

## SHORT COMMUNICATION

### Cultural relativity of moral precepts

*K. Fatehi*<sup>1</sup>, *K. Teymournejad*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Management and Entrepreneurship Department, Coles College of Business, Kennesaw State University, 560 Parliament Garden Way, Kennesaw, GA 30144-8599, U.S.A.*

<sup>2</sup>*College of Management, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Azadi Street, Tehran, Iran*

Received 15 March 2016; revised 7 May 2016; accepted 29 June 2016; available online 1 July 2016

**ABSTRACT:** The foundation of most intellectual discourse is Western-centric to the exclusion of other views. This includes ideal patterns of social interaction, preference for aesthetic, accepted norms and values, and the concepts of dignity, respectability, morality and ethics. Such a position is culturally myopic. Western cultural influence colors all of them including moral precepts. The assumption is that Western-centric moral precepts are universally followed. This paper explores these concepts and discusses the dominance of Western-centric point of view in moral precepts. It describes how non-Western-centric views are different and argues that understanding non-Western-centric concepts is a useful undertaking that could expand our horizons.

**KEYWORDS:** *Culture and morals; Moral precepts; Western-centric views of morals*

## INTRODUCTION

Logical discourse is the foundation of any intellectual undertaking. Often, such a task assumes Western-centric view which is based on Aristotelian logic to the exclusion of others. Such an assumption is imbedded in various aspects of Western thinking and attitudes, including ideal patterns of social interaction, preference for aesthetic, accepted norms and values, and the concepts of dignity, respectability, and morality. It views non-Western-centric concepts as not worthy of consideration. In addition, it is based on the dominance of individualism and prevalence of intra-cultural homogeneity. This position is western ethnocentrism and myopic. Understanding other cultural position and views on moral precepts is an intellectual imperative. We will explore them in the following.

This paper is divided into the following sections. First, from Western-centric view a discussion of various facets

of ethics and morality is presented. Next, variations of cultural aspects of judgment and decision making are discussed. Then the issue of intra-cultural and inter-cultural heterogeneity, or Mindscapes (Maruyama *et al.*, 1980) are elaborated upon, and their influence on moral precepts are explored. Conclusion and implications form the last section.

### *Western Centric Philosophical Basis of Moral Concepts*

In Western-centric line of thinking, the discussion of morality and ethics inevitably brings forth the suggestion that certain principles should be followed. These principles are enshrined in codes of conducts from the time of early Western civilization. These codes have been the philosophical basis for sorting out 'rights' from 'wrongs'. They are usually summarized under the banners of three doctrines, the utilitarian approach, the moral-rights approach, and the justice approach (Fritzsche and Becker, 1984; Premeaux, 2004; 2009).

✉ \*Corresponding Author Email: [kfatehi@kennesaw.edu](mailto:kfatehi@kennesaw.edu)

Tel.: +1 470 578 6785 Fax: +1 470 578 9021

Note: An earlier version of this paper was presented at the American Society for Competitiveness conference, Washington, D.C., Oct. 2016

Regardless of which approach followed, it implies that the decision maker should abide by a certain immutable standard.

The utilitarian approach is guided by the end result that should have the greatest good for the greatest number of people. In a utilitarian approach to management, for example, superiors go through “cost-benefit” analysis that might indicate, in the short run laying-off some of the employees could improve profitability of the firm and gains to stockholder, and in the long run might enable the firm to continue offering employment opportunities to many.

The moral-rights approach respects fundamental rights shared by everyone. Ethical behavior in this approach is guided by respect for the fundamental rights of all human beings. The U.S. Constitution’s Bill of Rights is a good example of this principle. This approach would consider it unethical to deny people the right to liberty, health and safety, and privacy.

With the justice approach the ethical behavior is guided by the respect and the application of impartial standard of fairness and equity. Such an approach treat all the same regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, and the likes.

The notion that people follow these codes and perspectives presupposes the homogeneity of mentality, beliefs, values, preferences etc. among people of cultures. The foundation of the above argument is an assumption of intra-cultural homogeneity and universally accepted framework regarding ethics and morality. There is ample evidence, however, to the contrary that there are heterogeneity in mentality and logic within and between cultures (e.g. Fatehi *et al.*, 2015; Maruyama *et al.*, 1980; McSweeney, 2002). The same diversity would be applicable to ethical precepts. Also, it assume that the decision maker, in all situations, abide by certain immutable standards that are fundamentally individualistic and abstractly Aristotelian.

