

Supplementary Materials

Vignettes, Procedures, and Materials from Study 3

Consensual Cannibalism Vignette

Steve lives in a culture where it is socially acceptable and common practice to consume the flesh of another person, when the person being consumed provides their written consent to be consumed prior to death. Steve's friend gives Steve his written consent to consume part of his dead body after he has died. Steve's friend tells him that Steve should view the act a way of honoring his memory. When Steve's best friend dies of natural causes, Steve cooks and eats part of his friend's dead body in accordance with his friend's consent and wishes. Steve thoroughly cooks the body part so there is no risk of disease.

Counterarguments

You said it was wrong that Steve consumed the flesh of his deceased friend. However, the story shows that Steve's actions were socially acceptable in his culture, Steve's friend gave him his consent, his friend was not physically harmed (i.e., he died of natural causes and was not alive when he was eaten), the act was meant to honor the friend's memory, and there was no risk of disease. Do you still think Steve's actions of eating the flesh of his deceased friend is wrong?

Consensual Incest Vignette

Julie and Mark are brother and sister. They are attracted to each other. One night Julie and Mark are alone and decide to make love. Julie was already taking birth control pills, but Mark uses a condom too, just to be extra safe. They both enjoy it and have no regrets about doing it, though they never do it again. They keep the night a secret between them.

Counterarguments

You said it was wrong that Julie and Mark had sexual intercourse with each other.

However, the story shows that their actions were consensual, they both had no regrets about what they did, there was no risk of pregnancy, the act was conducted in private and was kept private, and they both enjoyed it. Do you still think Julie and Mark's action of having sex with one another is wrong?

Note on Counterarguments

Following Haidt et al. (2000), counterarguments were provided to ensure that participants fully understood the features of the scenario that ruled out concerns that (a) someone was harmed or upset by the act, (b) the act was performed against someone's will (i.e., was non-consensual), and (c) the act indirectly affected people outside the situation.

Additional Instructions

Participants offered their moral judgment after receiving the following instructions:

"We are interested exclusively in your personal opinion about whether [description of the act] is wrong or not wrong in the situation described by the scenario. We are NOT interested in what you think other people in your culture or in another culture think about [the actor's] action."

The purpose of these instructions was to prevent participants from answering merely in terms of whether or not there exists a cultural norm proscribing the act in their culture, and therefore providing a descriptive (as opposed to an evaluative) assessment of the act.

Open-ended Justifications

If participants ruled a second time that the act was impermissible, they were instructed to provide their reason(s) for ruling that the action was wrong. Please contact the authors for more information.

Note on the Short Version of the Consequentialist Thinking Scale (CTS)

At the time Study 3 was conducted the standard 13-item CTS was still under construction. Three items (gossip, assisted suicide, treason) were later added. There were no other differences between the scales.

Scoring of the Cognitive Reflection Test (CRT)

The CRT (Frederick, 2005) is comprised of three math problems with intuitively attractive but incorrect answers. Choosing the attractive but incorrect answer indicates greater reliance on intuition and less reliance on reflective thinking. For example: “A bat and a ball cost \$1.10 in total. The bat costs \$1.00 more than the ball. How much does the ball cost?” The immediate, intuitive response is \$0.10, but the correct answer is \$0.05. Following Shenhav et al. (2011), we scored the CRT in terms of the number of intuitive responses given (e.g., a response “\$0.10”) rather than the number of correct responses given to avoid scoring nonintuitive incorrect responses (e.g., “\$0.15”) as intuitive.

Nationality and Permissibility Judgments

Nationality had no influence over permissibility judgments for the cannibalism case (US=53%; Indian=54%), $\chi^2(1)=.00$, $p=.94$, and only a marginal influence for the incest case (US=38%; Indian=52%), $\chi^2(1)=3.70$, $p=.055$. Since nationality did not reliably affect permissibility judgments, this variable was omitted from further analysis.

Analysis of Moral Emotions

Since the transgressions described within the vignettes involved actions performed consensually and without harm, more disgust was expected than anger towards the perpetrator (see Piazza & Russell, 2012). Indeed, as predicted, across the vignettes, more disgust was reported than anger, repeated-measures $t_s(191) > 3.55$, $p_s < .001$ (Cannibalism: $M_{disgust} = 4.83$ vs. $M_{anger} = 3.55$; Incest: $M_{disgust} = 4.37$ vs. $M_{anger} = 3.69$).

References

- Federick, S. (2005). Cognitive reflection and decision making. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 19, 25-42.
- Haidt, J., Bjorklund, F., & Murphy, S. (2000). *Moral dumbfounding: When intuition finds no reason*. Unpublished manuscript. University of Virginia.
- Piazza, J., & Russell, P. S. (2012). *The role of consent in the experience of moral anger and disgust towards perpetrators and victims*. Manuscript in progress.
- Shenhav, A., Rand, D. G., & Greene, J. (2011). Divine intuition: Cognitive style influences belief in God. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 141, 423-428.