

# Lecture 05 : Moral Psychology

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Thursday, 6th February 2025

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## 1. Liberals vs Conservatives

According to Feinberg & Willer (2013, p. 2), ‘liberals and conservatives possess different moral profiles regarding the five moral foundations.’ More specifically, ‘care and fairness are generally negatively, and loyalty, authority, and sanctity, generally positively related to conservative political orientation’ (Kivikangas et al. 2021, p. 77). Is this true?

By the end of this section you should understand the evidence for this claim as well as some objections to it.

In this section we aim to understand and evaluate the third key claim in the argument that cultural differences in moral psychology matter for political conflict over climate change:

‘liberals and conservatives possess different moral profiles regarding the five moral foundations’ (Feinberg & Willer 2013, p. 2).

What evidence supports this claim?

van Leeuwen & Park (2009) used the Moral Foundations Questionnaire (MFQ-1) to find evidence for this claim with a sample of Dutch students both when political affinity was tested using an explicit question and when it was tested using an implicit measure. And Graham et al. (2009) found comparable results with a sample from the USA.

On the basis of a careful meta-analysis of evidence, Kivikangas et al. (2021) conclude that, with some important exceptions noted below,

‘care and fairness are generally negatively, and loyalty, authority, and sanctity, generally positively related to conservative political orientation’ (p. 77).

Further, this result appears broadly robust across different ways of analysing data and different forms of the questionnaire used (Kivikangas et al. 2021, p. 83).

There is even some preliminary neurophysiological evidence for the claim that liberals tend to put more weight on care and fairness whereas conservatives tend to put more weight on loyalty, authority, and sanctity. Hopp et al. (2023) used MFQ-1 to explore how brain activity is related to moral foundations in a group of participants from the US. Their findings are rich and complex (although I would also urge caution as these researchers seem quite bold in some of the conclusions they draw). A key finding for us is that:

‘liberals and conservatives have differential neural responses

when evaluating individualizing versus binding moral foundations' (Hopp et al. 2023, p. 2193)

They also tested behavioural responses and found convergent results.

### 1.1. Objection from Cultural Differences

In New Zealand, Davies et al. (2014, p. 434) found that '[a]lthough Harm/care and Fairness/reciprocity showed significant negative correlations with conservatism, these relationships were weak, indicating that these foundations are not related to ideology. [...] the individualizing foundation results are surprising, and different to those found by Graham et al. (2011).'

Davis et al. (2016, p. e29) found evidence from two independent samples that

'the binding moral foundations would show a weaker relationship with political conservatism in Black people than in White people.'

They conclude that

'some of the current items may conflate moral foundations with other constructs such as religiosity or racial identity' (Davis et al. 2016, p. e29).

This conclusion is supported by (Kivikangas et al. 2021)'s meta-analysis:

'In the representative samples, arguably giving us the least biased estimates for the general population, and its subset of Black respondents, all associations between moral foundations and political orientation were close to zero' (p. 84).

These findings combined with the (related) failures to find evidence that the Moral Foundations Questionnaire exhibits scalar invariance (see *Operationalising Moral Foundations Theory* in Lecture 04) indicate that we should be cautious in drawing conclusions about cultural differences.

### 1.2. Reply to Objections

The research considered so far uses the original version of the Moral Foundations Questionnaire (now called MFQ-1).

Atari et al. (2023) developed the new version of the Moral Foundations Questionnaire, MFQ-2. They report that 'care is associated with liberal ideology, [while] loyalty, authority, and purity are associated with conservative ideology' (p.~1171). This is roughly what van Leeuwen & Park (2009) found. They also report that 'liberals are more concerned with equality and conservatives are more concerned with proportionality' (p.~1171).

### 1.3. Appendix: Liberal vs Conservative (Emilie's question)

*This section is not part of the spoken lecture.*

How can we be sure that the dutch 'liberal' is the same as the 'liberal' the moral psychologists are talking about (possibly US<sup>1</sup>) in the study by van Leeuwen & Park (2009)?

I am unsure what the answer is, but my current understanding is that although we cannot be sure, there does seem to be something to the one-dimensional opposition in lots of places.

