

Scholar One: Oxford Bibliographies Online (OBO). New York: Oxford University Press.  
[www.oxfordbibliographiesonline.com](http://www.oxfordbibliographiesonline.com).

OBO: Psychology  
Entry ID: 9780199828340-0037  
Version date: uploaddate  
Citation style: Scientific

## **MORAL REASONING**

Lene Arnett Jensen, PhD  
Associate Professor of Psychology  
Clark University  
Department of Psychology  
Jessica McKenzie  
PhD Student  
Clark University  
Department of Psychology  
Niyati Pandya  
PhD Student  
Clark University  
Department of Psychology

## **INTRODUCTION**

Morality is fundamental to the human condition. From early on, children make distinctions between matters of right and wrong, and the people and institutions around them convey myriad moral messages in direct and indirect ways. A key part of morality is moral reasoning. It occurs within the individual, between individuals, and in myriad institutional and collective contexts. Moral reasoning is multifaceted. It serves, for example, to guide and determine one's moral judgment and behavior, to prod and persuade others, and to defend and bolster behaviors to oneself and others that in fact are driven by other motives (including amoral or even immoral ones). From early on, social scientists addressed moral reasoning. They asked the kinds of questions that contemporary scholarship on moral reasoning has continued to address, such as whether or not the development of moral reasoning follows a universal pattern and what contexts are most important for the socialization of moral reasoning. Early social scientists also developed methods that have been extended by contemporary scientists, such as having research participants deliberate in response to hypothetical vignettes and observing children at play. But contemporary scholarship is also taking new directions. Whereas early scholars primarily focused on parents and peers, current work examines additional contexts such as afterschool and youth programs and the Internet. Due to improvements in neuroscience technology, neuroscientific research on moral reasoning and emotions has also emerged. And with more international exchange and globalization, the influence of culture on moral reasoning is also receiving far more attention than current scholarship is. This bibliography first provides information on general overviews and then professional organizations and journals that primarily focus on moral reasoning. This is followed by a description of influential early social science

scholarship and its impact on contemporary work. A section on contemporary theories, then, describes five approaches: post-Piagetian research, the cognitive-developmental approach, the domain approach, work on gender and the two orientations approach, and the cultural-developmental approach. The section on theories, in turn, is followed by a section on current research topics. Specifically, this work focuses on moral reasoning in relation to culture, religion, contexts, identity, emotions, and crime and delinquency. Many of the theories and much of the current research described in these sections are rooted in psychological science. Thus the final section of this biography looks at emerging moral reasoning research in three other disciplinary areas: biology, neuroscience, and anthropology.

## GENERAL OVERVIEWS

Kurtines and Gewirtz 1991 is a three-volume handbook that provides an overview of theory, research, and applied work in the area of moral psychology. While these volumes still provide very useful information, newer handbooks reflect changes in the field and provide access to more recent scholarship. Killen and Smetana 2006, a handbook on moral development, includes twenty-six chapters covering a variety of issues pertaining to morality in the field of psychology. Doris and Moral Psychology Research Group 2010 provides an interdisciplinary overview of a variety of issues in contemporary moral psychology and philosophy. Two recent encyclopedias are also available that include entries pertaining to moral reasoning in a variety of ways. Power, et al. 2007 is a two-volume encyclopedia that focuses on moral education in American schools but includes entries on moral psychology scholars, theory, and research. Shweder, et al. 2009 is an encyclopedia on children that has a much broader scope than moral psychology, yet many of the entries touch directly or indirectly on moral reasoning, emotions, and behaviors.

Doris, J. M., and Moral Psychology Research Group[nonPersonal]. 2010. *The moral psychology handbook*. Oxford, UK: Oxford Univ. Press.[ISBN: 9780199582143]

This handbook draws attention to the emergent interdisciplinarity in studying human morality, particularly in its attempt to bridge philosophic and psychological perspectives. Topics included pertain to moral reasoning, character, and rules, as well as neural correlates of ethical judgment.

Killen, M., and J. Smetana, eds. 2006. *Handbook of moral development*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. [ISBN: 9780805847512]

Covers a variety of theories and research on moral reasoning and psychology. Topics include moral development stage theory, social domain theory, conscience, sociocultural work, moral emotions, and moral education.

Kurtines, W. M., and J. L. Gewirtz, eds. 1991. *Handbook of moral behavior and development*. 3 vols. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. [ISBN: 9780805802061]

Consists of three volumes, one each on theory, research, and application. The volume on theory includes theories by Bandura, Hoffman, and Kohlberg. The volume on research includes work on gender, empathy, and narrative. The application volumes address issues such as drug use, moral education, and public policy.

Power, F., R. Nuzzi, D. Narvaez, D. Lapsley, and T. Hunt, eds. 2007. *Moral education: A handbook*. 2 Vols. Westport, CT: Praeger.

This two-volume encyclopedia pulls together a variety of information pertaining to moral education in American K-12 schools. The A-Z format of this handbook allows for quick access to information pertaining to topics such as religious moral education, moral philosophy, and character education.

Shweder, R. A., T. R. Bidell, A. C. Dailey, S. D. Dixon, P. J. Miller, and J. Modell, eds. 2009. *The child: An encyclopedic companion*. Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press. [ISBN: 9780226475394]

This encyclopedia brings together contributors from a wide variety of disciplines, including anthropology, pediatrics, psychology, and law. Of the more than five hundred entries on children and childhood, many highlight moral conceptions and practices across cultures. Examples of such entries pertain to civic education, family sleeping arrangements, discipline and punishment, and food preferences.

## PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND JOURNALS

One society that primarily focuses on moral reasoning is the **\*\*Association for Moral Education\*\***. The **\*\*Journal of Moral Education\*\*** is a membership journal.

**\*Association for Moral Education**[<http://www.amenetwork.org>]\*.[class: webLink]

Started by cognitive-developmental scholars, this is now an interdisciplinary organization for scholars and practitioners focusing on moral development and education.

**Journal of Moral Education**.[class:periodical]

This interdisciplinary journal of the Association for Moral Education publishes research on moral education and development. Includes articles providing empirical research and philosophical analyses, book reviews, and occasional special issues. Published quarterly.

## EARLY SOCIAL SCIENCE SCHOLARSHIP

Early social scientists asked the kinds of questions that contemporary research on moral reasoning and development has continued to address: Is morality the equivalent of societal norms or is morality a set of concepts that go beyond society (see Durkheim 1984 and Piaget 1965)? How do moral conceptions develop in the course of childhood and adolescence (Freud 1961 and Piaget 1965)? Does the development of cognition, including moral reasoning, occur in a sequence of levels or stages (see Baldwin 2001 and Piaget 1965)? Who has notable influence on moral development—parents, peers, society as a whole, or other contexts (see Freud 1961 and Durkheim 1984)? To what extent does moral development differ between societies (Piaget 1965)? How should educational systems and societies aim to promote moral reasoning and development in children (Dewey 1916 and Piaget 1965)?

Baldwin, J. M. 2001. *Social and ethical interpretations in mental development*. Bristol, UK: Thoemmes.[ISBN: 9781855069169]

Originally published in 1897, the topics in this volume range from a discussion of the development of moral or “ethical” judgments and emotions in the individual to social progress. Baldwin’s scholarship was a source of inspiration for Kohlberg’s cognitive-developmental approach (see **\*Cognitive-Developmental Approach\***).

Dewey, J. 1916. *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. New York: Free Press.

A wide-ranging treatise on the purposes and aims of education, including consideration of values and morals in education.

