

Coding Manual: Ethics of Autonomy, Community, and Divinity

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CODING GUIDELINES

- 1) A justification is defined as a statement that can be coded within the manual as a subcode.
- 2) Code every justification that participant (P) provides to explain his/her moral evaluation. Do not code justifications that P may mention but which support another (e.g., an opposing) moral evaluation not endorsed by participant.
- 3) Code parsimoniously. Give only one code if a P elaborates on a justification by giving multiple example or mentions different but related aspect of an argument. (Though see also 4).
- 4) The same subcode may be assigned more than once to P's justifications of his/her moral evaluation. This should only be done when the P clearly is describing different justifications; for example, that divorce is wrong because it often leaves children to be raised under poor financial conditions (Community-Other's Interest), and that divorce is wrong because it is bad for society (Community-Other's Interest).
- 5) A justification should be assigned only one subcode. Do not assign multiple codes to one justification, but choose the one code that is most applicable.
- 6) Do not assign a final code to justifications that are insufficiently described. For example, a justification may be an example of one subcode which could be classified within two or more ethics (e.g., Divorce is wrong because it shows a lack of respect. This is a case of a Virtues subcode, but without knowing in regards to whom or what divorce shows a lack of respect, a final Ethics code cannot be assigned. For example, a lack of respect for God would be classified within the Ethic of Divinity whereas a lack of respect for one's spouse would be classified within the Ethic of Community).
- 7) Ethic of Community subcodes may be further differentiated. Specifically, a differentiation between family, peers, and society may be useful for the subcodes. For example, one may differentiate whether "others' interest" pertains to family, peers, or society at large.
- 8) New subcodes (e.g., characteristic of a culture or of theoretical importance) may be added by researchers.

RELIABILITY CODING

Provide the transcribed interview to a second rater with the coded justifications underlined or otherwise marked. The second rater assigns a code (Ethic and subcode) to each of the underlined justifications. Reliability is assessed on the Ethic, typically using Cohen's Kappa. (Reliability may also be assessed for subcodes).

ETHIC OF AUTONOMY: Moral discourse within the ethic of autonomy defines the person as an autonomous individual who is free to make choices, with few limits. Justifications within this ethic center on an individual's rights, needs, feelings, and well-being. What restricts a person's behavior is mainly a prohibition on inflicting harm to oneself and others, and encroaching upon the rights of other people. The ethic also includes a concern with equality.

SUBCODES, DEFINITIONS, AND EXAMPLES

Punishment Avoidance (to self)

Definition: Avoidance of adverse consequences where focus is on harm or cost to self rather than on the social context of sanctions experienced by self.

Examples: “The child would know never to do that again because he’ll just get hit again.”

Reward Seeking (to self)

Definition: Action is done so that actor can receive immediate benefits. The focus is on the benefits to the self rather than on who provides the benefits or the relationship within which the action-benefit exchange takes place.

Examples: “I cheated on the exam because I hoped to get a better grade.”

Self's Physical Well-Being

Definition: Hurting the body, causing or failing to relieve hunger or thirst, injury, discomfort, pain, etc. of the self. This category includes references to the absence of physical harm and to the promotion of physical well-being. (It does not address when the body is described as belonging to God, or as a temple of God. See Ethic of Divinity).

Examples: “People who are terminally ill may commit suicide. They should be taken out of their pain and misery. They have no hope of enjoying life.” “Abortion is wrong in that it has a lot of ramifications; for example, a lot of times it can affect a woman's ability to conceive children.”

Self's Psychological Well-Being

Definition: Causing or failing to alleviate unpleasant emotional states to one’s own psyche, such as sadness, frustration, fear, and anger. The category includes references to the absence of psychological harm and to the promotion of psychological well-being.

Examples: “Incest is destructive to the perpetrators as it encourages the sick part of them.” “When you do what is right, you get a certain peace of mind.”

Self's Interest

Definition: Advancing or protecting (or failing to do so) interests, goals, wants, or the general welfare of the self.

Examples: “By committing suicide, one is not giving oneself a chance to obtain a better life.” “Abortion is wrong. You have to consider that children give so much more than they take. They give so much purpose to your life.”

Other Individual's Physical Well-Being

Definition: Hurting the body, causing or failing to relieve hunger or thirst, injury, discomfort, pain, etc. to individuals other than oneself. This category includes references to the absence of physical harm and to the promotion of physical well-being. The Ethic of Autonomy is used when the harm is caused to an individual that the actor has immediate interaction with regarding the issue at hand. (See also Ethic of Community for cases of third person's well-being).

Examples: "If I divorce my husband it might really hurt him, including even physical ramification."