It's important that the claim is about *socially* liberal vs *socially* conservative. (If we were talking about economic views, the picture would be much more complex.<sup>2</sup>)

The moral psychologists do take themselves to be talking about a dimension that is found across the world. For example:

'Whereas in the US, the political divide is between "liberals" and "conservatives" (or Democrats and Republicans), both the substance of political divides and the terms used to describe them vary across cultural contexts (Malka et al., 2014). However, research suggests that the liberal-conservative divide on social issues in particular manifests in similar ways across cultures (e.g., Feinberg, Wehling, Chung, Saslow, & Melvær Paulin, 2019; Graham et al., 2011)' (Feinberg & Willer 2019, footnote 1).

Do the references they cite here support these assertions?

As far as I can tell, Graham et al. (2011) depend on the assumption that the socially liberal-socially conservative distinction works in roughly the same way across many countries; in this sense it may provide indirect evidence (if this assumption was false, they shouldn't have been able to get significant results). Feinberg et al. (2020, Study 4a) compares earlier findings from a US sample of participants with studies of people in Austria, France and Germany.

<sup>1</sup> van Leeuwen & Park (2009, p. 169) do indeed rely on research using US samples as background on political identity. Jost et al. (2009)'s authoritative review of the one-dimensional liberal-conservative model of political identity (which they do not cite) covers much of the background they are relying on. This review is entirely focussed on the US. It also does not discuss whether a single model of political identity works equally well across different ethnic groups.

<sup>2</sup> To illustrate, Malka et al. (2014, p. 1034) notes that 'Eastern European nations formerly subjected to communist rule sometimes show relations between high levels of NSC [needs for security and certainty] characteristics [which are associated with socially conservative views] and left-wing economic preferences.' See also Duckitt & Sibley (2009), who propose that different processes underpin social and economic aspects of political identity.

Again, this seems to depend on the assumption that (in their words) ‘the same conservative-liberal divisions found in the United States are common in countries across the world’ (Feinberg et al. 2020, p. 790) and so provides at most indirect evidence for it.

Those authors do cite Bornschier (2010) in support of this assumption. This is a study which covers multiple countries with relevantly different histories (but not the US). I don’t fully understand this research (yet), but my sense is that it provides one method to identify how robust the idea of a divide between socially liberal and socially conservative is. It also has some very clear figures.

#### 1.4. Appendix: Objection from a Competing Theory

*This section is not part of the spoken lecture.*

A competing view is offered by Gray et al. (2012) and developed in later publications by these authors. I do not recommend studying this view, nor do I not include it in the lecture. My own sense is that their view is not well supported (as always, I am happy to learn otherwise from you). I include it in these notes because you may encounter responses to this view if you read some of the literature on Moral Foundations Theory.

Gray et al. (2012) propose that ‘all morality is understood through the lens of harm.’ This leads them to the hypothesis that ‘harm is central in moral cognition across moral diversity for both liberals and conservatives’ (Schein & Gray 2015, p. 1158). They offer evidence which, they claim, is ‘more consistent with a common dyadic template than with a specific number of distinct moral mechanisms that are differentially expressed across liberals and conservatives’ (Schein & Gray 2015, p. 1158).

Note that this requires working with a particularly broad conception of harm:

‘loyalty, purity, industriousness, and social order [...] are best understood as “transformations” or “intermediaries” of harm, values whose violation leads to perceptions of concrete harm’ (Schein & Gray 2018).

My guess is that this is more likely to capture how some people think in abstract terms (but see Crone & Laham (2015) for counter evidence) than to capture the psychological structure of ethical abilities.

## 2. Moral Psychology Drives Environmental Concern

According to Feinberg & Willer (2013, p. 2), 'liberals express greater levels of environmental concern than do conservatives in part *because* liberals are more likely to view environmental issues in moral terms.' Is this true?

In this section we aim to understand and evaluate the fourth key claim in the argument that cultural differences in moral psychology matter for political conflict over climate change:

'we hypothesized that liberals express greater levels of environmental concern than do conservatives in part *because* liberals are more likely to view environmental issues in moral terms' (Feinberg & Willer 2013, p. 2; my emphasis).

The same claim is made in an influential review:

'The moral framing of climate change has typically focused on only the first two values: harm to present and future generations and the unfairness of the distribution of burdens caused by climate change. *As a result*, the justification for action on climate change holds less moral priority for conservatives than liberals' (Markowitz & Shariff 2012, p. 244; my emphasis).

Is this true?