Durkheim, E. 1984. *The division of labor in society*. New York: Free Press.[ISBN: 9780029079607]

Originally published in 1893, this book puts forth the influential argument that moral reasoning and behaviors are inextricably tied to societal norms and conditions. The argument is presented in the context of a discussion of division of labor, anomie, and solidarity in modern societies.

Freud, S. 1961. *Civilization and its discontents*. New York: W. W. Norton.

First published in 1930, Freud's book argued that inherent antisocial human tendencies are at odds with the human need to live in communities. He also provided an account of the early ontogenetic development of moral conscience.

Piaget, J. 1965. *The moral judgment of the child*. New York: Free Press.

A tour de force that introduces different methods for the study of moral reasoning, presents a sequence of moral development stages, and addresses educational policy. The book was originally published in 1932.

## CONTEMPORARY THEORIES

This section provides an overview of five approaches: \*post-Piagetian research\*, the \*cognitive-developmental approach\*, the \*domain approach\*, work on \*gender and the two orientations approach\*, and the \*cultural-developmental approach\*. The approaches vary on a number of dimensions. This includes definitions of morality (e.g., whether to include considerations pertaining to collectivities and divinity); methodologies (e.g., observation of children's activities, and interviews about hypothetical dilemmas and participants' moral experiences); and claims about the extent to which moral reasoning follows a universal pattern of development or is influenced by gender and culture.

### Post-Piagetian Research

The landmark Piaget 1965 introduced many concepts pertaining to the development of moral reasoning and judgments. Piaget addressed, for example, the development of consciousness of rules and of the intentions of a moral agent, reasoning in children about justice and punishment, and the beneficial impact (in his view) of democratic discussions of moral rules among peers. Piaget also used research techniques such as interviews about vignettes and observations of children's games that have been utilized and extended by subsequent researchers. Recent researchers have drawn on Piaget's work in a variety of respects. One area that has received considerable attention is the ability of young children to understand the intentions of others (Nelson 1980), including in regard to behaviors such as lying and making promises (Maas 2008). Another area is the role of peers, especially in the course of adolescence, in facilitating moral development and perspective taking. Youniss and Smollar 1985 focuses on friendships as allowing for a broadening of adolescents' moral compasses, while Youniss and Yates 1997 focuses on adolescents' joint involvement in community service. Larson, et al. 2011 addresses how peer groups serve as crucible of positive value development. While drawing on Piaget's insights on the benefits of peer interactions, the chapter departs from Piaget in its focus on culture and globalization.

Larson, R. W., L. A. Jensen, H. Kang, and A. Griffith. 2011. Peer groups as a crucible of positive value development in a global world. In *Values, religion, and culture in adolescent development*. Edited by G. Trommsdorff and X. Chen. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press.

In the context of the global spread of peer cultures, this chapter summarizes research on youth programs with a focus on how they can lead to adolescent value change, collective perspective-taking, as well as articulation and enactment of positive values.

Maas, F. 2008. Children's understanding of promising, lying, and false beliefs. *Journal of General Psychology* 135:301–321.

Whereas Piaget 1965 concluded that younger children focus on the consequences of behaviors rather than the intentions of the person engaging in the behavior when rendering moral judgments, this is an example of research showing that children as young as four years of age take intentions into consideration.

Nelson, S. 1980. Factors influencing young children's use of motives and outcomes as moral criteria. *Child Development* 51:823–829.

A classic study showing that three-year-olds took both the intentions of a person and the consequences of a behavior into account when making moral judgments.

Piaget, J. 1965. *The moral judgment of the child*. New York: Free Press.

Originally published in 1932, Piaget argues that just around age nine is a key age for several shifts in moral reasoning. These shifts include consideration of the role of a person's intentions and arriving at autonomous judgments through peer discussions rather than adherence to parental authority.

Youniss, J., and J. Smollar. 1985. *Adolescent relations with mothers, fathers, and friends*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press. [ISBN: 9780226964874]

This widely cited book describes the nature of American adolescents' friendships on a variety of dimensions, including the positive role of friends in the development of values, perspective-taking, and identity.

Youniss, J., and M. Yates. 1997. *Community service and social responsibility in youth: Theory and policy*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press. [ISBN: 9780226964829]

Contributes to a focus on community service in youth, and it specifically argues that adolescents who take part in service—often with peers—develop a new sense of responsibility and consideration for communal and societal well-being.

### **Cognitive-Developmental Approach**

Kohlberg 1958 launched the cognitive-developmental approach to moral reasoning. The approach dominated moral psychology for several decades and has influenced many subsequent approaches. Kohlberg 1958 and Kohlberg 1981 developed “hypothetical dilemmas” to elicit moral reasoning in one-on-one interviews. Drawing on participants' responses to the dilemmas as well as his readings of Western rationalist moral philosophy, he concluded that moral reasoning occurs in a sequence of six stages. Kohlberg 1981 sees these stages as both universally applicable descriptions of moral development and prescriptive for how moral reasoning ought to develop. Walker 1989 provides extensive research with the cognitive developmental approach and found support for a sequential emergence of cognitive-developmental stages in North American samples. In a review of cross-cultural research utilizing the cognitive-developmental approach, Snarey 1985 found support for the widespread occurrence of the first three stages. Colby and Kohlberg 1987 offers a detailed and widely used scoring manual for the cognitive-developmental approach. Rest 1979 developed the Defining Issues Test (DIT), a questionnaire-based alternative to interviews for assessing moral reasoning in terms of Kohlberg's stages. More recently, cognitive-developmental researchers have debated the validity of the highest two stages in Kohlberg's sequence and have formulated post- or neo-Kohlbergian theories (for example, Gibbs, et al. 2007 and Rest, et al. 1999).

Colby, A., and L. Kohlberg. 1987. *The measurement of moral judgment*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press. [ISBN: 9780521325653]

This two-volume set includes an overview of reliability and validity issues in research with Kohlberg's stage theory. Also provides a detailed coding manual.

- Gibbs, J. C., K. S. Basinger, R. L. Grime, and J. R. Snarey. 2007. Moral judgment development across cultures: Revisiting Kohlberg's universality claim. *Developmental Review* 27:443–500. An example of a recent extension of Kohlberg's theory, this article synthesizes Snarey's work on rendering Kohlberg's highest stages more universally valid with cross-cultural research by Gibbs and his colleagues.
- Kohlberg, L. 1958. *The development of modes of thinking and choice in years 10 to 16*. PhD diss., University of Chicago.[class:thesis-phd]  
Kohlberg's dissertation presents the theoretical and research foundations for what was to become the full-fledged cognitive-developmental theory. In opposition to Freud 1961 and Durkheim 1984 (among others), it includes his argument that morality goes beyond societal norms.
- Kohlberg, L. 1981. *The philosophy of moral development*. San Francisco: Harper & Row. [ISBN: 9780060647605]  
Highly influential volume that includes Kohlberg's statements of his research and theory on moral development, education, and philosophy.
- Rest, J. R. 1979. *Development in judging moral issues*. Minnesota: Univ. of Minnesota Press. [ISBN: 9780816608911]  
This volume lays out the Defining Issues Test (DIT), a questionnaire to assess moral reasoning within Kohlberg's sequence of stages.
- Rest, J. R., D. Narvaez, M. J. Bebeau, and S. J. Thoma. 1999. *Postconventional moral thinking: A neo-Kohlbergian approach*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. [ISBN: 9780585176703]  
An example of an extension of the cognitive developmental approach to morality that primarily draws on questionnaire-based research using Rest's Defining Issues Tests (DIT).
- Snarey, J. R. 1985. Cross-cultural universality of socio-moral development: A critical review of Kohlbergian research. *Psychological Bulletin* 97:202–232.  
A review of more than forty cross-cultural studies using the cognitive-developmental approach. It finds more support for the widespread occurrence of the three lower stages than the three higher stages in Kohlberg's sequence.
- Walker, L. J. 1989. A longitudinal study of moral reasoning. *Child Development*, 51:131–139.  
A widely cited example of Walker's longitudinal research with families utilizing Kohlberg's research protocol and stage theory.

