

Rights and Responsibilities Are Substitutable Framings That Differentially Affect Judgment

Social Psychological and
Personality Science
1-8

© The Author(s) 2021

Article reuse guidelines:

sagepub.com/journals-permissions

DOI: 10.1177/19485506211046790

journals.sagepub.com/home/spp



Allon Vishkin^{1,2}  and Jeremy Ginges^{1,2}

Abstract

Do employers have a responsibility to treat their workers equally or do employees have a right to be treated equally? In common discourse, rights and responsibilities are often used as substitutable framings for the same event, but they may differentially shape judgment. In this investigation, we develop an experimental manipulation of rights versus responsibilities and evaluate whether framing an arrangement between two parties in terms of rights, versus responsibilities, affects people's judgment. We found that people judged unequal distributions between two parties as less fair when framed in terms of rights than in terms of responsibilities. Furthermore, people judged a rights framing as fairer for an unequal (vs. equal) contractual agreement. Thus, a subtle framing manipulation can increase or decrease people's sensitivity to unequal distributions. We discuss potential mechanisms for this effect and implications for behavioral law as well as the potential to nudge people's sensitivity to inequality.

Keywords

equality, fairness, rights, responsibilities, framing, judgments

Most groups, whether families, workplaces, or communal organizations, have means of distributing roles and rewards among their members. Sometimes these arrangements are seen as just or normative, while other times they are seen as violating norms of fairness. In this article, we argue that one contribution to variation in such judgments may be whether such arrangements are described in terms of *rights* or in terms of *responsibilities*. While rights and responsibilities are often seen in common discourse as substitutable framings for the same event (Moghaddam et al., 2000), we theorize and demonstrate that these different framings may shape judgments of fairness. Specifically, we show that people perceive unequal distributions as less fair when they are framed in terms of rights than when they are framed in terms of responsibilities, whether such distributions address the minutiae of dinner chores or relate to tasks with well-established gender roles.

Rights and responsibilities or duties¹ are often seen as just two alternative and substitutable means of describing the same event. For example, Bentham (1780/1970) argued that rights are redundant with respect to responsibilities and duties. Other scholars point out that rights and duties are correlative, such one person's right implies another person's duty (Hohfeld, 1917, 1919). While the notion of rights pervades much of modern Western thought and is appealed to in the *U.S. Declaration of Independence* and the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen* formulated during the French Revolution, people in different cultures differ in their tendency to describe arrangements in terms of rights or responsibilities (Hong et al., 2001).

We theorized that a tendency to describe relationships in terms of rights versus responsibilities might have important consequences for judgments about unequal distributions of roles or goods within relationships. Specifically, a rights framing might increase the perceived unfairness of unequal distributions more than a responsibilities framing. This reasoning is based on three lines of evidence. First, work on cultural differences in value judgments (Miller & Luthar, 1989; Vauclair & Fischer, 2011) suggests that rights might promote moral considerations related to individual autonomy, including fairness (Graham et al., 2009), whereas responsibilities might promote moral judgments based on relations with one's social group. Second, in the legal literature comparing jurisprudence that is rights-based (as is common in the West) versus jurisprudence that is duties-based (such as in Jewish law), it is argued that under a rights frame, moral equivalence between two groups is simply associated with normative equality between these groups (Cover, 1987). Meanwhile, the same is not true under a duties frame because differences in duties may be due to differences in judged capacities of different parties. For example,

¹ The New School for Social Research, New York, NY, USA

² Artis International, Peoria, AZ, USA

Corresponding Author:

Allon Vishkin, The New School for Social Research, 79 Fifth Avenue, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10003, USA.

Email: avishkin@umich.edu

a rich person may be seen as having a greater duty than a poor person to help a person in need. A similar sentiment is echoed in the *Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights* (1981), which stipulates that “everyone shall undertake obligations proportionate to his capacity.” Finally, while popular and theoretical conceptions of the origins of rights view them as an ontological fact of an individual’s existence, conceptions of responsibilities stem from relationships between an individual and other agents in their environment (Moghaddam et al., 2000). To the extent that rights are viewed as inhering to individuals whereas responsibilities are dependent on one’s social context, unequal rights might be more likely to be perceived as more unfair than unequal responsibilities. Consequently, we predict that in an arrangement with an unequal distribution between two parties, such a distribution will be judged as more unfair when framed in terms of rights than in terms of responsibilities.