Feinberg & Willer (2013) support this claim with two studies (numbered 1a and 1b in their paper). The first (1a) provides evidence that socially liberal, but perhaps not socially conservative, participants view a failure to recycle as a moral violation. The second (1b) provides evidence that the effect of political ideology (liberal vs conservative) is mediated by whether the participants regarded environmental issues as moral issues.

Does this work beyond the US? I found it difficult to identify studies with non-US participants which consider whether participants conceive of environmental issues in ethical terms. There is, however, evidence that differences in ethical foundations have a larger or more direct effect than differences in political ideology on environmentally-motivated actions. We considered Doran et al. (2019) in *Do Ethical Attitudes Shape Political Behaviours?* in Lecture 04, which has participants from four European countries. In addition, Milfont et al. (2019) studied a group of participants from New Zealand. They find an interesting interaction between political identity and moral psychology. In a post-hoc analysis, they find that

'individuals with strong individualising morals evidenced a pos-

itive relationship between liberal ideology and electricity conservation [...], whereas individuals who reported weak individualising morals evidenced a negative relationship' (Milfont et al. 2019, p. 10).

While Milfont et al. (2019)'s results differ from Feinberg & Willer (2013)'s findings in interesting ways, their results do provide support for the main claim that concerns us: environmental concerns and behaviours are partly explained by moral foundations. This makes it plausible that environmental concern is, at least in part, driven by moral concerns and not entirely by political ideology.

### 3. Framing Changes Ethical Attitudes

Environmental rhetoric tends to emphasize harm and unfairness. Will introducing moral terms that appeal more to social conservatives than social liberals cause social conservatives to become more supportive of environmental action?

The fifth and final claim in our argument that differences in moral psychology explain political conflict concerns moral reframing. If environmental arguments are reframed in terms of moral concerns which are likely to be more highly weighted by conservatives than liberals, will conservatives show more support for measures to mitigate climate change?

Feinberg & Willer (2013, Study 3) provide evidence that they will. They created two op-ed style pieces which differed only in that one framed environmental issues in terms of harm whereas the other framed them in terms of purity. Participants were divided into two groups. Each group read one of the op-ed style pieces, then answered a survey about proenvironmental attitudes, a survey about proenvironmental legislation and a survey about knowledge of anthropogenic climate change. Conservatives scored significantly higher on all three measures after reading the op-ed style piece which framed things in terms of purity.

#### 3.1. Two Extensions

Can moral reframing change how people act?

Kidwell et al. (2013) found that it can. They studied how much people put into their recycling bins after they received a leaflet about recycling which was framed either in terms of harm or else in terms of in-group loyalty and respect for authority. They report:

‘we developed tailored persuasive messages that appealed to the individualizing foundations for liberals, based on fairness and avoiding harm to others, and the binding foundation for conservatives, based on duty and an obligation to adhere to authority. We found that these congruent appeals significantly affected consumers’ acquisition, usage, and recycling intentions and behaviors’ (Kidwell et al. 2013).

Further, Wolsko et al. (2016, Experiment 2) found evidence that moral reframing can influence how much people donate to an ‘Environmental Defense Fund’.

Can liberals’ attitudes on typically conservative issues also be changed using a similar ethical framing strategy?

Feinberg & Willer (2015) looked at a typically conservative issue in the US, making English the official language of the United States. They found that liberals’ support for this issue could be increased by moral reframing; in this case, by reframing it in terms of fairness.

For more on moral reframing, see Feinberg et al. (2019)’s review. Scharmer & Snyder (2021, Study 4) explore whether moral reframing can influence environmentally-driven meal choice behaviours.

### 3.2. Aside: Why isn’t moral reframing more widely used?

Feinberg & Willer (2015) asked conservatives to write arguments that would persuade liberals, and conversely. Participants were told they would be ‘entered into a draw for a \$50 bonus’ if their arguments proved effective.

Fewer than 10% of the arguments provided actually fitted with the target morality. Most fitted with the authors’ morality.

Around a third of liberals even wrote arguments attacking conservative morality.

Why are people so bad at moral reframing?

‘Without recognizing that one’s political rivals possess different morals, and without a clear understanding of what those different morals are, using moral reframing becomes impossible’ (Feinberg & Willer 2019, p. 7).