Other Individual's Psychological Well-Being

Definition: Causing or failing to alleviate unpleasant emotional states to individuals other than the self, such as sadness, frustration, fear, and anger. The category includes references to the absence of psychological harm and to the promotion of psychological well-being. The Ethic of Autonomy is used when the harm is caused to an individual that the actor has immediate interaction with regarding the issue at hand. (See also Ethic of Community for cases of third person's well-being).

Examples: "In the case of incest between consenting adults, there does not seem to be any emotional harm to others." "My decision to divorce my wife was right because it was psychologically destructive to her to stay in the marriage."

Other's Individual's Interest

Advancing or protecting (or failing to do so) interests, goals, wants, or the general welfare of individuals other than the self. The Ethic of Autonomy is used when the interests pertain to liberties and a person's freedom to make choices. (See also Ethics of Community and Divinity).

Examples: "It didn't have an impact on anyone's life except my own."

Fairness, Reciprocity, Golden Rule

Definition: Treating like cases alike and different cases differently; proper ratio or proportionality of give and take in an exchange; doing to others what you would have them do to you.

Examples: "She was not treated fairly. She was fired without justification and was given no opportunity to defend herself."

Conscience (guilt)

Definition: Your conscience will feel bad because you know you have done wrong or will not feel bad because you do not believe you have done wrong or think you have done right. Use Ethic of Autonomy when the conscience is seen as a psychological part of the person. When conscience is described as a psychological feeling of guilt. (See also Ethic of Divinity).

Examples: "There would be a sense of guilt if I did not tell her the truth, it would bother me unconsciously." "Abortion is wrong because afterwards people have great problems with guilt. So they are doing themselves a disservice."

Virtues (autonomy-oriented)

Definition: Attitude or trait which, if manifested in the situation would make behavior right, if not manifested would make behavior wrong. If informant talks about vice, then manifestation of attitude or trait would make the behavior wrong, and absence of trait or attitude would make it right. Also habitual manner of action. Virtues include gratitude, respect, devotion, loyalty, sympathy, love, etc. Use Ethic of Autonomy when the virtues pertain to individuality and freedom, such as respecting another's choice. When the virtues are not related to a person's dignity or social role. Virtues related to handling of individual property. (See also Ethics of Community and Divinity).

Examples: "I didn't tell her full story out of respect for her boundaries." "It was alright for me not to reference the source in my essay because I was creative and came up with things of my own." "Committing suicide is a sign of weakness. You are running away from life, but you have to face life."

Responsibility (for self)

Definition: Taking responsibility for one's own actions (or failing to do so). The code does not include taking responsibility for others. (See Ethic of Community).

Examples: "Abortion is wrong because if they made the choice to have sexual relations and got pregnant, then they should take responsibility for their actions."

Means-Ends Considerations: Ends of an Individual

Definition: When means serve ends that are beneficial or pertain to an individual.

Examples: "Physical discipline is a good way to teach a child right from wrong. It helps them learn about life and gain self-control."

Rights

Definition: Entitlement to be treated or not treated in a certain way, or to act or abstain from acting in a certain way. The category includes references to a person's right not to be forced to engage in an activity, and the absence of voluntary consent.

Examples: "Ending one's life is one's own decision. It's one's right to make that decision." "Abortion is wrong because the child has a right to life."

Other Autonomy

Any other justifications centered on the self or other individuals.

ETHIC OF COMMUNITY: Moral discourse within the ethic of community describes the person in terms of her membership in groups, such as the family, the community, or the nation. Persons are described as acting in terms of their social roles, such as mother, scout leader, or American. The view is that our roles bind us together in intricate relations of differing obligations. The ethic also includes a concern with promoting the welfare, goals, needs, and interests of social groups.

SUBCODES, DEFINITIONS, AND EXAMPLES

Punishment Avoidance: Social Sanctions

Definition: Avoiding adverse reactions from other people in one's social group; includes gossip, rumors, fines, beatings, prison, loss of job, salary cut, etc.

Examples: "Incest will have a lifelong effect on the girl in the form of social condemnation."

Reward Seeking: Social Benefits

Definition: Action is done so that actor can receive social benefits.

Examples: "When you do what is right, you get more respect in the long run."

Others' Physical Well-Being.

Definition: When physical harm is caused to a collective entity. This category includes references to the absence of physical harm and to the promotion of physical well-being. When physical harm is caused to persons, third parties, who are not directly involved in the decision making pertaining to the moral issue.

Examples: "Divorce is wrong because it is harmful to all family members. It preys upon their physical health."

Others' Psychological Well-Being.

Definition: When psychological harm is caused to a collective entity. This category includes references to the absence of psychological harm and to the promotion of psychological well-being. The category also applies to a case where a person is not directly involved in the issue at hand but will be affected due to her relationship with an actor who is directly involved in the issue.

Examples: "When a terminally ill commits suicide, the family will know that there is nothing they could have done and will not feel insecurity." "My decision to divorce my wife was right because the situation was psychologically destructive to my children."

