

Exploring the Ethics of Care

Week 4



Values

- Values are individual beliefs that motivate people to act one way or another. They serve as a guide for human behaviour.
- Generally, people are predisposed to adopt the values that they are raised with. People also tend to believe that those values are "right" because they are the values of their particular culture.
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- Ethical decision-making often involves weighing values against each other and choosing which values to elevate. Conflicts can result when people have different values, leading to a clash of preferences and priorities.
- Some values have intrinsic worth, such as love, truth, and freedom. Other values, such as ambition, responsibility, and courage, describe traits or behaviours that are instrumental as means to an end

Virtue Ethics



- Virtue ethics is a philosophy developed by Aristotle and other ancient Greeks. It is the quest to understand and live a life of moral character.
- This character-based approach to morality assumes that we acquire virtue through practice. By practicing being honest, brave, just, generous, and so on, a person develops an honorable and moral character. According to Aristotle, by honing virtuous habits, people will likely make the right choice when faced with ethical challenges.

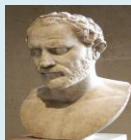
Deontology

- Deontology is an ethical theory that uses rules to distinguish right from wrong. Deontology is often associated with philosopher *Immanuel Kant*. Kant believed that ethical actions follow universal moral laws, such as "Don't lie. Don't steal. Don't cheat."



Consequentialism

- Consequentialism is an ethical theory that judges whether or not something is right by what its consequences are. For instance, most people would agree that lying is wrong. But if telling a lie would help save a person's life, consequentialism says it's the right thing to do.



- However, because we cannot predict the future, it's difficult to know with certainty whether the consequences of our actions will be good or bad. This is one of the limitations of utilitarianism.

Utilitarianism

- Utilitarianism is an ethical theory that determines right from wrong by focusing on outcomes. It is a form of consequentialism.
- Utilitarianism holds that the most ethical choice is the one that will produce the greatest good for the greatest number. It is the only moral framework that can be used to justify military force or war. It is also the most common approach to moral reasoning used in business because of the way in which it accounts for costs and benefits.

Behavioural Ethics

- Behavioural ethics is the study of why people make the ethical and unethical decisions that they do. Its teachings arise from research in fields such as behavioural psychology, cognitive science, and evolutionary biology.
- Behavioural ethics is different from traditional philosophy. Instead of focusing on how people *ought* to behave, behavioural ethics studies why people *act* as they do. Arguably, it is more useful to understand our own motivations than to understand the philosophy of Aristotle.

Ethics of Care

Traditional Moral Question Ethics asks: **What is just?**

Ethics of Care asks: **How to respond?**

Carol Gilligan

Nel Nodding

Virginia Held

Michale Slote

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=you+tube+the+ethics+of+care&qpvt=you+tube+the+ethics+of+care&view=detail&mid=oF3C7oCDE9A3o7C827ioF3C7oCDE9A3o7C8276rvsmid=9o548A4F4EAC5o9oC3539o548A4F4EAC5o9oC3536FORM=VDRVRV>

Ethics of Care – Feminist Ethics

A moral theory

- Relationships as goods
- Emotions involved in moral reasoning/judgement
- Real persons over abstract principles - Women's concerns and experiences
- Childbearing, mothering, nurturing support.
- Held, V. (2006) *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (EBOOK)

A 'women's' ethic?

- It is a distinctly **feminine** ethic, long ignored by male philosophers
- It has **modern** appeal, paralleling the liberation of women
- It is more **holistic**, embracing men and women as having unique differences

What is the theory of “ethics of care?”

- A morality of care that rests upon the understanding of relationships.
- Focuses on the importance of maintaining healthy relationships with those who we value.
- Focuses on being responsive in important relationships.
- Relationships don't exist in terms of right and wrong.

Ethics—The Basics

Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

Six Stages of Moral Development

Post-Conventional Stages (Abstractly Oriented Stages)	6. Universal ethical principles; mutual respect as a universal principle
	5. Social contract orientation; justice and rights; contractual perspective
Conventional Stages (Socially Oriented Stages)	4. Authority and social order ;“Law and order” mentality; social systems perspective
	3. Interpersonal conformity; “I’m a good boy/girl.” social norms; social relationships perspective
Pre-Conventional Stages (Egoistically Oriented Stages)	2. Self-interest : “What’s in it for me?”; reward; instrumental egoism perspective
	1. Obedience; fear of punishment; blind egoism perspective

CARE ETHICS

Carol Gilligan (1936-present), a research assistant to Kohlberg, and a psychologist herself, argued that his ideas were too **androcentric**:

