the three *S*s of religion. Reflecting on the Ethic of Divinity, it is not hard to see how that particular realm of the moral is an application of all three *S*s (soul, sacred, supernatural) to a fourth *S* – the “self.” Human selves are capable of experiencing and recognizing themselves as soulful and supernatural in the sense of being capable of being the “unmoved mover,” able to initiate action in ways that distinguish the “I” from other moved movers such as robots and other facts and artifacts of the material or “natural” world. (The equation of *Atman*, the animated personal self, with *Brahman*, the world soul or the divine, is a Hindu doctrinal version of this recognition.)

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76847-4 - Moral Development in a Global World: Research from a Cultural-Developmental Perspective

Lene Arnett Jensen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Foreword xvii

Human persons are also capable of feeling a direct connection to some elevated or dignifying realm of truth and value (a sacred realm, in the sense of being unquestionably good) that is inherently a potential source of human integrity. “Cleanliness is next to Godliness” is but one rather theistic way to express the virtues or goods associated with the Ethic of Divinity, but one can even be an atheist and still experience the moral domain guided by self-regulatory goods such as cleanliness, purity, pollution, sin, salvation, and sanctity.

The Enlightenment recoil against the institutions of organized religion, the ultimate distrust of all metaphysical notions expressed by many positive scientists may have inoculated many contemporary secular social scientists against words like *soul*, *sacred*, and *supernatural*. This may be one reason contemporary moral psychologists do not typically include the Ethic of Divinity in their studies of morality. But the concepts underlying those words are deeply embedded in the human experience of value and choice, and they play a part in the socialization of children and in the significance and meanings conveyed in daily activities such as the preparation of food, eating, bathing, going to bed, and even how one dresses in the morning and prepares to meet the world. Fortunately, the Ethic of Divinity is capable of rendition in less tendentious terms. Mathematical and logical truths, for example, arguably have a “supernatural” status in the sense that they are nonmaterial and nonmental yet nonetheless really real. The analogy between moral reality and mathematical reality has not gone unnoticed in the history of moral philosophy. Happily, the Big Three of the morality empirical research tradition as expressed in this very readable book on moral development in a global world seems well positioned to bridge the fields of developmental psychology and psychology of religion and to elaborate more and more sophisticated methods and concepts for comparative study.

Finally, although there are analytic distinctions to draw among the Big Three domains of morality, there is no reason to view Autonomy thinking, Community thinking, and Divinity thinking as mutually exclusive with respect to the particular social practices of a cultural community. Consider, for example, some Amish communities in the United States where late-adolescent youth are given the opportunity to go off into the world of the “English” and see what life is like in other communities. Most of the youth return to the farm after they see modern life, choose to become baptized, and commit themselves to the strictures and moral charter of and for the Amish cultural and religious community. This ritual seems to combine Ethics of Autonomy, Community, and Divinity in a rather powerful identity-defining way. Every essay in this book is testimony both to the heterogeneity and inherent tensions in the moral domain and to the potential of each of the ethics to reinforce the others in creative and often culture-specific ways.

I am delighted to have been invited to write the Foreword to this brilliant and very coherent collection of chapters on the Big Three of morality.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76847-4 - Moral Development in a Global World: Research from a Cultural-Developmental Perspective

Lene Arnett Jensen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xviii Foreword

Congratulations to the contributors. One looks forward to future research that builds on this volume. “Onward and upward” is the sentiment I experienced reading the book. *Moral Development in a Global World: Research from a Cultural-Developmental Perspective* is an inspiration to move onward to the interdisciplinary developmental study of comparative ethics, with developmental psychologists and cultural anthropologists working together to investigate the moral psychology of particular customary practices in the diverse cultural regions of the world. The book’s truly great achievement is to move us upward to the rightful inclusion of the Ethic of Community and the Ethic of Divinity in the moral domain.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76847-4 - Moral Development in a Global World: Research from a Cultural-Developmental Perspective

Lene Arnett Jensen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgments

No woman is an island. Here I would like to acknowledge key groups that over the years have influenced my thinking on psychological development, morality, and culture. To the Committee on Comparative Human Development at the University of Chicago, where as a graduate student I studied the complexities of culture. To the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Berkeley, where as a postdoctoral fellow I learned about subtleties of individuality and spirituality in the United States. To the Life Cycle Institute at Catholic University of America, where hiring a psychologist whose unorthodox scientific research addressing moral psychology and “culture wars” seemed worthwhile. To the Department of Psychology at Clark University, where a history of welcoming original ideas about human development continues. To the Bridging Culture and Development Group sponsored by the Society for Research on Child Development, whose members gave me the assurance and friendships to switch out one-size-fits-all social science models of the twentieth century with a “cultural-developmental” approach where local and global knowledge come together.

I also appreciate the support of the administrative, production, and marketing teams at Cambridge University Press. I thank my editors, Adina Berk, Hetty Marx, and Rebecca Taylor, who embraced the idea of a book on moral development with an international and interdisciplinary team of authors.