### Domain Approach

In the latter half of the 1970s, Nucci and Turiel proposed taking a step back from the question of how moral reasoning develops to the question of what is moral in the first place. They wanted to find out whether children differentiate moral from non-moral issues. Based on a similar tradition of Western rationalist philosophy that Kohlberg drew on to formulate his cognitive-developmental approach (see \*Cognitive-Developmental Approach\*), Turiel 1983 argued that in order for a rule to be moral, key criteria are that it applies to everyone and that it cannot be altered. Also, moral rules are justified in terms of reasoning pertaining to justice, fairness, and the welfare of other individuals. Turiel 1983 differentiated this moral domain from social conventions, and Nucci 1981 differentiated it from what he termed a "personal" domain. Smetana 1983 argues that the three domains emerge as structurally distinct in early childhood, whereas their content develops over time, and some judgments may draw on more than one domain. Domain researchers have applied their theory to a variety of subject areas, including

accounts of disagreements between adolescents and parents (e.g., Smetana 1988) and exclusion in intergroup relations (e.g., Killen 2007). Turiel and his colleagues claim that their theory has universal applicability (e.g., Turiel 1983). Other scholars, however, have observed that children and adults from diverse cultures appear to regard a wide variety of issues and reasons as moral that are not included within the domain approach definition of morality (e.g., Nisan 1987, Zimba 1994, Haidt, et al. 1993).

Haidt, J., S. H. Koller, and M. G. Dias. 1993. Affect, culture, and morality, or, is it wrong to eat your dog? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 65:613–628.

On the basis of research with children and adults in Brazil and the United States, the authors concluded that distinctions between morality and conventions vary by socioeconomic status and nationality.

Killen, M. 2007. Children's social and moral reasoning about exclusion. *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 16:32–36.

Provides an overview of the application of the domain approach to children's reasoning about peer exclusion based on gender and race.

Nisan, M. 1987. Moral norms and social conventions: A cross-cultural study. *Developmental Psychology* 23:719–725.

Based on research with Israeli children of Arab Muslim and Jewish background, the author concludes that distinctions between moral and conventional domains are neither universal nor follow an inherent developmental pattern.

Nucci, L. 1981. The development of personal concepts: A domain distinct from moral and societal concepts. *Child Development* 52:118–121.

Introduces the personal domain as distinct from the moral and conventional domains. The personal domain is described as pertaining to behaviors that primarily have an effect upon the individual engaging in them. Examples provided include masturbation, smoking, and one's choice of friends.

Smetana, J. G. 1983. Social-cognitive development: Domain distinctions and coordinations. *Developmental Review* 3:131–147.

While this article starts from the premise that moral, social, and personal domains are distinct, parallel and irreducible, the focus is on how content within the three structures may blend under various circumstances.

Smetana, J. G. 1988. Adolescents' and parents' conceptions of parental authority. *Child Development* 59:321–335.

An early and influential study in a line of research by Smetana using the domain approach to account for discrepancies between adolescents and parents in their views of adolescent autonomy and parental authority.

Turiel, E. 1983. *The development of social knowledge: Morality and convention*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press. [ISBN: 9780521253093]

This volume brings together more than a decade's worth of research with the domain approach in support of the argument for a structural domain distinction between moral rules and conventions.

Zimba, R. F. 1994. The understanding of morality, convention, and personal preference in an African setting: Findings from Zambia. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 25:369–393.

Based on research with diverse age groups and social groups of Zambians, the author concludes that their understanding of morality is broader than the domain approach concept,

encompassing not only reasons pertaining to harm and justice but also to communal norms and well-being.

### **Gender and Two Orientations Approach**

In the course of the late 1970s and 1980s Gilligan 1977 and Gilligan 1982 argued that a considerable part of psychological work—including work on moral reasoning—was premised on the development of boys and men and that the time had come to address the development of girls and women. She noted, for example, that Piaget 1965 (cited in \*Early Social Science Scholarship\*) suggested that boys show more advanced negotiation of moral rules than girls. She also noted that the initial cognitive-developmental research by Kohlberg 1958 (see \*Cognitive-Developmental Approach\*) included only boys, and she claimed that girls score lower than boys on his sequence of stages. However, subsequent meta-analyses of cognitive-developmental research based on questionnaires (Thoma 1986) and interviews (Walker 1984) have not supported this claim. On the basis of interviews with American children and adults, Gilligan 1982 also proposed that there are two kinds of moral orientations. One is a “justice” orientation, focused on how to negotiate among competing rights in an impartial manner. This orientation, according to Gilligan, is characteristic of male development. The other orientation, however, pertains to “care” and is more characteristic of female development. Here the concern is with tending to the needs of self and those one has relationships with. Research across cultures has found that children and adolescents—whether girls or boys—speak of both care and fairness. In some cultures, however, care considerations have a decidedly different inflection from Gilligan’s. Research in India found in Miller 1994 and Miller and Bersoff 1992 shows that when children and adolescents speak of care, their focus is not so much on interpersonal feelings as on role-based duties. In research using Japanese adolescent boys, Shimizu 2001 finds that care was directed not only at other individuals but also at communities as a whole, as well as family, school, and society. Snarey and Keljo 1991 proposes a broadened care orientation to include collectivistic considerations.

Gilligan, C. F. 1977. In a different voice: Women’s conception of the self and of morality. *Harvard Educational Review* 47:481–517.

A precursor to the book with the same title, this article proposed an expansion of conceptions of self and morality from a “woman’s standpoint.” The article includes discussion of interviews with women considering whether or not to have an abortion.

Gilligan, C. F. 1982. *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women’s development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press. [ISBN: 9780674445437]

The highly influential and widely read book proposes two orientations to moral reasoning, care and justice, with the former being more characteristic of females and the latter more characteristic of males. It includes a proposal for a three-stage sequential development of care.

Miller, J. G. 1994. Cultural diversity in the morality of caring: Individually oriented versus duty-based interpersonal moral codes. *Cross-Cultural Research* 28:3–39.

Offers a critique of the universalistic and individualistic assumptions undergirding the theories of Gilligan 1982 and Kohlberg 1981, as well as summary of a research program that shows how moral reasoning among Hindu Indians emphasizes interpersonal obligations and context.

Miller, J. G., and D. M. Bersoff. 1992. Culture and moral judgment: How are conflicts between justice and interpersonal responsibilities resolved? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 62:541–554.



A study with children and adults from India and the United States that shows how definitions of the moral domain and moral reasoning are dependent upon cultural context.

Shimizu, H. 2001. Japanese adolescent boys' senses of empathy (Omoiyari) and Carol Gilligan's perspective on the morality of care: A phenomenological approach. *Culture & Psychology* 7:453–475.

This study examines Gilligan's care orientation in a Japanese sample of high school students. The author found a clear concern with care. However, he also noted its equal presence in boys and girls and its elaboration to include not only concern for other individuals but also groups and institutions.

Snarey, J. R., and K. Keljo. 1991. In a gemeinschaft voice: The cross-cultural expansion of moral development theory. In *Handbook of moral behavior and development: Theory*. Vol. 1. Edited by W. M. Kurtines and J. L. Gewirtz, 395–424. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. [ISBN: 9780805802061]

The aim of this chapter is to expand on Kohlberg's theory by adding communitarian or "gemeinschaft" considerations, particularly for the highest stages of Kohlberg's model.