#### *Cultural Basis of Ethical/Moral Judgment*

The ethical and moral codes are constructed with the implicit assumption of intra-cultural homogeneity. Additionally, its foundation is mostly Western thinking, and Aristotelian logic. The first assumption is not necessarily valid (McSweeney, 2002; 2009; 2013), and the second is exclusionary thinking (Korzybski, 1958) as there are other forms of logic. Aristotelian logic is a two-valued system of logic [to be or not to be]. There

are, however, other systems of logic that are based on three or more values (Gunther, 2015; Wikipedia, 2015). The discussion on non-Aristotelian logic is beyond the scope of this paper and could be the subject of another discourse. But, in the following, cultural issues and their influence on moral-ethical precepts are analyzed.

Most cross-cultural research is implicitly based on intra-cultural homogeneity. These studies have applied a number of cultural characteristics to compare and contrast cultures. The most popular stream of this line of research has followed the path established by Hofstede and Hofstede (2001) who proposed that cultures could be studied using four dimensions of individualism-collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and gender role differentiation or femininity-masculinity. Later on, a fifth dimension, inter-generational time orientation, was added to this list (Hofstede and Bond, 1988).

In particular, individualism-collectivism dimension is more germane to our discussion. Western-centric view of cultural precepts is dominated by the assumption of individualistic culture.

Individualism is the culture’s emphasis on personal identity. It encourages self-serving behaviors. In individualistic cultures, it is expected that individuals primarily look after their own interest. Therefore, individualistic cultures are loosely integrated. Unlike individualistics, collectivist cultures emphasize groups (e.g., family, neighborhood, organizations, and the country), not the individuals. In a collectivist society, the interests and goals of the individuals are subordinate to those of the group (Triandis *et al.*, 1988). Individuals seek fulfillment and happiness in the harmony of the group. Groups provide security to members, and protect their interests in exchange for their complete loyalty (Hofstede, 1984).

People of individualistic cultures rely on personal judgment, while collectivists value collective judgment and emphasize harmony between people. According to Nisbet (2003) Americans regard personalities as relatively fixed, while Asians regard them as more malleable.

Therefore, moral judgment would vary among individualistic and collectivist cultures. The daily activities of people of collectivist cultures demonstrates their interdependence. They live in close proximity to each other and synchronize their play, work and activities, while individualistic people tend to do

“their own thing” separately (Anderson, 1988). Interdependence and socially prescribed interpersonal relationships are reflected in the way collectivist people value certain behavior and the motivation for taking certain actions. Consider, for example, the implications of cognitive consistency for individualist and collectivist persons. Cognitive inconsistency creates dissonance (Festinger, 1957), an unpleasant anxiety producing, a psychological state that motivates the individual to take actions. Cognitive dissonance is different in an independent self, versus an interdependent self. Take the case of a person who smokes cigarettes and believes that smoking is detrimental to his or her health. In this example, the individual can pursue a number of alternatives to eliminate the dissonance, including giving up smoking. An interdependent self whose internal attributes are more flexible is less likely to quit smoking as long as his or her reference group smokes. For this individual, the confirmation for self-harm comes from the group. In this case, the situational requirements regulate the private feelings of interdependent person. Therefore, there is less room for experiencing inconsistency and dissonance for such a person.

Consider another aspect of personal choice. Because compliance with norms is central to collectivists, they may suppress emotional displays that are contrary to the group expectations. Conversely, since individual freedom is of paramount value in individualistic cultures, they encourage self-expression and personal judgment. In collectivist cultures most of the norms governing interpersonal relationships are determined by the larger collective, the society, while in individualistic cultures individuals personally bear this responsibility. In individualistic cultures, personal values are the basis of most decisions, including intimate relationships. Collectivists are just the opposite. Arranged marriages, for example, are not uncommon in some collectivist societies (Gannon, 2004).

#### *Differing Perspectives of the ‘Person’*

To fully comprehend the difference between individualistic people and collectivists, we need to explore the concept of ‘individualism’ from the personal aspect of ‘self.’ The concept of ‘self’ has many facets. Westerners view the individual as a self-contained, autonomous, and independent entity. Based on this understanding, the individual comprises a unique

configuration of attributes such as traits, abilities, motives, and values. These attributes are the basis for the individual’s behavior (Sampson, 1989).

For most Westerners, ‘self’ is impermeable, free agent, independent of circumstances or particular relationship, who can move from group to group and situation to situation without significant alteration. In effect, ‘self’ can be abstracted from its surroundings. For the Easterners (and many other people), the person is connected, fluid, and conditional. The person exists in a web of relationships, such as the family and society. The person is mostly identified in terms of these relationships and purely independent behavior is impossible. In Chinese language, for example, there is no equivalent term for the word individualism. An American may describe himself/herself as “fun loving and hardworking person”, a Japanese, a Chinese or a Korean may say I am “fun loving with my friends”, or “I am serious at work”, which puts the person in relation to others and in a context (Nisbet, 2003).

