

Moral social political philosophy comparison paper assignment

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



Moral/Social/Political Philosophy Comparison Paper Introduction One may ask what holds society together in a world where different cultures and religious beliefs exist. What overall rule do humans live by in order to obtain virtues such as peace, freedom, harmony and happiness? Three fields of philosophy may help answer such questions and possibly provide insight as to what true principles one must live by in order to achieve such virtues. Moral, social, and political are three fields of philosophy that contain its own set of principles that determine the ways in which one thinks and acts; however, each field is dependent upon the other.

Moral and Social Philosophy Ethics, or otherwise known as moral philosophy focuses on the study of moral and value judgments and pose such questions as what is morally right, wrong, good, just, unjust, bad, evil, or of virtue? The answers to such questions can lead one to think how he or she should conduct himself or herself in society. Aside from the many questions and answers relating to moral judgments, one important question is “ what moral judgments are morally correct? ” How can one know whether there exist a standard of what makes one thing morally right or wrong? Moore-Bruder, 2005, p. 250-251) In an attempt to help answer deeper questions such as these, one may consider the concepts to moral judgments to gain an understanding of moral philosophy. While many concepts from various moral philosophers can help one understand moral philosophy, key philosophers such as Immanuel Kant, St. Thomas Aquinas, Plato, and Aristotle each hold different ideas on what moral or ethical judgments are, and concepts such as skepticism, relativism, or, egoism, and hedonism provides insight as to how one views what is morally correct.

Ethical skepticism holds that moral knowledge is not possible while relativism holds that moral standards differ from culture to culture and from individual to individual depending what one believes to be right or wrong. On the other hand, egoism promotes self-interest above all, or a conscious action seeking one's own interest. Hedonism holds that a person's main motive is pleasure above all else, or when a person ought to seek pleasure above all things. Philosophers as those mentioned earlier, help justify what moral or ethical theories mean.

While Kant sees that one does what is morally his or her duty to do regardless of consequences in some cases, Plato and Aristotle sees that a person acts according to the type of person he or she ought to be. Aquinas; however, sees that one does or acts in such a way that God ordains he or she to act. (Moore-Bruder, 2005, p. 251-254). To help further explain moral judgment and ethics, Plato, Aristotle, the stoics, and Socrates considered the discussion of moral character an important factor to the field as character contributes to how one sees a certain situation and what action they will take whether right or wrong.

As Socrates explains in his writing "Laches," one does not have courage just because he is standing firm in a battle, for standing firm in a battle may bring needless risk for oneself or others. (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2007) This means that one may not necessarily be correct just because his or her moral character holds courage; however, moral character may play a part in how one should behave or if his or her actions are right or wrong.

While much description and concepts define moral philosophy, social philosophy relates to the study of institutions and society and is concerned with determining features of the best or ideal society in specific. (Moore-Bruder, 2005, p. 10) The writer believes that along with moral values, society as a whole contributes or determines which factors best fit the description of an ideal world. Factors could include having a world free of war and racism; however, some societies promote racism and countries are at war because of religious beliefs.

In an ideal world, war and racism would not exist. Political Philosophy As Vladimir Lenin quotes, “ While the state exists there is no freedom. Where there is freedom, there will be no state” (Moore-Bruder, 2005, p. 309).

Moore-Bruder (2005) defines political philosophy as seeking for the best form of political existence and concerns determining the state’s right to exist, legitimate organizations, scope and functions, and understanding political relationships and authority through scholars or political scientists. (p. 309-310)

Philosophers have a common goal of establishing basic principles that will determine an individual’s rights, justify a particular form of state, or decide what is the proper way to share society’s material resources among its’ members. Philosophers establish the common goal by interpreting and analyzing ideas such as justice, freedom, democracy, and authority by applying those ideas in a critical way to the current social and political institutions. While some political philosophers primarily justify the prevailing arrangements of society, others paint pictures of an ideal society, different

from what one has experienced so far. Miller, 2008). Some of the main concepts of political philosophy include theories from key political scientists such as Aristotle, Plato, St. Augustine, and St. Thomas Aquinas. Plato held that a “just” healthy-state is a class-structure aristocracy ruled by philosopher-kings and the state like a person is a living organism that must seek a state of well-being from members of society. Moreover, he believed that the governing class consisted of highly educated individuals and that members of society would move to a lower or higher class based upon personal aptitude.

Aristotle held the same as Plato in that the state is a living organism existing to promote well-being or the “good life.” He strongly believed that the ideal state changes and depends on circumstances and unlike Plato did not set a recipe for an ideal state. Furthermore, Aristotle questioned the equality of people and asked questions relating to whether or not ought to all people to be equal in citizenship or freedom and viewed by others as the main source of natural law political theory. St. Augustine and St.

Thomas Aquinas held an entire different view of political philosophy as conceived by the stoics and Christianized natural law concepts. Both philosophers concerned themselves with the relationship between the secular laws and natural laws, and of the state to the church. One of the most important contributions to political philosophy came from St. Thomas Aquinas when he distinguished four different kinds of law to include eternal law (divine reason of God as ruler), divine law (God’s gift to man), natural law (God’s eternal law), and human law (laws and statutes derived from

man's understanding of natural law). Moore-Bruder, 2005, p. 310-314)

Contrast and Comparison of Fields The three fields of philosophy each have unique definitions; however, each field is dependent of the other in terms of what one believes to be ethical, moral, socially, and politically, yet separate principles may determine the reason why one thinks in certain manner, and how one acts. In a world run by politics, including morality in a social environment is just the same as having morals and values in a social environment run by politics.

One needs all fields of philosophy in order to determine what is right or wrong. For example, political judgments are similar to those of moral and social values. In Aristotle's view, the common purpose for life is to promote the highest human good or happiness and this makes life just; whereas, Plato believes that a state is good if its society is well ordered. (Moore-Bruder, 2005, p. 312) Who is to say which statement is true or correct? One may view one statement to be true while another person may disagree.

One may also question moral ethics as Aristotle did for political ethics about what is right and wrong, bad, just and unjust, proper or improper through his political theory known as natural law political theory. (Moore-Bruder, 2005, p. 313) Conclusion Moral, social and political philosophy each has unique definitions but each field of philosophy depends on the other. While common theories among each field of philosophy exist, the same fields can provide answers to overall rule humans should live by in order to obtain virtues such as peace, freedom, harmony and happiness.

Moral, social, and political are three fields of philosophy that contain its own set of principles that determine the ways in which one thinks and acts, and how society as a whole or the state is governed. References Miller, D. (2008). Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Political Philosophy. Retrieved September 22, 2008, from [http://www. rep. routledge. com/article/S099](http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/S099)

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