Another (compatible) possibility is intolerance. People are less tolerant of differences in moral than in nonmoral attitudes (Skitka et al. 2005). Perhaps this makes them unwilling to provide arguments that are effective across differences in moral psychology.



### 3.3. Never Trust a Psychologist

I am a fan of Feinberg and Willer but they are sometimes unreliable. Consider:

‘individuals experience their moral convictions as objective truths about the world (Skitka et al., 2005). As a result, it can be difficult to recognize that there are different “truths” that other people believe in (Ditto & Koleva, 2011; Kovacheff et al., 2018). Indeed, polling data indicates that people are apt to perceive someone who does not endorse their morality as simply immoral or evil, rather than morally different (Doherty & Kiley, 2016)’ (Feinberg & Willer 2019, p. 7).

When I read this, I expected to find that the sources they cite provide support for the claims they make. But which of the sources cited do support the claims they make?

Not one:

- Skitka et al., 2005 mentions the claim about objectivity but does not provide evidence for it. Those authors cite Shweder (2002)<sup>3</sup> in support of it, which is a brief opinion piece in a magazine. Skitka et al., 2005 is indirectly relevant because it is about people being less tolerant of differences in moral than in nonmoral attitudes.
- Ditto & Koleva, 2011<sup>4</sup> is a two-page unargued endorsement of Moral Foundations Theory.
- Kovacheff et al., 2018<sup>5</sup> is an interesting review but I couldn’t find anything directly relevant to the claim it is cited in support of. (It’s very long so I may have missed something.)
- Doherty & Kiley, 2016<sup>6</sup> does not support the point about ‘polling data’ at all. This is a reference to a blog post (<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/06/22/key-facts-partisanship/>) which is about about political parties, not

<sup>3</sup> I’m not including these works in the list of references to avoiding giving the impression that they are relevant to this topic.

<sup>4</sup> I’m not including these works in the list of references to avoiding giving the impression that they are relevant to this topic.

<sup>5</sup> I’m not including these works in the list of references to avoiding giving the impression that they are relevant to this topic.

<sup>6</sup> I’m not including these works in the list of references to avoiding giving the impression that they are relevant to this topic.

‘endorsing their morality’. (To make this relevant, you would need a strong premise linking moral psychology and political identity.)

Not all of the sources they cite are even directly relevant to the points they are cited in support of.

My conclusion: Claims made by leading experts in peer-reviewed journals are sometimes unsupported even when citations give the impression that they are based on a rich body of evidence.<sup>7</sup>

## 4. The Argument and Some Objections

Feinberg & Willer (2013)’s brilliant argument for the influence of cultural differences in moral psychology on political conflict over climate change faces some compelling theoretical and empirical objections. If the objections are right, they leave us with a puzzle. If the evidence for cultural variation in moral psychology is at best weak, and if the theoretical argument for moral reframing is flawed, why does moral reframing seem to work?

We have explored Feinberg & Willer’s argument that cultural differences in moral psychology explain political conflict on climate change.

I broke this into five considerations:

1. ‘Moral convictions and the emotions they evoke shape political attitudes’ (see *Do Ethical Attitudes Shape Political Behaviours?* in Lecture 04)
2. There are at least two foundational domains of human morality, including harm and purity. Also, Moral Foundations Theory is true (see *Moral Pluralism: Beyond Harm* in Lecture 04; *Moral Foundations Theory: An Approach to Cultural Variation* in Lecture 04; and *Operationalising Moral Foundations Theory* in Lecture 04)
3. ‘liberals and conservatives possess different moral profiles’ (see *Liberals vs Conservatives* (section `§unresolved xref to unit:lib_vs_con`))
4. ‘liberals express greater levels of environmental concern than do conservatives in part because liberals are more likely to view environmental issues in moral terms’ (see *Moral Psychology Drives Environmental Concern* (section `§unresolved xref to unit:ethics_drives_climate`))

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<sup>7</sup> Imagine how much worse it is for claims made by your lecturer in these lecture notes.

5. ‘exposing conservatives to proenvironmental appeals based on moral concerns that uniquely resonate with them will lead them to view the environment in moral terms and be more supportive of proenvironmental efforts.’ (see *Framing Changes Ethical Attitudes* (section `$unresolved xref to unit:framing_changes_ethical_attitudes`))

At this point you should understand the argument. You should also understand how it aims to support the claim that cultural differences in moral psychology explain political conflict on climate change.