Westerners have an isolationist concept of the “person.” To them, an individual is a person standing alone and clearly separate from his or her environment. Such a concept of an individual is alien to collectivists. In the Japanese language, for example, there is no equivalent term for the English word “I,” denoting a person separate from the surroundings in all situations. For Japanese, individuals exist only in relation to others. The individual is a node of interrelations with others around him/her. Each has a special way and meaning in relating with others, which becomes his/her individuality. Without such relations, there is no individuality (Maruyama, 1989). Different terms are used to distinguish between these various individualities that identify the person-situational relationships. The “I” of teacher-student, or a superior-subordinate situation (Watakushi, for male or female), for example, is different from the “I” of parent-child or sibling relationships (Watashi or Ore, a female or male about 14 years or older; Atashi or Boku, a girl or a boy under 14 years).

Many Westerners, including Americans, believe in inherent separateness of distinct persons. It is the norm, and people are expected to become independent from others, and discover and express their unique attributes. In contrast to the Western view, many Eastern cultures have maintained an interdependent view of ‘self’. These cultures believe in the fundamental connectedness of humans to each other. An

interdependent 'self' is not separate from the social context. It is more connected to and less differentiated from others. Such a connectedness motivates people to fit and to become a part of the social context and to fulfill the obligation of belongingness with relevant others. As [Hernandez and Iyengar \(2001\)](#) put it, the crucial point for such a person is not inner self but rather the relationships the person has with others. Experiencing interdependence entails seeing self as a part of an encompassing social relationships. Therefore, interdependent persons are more motivated by the contexts that allow them to perceive themselves fitting in with a social group, which in turn enabling them to enhance their relationships with others.

The internal attributes of an interdependent self are less fixed and concrete and more situation specific, and are sometimes elusive and unreliable. In such a case, the attitudes will not directly regulate overt behavior, especially if the behavior implicates significant others. In many social contexts, the interdependent self must constantly control and regulate his or her opinion, abilities, and characteristics to come to terms with the primary task of interdependence. In an interdependent collectivist culture, an independent behavior such as expressing an opinion is likely to be influenced and somewhat determined by the forces of interdependence. Such behavior has a different significance than the one exhibited by an independent self in an independent culture ([Markus and Kitayama, 1991](#)). The contrast between the internal source of what Westerners consider inner attributes, such as conscience, and an external source of such attributes for the Japanese is described by [Dore \(2013, p. 385\)](#):

“The Christian who believes that his conscience is the voice of God within him feels that it is a duty to God to obey its dictates and that he has sinned in the sight of the Lord if he fails to do so. The Japanese who conceives of the voice of his conscience as the voice of his parents and teachers feels it to be a duty towards them to obey it, and if he fails to do so it is they whom he has let down. Even after their death his feelings of guilt may take the form of imagining how displeased these honored parents and teachers would be ...”

Research findings suggest, for example, that there is a difference between the way Americans and Japanese perceive causation ([Diener et al., 2003](#); [Nakamura, 1964](#); [Tusunoda, 1975](#); [1979](#); [Masuda and Nisbett, 2001](#)). As [Nisbet \(2003\)](#) stated “two different

approaches to the world have maintained themselves for thousands of years. These approaches include profoundly different social relations, views about the nature of world, and characteristic thought processes [and we can add judgment and morality issues]. Each of these orientations—the Western and the Eastern— is a self-reinforcing, homeostatic system. The social practices promote the world-views; the world-views dictate the appropriate thought processes; and the thought processes both justify the world-views and support the social practices”.

Western cognitive model, such as Americans, is logical, sequential, and it is based on the abstract concept of universal reality. Aristotelian logic is an underlining fabric holding it all together. Japanese cognition is based on concrete perception that relies on senses data, emphasizes the particular rather than universal, reality is not abstract, and has a high sensitivity to environmental context and relationships. The abstract concepts used by Americans to explain various behavior, including moral actions, and decision making, are not well defined in the Japanese language ([Doktor, 1983](#)).

