PERSONAL INTEGRITY & SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

Ethical Naturalism

➢ Ethical naturalism is a philosophical theory that holds that moral properties, such as goodness or rightness, can be explained in terms of natural properties or facts.

➢ It is a type of moral realism, which means it asserts that moral claims are objectively true or false, and that moral values and obligations exist independently of human opinion or belief.

➢ According to ethical naturalism, moral properties are a part of the natural world, and they can be studied and understood through empirical methods, such as observation and experimentation.

➢ It asserts that moral principles can be derived from the natural order of things, and that ethical claims can be supported or refuted by empirical evidence.

Principles of Ethical Naturalism

➤ **Moral properties are natural properties:** Ethical naturalists believe that moral properties, such as goodness or rightness, are natural properties that can be observed and studied like any other natural phenomenon.

➤ **Science can discover moral truths:** Ethical naturalists believe that scientific investigation can lead to the discovery of objective moral truths. This means that ethical theories can be tested and validated through empirical evidence.

➤ **Morality is objective:** Ethical naturalists believe that moral truths exist independently of human beliefs and practices. This means that there are objective moral truths that apply universally to all people, regardless of their cultural or individual beliefs.

➤ **Moral language is descriptive:** Ethical naturalists believe that moral language is descriptive, rather than prescriptive. This means that moral language describes the world as it is, rather than prescribing how it should be.

Criticisms of Ethical Naturalism

➢ **The naturalistic fallacy:** Critics of ethical naturalism argue that it commits the naturalistic fallacy, which is the fallacy of assuming that what is natural is morally good. Just because something is natural does not necessarily mean that it is morally good.

➢ **Moral subjectivity:** Critics of ethical naturalism argue that morality is ultimately subjective, and that there is no objective way to determine which moral principles are correct. They argue that ethical naturalism fails to account for the role of subjective values and beliefs in moral decision-making.

➢ **The is-ought problem:** Critics of ethical naturalism argue that it cannot bridge the gap between descriptive statements about the world and prescriptive statements about how the world should be. This is known as the is-ought problem, and it poses a significant challenge for any ethical theory that seeks to derive moral prescriptions from naturalistic observations.
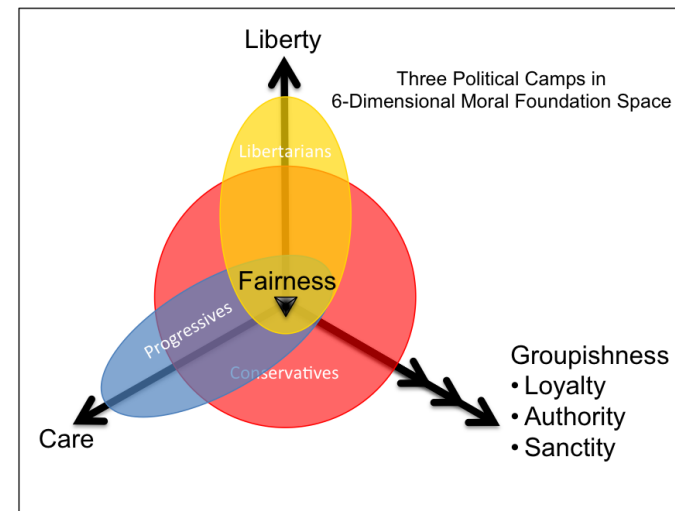
Moral Foundations

➤ Moral foundations refer to the underlying psychological mechanisms or principles that guide our moral thinking and decision-making. The concept of moral foundations was introduced by social psychologist Jonathan Haidt in his work on moral psychology.

Moral Foundations Theory

Care	Fairness	Liberty	Loyalty	Authority	Sanctity
Harm	Cheating	Oppression	Betrayal	Subversion	Degradation

The Six Moral Foundations

- Care/harm

- Fairness/cheating

- Loyalty/betrayal

- Authority/subversion

- Sanctity/degradation

- Liberty/oppression.

Care/Harm Foundation

➤ People who prioritize the Care/Harm Foundation tend to be motivated by a desire to help others and promote well-being. They are likely to value kindness, empathy, and altruism.

➤ They may be more inclined to support policies and practices that prioritize the well-being of vulnerable or marginalized groups, such as social welfare programs, environmental protections, or policies to reduce violence and crime.

➤ On the other hand, individuals who devalue the Care/Harm Foundation may be more prone to engage in behaviors that harm others or disregard the suffering of others. They may prioritize their own interests or those of their social group above the well-being of others, leading to behaviors such as aggression, discrimination, or exploitation.