What is a philosopher doing here? On the face of it, the argument is simply a (brilliant) piece of social science. No philosopher needed.

But the argument gives rise to a puzzle. To see the puzzle, first consider some objections.

#### 4.1. Objection 2

This objection to the third of the five points above (‘liberals and conservatives possess different moral profiles’) concerns measurement invariance.

As we have already seen (in *Operationalising Moral Foundations Theory* in Lecture 04), attempts to demonstrate scalar invariance have all or mostly failed; and Iurino & Saucier (2020) even fail to find support for the five-factor model, which casts doubt on whether the original Moral Foundations Questionnaire (MFQ-1) meets requirements for internal validity in all populations.

We are therefore not justified in using the Moral Foundations Questionnaire (MFQ-1) to compare means across different groups. But this is exactly what the claim that ‘liberals and conservatives possess different moral profiles’ requires us to do.

Note that this objection seeks to establish that we do not know Claim 3; it is not an argument that this claim is false.

#### 4.2. Objection 3: Joan-Lars-Joseph

The evidence on cultural variation says socially conservative participants and socially liberal participants tend to regard the care and fairness foundations as having roughly the same moral relevance.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> This point requires some care. Kivikangas et al. (2021, p. 77) find that ‘care and fairness are generally negatively, and loyalty, authority, and sanctity, generally positively related to conservative political orientation.’ But note that, when it comes to harm and fairness, the effect sizes for conservatism and right-orientation are mostly small even in those studies which reliably found an effect at all. (See figures 2 and 3.)

This does not generate the prediction that socially conservative participants will be more likely to view climate issues as ethical issues when linked on one foundation (e.g. purity) than when linked to another foundation (e.g. harm).

Contrast Feinberg & Willer (2019, p. 4):

‘Why does moral reframing work? The primary explanation is that morally reframed messages are influential because targets perceive a “match” between their moral convictions and the argument in favor of the other side’s policy position.’

The Joan-Lars-Joseph objection<sup>9</sup> is this: if we take the claims cultural differences in moral psychology to be true, framing environmental issues in terms of purity should not cause conservatives to perceive more or less of a “match” than framing environmental issues in terms of harm.

This is an objection to the theoretical argument for the fourth claim in the five points above (‘liberals express greater levels of environmental concern than do conservatives in part because liberals are more likely to view environmental issues in moral terms’).

Note that Objections 2 and 3 are complementary: #2 aims to show that we lack evidence that liberals and conservatives differ in their moral psychology; #3 assumes that we have such evidence and aims to show that it does not support the conclusion about moral framing.

#### 4.3. A Puzzle

If the evidence for cultural variation in moral psychology is at best weak (Objections 1 and 2), and if the theoretical argument for moral reframing is flawed (Objection 3), why does moral reframing seem to work?

### 5. The Puzzle of Moral Foundations Theory

If the evidence for cultural variation in moral psychology is at best weak, and if the theoretical argument for moral reframing is flawed, why does moral reframing seem to work? Some evidence suggests that it may work in part because moral reframing makes an argument appear to you to fit better with your moral psychology (Wolsko 2017). Perhaps another part of the answer is that moral reframing provides cues to the source of a message, and people are more influenced by sources they perceive as sharing their political identity (Fielding et al. 2020). And perhaps a further part of the answer is that moral

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<sup>9</sup> Thanks to Joan, Lars and Joseph. (I think they each came up with a version of this objection independently.)

reframing can modulate how fluently people with different political identities can parse a message, and people are more influenced by messages they can parse more fluently. But these speculations about how moral reframing works have yet to be tested directly, and are unlikely to be the whole story. The puzzle remains.

Why does moral reframing work?

According to Feinberg & Willer (2019, p. 4), the ‘primary explanation’ is that moral reframing of an argument influences how well the argument matches (their term) a person’s moral psychology.

But both the evidence and the theoretical basis for this view faces objections (as we saw in *The Argument and Some Objections* (section `$unresolved xref to unit:climate_the_argument_and_objections`)). These objections do not imply that the ‘primary explanation’ is wrong, only that we do not know that it is true. This motivates considering alternative possibilities.

Relatedly, is it possible to explain why moral reframing succeeds without commitment to Moral Foundations Theory?