Others' Interest

Definition: When the focus is on the interests of society or some other form of collective entity. When the focus is on someone who is not directly involved in the issue at hand but who will be affected due to her relationship with an agent who is directly involved in the issue.

Examples: "Suicide is wrong as society needs its people." "To have an affair with a married man would be mitigated by the fact that it would not affect the wife if she did not

know.” “Divorce is wrong because it does a lot of harm to society. You miss a key element if you're a single family and this ends up harming society.”

Important Socially-Defined Person's Authority

Definition: Important person's, such as parents or social leaders, have taught or exemplified that it is wrong or right.

Examples: “Abortion is wrong from the way that I have been taught by my parents.”

Customary or Traditional Authority

Definition: Our practices or traditions or customs go against it and indicate it is wrong, or encourage it and indicate it is right. It is what we do, or what we do not do. When focus is on custom or tradition as socially derived, as opposed to instituted by a transcendental authority. (See also Ethic of Divinity).

Examples: “There is a cultural taboo against incest.” “I did not remarry because society does not accept it.”

Legal Authority (of social institutions)

Definition: When one must obey the law because it is of social origin.

Examples: “I shouldn't have taken the candy at the store because it's against the law.”

Virtues (community-oriented)

Definition: Attitude or trait which, if manifested in the situation would make behavior right, if not manifested would make behavior wrong. If informant talks about vice, then manifestation of attitude or trait would make the behavior wrong, and absence of trait or attitude would make it right. Also habitual manner of action. Virtues include gratitude, respect, devotion, loyalty, sympathy, love, etc. (Use Ethic of Community when the virtues pertain to familial and communal relationships, such as familial loyalty. (See also Ethics of Autonomy and Divinity.)

Examples: “It is questionable whether one can love one's kin as it is proper for intimate partners to love each other.” “I didn't want to go back on my word that I had given to my sister.” “Divorce is wrong because when you make a promise you should keep it. Honesty and integrity are traits. They are valuable and valued in the community.”

Duty

Definition: An obligation of station to behave in certain ways in certain circumstances due to one's status or position (e.g, father, son, etc.). The category includes absolution from duty. Use Ethic of Community when the duty in question derives from a familial, social, or communal role, not when duties transcend society and culture, or pertain to a person's duties to a divine or higher order. (See also Ethic of Divinity.)

Examples: “When a parent commits incest, he abdicates his responsibility to look after his child's welfare.”

Means-Ends Considerations: Ends of Social Groups

Definition: When means serve familial, social, or communal ends.

Examples: “Lying about my Jewish identity does not alleviate the problem and make people realize that their conceptions of Jews are false.” “Sati is not rational. It was for another time, nowadays ladies are no longer confined to the home and remarriage is also possible.”

Social Order or Harmony Goals

Definition: Avoiding chaos or disorder. May imply the extremity, if not the violence, of the war of all against all. Promoting to perpetuation of order within any social group.

Examples: “Suicide is very impractical, if everyone just killed themselves when others weren't doing what they wanted, we'd have a real mess on our hands.” “Divorce is wrong. The goal is to united and bringing a house together. You can't stand there divided because you'd create turmoil.”

Other Community

Definition: Any other justification centered on social groups or the ways that actions has ramifications beyond those immediately involved.

ETHIC OF DIVINITY: Moral discourse within the ethic of divinity envisions the person as a spiritual entity. A person's behaviors are to be in accordance with the guidelines rendered by a given spiritual or natural order. Thus the person avoids degradation and comes closer to moral purity.

SUBCODES, DEFINITIONS, AND EXAMPLES

Punishment Avoidance (from God(s))

Definition: Avoiding punishment from God(s) or unmentioned Higher Order(s). Includes avoiding consequences such as a decline in one's relationship with God.

Examples: "One reason that I would not have an affair with a married man is that I'm afraid of God's punishment." "We couldn't keep the money that wasn't ours, because to purposely choose to do what's wrong it sets us up for one bad thing after another." "To divorce is not God's first choice, and therefore if you're not going to live God's first choice, you can't expect God's first blessings either."

Reward Seeking (from God(s))

Definition: Action is or should be done so that actor can receive benefits from God(s).

Examples: "In heaven, I will see the bird again that I rescued. I will go to heaven." "Sati is a good act, it will ensure the woman's salvation."

Self's Physical Well-Being (Body as God's temple)

Definition: When the self's body is described as God's rather than the person's. (See also Ethic of Autonomy.)

Examples: "It's wrong to take drugs because it would harm my body, and your body is God's temple."

Interest of Self's Soul

Definition: When the interest promoted or hindered pertains to the self's spiritual interests, status, or soul. (See also Ethics of Autonomy and Community.)