Western cultures, and particularly the American culture, place a high value and priority on rational, objective, and factual information in support of most decisions. North Americans, and other Western nations assume the existence of an “objective” truth. Errors are considered to be the source of differences. Quite often, people attempt to reach an understanding by discarding areas of disagreements and building on the areas on which they agree. Japanese, however, try to include multiple views and build on variations. This is similar to the variation between the two different images of the same object. A three-dimensional view is due to the differences between the two images. Discarding the variations between the two images results in a two-dimensional, flat object. For the Japanese the objective truth of Aristotelian logic is a foreign concept, which does not have an exact equivalence in Japanese and therefore does not make sense. The translation of the term “objectivity” into Japanese does not quite match the meaning implied by it in the English language. The Japanese translation for the foreign word “objectivity” is *kyakkanteki*, which means the guest’s point of view, and subjectivity is *shukanteki*, meaning the host’s point of view ([Maruyama, 1980](#); [Pattee, 2012](#)).

There are fundamental differences between the way Westerner and Easterners view the world. Westerners pay more attention to objects, while Easterners focus

more on the overall surroundings. Consequently, Easterners are more likely to detect relationships among events than Westerners. Westerners believe more than Easterners in the ability to control the environment and see the world as composed of objects, while Easterners see the world as composed of substances. This leads to the Westerners method of organizing by categorizing the objects, and Easterners emphasizing the relationships. Because of Easterners' heightened perception of the environment, they attribute causality more to the context, and tend to resolve contradiction and conflict by seeking a middle option between two positions. Westerners on the other hand, rely more on logical rules and in resolving contradiction insist on the correctness of one side (Nisbet, 2003).

Most Westerners insist on the validity of personal judgment, using principles of morality. Therefore, it is not a complement to call someone a conformist. Conformity, however, is translated into the Japanese as "sharp perception of the situation, unique sense of adaptation with reality, quick orientation and reaction to cope with various situations, responding to the needs of the overall situation." "Conformity" to the Japanese, using their own standards of desirability in judging behavior, implies something desirable because it involves understanding others and the ability to comprehend situations from their viewpoints. It seems that the Japanese sense of conformity more closely corresponds to the "flexibility" of the Americans (Maruyama, 1980).

The differing views of an individual produce divergent concepts of organizational relationships. In countries with an isolationistic-atomistic view of the individual, such as the United States, an individual is expected to perform most functions with clearly defined responsibilities. The individual's participation in the society is based on a clear demarcation of each person's performance and the importance of the individual's contribution, holding individuals accountable for their actions. This is not consistent with the "Japanese vagueness of individual responsibility, the idea of joint group responsibility, and the strong sense of responsibility toward the small, close group" (Iwata, 1982, p. 5). Similarly, the Chinese philosophy of individual rights could be regarded as one's share of the rights of the community as a whole, not a license to do as one pleases (Nisbet, 2003).

Americans believe that people are the masters of their own destiny. Therefore, individual judgment is

the basis of most decisions. They believe that individuals have a considerable choice in what happens to them and around them. Americans take pride in doing everything by themselves without help from others, and have a very strong sense of independence. The concept of self-determination has a counterpart of individual responsibility. Individuals are held responsible for their deeds. The limits of each person's responsibilities are clearly defined.

The American concept of the individual as an independent, self-sufficient, self-reliant, and hard-working person who should be held responsible for the outcomes has been an anchor around which other social values were constructed. Various cultures have different views of the individual and ecological relations. In some cultures, the concept of the individual as a lone entity all by itself and separate from the surrounding milieu does not have much appeal. Japanese, Middle Eastern, and Southeast Asian cultures have a different concept of the individual responsibility.

In Japan, there is little awareness of "individual responsibility." The scope of individual responsibility is very small and obscure. Instead, the responsibility is to the group. As a corollary, there is an exceptionally strong presence of "solidarity of responsibility" among members of a family, a work group, and other social organizations. The solidarity of responsibility is a given. Willingly or not, membership in a group puts a person in the position of assuming joint responsibility. This joint responsibility creates "responsibility of the stronger." "When the weaker element in the group is in trouble or placed in an awkward situation, it is considered natural in Japan that he or she seek succour, and that the 'stronger' will be considered as being 'irresponsible' should he not respond to and take appropriate measures" (Iwata, 1982).

Interdependent cultures assume that a person is mostly defined by situations and by the presence of others. Therefore, a person is inseparable from the situations of others. This interconnectedness, for example, is the basis for the Chinese culture's emphasis on synthesizing the constituent parts of any situation or problem into a harmonious whole. The Japanese word *jibun*, for self, more accurately describes "one's share of the shared life space." (Markus and Kitayama, 1991), or "my portion" (Nisbet, 2003). For the Japanese, according to Esyun *et al.* (1985): "a sense of identification with others (sometimes including conflict)

pre-exists and selfness is confirmed only through interpersonal relationships....Selfness is not constant like the ego but denotes a fluid concept which changes through time and situation according to interpersonal relationships.”

