

Justice, Care, and Religious Affiliation in Moral Development

Brief History and Recent Research



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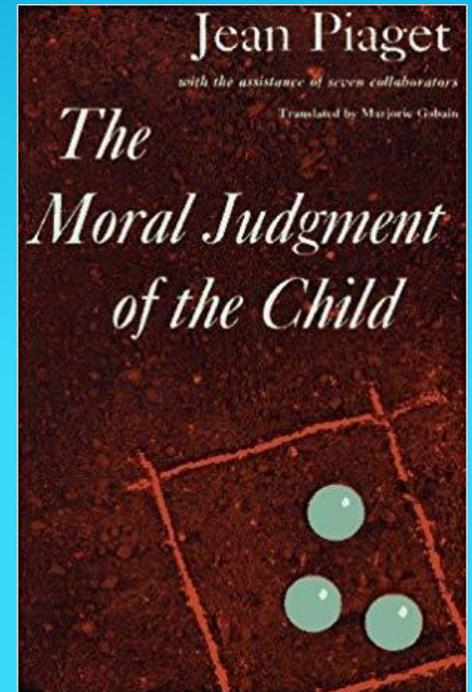
Brief History

Piaget

- *Moral Judgment of the Child* (1932)
- Used scenarios
- Follow-up interviews

There was once a little girl who was called Marie. She wanted to give her mother a nice surprise and cut out a piece of sewing for her. But she didn't know how to use the scissors properly and cut a big hole in her dress.

A little girl called Margaret went and took her mother's scissors one day when her mother was out. She played with them for a bit. Then, as she didn't know how to use them properly, she made a little hole in her dress.



Piaget (cont'd.)

– Heteronomous Morality (age 5-puberty)

- External rules
- Punishments

– Autonomous Morality (puberty to adulthood)

- Internal Rules
- Intentionality

Still on History

Kohlberg

- **Scenarios**

Heinz's wife was dying from a particular type of cancer. Doctors said a new drug might save her. The drug had been discovered by a local chemist, and the Heinz tried desperately to buy some, but the chemist was charging ten times the money it cost to make the drug, and this was much more than the Heinz could afford.

Heinz could only raise half the money, even after help from family and friends. He explained to the chemist that his wife was dying and asked if he could have the drug cheaper or pay the rest of the money later.

The chemist refused, saying that he had discovered the drug and was going to make money from it. The husband was desperate to save his wife, so later that night he broke into the chemist's and stole the drug.

- **Stages of Development**

- Pre-Conventional (up to puberty)

- Rules
- Consequences

- Conventional

- Internalized
- Norms and Customs
- Not Highly Questioned

- Post-Conventional

- Ethical Principles
- Individual Values
- Justice/Rights



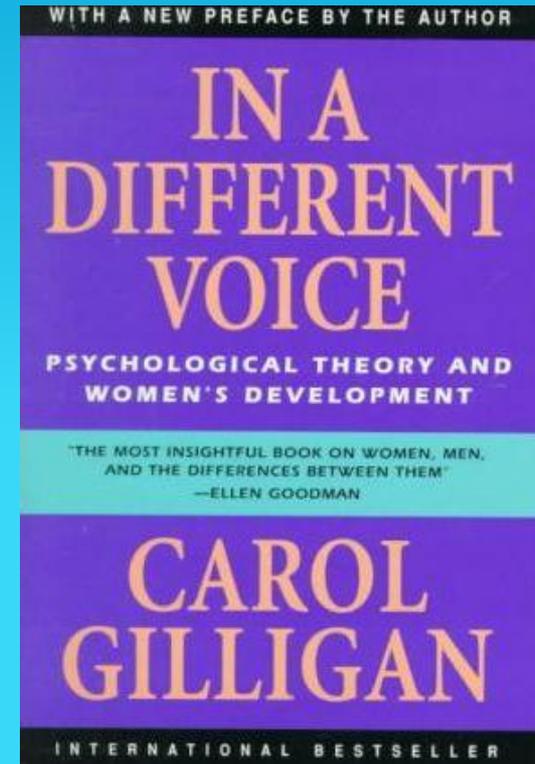
Criticisms

Sex/Gender?