We will consider three candidate explanations: perceived match, source and fluency.<sup>10</sup>

### 5.1. Perceived Match

Wolsko (2017) provides evidence for the hypothesis that moral reframing works in part because it influences how well the argument matches a person’s moral psychology. Their approach does not rely directly on Moral Foundations Theory and neatly avoids the objections to Feinberg & Willer (2013)’s position considered earlier (see *The Argument and Some Objections* (section `$unresolved xref to unit:climate_the_argument_and_objections`) for these objections).

Wolsko (2017, Experiment 1) directly measured how participants’ perceived the match between their values and the values in the message:

‘Immediately after reading the moral framing manipulation, participants [...] were asked to indicate their level of agreement with a 5-item measure of salient value similarity, including: “The message above contains values that are important to me,” “The message above comes from someone who thinks in a similar way as me,” and “I share similar values with those that are presented in the message above.”’ (Wolsko 2017, p. 287).

<sup>10</sup> Feinberg & Willer (2019, p. 4)’s own view is that, while matching is the most important, all three are relevant to explaining why moral reframing works.

Like Feinberg & Willer (2013, Study 3), Wolsko (2017, Experiment 1) found that moral reframing caused an increase in conservatives' proenvironmental attitudes and a decrease in liberals'.<sup>11</sup> Importantly, this effect was mediated by the degree to which participants' perceived the match between their values and the values in the message. They conclude

‘it is a perceived shift in the personal moral relevance of the message which increases the persuasiveness of these environmental appeals’ (Wolsko 2017, p. 289).

One limit of this study is that it does not involve any manipulation of the source of the message and so cannot distinguish the degree to which a message is perceived to match participants' values from the degree to which participants identify with the source of the message.

## 5.2. Message Source

Perhaps moral reframing is effective in part because it provides cues to the source of a message, and people are more influenced by sources they perceive as sharing their political identity.

Hurst & Stern (2020) provide indirect support for this idea in a study on attitudes to reducing use of fossil fuels. They manipulated both the content and the source of a message. When the content emphasised all five foundations to match socially conservative moral foundations but was identified as originating from a liberal source, it rarely made a difference to conservative participants' environmental attitudes.

Fielding et al. (2020) manipulated only the source of a message and measured the influence of reading the message on participants' support for carbon tax. They found a significant effect of message source. This is evidence that people are more influenced by sources they perceive as sharing their political identity. (Schuldt et al. (2017) provide further, less direct evidence along these lines.)

They offer a bold conjecture on the basis of these results:

‘it is possible that the values framing in past studies worked because it provided conservatives with information about the

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<sup>11</sup> These authors did not find that moral reframing could eliminate the contrast between groups on climate scepticism. (‘The one prominent exception to the moral framing effects observed in the present experiments was on climate change skepticism in Experiment 2. While the common ingroup condition was effective in decreasing skepticism overall, attitudes remained strongly and consistently polarized across conditions’ (Wolsko 2017, p. 293).)

source of the message: when messages aligned with conservative values, Republicans [conservatives] filled in the gaps and simply presumed that the message came from a Republican source' (Fielding et al. 2020, p. 196).

While we do not have evidence sufficient to accept it, this conjecture does underline the importance of distinguishing the effects of perceived match and source in explaining why moral reframing works.

### 5.3. Fluency (optional)

*This is not part of the spoken lecture.*

Kidwell et al. (2013) conjecture that moral reframing may work because it increases the fluency with which messages can be parsed.

Fluency is important for judgements in a range of domains, including familiarity (e.g. Whittlesea 1993; Scott & Dienes 2008), agency (e.g. Sidarus et al. 2017), and surprise (e.g. Reisenzein 2000). Most importantly for us, the perceived fluency with which you process a message can influence how likely you are to hold it true (e.g. Unkelbach 2007). This is thought to be why repeating a message can make people more likely to believe it.<sup>12</sup>

Kidwell et al.'s conjecture is therefore coherent. If framing a message in a way that fits a person's moral psychology can increase the fluency with which they process it, this could explain why moral reframing works.

### 5.4. ... and More?

We have seen that Perceived Match, Source and Fluency provide at least three candidate explanations for why moral reframing works. None rely directly on Moral Foundations Theory, and each avoids the objections considered in *The Argument and Some Objections* (section `§unresolved xref to unit:climate_the_argument_and_objections`).