Developing an Experimental Paradigm

We developed an experimental paradigm that tests these different framings while maintaining clean experimental manipulations. First, building on insights from the legal literature on the equivalence between rights and responsibilities (Bentham, 1780/1970; Hohfeld, 1917, 1919), we switched the grammatical subject and object of sentences (e.g., *Children have a responsibility to respect their parents* is identical in content to *Parents have a right to be respected by their children*). Next, given that placing a target person in the subject or object position of a sentence can influence judgments of that person (Niemi & Young, 2016; see also Bohner, 2001; Young & Phillips, 2011), it is necessary to control for the different placements of grammatical subjects and objects. One way to achieve this is to describe reciprocal rights and responsibilities for two different actions, *A* and *B*, between two parties, *X* and *Y*, such that *X has a responsibility to A toward Y* and *Y has a responsibility to B toward X* (in the responsibilities condition) and *X has a right to B from Y* and *Y has a right to A from Y* (in the rights condition). Such reciprocal relations cannot be applied aptly to two parties with unequal status. For instance, in the previous example, many people might think that it is more appropriate to say that parents have a right to be respected by their children than it is to say that children have a right to be respected by their parents. Due to this constraint, vignettes in Studies 1–3 presented a distribution of roles between two people of similar and reciprocal status. These roles were framed either in terms of responsibilities or in terms of rights and were unequal in the sense that the goods or roles being exchanged were not equivalent to each other, based on the idea in *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954) that separate is inherently unequal.

We describe our operationalization of unequal distributions in Studies 1–3 as *asymmetric distributions*, by which we mean any arrangement or agreement between two parties in which the goods being traded are not identical to each other. Participants were asked to judge the fairness of the distribution

described in each vignette. Study 1 tested whether even a relatively inconsequential issue—the distribution of dinner chores between a married couple—is judged as more or less fair when framed in terms of responsibilities versus rights. Study 2 tested a more consequential division of labor regarding the distribution of traditional gender roles between a married couple, whose advantage to men has created unequal outcomes between men and women (Bernard, 1981). Study 3 tested an alternative explanation to these findings by examining the distribution of chores between two strangers. In these studies, we maintain complete correlativity between responsibilities and rights, such that the entitler, entitlee, and entitlement are the same in both framings.

It may be argued that the asymmetric distributions in Studies 1–3 are not necessarily perceived as unequal. Study 4 addressed these limitations by manipulating the equality of a distribution between two parties (equal vs. unequal) and asking participants to indicate whether it is fairer to frame such a distribution in terms of rights or in terms of responsibilities. To the extent that an unequal distribution is perceived as less fair when framed in terms of rights, a rights framing of an unequal distribution can ensure the interests of the disadvantaged party by guaranteeing that the distribution is indeed perceived as unequal. In contrast, to the extent that an unequal distribution is perceived as more fair when framed in terms of responsibilities, a responsibilities framing of an unequal distribution might diminish the perception that the disadvantaged party is indeed disadvantaged. Therefore, we expected that people would select the rights framing as more fair for the unequal (vs. equal) distribution.

Data and syntax are available for all studies (https://osf.io/8u2vm/?view_only=7fe39d7a1c8541a99fbe83235e122dc1).

Study 1

Method

Participants

There was no basis for determining an effect size prior to running Study 1. Therefore, the target sample size was set to 200, which was sufficiently powered to detect a small effect size ($d = 0.20$) at 80% power (Faul et al., 2009). A total of 300 participants located in the United States were recruited from MTurk. To ensure that participants read the vignettes carefully, we included a rigorous attention check, for which the likelihood of passing by guessing is less than 5%. Ninety-six participants failed the attention check, leaving 204 participants (43% female, $M_{\text{age}} = 35.13$). Results remained unchanged when including all participants. Participants were compensated \$0.30 for their participation.