- Carol Gilligan
- Law/Justice vs. Care

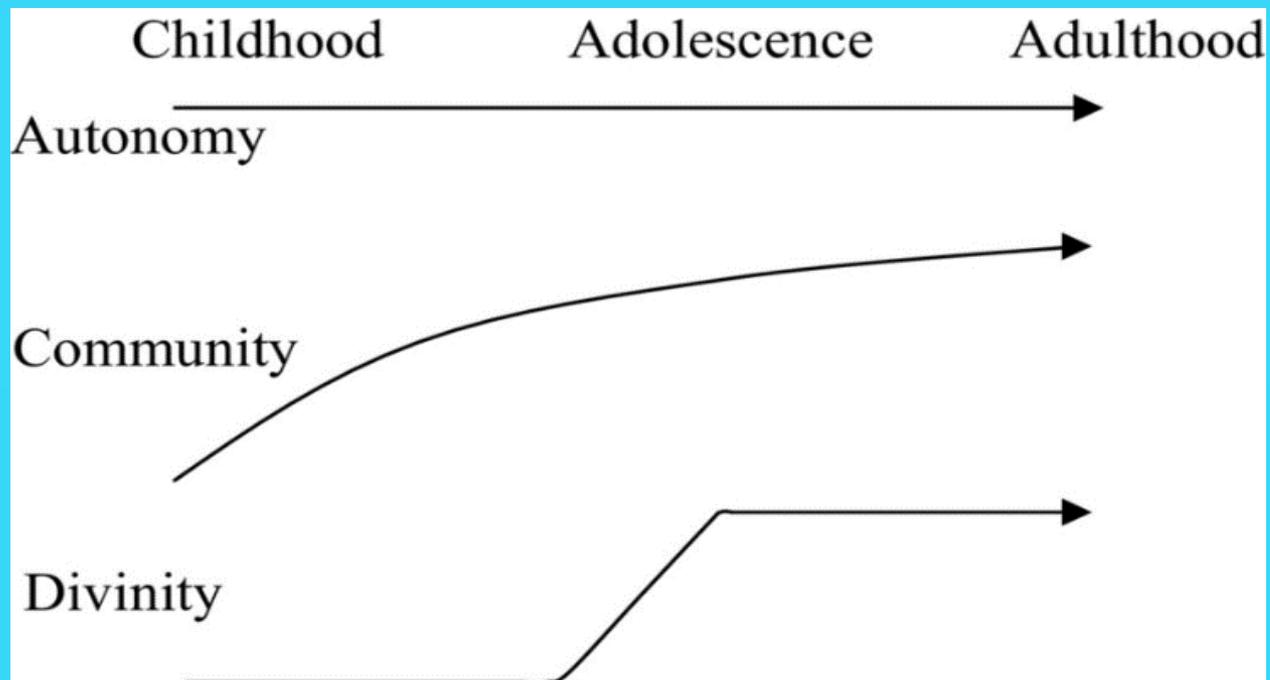
Culture?

- Less Industrialized
- Different moral philosophies/beliefs



21st Century Cultural-Developmental Approach

- Ethic of Autonomy
- Ethic of Community
- Ethic of Divinity



Divinity in Children's Moral Dev.

