

Cultural considerations in moral and ethical reasoning

[Experience](#), [Human Nature](#)



Cultural considerations in moral and ethical reasoning The sound development of moral reasoning and ethics is an integral part of the growth and maturation of a healthy and productive human being. Without morals and ethics, a person cannot exist within society's boundaries and would be doomed to be forever barred from its hallowed walls for as long as that person did not conform to the societal norms of having the ability to morally reason and implement a set of ethics. But morals and ethics, as necessary as they are, are relative and not absolute (Brink, 1989).

This means that what a particular society constitutes as moral behavior is actually very much like beauty and in the eye of the beholder. The society in which an individual grows up in and is a member of dictates the type of societal rules that must be accepted as part of the price of membership. However, it does not take into account the various cultural differences that must affect which ethics and morals are adhered to in a particular place. Ethics are generally defined as the principles of morally acceptable conduct of individuals, and a person's belief about right and wrong behaviors (Cosmides & Tooby, 2004).

It is evident however, that the difference in cultures around the world make it quite clear that moral reasoning and ethics are directly influenced by the cultures in which they are developed (Boyd & Richerson, 2005). Behavior that is unacceptable in the U. S. is perfectly acceptable elsewhere in the world. For example, polygamy is accepted in most African societies, and even encouraged, but in the U. S. it is not only considered morally reprehensible, but also criminal. Homosexuality is accepted and even

celebrated in the U. S. et woe betides the person trying to engage in this behavior in the Middle East, where it is considered a moral abomination (Haidt & Hersh, 2001). It is clear that there is no universal standard for moral reasoning not with culture, religion, and even environment playing roles in how it will occur (Wright, 1994).

Therefore, it is of utmost importance to teach developing humans how to evaluate critically their own views on morality and that of others in order to preserve a balance in their world view no matter where they are. They must be taught an openness that allows for them to discuss comfortably moral matters with many types of people in order to gain a clearer picture of the world. By honing reasoning skills one can better evaluate ethical and moral statements or judgments (Gigerenzer & Goldstein, 1996) and this will help to describe the negatives and the positives of a situation and ultimately take us a step closer to understanding our world and the various subsets of which it is made up of.

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