In contrast to independent cultures, in interdependent cultures the relationships are often valued for and by themselves, not as a means of achieving personal objectives. People are constantly aware of the others and will try to account for the others’ goals and desires in the pursuit of their personal goals. A reciprocity arrangement exists within which people passively monitor their contributions to others’ goals and vice versa. The importance of others to one’s life and the resultant relationships and social obligations are limited to persons of “in-groups,” such as family members or members of social or work groups. The following excerpt from Dore (2013, p. 389) illuminates the issue.

“...the individual surrenders a part of himself not to a group of which he is a member, but to particular individuals whose leadership he accepts, with whose fortunes he identifies himself, on whose help he depends for securing his own advancement or happiness, on whose goodwill he depends for his emotional security, and whose approval he depends for his self-respect.”

We can summarize the influence of variations in perceiving “self” as dependent or interdependent, and individualistic or collectivist attitudes on moral-ethical judgment. Individualists and independent view encourages personal choice of various moral-ethical precepts, while collectivists and interdependent view differs such judgments to the collective. As Kaushal and Kwantes (2006) reported individualism and collectivism influence conflict resolution behavior differently. American preferred mode of conflict resolution tend to be a dominating style while Easterners such as Japanese, Koreans, or Chinese tend choose obliging and avoiding style. ... culture does play a role in determining a person’s choice of conflict resolution strategy” (p.597).

Perspective Variations on Moral/Ethical Judgment Western-centric discussion on morals and ethics assumes homogeneity in selecting various moral strategies. Two separate line of research, while not directly acknowledging the influence of cultural factors and their role in the formation of moral precepts, indirectly deal with it. These two, not necessarily in

any particular order are the works of Forsyth (1980), Maruyama *et al.* (1980) and Maruyama (1989-2007). Without delving into a discussion of cultural influence on judgment but recognizing that there are different views in consideration of every issue, Forsyth (1980) proposed the role of various perspectives in judging most situations. These views suggest various degrees of idealism and four ethical perspectives of situationism, absolutism, subjectivism, and exceptionism. Situationism, considers a contextual analysis of morally questionable actions, and acknowledges that each situation could warrant different action. Absolutism, applies inviolate, universal moral principles to formulate moral judgments. It assumes the validity of moral codes regardless of environmental variations. Subjectivism, suggests that moral judgments should depend, above all, on one’s own personal values. Exceptionism, proposes that sometimes exceptions must be made to moral absolutes.

Forsyth (1980) view takes into account differing perspective in moral judgment. This is similar to the Mindscape Theory and its consideration of intra-cultural and transcultural heterogeneity (Maruyama, 1994a; 1994b).

Maruyama proposed Mindscape Theory that elaborates on individual differences within and between cultures. From 1960 through 2007, he advanced the position that below the surface of homogenous cultures, there are various types of mentality, logic, and values among individuals that he called “Mindscapes” (Maruyama, 1960; Maruyama *et al.*, 1980; Maruyama 1989-2007). Fatehi and Tate (2014) by elaborating on the concept of Mindscape, described the salient aspects of Mindscape as: (a) Individual heterogeneity exists in each culture, (b) Any individual type found in a culture can be found in other cultures, (c) cultural differences consist in the way that some type becomes dominant and suppresses, transforms, ignores or utilizes non-dominant types..

According to Maruyama, notwithstanding the dominant national or cultural stereotype, all cultures include various mindscape types (Maruyama, 1995). One type, however, becomes dominant, therefore, cultural stereotypes. For personal benefits, convenience, and expedience, the non-dominant individual logical types are transformed, hidden or camouflaged in favor of the dominant type. Individuals for survival purposes and for the sake of fitting into the society, develop various strategies. These

strategies could include avoiding the mainstream dominant type by finding a niche, disguising one's own type, and switching back and forth between one's own and the dominant type in private and public life. In some cases, people may choose reversible repression of their own type, becoming a reformer, a rebel, or a trouble-maker. In the worst cases, they drop out or emigrate (Maruyama, 1992a; 1992b; 1994a; 1995; 1999).

While here are many Mindscape types, four major types of H, I, S, and G are more common in most cultures. About one-third of North Americans, for example, belong to H-type. I, S, and G types, and mixtures of them make up another third. The rest belong to types that are different than these four types and their mixtures (Maruyama, 1995). Venaik and Midgley (2015) considered H-type and I-type as more self-enhancement, and S-type and G-type as more self-transcendence. The salient characteristics of the four types are explained below.

We should mention that three of these types are identical to those that were independently identified by Harvey (1966). From extensive empirical research and statistical analysis he deduced these types or systems, which he called various level of concreteness-abstractness. According to him these systems evolve in individuals through experience and socialization process. Fatehi and Tate (2014) have offered a detailed discussion of these systems and their relations with Maruyama's mindscape.