The candidate explanations are not exclusive: perhaps moral reframing works by way of multiple distinct processes.

To my knowledge, we lack insufficient evidence to conclude that any the explanations we have considered is correct. Perhaps none of them are. And even if they are all correct, these candidate explanations need not be the whole story. Maybe other processes are also needed to explain the success of moral reframing.

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<sup>12</sup> 'the truth effect is mediated by the metacognitive experience of processing fluency' (Dechêne et al. 2009, p. 238).

## 6. Conclusion: Moral Psychology Works

Because moral reframing works, we know that cultural differences in moral psychology are likely to matter for overcoming political conflict. Because the leading theoretical explanation of why moral reframing works faces some interesting objections, we do not yet understand why differences in moral psychology matter.

Do cultural differences in moral psychology explain political conflict on climate change?

We have explored Feinberg & Willer's argument that cultural differences in moral psychology explain political conflict on climate change. (See *The Argument and Some Objections* (section §unresolved xref to unit:climate\_the\_argument\_and\_objections) for a summary linking each the claim to the section which covered it.)

This argument, if it works, would support a positive answer to our question. Not only do cultural differences in moral psychology explain political conflict on climate change: such conflict can be overcome by moral reframing.<sup>13</sup>

We have encountered unresolved objections to some of the claims. One objection concerns whether studies based on Moral Foundations Theory can provide evidence for the third claim that 'liberals and conservatives possess different moral profiles' (see *Operationalising Moral Foundations Theory* in Lecture 04). We also saw an objection to the theoretical justification for the prediction about moral reframing in the fifth claim (see *The Argument and Some Objections* (section §unresolved xref to unit:climate\_the\_argument\_and\_objections)). Perhaps there are good replies to these objections, but we have not yet identified them.

We are therefore left with a puzzle. Why does moral reframing seem to work despite these objections? (See *The Puzzle of Moral Foundations Theory* (section §unresolved xref to unit:mft\_puzzle) for more details.)

## Glossary

**foundation** I am unsure what exactly a moral foundation is; my rough working assumption is that a foundation is an area of concern. The proponents of Moral Foundations Theory are clear on what makes some-

<sup>13</sup> This is one reason why Pogge (2005) on responsibility for global poverty is so interesting. He is attempting to argue in a way that includes only premises even libertarians would accept. Their moral psychology may differ from both liberals' and conservatives' (Iyer et al. 2012). Pogge is not doing this himself (as far as I know), but perhaps his arguments lend themselves to moral reframing.



thing a moral foundation? It is ‘(a) being common in third-party normative judgments, (b) automatic affective evaluations, (c) cultural ubiquity though not necessarily universality, (d) evidence of innate preparedness, and (e) a robust preexisting evolutionary model’ (Atari et al. 2023, p. 1158). 2, 3, 11, 14

**moral conviction** ‘Moral conviction refers to a strong and absolute belief that something is right or wrong, moral or immoral’ (Skitka et al. 2005, p. 896). We take the convictions and beliefs to be attitudes. 9, 10

**Moral Foundations Theory** The theory that moral pluralism is true; moral foundations are innate but also subject to cultural learning, and the Social Intuitionist Model of Moral Judgement is correct (Graham et al. 2019). Proponents often claim, further, that cultural variation in how these innate foundations are woven into ethical abilities can be measured using the Moral Foundations Questionnaire (Graham et al. 2009; Graham et al. 2011). Some empirical objections have been offered (Davis et al. 2016; Davis et al. 2017; Doğruyol et al. 2019). See ?? 5, 9, 10, 13, 15, 16

**moral reframing** ‘A technique in which a position an individual would not normally support is framed in a way that it is consistent with that individual’s moral values. [...] In the political arena, moral reframing involves arguing in favor of a political position that members of a political group would not normally support in terms of moral concerns that the members strongly ascribe to’ (Feinberg & Willer 2019, pp. 2–3). 7, 8, 12–16

**Social Intuitionist Model of Moral Judgement** A model on which intuitive processes are directly responsible for moral judgements (Haidt & Bjorklund 2008). One’s own reasoning does not typically affect one’s own moral judgements, but (outside philosophy, perhaps) is typically used only to provide post-hoc justification after moral judgements are made. Reasoning does affect others’ moral intuitions, and so provides a mechanism for cultural learning. 17

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