Thoma, S. 1986. Estimating gender difference in the comprehension and preference of moral issues. *Developmental Review* 6:165–180.

A meta-analysis of studies using the Defining Issues Test (DIT) found that females scored significantly higher than males on Kohlberg's stages, although the difference was minimal.

Walker, L. J. 1984. Sex differences in the development of moral reasoning: A critical review. *Child Development* 55:677–691.

A meta-analysis of studies employing Kohlberg's interview approach and scoring found that by and large, sex differences were nonsignificant.

### **Cultural-Developmental Approach**

Based on a review of a large body of developmental and cultural research findings, the cultural-developmental approach constitutes a recent and novel proposal for how to conceptualize moral reasoning. Jensen 2008 introduced a conception termed a cultural-developmental template. This template charts developmental patterns across the life course for moral reasoning in terms of the "three ethics": the ethics of autonomy, community, and divinity. According to Shweder, et al. 1997 the three ethics entail different definitions of the self and morality, with autonomy focusing on the individual, community on social interactions and groups, and divinity on spiritual and religious considerations. Jensen's template, however, is not one-size-fits-all. Its general developmental patterns accommodate the different constellations of ethics held by culturally diverse peoples. For example, the model predicts an uptick in autonomy reasoning in cultures that afford young people in their twenties a prolonged period of exploration, and this cultural-developmental pattern has been fleshed out by Arnett, et al. 2001 in a study of American emerging adults. The model (in Jensen 2011) also predicts an early development of community reasoning within collectivistic cultures, as for example seen in Haidt, et al. 1993 and Fung 1999. The cultural-developmental template also charts the absence or minimal emergence of the ethic of divinity considerations across the life course in religiously liberal cultures (e.g., Jensen 1998), whereas such considerations are notable in many other cultures (e.g., Vasquez, et al. 2001) and may undergo particularly rapid development in the course of adolescence in such cultures (Jensen 2011). Studies testing the cultural developmental model are currently underway with diverse age groups in nations such as India, Finland, Thailand, and Turkey.

- Arnett, J. J., K. D. Ramos, and L. A. Jensen. 2001. Ideological views in emerging adulthood: Balancing autonomy and community. *Journal of Adult Development* 8:69–79.  
This study of 140 American emerging adults (ages twenty to twenty-nine) assessed their use of the ethics of autonomy, community, and divinity in response to questions about their own moral purposes and those of the next generation.
- Fung, H. 1999. Becoming a moral child: The socialization of shame among young Chinese children. *Ethos* 27:180–209.  
In-depth analyses of stories told in the presence of Chinese children in Taiwan show that by age four they are well aware of notions pertaining to shame, loss of face, social discretion, and role-based duties.
- Haidt, J., S. H. Koller, and M. G. Dias. 1993. Affect, culture, and morality, or, is it wrong to eat your dog? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 65:613–628.  
A study of children and young adults in Brazil and the United States that demonstrated variability across age and culture in definitions of what is considered to be moral, and moral reasoning. The study used the “three ethics” approach.
- Jensen, L. A. 1998. Moral divisions within countries between orthodoxy and progressivism: India and the United States. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 37:90–107.  
This mixed methods study addressed culture at the level of religious communities and showed how the moral reasoning and worldviews of religiously orthodox participants within India and the United States often set them apart from their religiously liberal compatriots.
- Jensen, L. A. 2008. Through two lenses: A cultural-developmental approach to moral reasoning. *Developmental Review* 28:289–315.  
Offers an overview of key theoretical approaches to moral psychology during the last century. Also draws on a large body of developmental and cultural research findings to propose a novel theoretical approach that charts moral development by means of a template model that accommodates a particular culture.
- Jensen, L. A. 2011. The cultural-developmental theory of moral psychology: A new synthesis. In *Bridging cultural and developmental approaches to psychology: New syntheses in theory, research and policy*. Edited by Lene Arnett Jensen, 3–25. New York: Oxford Univ. Press. [ISBN: 9780195383430]  
This chapter draws on Jensen 2008 and extends the cultural-developmental approach in an effort to bridge cultural and developmental approaches to psychology, including by considering policy issues.
- Shweder, R. A., N. C. Much, M. Mahapatra, and L. Park. 1997. The “big three” of morality (autonomy, community, divinity), and the “big three” explanations of suffering. In *Morality and health*. Edited by A. Brandt, and P. Rozin. New York: Routledge. [ISBN: 9780415915816]  
Provides a review of the background, definitions, and research with the three ethics: autonomy, community, and divinity.
- Vasquez, K., D. Keltner, D. H. Ebenbach, and T. L. Banaszynski. 2001. Cultural variation and similarity in moral rhetorics: Voices from the Philippines and the United States. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Research* 32:93–120.  
Presents the results from five studies on the moral reasoning and emotions of American and Filipino university students. The studies showed notable variation between the countries in use of the three ethics, as well as on specific conceptions of autonomy.

## CURRENT PROMINENT RESEARCH TOPICS

This section addresses research topics that currently are prominent. Specifically, the focus is on work that addresses moral reasoning and its relation to: \*culture\*, \*religion\*, \*contexts\*, \*identity\*, \*emotions\*, and \*crime and delinquency\*. The lines of research across these areas reflect highly varied views and conclusions on the importance of moral reasoning for behavior, the most valid research approaches to moral reasoning, and even its locus. Taken together, the lines show that moral reasoning is a research area with a lot of vitality.

### Culture

Starting in the 1980s, moral psychology scholars increasingly called for a cultural calibration and rethinking of theories and research on moral reasoning and development. The concern was that theories often were formulated on the basis of research with American participants and philosophical conceptions deriving from Western traditions and that consequently theories failed to adequately capture the moral reasoning and development in the many other parts of the world. Dien 1982 offers a critique of the philosophical underpinnings of the \*cognitive-developmental approach\* from a Chinese and Confucian vantage point, while Huebner and Garrod 1991 provides such a critique on the basis of research with Buddhist monks from Tibet. Edwards 1997 notes how many moral concepts from her research in Kenya are overlooked within the cognitive-developmental framework. With respect to the \*domain approach\*, a number of researchers, such as Nisan 1987, Zimba 1994, and Shweder, et al. 1990, have argued that the definition of morality within this theory is too narrow to apply across cultures. At this time, there is a continued emergence of research aiming to address indigenous moral reasoning and emotions in diverse cultures through the use of new methods. This includes Fung 1999's analysis of shame concepts in the stories told by Taiwanese mothers to their children, and Shweder, et al. 1995's research on the moral conceptions that underlie who sleeps by whom in India and the United States. There is also an emergence of new theory that synthesizes cultural and developmental considerations, such as the \*cultural-developmental approach\*.

Dien, D. S. 1982. A Chinese perspective on Kohlberg's theory of moral development.

*Developmental Review* 2:331–341.

An early and prescient argument that Kohlberg's theory of moral development reflects a Western heritage in its emphasis on autonomous moral reasoning and judgment.

Edwards, C. P. 1997. Morality and change: Family unity and paternal authority among Kipsigis and Abaluyia elders and students. In *African families and the crisis of social change*. Edited by T. S. Weisner and C. Bradley, 45–85. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey/Greenwood. [ISBN: 9780897894739]

The author provides a detailed analysis of interviews conducted with students and elders in Kenya about moral issues, concluding that reasons pertaining to such matters as respect for elders, mutual trust, and communal peace cannot be accommodated by the cognitive-developmental framework.