H stands for "hierarchy and homogeneity". I stands for "isolationism, individualism, and independence". S stands for "stabilizing". G stands for "generating". The H type predominates in cultures that emphasize order, procedure and method. This type is classifying, competitive, zero-sum, sequential, and has the tendencies to honor hierarchy, rules, formalization, control, homogenization, intolerance of variety, functional interest in activities, competitive, zero-sum, and classifying. The I type might be considered typical of "alternative" modes of behavior and idiosyncratic attitudes to work, especially among creative individuals and artists. The S type might be considered typical of recreational and "partying" modes of behavior in which inter-activity is primary. Characteristics of the G type are heterogeneization, pattern developing, spontaneity, poly-ocular vision, positive-sum, growth amplifying, and harmonizing. The G type can be considered inspirational mode (Gammack, 2002). An H-type person,

being homogenistic, perceives in terms of categories and stereotypes, find beauty in symmetry and repetition of the same forms, believes in the existence of one truth, regards homogeneity as the basis of peace, and heterogeneity as the source of conflict. H-type persons' concept of personal integrity consists in adhering to absolute principles regardless of situations. Since H-type persons believe that all civilizations take the same path of development, if two cultures are different, one of them is more advanced and the other is more primitive.

In contrast, an I-type person perceives everything as unique and unrelated, finds beauty in caprice and random surprise, regards isolation as the basis of peace, and interaction as the source of mutual harm. For I-type persons, the concept of personal integrity consists adhering to one's own principles regardless of what others say or think.

For S-type and G-type persons, interactive heterogeneity is the basic principles of the universe, heterogeneity enables cooperation and mutual help, while homogeneity fosters competition and conflict. They find beauty in non-redundant (non-repetitious) complexity of interaction among heterogeneous elements (Maruyama, 1980). For S-type and G-type persons, personal integrity is a behavior that reflects social context and situation. The difference between S-type and G-types persons is that the former strive for stable harmony, while the later endeavor to invent new patterns of interaction including new elements and new situations, to generate new mutual benefit.

Needless to say, from the point of view of H-type and I-type persons, the personal integrity of S-type and G-type is unethical, while from the point of view of S-type and G-type persons, the personal integrity of H-type and I-type is unethical.

The ethical precepts that from the view point of the four Mindscape types are summarized in Table 1.

It appears that three of the mindscape types have a very close resemblance to the three of the four perspectives suggested by Forsyth (1980).

The hierarchical 'H' type considers personal integrity as adherence to absolute principle disregarding situational conditions. This is no different than 'absolutism' of Forsyth (1980) that assumes the validity of moral codes regardless of contextual conditions. 'Subjectivism' perspective that considers own personal values as the basis for moral judgment is similar to the isolationist 'I' mindscape type where

Table 1: Ethical precepts of mindscape types

Type			
H	I	S	G
Hierarchical	Isolationist	Interactive	
The stronger should dominate the weaker	Everybody should be self-sufficient	Differences are desirable and mutually beneficial. Sameness creates competition and conflict.	
Lead or follow	Do it yourself	Interact with different people to do things	
The stronger should dominate. Superior should rule.	Being poor is a person's own fault.	Differences are desirable and mutually beneficial. Sameness creates competition and conflict.	
Dealing with others is a zero-sum game.	Do your own thing, dealing with others is a negative-sum game.	Social interaction is a positive-sum game.	
Personal integrity is adherence of absolute principle and disregard situational conditions.	Personal integrity is adherence to personal principles regardless of others opinions.	Personal integrity is acknowledging social situation and context.	Personal integrity is new ways of behavior which generate mutual benefit in a new way.

personal integrity is reliance on personal principles, and where self-sufficiency is highly regarded by doing 'own thing'.

'Situationism' where each situation is considered by its merits that could warrant different action could be thought as similar to the 'S' mindscape type where personal integrity is acknowledging social situation and context before passing any moral judgment.

The fourth mindscape type 'G' and exceptionsim perspective of Forsyth (1980) are not easily reconciled. But three similarities between the positions advocated by Maruyama and Forsyth provides sufficient reason to suggest that cultural variations could be a basis for discussion and analysis of moral precepts as suggested by the writings of these two scholars.

