

On the diversity of folk morality: Measuring classical positions in moral philosophy

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Abstract: Moral psychology often oversimplifies moral philosophical debates into either deontological or consequentialist theories. The current research attempted to document greater variation in the extent to which participants used one of six core concepts to justify actions (i.e., appeals to religion, intuition, or one of four classical philosophical positions associated with Bentham, Hobbes, Kant, or Schopenhauer). Two hundred and fifty student participants (121 males) from the University of Granada were asked why a specific action would be "morally" correct or incorrect, which of the six concepts would be most adequate to justify the action, and whether they would behave similarly. Results indicated that participants agreed on a variety of diverse moral positions and that moral justification changed depending on context. The present research contributes to a growing body of work suggesting that different people apply different moral concepts to different life situations.