Materials

Vignettes. A vignette described an asymmetric distribution pertaining to dinner preparation between two people. In the rights condition, the vignette read as follows:

Bill and Sophie are a married couple. They decide to divide up the dinner chores at home. In particular, Sophie will have the right to have her food cooked by Bill, whereas Bill will have the right to have his dirty dishes cleaned by Sophie.

The responsibilities condition referred to responsibilities instead of rights. The vignette in the responsibilities condition was as follows:

John and Emma are a married couple. They decide to divide up the dinner chores at home. In particular, John will have the responsibility to cook food for Emma, whereas Emma will have the responsibility to clean John's dirty dishes.

To rule out potential confounds, the presentation of vignettes included three counterbalances. First, some participants first read the rights and then the responsibilities vignette, whereas other participants first read the responsibilities and then read the rights vignette. Next, the names of the particular characters were counterbalanced, such that for some participants Bill and Sophie appeared in the rights vignette and John and Emma appeared in the responsibilities vignette, whereas the reverse was true for other participants. Finally, the association between a particular gender and a particular role was counterbalanced. For example, for some participants, the male character (Bill or John) was responsible for cooking food and the female character (Sophie or Emma) was responsible for cleaning dishes, whereas the reverse was true for other participants.

Procedure

Participants were asked to read each of two vignettes, one framed in terms of rights and one framed in terms of responsibilities. Following each vignette, they were asked to judge their impression of the arrangement based on the extent to which they think the arrangement is equal, unfair (reverse-scored), immoral (reverse-scored), and respectful of both sides ($\alpha_s = .78$ and $.73$ in the rights and responsibilities conditions, respectively) on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*To a very great extent*). Participants also completed two filler items by indicating the extent to which they think the arrangement is convenient and inefficient. Finally, participants completed an attention check in which they were asked to indicate which two sets of names appeared in the vignettes they read out of seven sets of names.

Results and Discussion

A paired-samples t test revealed that, consistent with the hypothesis, participants judged the asymmetric distribution as less fair when framed in terms of rights ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.71$) than when framed in terms of responsibilities ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 0.57$), $t(203) = 3.74$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.06, .19], $d_{RM} = .28$. A mixed analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed that effects were not qualified by the counterbalanced role assigned to each gender, $F(1, 202) = 0.36$, $p = .55$. These

results reveal that a rights (vs. responsibilities) framing affects the perceived fairness of asymmetric distributions.

Study 2

The scenario in Study 1 focused on dinner chores, a common daily task. However, it is unclear whether framing more socially sensitive arrangements in terms of rights will also affect perceived fairness. Therefore, Study 2 tested a more consequential division of labor related to more traditional gender roles (Goodnow, 1998): taking care of household chores versus joining the workforce.

Method

Participants

Achieved power in Study 1 was greater than 95%. Therefore, we recruited a similar sample size as in Study 1. Of 300 participants located in the United States recruited from MTurk, 120 participants failed a rigorous attention check, leaving 180 participants (49% female, $M_{age} = 38.11$). Results remained unchanged when including all participants. Participants were compensated \$0.30 for their participation.

Procedure

The procedure was identical to the procedure in Study 1 with two exceptions. First, participants read about the distribution of tasks pertaining to traditional gender roles. For example, the vignette in the responsibilities condition was as follows:

John and Emma are a married couple. They decide to divide up the needs of the family. In particular, Emma will have the responsibility to take care of the household chores, whereas John will have the responsibility to provide an income.

All counterbalances were identical to those present in Study 1, including for gender roles. In addition, the attention check required identifying the correct two sets of names from a list of nine sets of names. The likelihood of passing the attention check by guessing is less than 3%.