by Niyata Pandya and Rachana Bhangaokar

- **144 children from India**

- ½ 3rd graders and ½ 6th graders

- ½ male and ½ female

- ½ of high and ½ of low socio-economic status

- **5 Scenarios**

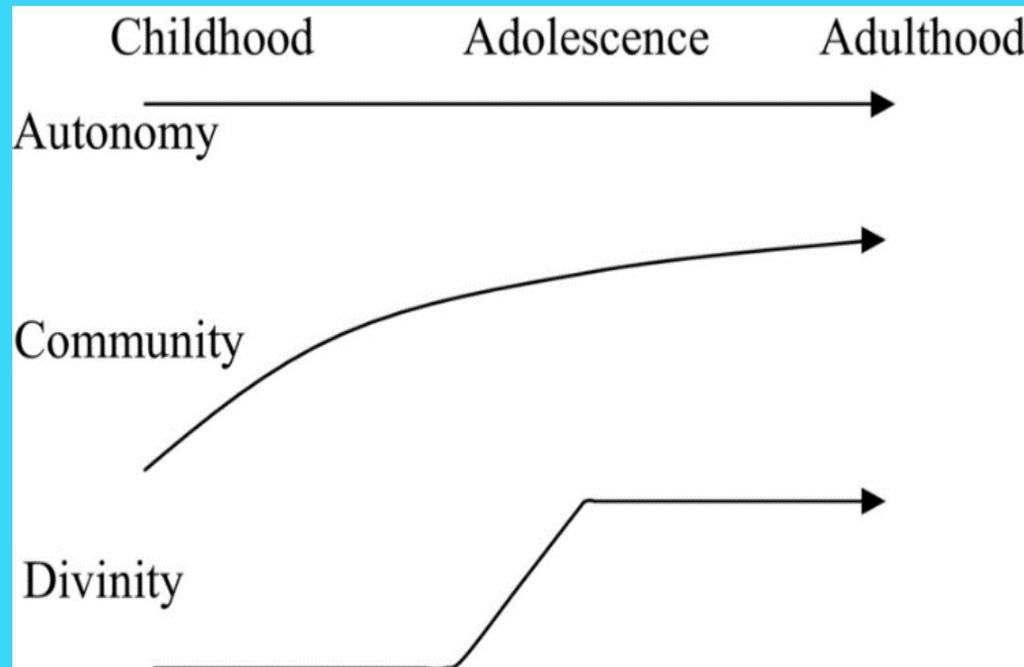


One day, Preeti's mother gives her money to buy sweets for some guests who are going to visit them. Preeti goes to the shop on her cycle and buys the sweets. While returning home, she sees her friends in a nearby park, playing with a new toy. Preeti is curious and decides to go inside the park. She parks her cycle and forgets to take the bag of sweets with her. After some time, when Preeti comes back to her cycle, she is surprised to find that her bag of sweet has disappeared. While she is thinking of what to do, she notices a wallet full of money which someone has left on a nearby cycle. Preeti is wondering if she should take the money from the wallet to buy a new packet of sweets.

Findings

Third-graders used divinity as a reason for their decision *more* than the sixth-graders

Used abstract concept like *karma*, *dharma*, and *moksha* in their answers



Findings (cont.d)

Higher SES/caste more likely to use divinity concepts in their reasoning compared to lower SES/caste.

Kids viewed God as omnipotent, omnipresent, and just.

“If we do wrong by mistake or unknowingly, then God will forgive us and give us a chance to make up for our wrong-doing, but if we purposely do wrong or harm others, then God will certainly give *paap*.”

Findings (cont.d)

Also spoke of God's presence in everything and everyone

“God has given life to the kitten, so her life is precious and we must save her. Like all animals and plants, God exists in the kitten too, and so, it is our duty to save her or at least do what we can to help her feel better.”