Fairness/Cheating Foundation

➢ People who prioritize the Fairness/Cheating Foundation tend to be motivated by a sense of fairness and the belief that everyone should be treated equally. They value honesty, integrity, and reciprocity in their relationships with others. They may be more inclined to support policies and practices that promote social equality, such as anti-discrimination laws, progressive taxation, or labor rights.

➢ On the other hand, individuals who devalue the Fairness/Cheating Foundation may be more prone to engage in behaviors that violate norms of fairness and reciprocity, such as cheating, lying, or exploiting others for personal gain. They may prioritize their own interests over those of others, leading to behaviors such as greed, selfishness, or exploitation.

Loyalty/Betrayal Foundation

➢ People who prioritize the Loyalty/Betrayal Foundation tend to be motivated by a sense of loyalty and devotion to their group, whether it be their family, community, or country. They may value traditions and customs that reinforce group identity and may be more likely to trust and cooperate with others who belong to the same group. They may also be more inclined to support policies and practices that promote group cohesion and identity, such as nationalistic or patriotic movements.

➢ On the other hand, individuals who devalue the Loyalty/Betrayal Foundation may be more prone to engage in behaviors that undermine group loyalty or cohesion, such as individualism, rebellion, or subversion. They may be more likely to question traditions or customs that reinforce group identity and may be less trusting or cooperative with others who belong to the same group.

Authority/Subversion Foundation

➢ People who prioritize the Authority/Subversion Foundation tend to be motivated by a desire for order, stability, and social structure. They may value obedience to authority figures and may be more likely to support traditional institutions such as government, religion, or the military. They may also be more inclined to follow rules and laws, and to uphold social norms and traditions.

➢ On the other hand, individuals who devalue the Authority/Subversion Foundation may be more prone to engage in behaviors that challenge or subvert authority, such as rebellion, protest, or civil disobedience. They may question or challenge social norms and institutions and may be more likely to support radical or progressive social change.

Sanctity/Degradation Foundation

➢ People who prioritize the Sanctity/Degradation Foundation tend to be motivated by a sense of purity and cleanliness, both in a physical and a moral sense. They may value traditions and customs that reinforce purity, such as religious practices or cultural taboos. They may also be more inclined to avoid behaviors or substances that are seen as contaminating or degrading, such as sexual promiscuity, drug use, or blasphemy.

➢ The Sanctity/Degradation Foundation may be more prone to engage in behaviors that challenge or transgress traditional purity norms, such as sexual liberation or artistic expression that challenges taboos. They may be more likely to question or reject religious or cultural practices that emphasize purity or sanctity.

Liberty/Oppression Foundation

➤ People who prioritize the Liberty/Oppression Foundation tend to be motivated by a sense of autonomy and self-determination. They may value individual rights and freedoms, and may be more inclined to resist restrictions on their behavior or beliefs. They may also be more likely to support policies and practices that promote equality and justice, and that protect individuals from discrimination or oppression.

➤ On the other hand, individuals who devalue the Liberty/Oppression Foundation may be more prone to engage in behaviors that restrict individual freedom or impose authority, such as authoritarianism, censorship, or surveillance. They may prioritize social order or collective welfare over individual rights and may be more willing to accept limitations on individual autonomy in the name of social stability or security.

Implications for Understanding Moral Conflict

➢ Research has found that individuals tend to judge actions and beliefs that violate their own moral foundations more harshly than those that violate other foundations. This suggests that individuals may be more likely to experience moral outrage and conflict when their own moral foundations are threatened or violated.

➢ Furthermore, individuals may also be more likely to attribute negative characteristics to individuals who hold different moral values than their own, which can further exacerbate moral conflict and polarize groups.

Political Attitudes and Moral Foundations

➢ Research has found that political attitudes and ideologies are often associated with differences in the extent to which individuals prioritize the six primary moral foundations (care, fairness, loyalty, authority, sanctity, and liberty).

➢ Conservatives tend to place more emphasis on the loyalty, authority, and sanctity foundations, whereas liberals tend to prioritize the care and fairness foundations. Conservatives often value traditions, respect for authority, and social order, while liberals often prioritize individual rights, equality, and compassion for those in need.

➢ However, it's important to note that these associations are not absolute and there is a great deal of individual variability within political groups. Furthermore, different political issues may activate different moral foundations, and individuals may prioritize different moral values depending on the context.