

Video Abstract - Introduction to Self, Motivation and Virtue Studies

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Hello, Nancy Snow and I are the editors of this special issue of papers that emerged from teams of interdisciplinary researchers, social scientists and philosophers, who were supported under the auspices of the Self, Motivation and Virtue Project (funded by Templeton Religion Trust). The aim of SMV was to stimulate research into those topics with sustained and serious interdisciplinary energy. Teams used the cross-fertilization of social sciences and humanities to design the innovative research ventures summarized here. There are 8 papers.

The first papers in the special issue examine the **nature** of virtue. In the first paper, Bradford Cokelet and Blaine Fowers take a broad perspective noting that there exists no science of virtue currently, optimistically argue that a science of virtue be developed, and offer a method to do so. They present a five-step strategy to investigate virtue traits and advocate a STRIVE-4 model. The STRIVE-4 model may be a good contender for guiding the way forward in virtue research.

In the second paper, Michael Spezio and Robert Roberts discuss the distinctiveness of humility, specifically interactive humility. They used empirical data from members of L'Arche communities, places where developmentally delayed adults live in community with caregivers. They gathered texts that inspire the L'Arche community and conducted semantic analysis comparing these texts with several other standard databases of texts. Humility and openness to others were highly related only in the L'Arche text analysis. The result was the IHO model—interactive humility as op openness to others. It is different from an absence of pride and because it is interactive and interpersonal, distinctive from intellectual humility as well.

The second set of papers involves **perceptions** of moral virtue. In the third paper, Michel Ferrari, Hyeyoung Bang and Zhe Feng conducted an exploratory study on values and wisdom in Canada and South Korea. Formal education contributed significantly to cultivating wisdom, that is, state-mandated curricula. Though age was correlated with numerous values, nation and faith were not. Each sample had a different pattern of results, showing the challenges of measuring and interpreting cross-nation research.

In the fourth paper, Javier Gomez-Lavin, Nina Strohminger, Shaun Nichols, and Jesse Prinz empirically address a longstanding philosophical interest in personal identity--that is,

perceptions that others have of a person's identity. In prior work, a person's moral values have been critical to views of the continuity of identity and the ascription of moral responsibility. Here they present studies of identity change, specifically, whether a prisoner who undergoes moral change deserves parole.

Two papers address flourishing or wellbeing. In the fifth paper, Colin DeYoung and Valerie Tiberius note definitional disagreements among scholars of wellbeing. But they are also able to identify an area of agreement—success in personal projects. Using data from a longitudinal undergraduate college student sample, they measured individual personal projects and assessed several aspects of subjective well-being. They showed that by and large success in current personal project contemporaneously relates to subjective wellbeing.

In the sixth paper, Paul Condon, John Dunne and Christine Wilson-Mendenhall investigated the nature of mindfulness, the nature of compassion and their interrelation within close relationships. They used Buddhist sources to describe flourishing. The authors combine Buddhist ideas of the importance of other cherishing for flourishing with a Western social science view of successful relationships: the partner's validation of one's core self and the maintenance of positive illusions towards one's partner. The authors describe how wisdom and compassion can be and must be balanced within the dynamism of a relationship.

The last two papers focus on aspects of life that undermine virtue or change its expression. In the seventh paper, Theresa Tobin and Dawne Moon delve into the world of shame among US conservative Christians who are or are allied with non-heterosexuals. Using participant-observation methodology, they examine the content of felt shame and humility among both groups. They found that shaming for being non-heterosexual does not effectively prevent or stop behaviors but instead ruptures relationships. And it can lead to self-harm and ill health. Based on their data from over 100 interviews, they propose what they call “humility-pride.”

In the eighth and final paper, Jack Bauer and Peggy DesAutels take up the examination of non-ideal lives and the struggles that challenge virtue expression. Focusing on the life stories of two women interviewed, they investigate the care-related virtue of generativity. Bauer and DesAutels explore the costs of virtuous living and how obstacles are overcome when life circumstances are more than difficult, specifically when virtue is burdened by highly gendered roles.

We hope these papers stimulate innovation and foster further interdisciplinary endeavors. The humanities and social sciences can only benefit from a deeper, transdisciplinary exploration of self, motivation and virtue.

Check out the Self, Motivation and Virtue website for more resources and the forthcoming edited volume to be published by Routledge. Also see the new project Self, Virtue and Public Life, both at the Institute for Human Flourishing at the University of Oklahoma. And see our websites for more.