Fung, H. 1999. Becoming a moral child: The socialization of shame among young Chinese children. *Ethos* 27:180–209.

An argument that a child's moral development occurs from the get-go in the context of a constant stream of everyday behaviors and messages and that these behaviors and messages are culturally patterned.

Huebner, A., and A. Garrod. 1991. Moral reasoning in a karmic world. *Human Development* 34:341–352.

On the basis of in-depth interviews with Tibetan Buddhist monks, the authors argued that their meta-ethical views of the purposes of life, suffering, and transgression are markedly different from the views underlying both Kohlberg's and Gilligan's theories of moral reasoning and development.

Nisan, M. 1987. Moral norms and social conventions: A cross-cultural study. *Developmental Psychology* 23:719–725.

Nisan argues that distinctions between moral and conventional domains are neither universal nor follow an inherent developmental pattern on the basis of interview research with Israeli children of Arab Muslim and Jewish backgrounds.

Shweder, R. A., L. A. Jensen, and W. Goldstein. 1995. Who sleeps by whom revisited: A method for extracting the moral goods implicit in practice. In *New directions for child development: Contextualizing development, a practice perspective*. Vol. 67. Edited by J. J. Goodnow, P. J. Miller, and F. Kessel, 21–39.

On the basis of observations and interviews in India and the United States, the authors argue that who sleeps next to whom in a family is a symbolic action that simultaneously expresses and realizes some of the deepest moral ideals of cultural communities.

Shweder, R. A., M. Mahapatra, and J. G. Miller. 1990. Culture and moral development. In *Cultural psychology*. Edited by J. W. Stigler, R. A. Shweder, and G. Herdt, 130–204. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press. [ISBN: 9780521378048]

An early and cogent critique of the assumptions about self, morality, and development that Western moral psychology theories of the time exported to other cultures without adequate consideration of issues of validity. Originally published in J. Kagan and S. Lamb's *The Emergence of Morality in Young Children* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 1–83.

Zimba, R. F. 1994. The understanding of morality, convention, and personal preference in an African setting: Findings from Zambia. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 25:369–393. Argues for a conception of morality that includes communal norms and consideration of the well-being of social groups, in addition to the \*domain approach\* definition centered on harm and justice in regard to individuals.

## Religion

In the area of moral psychology, the role of religion and spirituality has been contested. From the vantage point of the \*cognitive-developmental approach\*, Kohlberg and Power 1981 argues that religious views are distinct from the moral realm. From the \*domain approach\* perspective, Nucci and Turiel 1993 similarly concludes that religious reasons fall within the conventional domain rather than the moral one. Yet quite a few scholars have found that reasoning based on religious worldviews informs some people's moral thoughts and actions. In an early critique of the cognitive-developmental approach to religion, Richards and Davison 1992 argues that the approach defined morality too narrowly, focusing on justice to the detriment of other moral concepts that often are prominent within diverse religions, such as love, nonviolence, and divine law. In a study that utilized Kohlberg's coding approach, Walker, et al. 1995 also concludes that religious and spiritual concepts invoked in moral discourse were very difficult to account for within the coding manual. They further noted that such concepts were quite common in their North American participants' moral reasoning, as well as their criteria for nominating moral exemplars. In an in-depth study of moral exemplars, Colby and Damon 1992 finds that the

exemplars frequently used religious reasons to account for their behaviors. Jensen 1998 and Jensen 2008, in a series of studies with religiously liberal and conservative participants in India and the United States, further noted the centrality of an “ethic of divinity” in their moral reasoning. This was especially the case for religious conservatives.

Colby, A., and W. Damon. 1992. *Some do care: Contemporary lives of moral commitment*. New York: Free Press. [ISBN: 9780029063552]

A highly readable study on the psychological qualities of twenty-three North American adults who were nominated as leading exemplary moral lives. Key points on the exemplars’ moral compasses were justice, charity, harmony, and religious faith. An unexpected finding was that 80 percent of exemplars attributed their core values to religious faith.

Jensen, L. A. 1998. Moral divisions within countries between orthodoxy and progressivism: India and the United States. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 37:90–107.

This mixed methods study highlights how reasons based on religion were common in the moral discourse of religiously orthodox participants in India and the United States, whereas such ethic of divinity reasoning was quite rare among their religiously liberal compatriots.

Jensen, L. A. 2008. Through two lenses: A cultural-developmental approach to moral reasoning. *Developmental Review* 28:289–315.

This article was the first to propose the cultural-developmental approach to moral psychology. It includes examples of how its template for the development of ethics of autonomy, community, and divinity across the lifespan is dependent on the type of religious community to which a person belongs.

Kohlberg, L., and C. Power. 1981. Moral development, religious thinking, and the question of a seventh stage. *Zygon* 16:203–259.

A well-known article in which the authors propose that religion constitutes a seventh stage, set apart from Kohlberg’s six-stage cognitive-developmental sequence. In their view, this seventh stage does not address why an action is right or wrong (that is, moral reasoning) but rather why it is important to act morally in the first place.

Nucci, L., and E. Turiel. 1993. God’s word, religious rules, and their relation to Christian and Jewish children’s concepts of morality. *Child Development* 64:1475–1491.

On the basis of two studies with conservative groups of Christian and Jewish children and adolescents in the United States, the authors concluded that participants held conceptions of morality that were distinct from their understandings of religious prescription.

Richards, P. S., and M. L. Davison. 1992. Religious bias in moral development research: A psychometric investigation. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 31:467–485.

Based on research with Mormon participants, the authors argued that religious reasons pertaining to concepts such as love, nonviolence, and divine law have been excluded from moral development research.

Walker, L. J., R. C. Pitts, K. H. Hennig, and M. K. Matsuba. 1995. Reasoning about morality and real-life moral problems. In *Morality in everyday life: Developmental perspectives*. Edited by M. Killen, and D. Hart, 371–407. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press. [ISBN: 9780521454780]

A series of studies aiming to gain a better sense of the scope and nuances of people’s moral psychology than what had been captured by Kohlberg’s theory. The studies include moral reasoning in response to people’s own moral dilemmas and nominations of moral exemplars.

## Contexts

The field of moral psychology has seen a steady expansion of the contexts of moral development that scholars take into account. In fact, recent research increasingly focuses not only on the moral reasoning of the individual but also on how social contexts in various ways frame and drive moral reasoning and development. Around the turn of the 20th century, Freud emphasized parents and family (see Freud 1961)—a focus that continues today, for example, in the work of Walker 1989. During the early 20th century, as mass education in Europe and the United States became common and compulsory, Piaget 1965 emphasized peers. This focus on peers can still be seen today, but now this focus is more often in the form of examinations of the peer interactions in youth programs (Larson and Hansen 2005) and civic organizations (Flanagan, et al. 2011). Researchers have also often focused on schools. One such approach is summarized in Higgins 1991. Addressing still broader contexts, Li 2011 notes how the moral values seen in schools and beliefs about learning in turn reflect historical and cultural contexts. This point about cultural contexts has also been elaborated by Shweder and Much 1987 in its analysis of everyday social communication.

Flanagan, C., M. L. Martinez, and P. Cumsille. 2011. Civil societies as cultural and developmental contexts for civic identity formation. In *Bridging cultural and developmental approaches to psychology*. Edited by L. A. Jensen, 113–137. New York: Oxford Univ. Press. [ISBN: 9780195383430]

This chapter addresses how moral and political beliefs and practices are transmitted through civil organizations and how this transmission is mediated by development and culture.

Freud, S. 1961. *Civilization and its discontents*. New York: W. W. Norton.