Autonomy, Community and Divinity in Emerging Adults

by Valeschka Guerra and Roger Giner-Sorolla

- 792 university students, age 18-23 years
- 5 different countries

- Brazil
- Israel
- Japan
- UK
- New Zealand

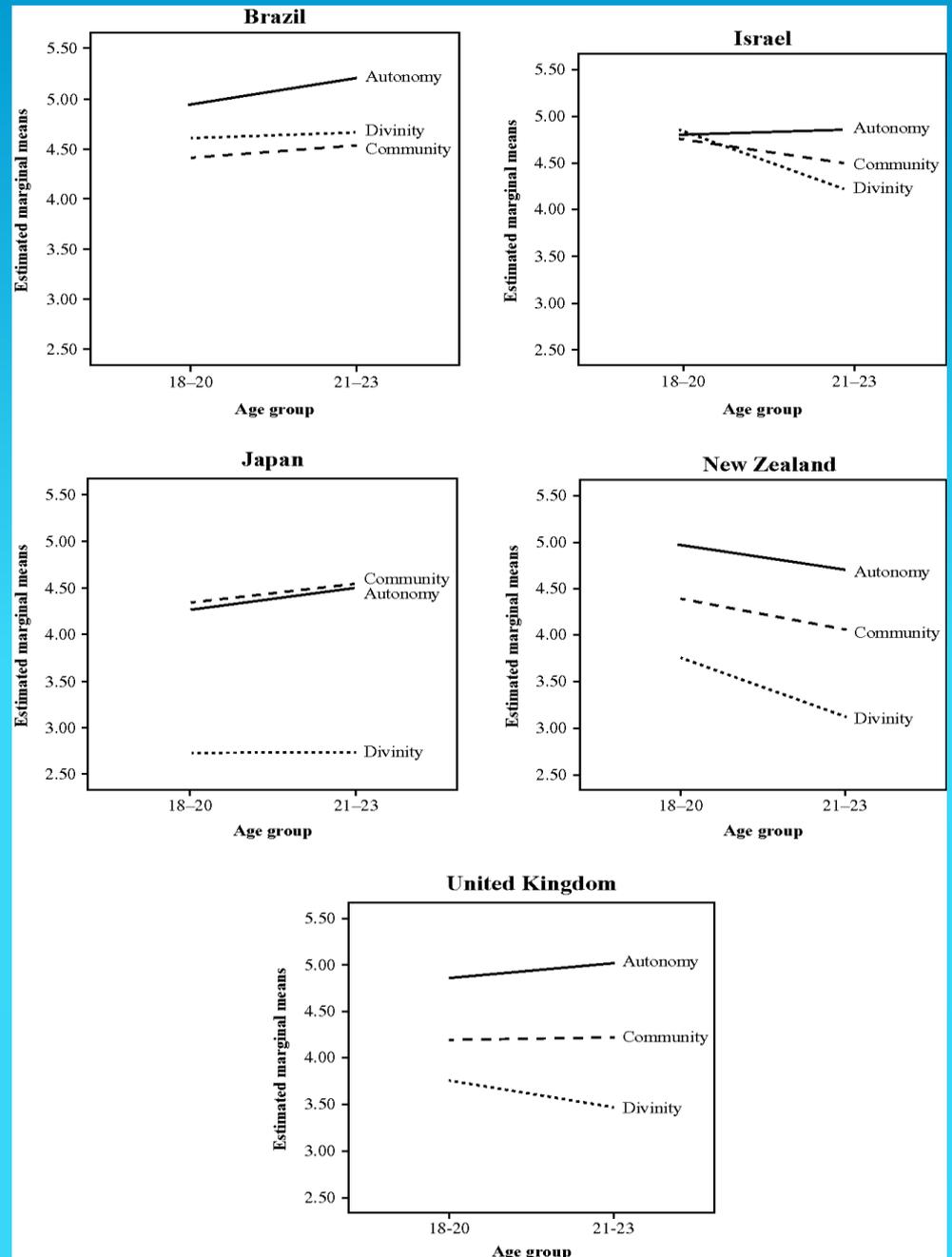


- Community, Autonomy, and Divinity Scale

Findings

Autonomy scores higher than scores for Community or Divinity

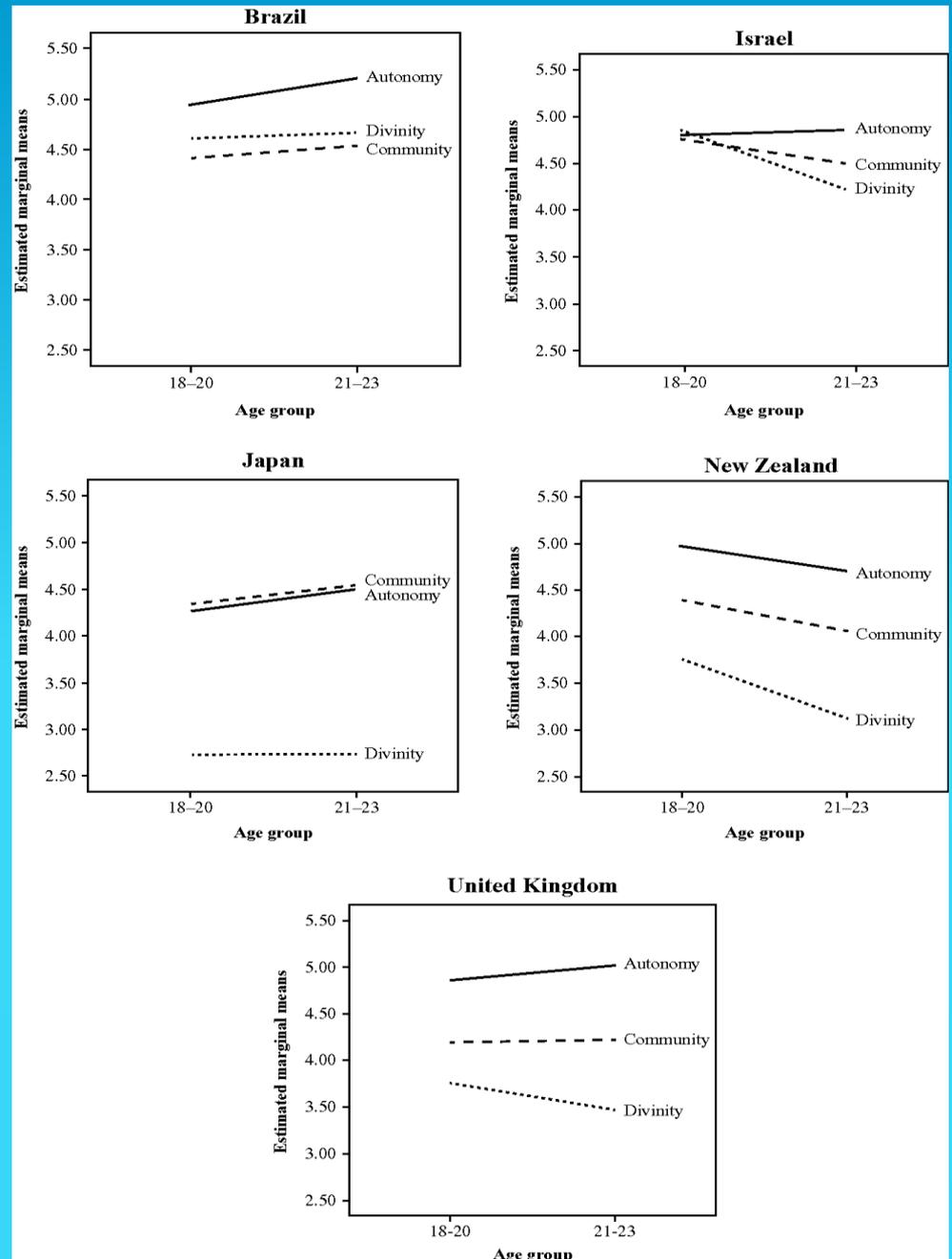
Overall, Divinity score went down slightly



New Hypotheses

Divinity values might increase even later in development (after marriage/family)

Divinity scale not reflective in Japan



Where does that leave us?

Divinity/Religiosity now “seated at the table.”

Range of cultures/belief systems being incorporated into updated models

Lots of work left to do!

Resources

Hoffman, M.L. (2000). *Empathy and Moral Development: Implications for Caring and Justice*. NY: Cambridge Univ. Press.

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