Examples: "It would be degrading to my soul."

Other's Physical Well-Being (Body as God's temple)

Definition: When the another person's body is described as God's rather than the person's. (See also Ethic of Autonomy.)

Examples: "I told her not to drink alcohol because it would harm her body which is like a temple to God."

Interest of Other's Soul

Definition: When the interest promoted or hindered pertains to another person's spiritual interests, status, or soul. (See also Ethics of Autonomy and Community.)

Examples: "Remarriage is wrong because children that are born to that union are illegitimate children. This has lifelong ramifications, in that it hinders their witnessing for

Christ.” “Sati is wrong. The wife should remain alive and finish the work her husband has not completed. In this way, his soul will find peace.”

Important Spiritually-Defined Person’s Authority

Definition: Important persons have taught or exemplified that it is wrong or right. Use Ethic of Divinity when the person is seen as a representative of God or the divine. (See also Ethic of Community.)

Examples: “According to the Pope, abortion is wrong.”

Customary or Traditional Authority (of spiritual/religious nature)

Definition: Practices or traditions or customs go against it and indicate it is wrong, or encourage it and indicate it is right. It is what we do, or what we do not do. Use Ethic of Divinity when the tradition or custom is religious, when a tradition or custom is seen as having a divine origin or being divinely sanctioned. (See also Ethic of Community.)

Examples: “As a Brahmin it is right for me to work as a cook. Most of us chose our occupation according to our tradition.”

Legal Authority (of religious institution)

Definition: When the law is regarded as instituted or sanctioned by divine authority. (See also Ethic of Community.)

Examples: “The law commands us to observe certain guidelines regarding food preparation and consumption.”

Authority of Natural Law

Definition: It is wrong because it is unnatural, or right because it adheres to natural law.

Examples: “Suicide is wrong because it is unnatural. That's just not the way it was supposed to happen. That's not the way life was supposed to end.”

Scriptural Authority

Definition: The scriptures have stated in the form of injunction or as revealed truth that it is wrong or right.

Examples: “The Bible says that incest is wrong.” “Thou shalt not steal.”

God's Authority

Definition: God has indicated or exemplified by action or otherwise that it is wrong or right. Doing what is pleasing or not pleasing to God. This category includes references to violating the sacred, committing sacrilege.

Examples: “We are given life by a Supreme Being and it is not in our hands to end it.” “Divorce is wrong because the two people coming together is a picture of Christ and his bride. That's supposed to be a sacred picture.” “Abortion is wrong because God gives life and it's a God given privilege to raise the child.”

Conscience (when God-given)

Definition: Your conscience will feel bad because you know you have done wrong or will not feel bad because you do not believe you have done wrong or think you have done

right. Use Ethic of Divinity when the conscience is the soul, or a part of the self through which a higher authority is experienced. (See also Ethic of Autonomy.)

Examples: “Our God-given conscience tells us that it is wrong to take one's own life.”

Virtues (divinity-oriented)

Attitude or trait which, if manifested in the situation would make behavior right, if not manifested would make behavior wrong. If informant talks about vice, then manifestation of attitude or trait would make the behavior wrong, and absence of trait or attitude would make it right. Also habitual manner of action. Virtues include gratitude, respect, devotion, loyalty, sympathy, love, etc. Use Ethic of Divinity when the virtues pertain to a person's status as a transcendental being, or when the virtues pertain to traditions that have a divine basis. (See also Ethics of Autonomy and Ethic of Community.)

Examples: “To commit suicide shows a lack of respect for human life.” “You should strive to be holy as God is holy.” “You should honor the marriage vow. I respect the institution of marriage as sanctioned by God”

Duty (as spiritual/religious being)

Definition: An obligation of station to behave in certain ways in certain circumstances due to one's status or position (e.g, Muslim, Brahmin, etc.). The category includes absolution from duty. Use Ethic of Divinity when the duties obtain due to a person's status as a human being, or as a faithful person, or result from being sworn to uphold a divine order. (See also Ethic of Community.)

Examples: “Since we will die, there is an obligation to do something while we are alive.” “Taking one's life is wrong because God created man that we might serve Him and love Him and glorify Him.”

Other Divinity

Definition: Any other justification centering on God(s), divine being, spirituality, religion, the soul, sin, sanctity, purity, pollution, etc.

OTHER CODES

Justifications that *cannot* be coded as Ethics of Autonomy, Community, or Divinity:

Involuntarism

Definition: The actor is judged not to be a moral agent because of age, acting under duress or compulsion, infirmity, incapacity, etc. If the actor is simply judged not to be a moral agent and no reference is made to who might step in the actor's place, the justification cannot be coded as an ethic of autonomy, community, or divinity.

Categorically Right or Wrong

Definition: When the participant only states that an action is right or wrong and that no reason is necessary or can be given.