First published in 1930, this book discussed Freud's view that a moral conscience (or what he also termed the "superego") develops in the early years of life as a child and comes to identify with the same-sex parent and the values represented by that parent.

Higgins, A. 1991. The just community approach to moral education: Evolution of the idea and recent findings. In *Handbook of moral behavior and development*. Vol. 3, *Application*. Edited by W. M. Kurtines, and J. L. Gewirtz, 111–142. [ISBN: 9780805802061]

Reviews the history of school intervention programs started by Kohlberg. This includes early programs where students reasoned about hypothetical dilemmas and later "just community" programs aimed at creating high school climates conducive to individual moral development.

Larson, R. W., and D. Hansen. 2005. The development of strategic thinking: Learning to impact human systems in a youth activism program. *Human Development* 48:327–349.

Addresses the modes of cognition youth develop over time through their participation in youth programs.

Li, J. 2011. Cultural frames of children's learning beliefs. In *Bridging cultural and developmental approaches to psychology: New syntheses in theory, research and policy*.

Edited by L. A. Jensen, 26–48. New York: Oxford Univ. Press. [ISBN: 9780195383430]

Reviews and extends a line of research on the cultural context of learning beliefs. For example, the author notes how Chinese learning beliefs include a focus on the cultivation of virtues such as diligence and perseverance.

Piaget, J. 1965. *The moral judgment of the child*. New York: Free Press.

Originally published in 1932, this book includes Piaget's argument that advanced, autonomous moral reasoning develops best in the context of interactions with peers.

Shweder, R. A., and N. C. Much. 1987. Determinations of meaning: Discourse and moral socialization. In *Moral development through social interaction*. Edited by W. M. Kurtines and J. L. Gewirtz, 197–244. New York: John Wiley. [ISBN: 9780471625674]

The authors argue that social communication, such as conversations between parents and children, is a powerful vehicle for both the representation and transmission of moral beliefs. In turn, these moral beliefs are situated within broader cultural worldviews.

Walker, L. J. 1989. A longitudinal study of moral reasoning. *Child Development* 51:131–139.

This study involved research with children and parents conducted over two years. The study is an example of Walker's focus on the family context as foundational for children's moral development.

## Identity

Aiming to better account for the connection between moral reasoning and behavior, scholars have emphasized the role of identity. As described by Blasi 1994, for example, a person will reason in terms of a particular set of moral concepts across diverse issues. As a person comes to identify strongly with these concepts, they become a core part of the person's sense of self that will habitually guide behavior. In turn, the behaviors may reinforce and refine the moral identity. Colby and Damon 1992, in research on moral exemplars, emphasizes how these individuals' moral goals and moral concepts had become a complete and subsuming part of their identities. In turn, the exemplars consistently and habitually acted in accordance with their moral commitments. Hardy and Carlo 2005 emphasizes identity as a key source of moral motivation. Lapsley and Narvaez 2004 is an edited book that includes chapters by diverse authors who all address the intersection of moral reasoning, behavior, and identity. Scholarship in this area has often focused on adolescence as a key phase of life for the development of moral and civic identity. The focus on adolescence is seen in the work of Damon 2008, Hart 2005, and Youniss, et al. 1997.

Blasi, A. 1994. Moral identity: Its role in moral functioning In *Fundamental research in moral development*. Edited by B. Puka, 168–178. New York: Garland.

Represents an early call for more attention to moral behavior, in addition to moral cognition. The author presented a model that highlights the moral self as a structure where moral reasoning and behavior merge.

Colby, A., and W. Damon. 1992. *Some do care: Contemporary lives of moral commitment*. New York: Free Press. [ISBN: 9780029063552]

This book on the lives of twenty-three moral exemplars concludes with an account of how exemplary moral action is based in the formation and habitual enactment of a moral identity.

Damon, W. 2008. *The path to purpose: Helping our children find their calling in life*. New York: Free Press. [ISBN: 9781416537236]

Focuses on adolescents, distinguishing between those who have found moral purpose in their lives and those who, for a variety of reasons, have not.

Hart, D. 2005. The development of moral identity. In *Nebraska symposium on motivation*. Vol. 51, *Moral motivation through the lifespan*. Edited by G. Carlo and C. P. Edwards, 165–196. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press. [ISBN: 9780803215498]

The author discusses recent academic interest in moral identity, outlines a moral identity formation model, and suggests implications for future research and policy-based interventions. The author speculates about the roots of moral identity in adolescence.

Hardy, S. A., and G. Carlo. 2005. Identity as a source of moral motivation. *Human Development* 48:232–256.

A review of theory and research on the interconnections between moral identity, commitment, reasoning, emotion, and behavior. The paper includes what the authors take to be unanswered questions in regard to moral identity.

Lapsley, D. K., and D. Narvaez, eds. 2004. *Moral development, self, and identity*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. [ISBN: 9781410610256]

In this volume, psychologists from different subdisciplines (social cognition, cognitive science, personality development) come together to examine the relationship between self, moral commitment, and conduct. The volume includes both theoretical and empirical chapters.

Youniss, J., J. A. McLellan, and M. Yates. 1997. What we know about engendering civic identity. *American Behavioral Scientist* 40:620–631.

The authors argue that adolescents who take part in civic activities develop a civic identity that comes to sustain their continued involvement over time.

## Emotions

Over time, scholars have addressed the role of emotions in moral action as well as the relation between emotions and moral reasoning. Eisenberg 1992 focuses on the development of care and empathy in a decades-long research program. Wilson 1993 proposes that all humans share moral sensibilities that guide our behavior. Kagan 1987 pushes the strong hypothesis that emotions are what determine moral action and that moral reasons are simply post-hoc justifications. This hypothesis was also put forth and extended by Haidt 2001. Other scholarship has addressed the intersection of moral emotions and reasons. Rozin, et al. 1999 proposes an interesting pattern of a mapping between specific emotions and moral concepts. Monin, et al. 2007 argues that the intersection of emotions and cognitions depend on the type of moral issue involved, with shocking violations pulling more for emotions whereas complex dilemmas pull more for reasoning. Latzko and Malti 2010 brings together several lines of research in a recent edited volume and concludes that moral cognition interacts with moral emotions in different ways across development. A study by Carlo, et al. 2010 finds that moral reasons and emotions were interrelated and predicted both pro-social and aggressive behaviors in adolescents.

Carlo, G., M. V. Mestre, P. Samper, A. Tur, and B. E. Armenta. 2010. Feelings or cognitions? *Moral cognitions and emotions as longitudinal predictors of prosocial and aggressive behaviors*.

A short-term longitudinal study of almost five hundred Spanish adolescents showing that aggressive and prosocial behaviors were predicted by the interplay of moral reasons and emotions.

Eisenberg, N. 1992. *The caring child*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press. [ISBN: 9780674097254]

An influential overview of research on pro-social behavior in children, including a focus on altruism and care. The book addresses individual differences on pro-social behaviors and grapples with the relative impact of heredity and environmental influences such as socialization by parents and educators.

Haidt, J. 2001. The emotional dog and its rational tail: A social intuitionist approach to moral judgment. *Psychological Review* 108:814–834.



An influential article proposing that moral judgments are generally the result of quick, automatic, emotion-based reactions. In contrast, moral reasoning is presented as slow, effortful, and serving to rationalize moral judgments in a post-hoc fashion.

Kagan, J. 1987. Introduction. In *The emergence of morality in young children*. Edited by J. Kagan and S. Lamb. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press. [ISBN: 9780226422312]

The author argues that moral emotions are what really drive moral behaviors, whereas moral reasons are a post-hoc way to explain the behavior to self and others.