## CONCLUSION

Many times, ethical/moral arguments are presented without considering variations due to cultural influence. It is assumed that Western moral precepts are shared intact universally. Very seldom non-Western-centric concepts are acknowledged. This paper attempted to fill this gap and discussed the difference between Eastern and Western, individualistic and collectivist

view of moral precepts. It explored the ramification of individualistic-atomistic and isolationist attitudes toward moral-ethical precepts and contrasted that with Eastern perspectives. It explained that in contrast to Western view, Easterners representing collectivist attitudes consider individuals as interdependent entities who individually would not make any judgment in conflict with such interdependency. These are totally two different positions that should be understood better.

In all of this, the writings of Forsyth (1980) and Maruyama *et al.* (1980) are exception. It appears that the two positions offered by Forsyth (1980) and Maruyama *et al.* (1980) are very compatible. Acknowledging the benefit of poly-ocularity, we suggest future discussion of moral-ethical precepts could explore non-Western-centric views and practical ramification of them in daily life fully.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors gratefully acknowledge the anonymous reviewers for the valuable comments and suggestions they provided during the review process.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript.

## REFERENCES

- Anderson, P., (1988). Explaining Intercultural Differences in Nonverbal Communication. In L. A. Samovar and R. E. Porter (eds.), *Intercultural Communication: A Reader*, 5<sup>th</sup> edn., pp. 272-281.
- Diener, E.; Oishi, S.; Lucas, R.E., (2003). Personality, culture, and subjective well-being: Emotional and cognitive evaluations of life. *Annu. Rev. Psychol.*, 54(1): 403-425 (23 pages).
- Dore, R.P., (2013). *City life in Japan*. Routledge.
- Doktor, R., (1983). Some tentative comments on Japanese and American decision making. *Decision Sci.*, 14 (4): 607-612 (6 pages).
- Esyun, H.; Shumpei, K.; Creighton, M.R., (1985). A contextual model of the Japanese: Toward a methodological innovation in Japan studies. *J. Jpn. Stud.*, 11(2): 289-321 (33 pages).
- Fatehi, K.; Kedia, B. L.; Priestley, J.L., (2015). Mindscapes and individual heterogeneity within and between cultures. *J. Bus. Res.*, 68(2): 291-298 (8 pages).
- Fatehi, K.; Tate, U. S., (2014). A psychological perspective on cultural difference: Epistemological heterogeneity and individual heterogeneity across cultures. *Eur. Sci. J.*, 10(8): 267-286 (20 pages).
- Festinger, (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Palo Alto, University of California Press, CA.
- Forsyth, D. R., (1980). A taxonomy of ethical ideologies. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.*, 39(1): 175-184 (10 pages).
- Fritzsche, D.J.; Becker, H., (1984). Linking management behavior to ethical philosophy—An empirical investigation. *Acad. Manage. J.*, 27(1): 166-175 (10 pages).
- Gammack, J., (2002). Mindscape and internet-mediated communication. *J. Computer-Mediated Commun.*, 7(3): 1-19 (19 pages).
- Gannon, M. J., (2004). *Understanding global cultures: Metaphorical journeys through 28 nations, clusters of nations, and continents*. Sage, pp. 47-67
- Gunther, G., (2015). Aristotelian and non-Aristotelian logic, Available at: [http://www.vordenker.de/gunther\\_web/aristotelian.html](http://www.vordenker.de/gunther_web/aristotelian.html), (Accessed 9 March, 2016).
- Harvey, O.J., (1966). System structure, flexibility and creativity, In O.J. Harvey (ed.), *Experience structure & adaptability*, Springer Publishing Company, New York, pp. 39-65.
- Hernandez, M.; Iyengar, S. S., (2001). What drives whom? A cultural perspective on human agency. *Soc. Cognition*, 19(3): 269-294 (26 pages).
- Hofstede, G., (1984). Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values, Vol. 5, sage, p. 390
- Hofstede, G.H.; Hofstede, G., (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions and organizations across nations*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Hofstede, G.; Bond, M.H., (1988). The Confucius connection: From cultural roots to economic growth. *Organ. Dyn.*, 16(4): 5-21 (17 pages).
- Iwata, R., (1982). *Japanese-style management: Its foundations and prospects*. Quality Resources.
- Kaushal, R.; Kwantes, C.T., (2006). The role of culture and personality in choice of conflict management strategy. *Int. J. Intercult. Rel.*, 30(5): 579-603 (25 pages).
- Korzybski, A., (1958). *Science and sanity: An introduction to non-Aristotelian systems and general semantics*. Institute of General Semantics.
- Markus, H. R.; Kitayama, S., (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychol. Rev.*, 98(2): 224-253 (30 pages).
- Maruyama, M., (1960). Morphogenesis and morphostasis. *Methodos*, 12(48): 251-296 (46 pages).
- Maruyama, M.; Beals, K.L.; Bharati, A.; Fuchs, H.; Gardner, P.M.; Guilmet, G.M.; Hahn, R.A.; Kamau, L.J.; Kronenfeld, D.B.; Kursh, C.O.; Meeker, J.W., (1980). Mindscapes and Science Theories [and Comments and Reply]. *Curr. Anthropol.*, 21(5): 589-608 (20 pages).
- Maruyama, M., (1989). Epistemological Sources of New Business Problems in the International Environment. *Hum. Syst. Manage.*, 8(1): 71-80 (10 pages).
- Maruyama, M., (1992a). Anti-monopoly law to prevent dominance by one theory in academic departments. *Hum. Syst. Manage.*, 11(4): 219-220 (2 pages).
- Maruyama, M., (1992b). Changing dimensions in international business. *Acad. Manage. Exec.*, 6 (3): 88-96 (9 pages).
- Maruyama, M., (1994a). *Mindscape in management*. Aldershot, Dartmouth Publishing Company, England.
- Maruyama, M. (1994b). Psychological tests for epistemological heterogeneity across cultures. *Commun. Cogn.*, 27(4): 277-396 (120 pages).
- Maruyama, M., (1995). Individual epistemological heterogeneity across cultures and its use in organizations. *Cybernetica 1995*; 37(3): 215-249 (35 pages).
- Maruyama, M., (1999). Self-heterogeneity and cultural milieu selection: Two new directions in counseling, in Pederson, P. (ed.), *Multiculturalism as a fourth force*, Brunner/Mazel (Taylor and Francis), Philadelphia.
- Maruyama, M., (2002). How to generate cultural and philosophical goals ahead of technology. *Futures Res. Quart.*, 18(1): 5-32 (28 pages).
- Maruyama, M. (2007). Extension of Sartre's philosophy for today's world situation. *Int. Rev. Soc.*, 17(3): 429-441 (13 pages).
- Masuda, T.; Nisbett, R.E., (2001). Attending holistically versus analytically: comparing the context sensitivity of Japanese and Americans. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.*, 81(5): 922-934 (13 pages).
- McSweeney, B., (2002). Hofstede's model of national cultural differences and their consequences: A triumph of faith- a failure of analysis. *Hum. Relat.*, 55(1): 89-118 (30 pages).
- McSweeney, B., (2009). Dynamic diversity: variety and variation within countries. *Organ. Stud.*, 30(9): 933-957 (25 pages).
- McSweeney, B., (2013). Fashion founded on a flaw: the ecological mono-deterministic fallacy of Hofstede, GLOBE, and followers. *Int. Market. Rev.*, 30(5): 483-504 (22 pages).
- Nakamura, H., (1964). *Ways of Thinking of Eastern People*, Honolulu, East-West Center Press, HI.
- Neisser, U. (1988). Five kinds of self knowledge. *Philos. Psychol.*, 1(1): 35-59 (25 pages).
- Nisbet, R.E., (2003). *The geography of thought*. N. Brealey Publishing, London.