- He originally only used privileged white male subjects
- He seemed to belittle female ethical concerns based on caring and relationships

Resources

- Gilligan, C. (1982) *In a different voice*. Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press
- Morgan, R. (2003) *Sisterhood Is Forever: The Woman's Anthology For A New Millennium*. New York: Washington Square
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carol_Gilligan
- <http://www.webster.edu/~woolfm/gilligan.html>
- <http://www.stolaf.edu/people/huff/classes/handbook/Gilligan.html>
- <http://www.acypher.com/BookNotes/Gilligan.html>

In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development



- It challenged past theories made by Kohlberg of girls moral development.
- Past studies usually only consisted of male participants, and the scoring was biased towards males.
- Gilligan said that women use ethics of care to try to keep connectedness after moral dilemmas, while males use ethics of justice to decide moral issues of individual rights.

What is the theory of "ethics of justice?"

- Also known as the morality of justice
- Moral choices through rights of the people involved
- Picking a solution that seems to harm the least amount of people
- Arguing from Principles

Relational turn – Relational and Context Bound Approach

- Women's sense of self, experience of relationship, and development all appear differently when they are not alone
- The continuation of relationships are based on the ability to repair breaks in connection
- Adolescent girls are much more receptive and intuitive than most people believe



Gilligan's criticisms

Despite many awards, Gilligan's views are controversial.

Criticism

- Christina Hoff Sommers criticized her work in *The War Against Boys*
- She called her research was inadequate because she did not follow standard research protocol
- She said her samples were too small, her evidence was disjointed, and she said that she failed to produce the data from her research

Virginia Held

- She states that TEC is importantly described as a feminist ethics so as to acknowledge that the movement forward into the moral realm has been a struggle for a certain voice to be heard within the dominant conventions of morality (pp.23-25),
- So does not want to subsume it under the ideas of virtue ethics

Held

- describes the TEC as having:
- 'grown out of the constructive turmoil of the phase of feminist thought and the rethinking of almost all fields of inquiry that began in the United States and Europe in the late 1960's' (p.23).

McLeod, 1998. p.295

- notes that:
- '[h]istorically, the task of caring has been work for women. In counselling and other human service organizations, women predominate in frontline service delivery roles, although men are proportionally more heavily represented in management roles' (p.295).
- What do we make of this?

Critics

- This interpretation of the TEC has brought with it concerns that a gendered view of care may well restrict its appeal (e.g. Jecker and Reich, 1994, pp 336–344), with critics challenging its perceived exclusivity to women's experience
- Potentially virtue ethics can offer a wider potential

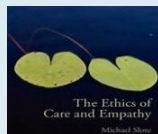
Nel Nodding

- Known for her work in philosophy of education, educational theory, and ethics of care (Relational Ethics)
- Distinction between natural caring and ethical caring
- Educating the whole child
- Centred around Happiness
- Build Community Learners.

Michael Slote

The ethics of care and empathy

2007, Oxon, Routledge.



Slote

- His work consists of a response to many people writing about Care Ethics.
- As his book suggests, his major point refers to the fact that from Hume onwards to contemporary care ethicists, there is a fundamental piece missing
- And that is the underlying motivation of **EMPATHY**
- Which itself is a moral concept
- Should this be taken into Counselling Ethics?

Slote -

- Action is morally permissible, and even good, if it exhibits caring on the part of its agents.
- Distinguishes between a caring attitude, on the one hand, and an attitude of indifference or hostility to others, on the other.
- The latter when displayed to relevant others counts as ethically wrong.

Empathy

- Genuine acts of caring involve an emotional/motivational sensitivity to particular other people.
- One is concerned about the situation a given person is in, and one's focus is on the individual herself, rather than on any abstract or general moral principles that someone might want to consult in order to determine how to act towards that individual.

Controversial – within TEC

- The concern is for that person with the **immediate need** and how one's actions may affect the welfare of the person one is, **at the moment**, concerned about, and the welfare of *other* people may be very much a background issue.

Partiality vs Impartiality

- Do I stand back or do I involve myself?

Nel Noddings -Partiality

- Utilitarianism or consequentialism may have concern for the individual, but TEC are openly transparent about the immediacy of care through partiality of that person with whom a person has an immediate relationship

Slote + Held

- Argue that there is no reason why care should be limited to immediate proximity.
- Caring attitudes towards groups of people are demonstrable.
- What one can do for people not know personally is less than what one can do for someone who one has an immediate relationship with.