Latzko, B., and T. Malti. 2010. Children's moral emotions and moral cognition: Developmental and educational perspectives. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development* 129.

Pulls together different research teams and concludes that the role of emotions and reasoning in moral behavior depends on the person's age. The editors also discuss new conceptual avenues and methodological approaches to study of children's moral cognition and emotions.

Monin, B., D. A. Pizarro, and J. S. Beer. 2007. Deciding versus reacting: Conceptions of moral judgment and the reason-affect debate. *Review of General Psychology* 11:99–111.

The authors argue that all moral issues are not the same. Some issues, such as shocking moral violations, pull for emotion-laden judgments whereas other issues, such as complex dilemmas, pull for deliberation.

Rozin, P., L. Lowery, S. Imada, and J. Haidt. 1999. The CAD triad hypothesis: A mapping between three moral emotions (contempt, anger, disgust) and three moral codes (community, autonomy, divinity). *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 76:574–586.

Shows how the three ethics of autonomy, community, and divinity correlate with the emotions of anger, contempt, and disgust, respectively.

Wilson, J. Q. 1993. *The moral sense*. New York: Free Press. [ISBN: 9780029354056]

Reviews a large interdisciplinary literature and argues that due to our common evolutionary origins, humans everywhere share certain moral senses such as sympathy and fairness, even if these also are culturally patterned. The author emphasizes the role of parents among other contexts of socialization.

## **Crime and Delinquency**

A number of recent studies have examined how moral reasoning is related to crime, delinquency, and aggression. In order to address these links, researchers have designed studies that assess levels of moral reasoning, moral values, personality traits, socialization processes (such as parenting), and offending behavior. Moral reasoning in these studies is often measured by means of the Sociomoral Reflection Measure (Aleixo and Norris 2000, Palmer and Hollin 2001, Tarry and Emler 2007, and Schonfeld, et al. 2005) and also the Defining Issues Test (Valliant, et al. 2000) and in terms of Kohlberg's stages (Arsenio, et al. 2009). Some scholars in this area, such as Palmer 2003, also emphasize intervention programs with criminal offenders involving moral reasoning. The articles included below represent the wide range of literature in this area.

Aleixo, P. A., and C. E. Norris. 2000. Personality and moral reasoning in young offenders.

*Personality and Individual Differences* 28:609–623.

A test of Kohlberg's and Eysenck's theories predicting that criminality is associated with lower moral reasoning maturity and specific personality traits, respectively. Findings indicate that offending behavior is associated with psychoticism and extraversion. The authors speculate that other variables (e.g., general reasoning ability) mediate the relationship between moral reasoning and criminality.

Arsenio, W. F., E. Adams, and J. Gold. 2009. Social information processing, moral reasoning, and emotion attributions: Relations with adolescents' reactive and proactive aggression. *Child Development* 80:1739–1755.

The authors focus on low SES African American and Latino adolescents in order to delineate how different types of aggression are related to moral reasoning, social information processing, and emotion attributions. They found that social information processing and moral reasoning exert collective influence on adolescent aggression.

Palmer, E. J. 2003. An overview of the relationship between moral reasoning and offending. *Australian Psychologist* 38:165–174.

Offers an informative overview of research on the link between moral reasoning level and offending behavior. Given her belief that socialization is a core process by which moral reasoning develops, the author advocates for an incorporation of moral reasoning training into interventions with offenders.

Palmer, E. J., and C. R. Hollin. 2001. Sociomoral reasoning, perceptions of parenting and self-reported delinquency in adolescents. *Applied Cognitive Psychology* 15:85–100.

The relationship between parenting, sociomoral reasoning, and self-reported delinquency is examined in adolescents. The results suggest that parenting variables are the most significant predictors of delinquency and that moral reasoning is also a significant predictor of delinquency in males.

Schonfeld, A. M., S. N. Mattson, and E. P. Riley. 2005. Moral maturity and delinquency after prenatal alcohol exposure. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 66:545–554.

The authors evaluate the link between moral reasoning maturity and delinquency among a group of people with prenatal alcohol exposure. Results regarding lower levels of moral maturity and higher levels of delinquency lead the authors to suggest interventions that target moral judgment for those exposed to alcohol prenatally.

Tarry, H., and N. Emler. 2007. Attitude, values and moral reasoning as predictors of delinquency. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology* 25:169–183.

This study demonstrates that self-reported juvenile delinquency is predicted by both moral values and attitudes to authority but not by moral reasoning level (as measured by the Sociomoral Reflection Measure [Short Form]). The authors conclude by questioning previous findings regarding the link between moral reasoning and delinquency.

Valliant, P. M., T. Gauthier, D. Pottier, and R. Kosmyna. 2000. Moral reasoning, interpersonal skills, and cognition of rapists, child molesters, and incest offenders. *Psychological Reports* 86:67–75.

Several psychometric tests were given to male inmates divided by offense type. Rapists and child molesters scored higher on moral reasoning (as measured by the Defining Issues Test) than incest offenders. The authors speculate that although rapists and child molesters understand moral issues, their personality orientation overrides their moral values.

## **MORAL REASONING RESEARCH IN OTHER DISCIPLINES**

This section looks at emerging scholarship on moral reasoning in three disciplinary areas: \*biology\*, \*neuroscience\*, and \*anthropology\*. The research across these areas highlights multifaceted dimensions, including consideration of phylogenetic and ontogenetic roots of morality, neurological underpinnings and locations of moral cognitions and emotions, and the roles of reflexivity and policy in the study of morality.

## Research on Biology and Evolution

While moral reasoning research typically has been ontogenetic in scope, some researchers have advocated for a phylogenetic examination of moral reasoning and judgment. Wilson 1993 argues that human nature is imbued with a basic moral sense, the roots of which are to be found in evolution. Wilson engaged in a detailed examination of the evolutionary, cultural, and developmental origins of this moral sense. A decade later, de Waal 2005 set out to explain the roots of human behavior, such as empathy, by way of drawing on his ethological work with primates. In so doing, he highlighted the key roles that biology and evolution play in human behavior. Grounding their work in Darwinian theories such as natural selection (Bering 2006) and the origin of the moral sense (Krebs 2008), some scholars have also recently argued that in order to understand morality, we must examine the evolution of moral behaviors, judgments, and emotions. With her “triune ethics” theory, Narvaez offers a conception of moral functioning that synthesizes evolutionary, neuroscientific, and developmental psychology findings. Narvaez 2010 suggests an education-based application of this theory. Sinnott-Armstrong 2008 provides an edited volume on the evolution of morality with contributions by scholars across diverse disciplines. One goal of this volume was to rectify the supposed chasm between moral psychologists and philosophers in the 20th century.

Bering, J. M. 2006. The folk psychology of souls. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 29:453–462.

In this conceptual article, the author examines the manner in which people’s belief in an afterlife may afford an increased understanding of the evolution of social cognition.

de Waal, F. 2005. *Our inner ape*. New York: Riverhead. [ISBN: 9781862077959]

The author, a well-known primatologist, explains the biological roots of empathy by way of offering engaging stories of politics, sex, violence, and kindness he has witnessed during his time conducting research with chimpanzees and bonobos.

Krebs, D. L. 2008. Morality: An evolutionary account. *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 3:149–172.

The author uses Darwin’s theory of the origin of the moral sense to frame his discussion of morality. Contemporary psychological theories are called into question given their focus on individual-level moral development. The author suggests a focus on the origin of the human species as an alternative framework.

Narvaez, D. 2010. The emotional foundation of high moral intelligence. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development* 129:77–94.