- Pattee, H.H., (2012). Evolving self-reference: matter, symbols, and semantic closure. In *law, language and life*. pp. 211-226. Springer Netherlands.
- Premeaux, S. R., (2004). The current link between management behavior and ethical philosophy. *J. Bus. Ethics*, 51(3): 269-278 (**10 pages**).
- Premeaux, S., (2009). The link between management behavior and ethical philosophy in the wake of the Enron convictions. *J. Bus. Ethics*, 85(1): 13-25 (**13 pages**).
- Sampson, E.E., (1989). The challenge of social change for psychology: Globalization and psychology's theory of the person. *Am. Psychol.*, 44(6): 914-921 (**8 pages**).
- Triandis, H. C.; Comtempo, R.; Villareal, M. J., (1988). Individualism-collectivism: Cross-cultural perspectives on self-grouping relationships. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.*, 54: 323-338 (**16 pages**).
- Tusunoda, T., (1975). The differences of recognition mechanism toward natural sounds between Japanese and Westerners. *Medicine and Biology*, 88: 309-314 (**6 pages**).
- Tusunoda, T., (1979). Difference in the mechanism of emotion in Japanese and Westerners. *Psychother. Psychosom.*, 31(1-4): 367-372 (**6 pages**).
- Venaik, S.; Midgley, D.F., (2015). Mindscapes across landscapes: Archetypes of transnational and subnational culture. *J. Int. Bus. Stud.*, 46(9): 1051-1079 (**30 pages**).
- Wikipedia, (2015). Talk: non-aristotelian logic, Available at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk%3ANon-Aristotelian\\_logic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk%3ANon-Aristotelian_logic), (Accessed 9 March, 2016).