Topics covered include the roots of morality in individual early experience, the embodied nature of moral learning, and the role of emotional experience for moral functioning.

Suggestions for educators and youth organizers on fostering ethical and emotional expertise are offered.

Sinnott-Armstrong, W. 2008. *Moral psychology*. Vol. 1, *The evolution of morality: Adaptations and innateness*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. [ISBN: 9780262195614]

This book brings together philosophers and psychologists to discuss the evolution of moral beliefs, values, and emotions. The contributors debate their perspectives, ultimately drawing attention to the importance of interdisciplinarity in understanding the evolution of morality.

Wilson, J. Q. 1993. *The moral sense*. New York: Free Press. [ISBN: 9780029354056]

Based on a review of large amount of research, the author argues that humans possess an innate moral sense. This moral sense, which is universal and rooted in biology and evolution, consists of human tendencies toward sympathy, fairness, self-control, and duty.

## Neuroscience Research

Recent times have seen a growth in neuroscientific studies of moral reasoning, emotions, decision making, and behavior. Since the 1990s, many researchers have drawn on advances in cognitive psychology and brain science to examine morality. In an edited volume (one of three companion volumes), Sinnott-Armstrong 2008 brings together some of the most recent work by researchers in the field of neuroscience. Neuroscientific work on morality is quite diverse. Some researchers focus on the roles of reasoning and emotions in moral judgment (e.g., Greene, et al. 2001). Greene and Haidt 2002 highlights the role of emotions, while others focus on abnormal psychology. Knabb, et al. 2009 shows how the interplay between brain and moral behavior can be useful to the judiciary system. Moll, et al. 2003 emphasizes the role of evolutionary processes and human experience in the development of neurobiological processes that influence moral behavior. They presented evidence based on observations of impaired moral behavior in patients with brain damage. Still others focus on developmental neuroscience. Smetana and Killen 2008 draw on developmental psychology evidence to support the idea that morality is shaped by both cognitive and affective processes. Very recent work in neuroscience is adding a cultural component. Chiao 2011, for example, argues for a cultural neuroscientific approach to the study of empathy and prosociality.

Chiao, J. Y. 2011. Towards a cultural neuroscience of empathy and prosociality. *Emotion Review* 3:111–112.

The author argues that while a core neural circuit appears to underlie empathy in humans, more cultural neuroscientific research is needed to address variation between groups on when and how empathy and prosociality are experienced.

Greene, J., and J. Haidt. 2002. How (and where) does moral judgment work? *Trends in Cognitive Science* 6:517–523.

The authors assert that evidence from recent studies in cognitive neuroscience suggests that emotions and affective intuitions primarily influence moral judgment rather than reasoning.

They suggest that no specific region of the brain is exclusively responsible for moral judgment.

Greene, J. D., R. B. Sommerville, L. E. Nystrom, J. M. Darley, and J. D. Cohen. 2001. An fMRI investigation of emotional engagement in moral judgment. *Science* 293:2105–2108.

Presents research using moral dilemmas and methods of cognitive neuroscience in the study of moral judgment. The authors argue that different moral dilemmas require varying degrees of emotional engagement, and that this variation influences behavior and moral judgment.

Knabb, J. J., R. K. Welsh, J. G. Ziebell, and K. S. Reimer. 2009. Neuroscience, moral reasoning, and the law. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law* 27:219–236.

Puts forth a framework for the interplay between the processes of the human brain and moral decision making. It shows how event-feature-emotion complexes (EFEC) can be helpful in understanding criminal behavior and in judicial decision making.

Moll, J., de Oliveira-Souza, R., and P. J. Eslinger. 2003. Morals and the human brain: A working model. *NeuroReport: For Rapid Communication of Neuroscience Research* 14:299–305.

Moral behavior results from multiple psychological and neurobiological processes that help organize unique forms of experience among humans. The article presents a model for the brain-behavior relationship, with evidence from studies involving impairments of moral behaviors observed in patients with neuropsychiatric disorders.

Smetana, J. G., and M. Killen. 2008. Moral cognitions, emotions, and neuroscience: An integrative developmental view. *European Journal of Developmental Science* 2:324–339.

Focuses on contributions from developmental research in providing an integrative approach to understand morality, with emphasis on both the role of reasoning and emotions as central to moral judgment.

Sinnott-Armstrong, W. 2008. *Moral psychology*. Vol. 3. *The neuroscience of morality: Emotion, brain disorders, and development*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

This volume brings together recent scholarship on the neuroscientific study of morality. Each chapter is followed by commentaries and a final reply by the author.

### **Anthropological Research**

Some anthropologists have recently called for a systematic examination of morality and moral reasoning. One of the first anthropologists to suggest an anthropological analysis of morality was Clifford Geertz (as described in Shweder 2005). Fassin 2008 and Stoczkowski 2008 furthered Geertz's emphasis on the researchers' moral reflexivity. The authors debated whether or not moral anthropology per se should exist and ultimately agreed that anthropology needs a new theoretical and methodological framework from which to examine morality. Zigon 2010 suggests a moral anthropological theory for examining local moralities. Although Zigon's analysis is primarily social in nature, his emphasis on socialization and the role of institutional moral discourses can also inform person-centered analyses of morality. Csordas 2009 blends psychological and anthropological concerns. With its vast array of contributors, Heintz 2009 offers an overview of moral anthropology in its current state. This book includes a variety of methodological approaches for use in anthropological investigations of local moralities.

Csordas, T. J. 2009. Growing up charismatic: Morality and spirituality among children in a religious community. *Ethos* 37:417–440.

Focuses on morality and spirituality in children and adolescents from a specific religious community. In pairing a detailed ethnographic description of the Word of God Community with a rich qualitative description of participants' responses to moral dilemma vignettes, the author offers a multilayered examination of moral reasoning.

Fassin, D. 2008. Beyond good and evil? Questioning the anthropological discomfort with morals. *Anthropological Theory* 8:333–344.

The author calls for the development of moral anthropology, arguing that anthropologists should “study morals as they do politics, religion, or medicine” (p. 333). The author emphasizes the importance of a researcher's moral reflexivity and the generation of a science of morals firmly grounded in ethnographic work.

Heintz, M., ed. 2009. *The anthropology of moralities*. New York: Berghahn. [ISBN: 9781845455927]

Presents a large number of methodological approaches to moral anthropology, which are illustrated through rich ethnographies. Social scientists interested in empirically examining values across cultures will find this book particularly useful.

Shweder, R. A. 2005. Cliff notes: The pluralities of Clifford Geertz. In *Clifford Geertz by his colleagues*. Edited by R. A. Shweder and B. Good, 1–9. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press. [ISBN: 9780226756097]

In this chapter, the author describes Geertz's role as one of the first anthropologists to ask important questions about morality, such as the feasibility of evaluating the social practices of others without imposing one's own moral evaluation. Geertz's skepticism of universalist conceptions of morality are also highlighted.

Stoczkowski, W. 2008. The 'fourth aim' of anthropology: Between knowledge and ethics. *Anthropological Theory* 8:345–357.

Starting from a description of his own fieldwork, the author explains the difficulty anthropologists face in both studying culture and affecting cultural change on some moral grounds. The author speaks to the difficulty in balancing these two agendas and speculates about the feasibility of striking such a balance.

Zigon, J. 2010. Moral and ethical assemblages: A response to Fassin and Stoczkowski. *Anthropological Theory* 10:3–15.

Starting from his investigation of a Russian Orthodox Church's rehabilitation program, the author stresses an anthropological need to examine local moral practices. The author suggests an analytic distinction between morality and ethics and explains the manner in which this differentiation would play out in research.