Results and Discussion

A paired-samples t test revealed that, consistent with the hypothesis, participants judged the asymmetric distribution as less fair when framed in terms of rights ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 0.96$) than when framed in terms of responsibilities ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.92$), $t(179) = 2.83$, $p = .005$, 95% CI [.03, .17], $d_{RM} = .21$. A mixed ANOVA revealed that effects were not qualified by the counterbalanced role assigned to each gender, $F(1, 178) = 0.25$, $p = .62$. These results replicate the findings from Study 1 and extend them to a division of labor related to more traditional gender roles.

Study 3

Studies 1 and 2 demonstrated that framing an asymmetric distribution in terms of rights, relative to responsibilities, leads to judgments of such a distribution as less fair. However, an alternative explanation to Studies 1 and 2 is that people are used to thinking of intimate relationships in terms of responsibilities. Consequently, presenting the arrangement of a married couple in terms of rights may arouse disfluency, which then leads to less favorable judgments (Winkielman et al., 2003). According to this account, it is not the framing of rights (vs. responsibilities) per se that increases the perceived unfairness of asymmetric distributions, but the use of rights in a context where it is less fitting. Study 3 sought to rule out this alternative explanation by examining whether it generalizes to a noncommunal relationship which may be more likely to be construed in terms of symmetric distributions than a communal relationship (Fiske, 1992) and to replicate the previous findings in a preregistered study (<http://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=bp8ts6>).

Method

Participants

Given that achieved power in Study 1 was greater than 95%, we recruited a similar sample size in the present study. Of 300 participants located in the United States recruited from MTurk, 68 participants failed a rigorous attention check, leaving 232 participants (46% female, $M_{\text{age}} = 37.96$). Results remained unchanged when including all participants. Participants were compensated \$0.30 for their participation.

Procedure

The procedure was identical to the procedure in Study 1 with two exceptions. First, the vignette described the two people as “strangers who have recently become apartment-mates” rather than as a married couple. Next, as in Study 2, the attention check required identifying the correct two sets of names from a list of nine sets of names.

Results and Discussion

A paired-samples t test revealed that, consistent with the hypothesis, participants judged the asymmetric distribution as less fair when framed in terms of rights ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.75$) than when framed in terms of responsibilities ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 0.70$), $t(231) = 3.88$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.07, .22], $d_{\text{RM}} = 0.26$. A mixed ANOVA revealed that effects were not qualified by the counterbalanced role assigned to each gender, $F(1, 230) = 0.39$, $p = .53$. These results replicate the findings from Studies 1 and 2 and extend them to relationship between strangers.

Study 4

Studies 1–3 demonstrated that framing an asymmetric distribution between two parties in terms of rights, relative to

responsibilities, increases the perceived unfairness of such a distribution. As we noted in the Introduction, a clean manipulation of a rights versus responsibilities framing requires selecting scenarios that describe an asymmetric distribution between two parties of equal status. While asymmetric distributions also imply unequal outcomes, people may not necessarily perceive such distributions as inherently unequal. Indeed, in all three studies, the mean levels of perceived unfairness were above the midpoint of the scale. Consequently, in Study 4, we manipulated the distribution as equal versus unequal and asked participants to choose whether it is fairer to describe the distribution in terms of rights or in terms of responsibilities. Since results from Studies 1–3 revealed that a rights framing of an unequal distribution is perceived as less fair, a rights framing of an unequal distribution can ensure the interests of the disadvantaged party by guaranteeing that the distribution is perceived as unequal. In contrast, since a responsibilities framing of an unequal distribution is perceived as more fair, a responsibilities framing of an unequal distribution might diminish the perception that the disadvantaged party is indeed disadvantaged. Therefore, we expected that people would select the rights framing as more fair for the unequal (vs. equal) distribution.

To maintain more realistic and more concise wordings of alternative framings, Study 4 included framings of rights and responsibilities that were phrased clearly and succinctly. We also used a vignette describing a contractual business relationship to extend the previous findings to a novel interpersonal context. The contribution of each party to such a transaction is necessarily different, with one party transferring goods and the other party transferring payment. We manipulated the equality of the distribution by specifying whether or not both parties required similar levels of flexibility in fulfilling their part of the contract. Study 4a used a within-subject design. To address the possibility that such a design implicitly invites participants to compare between the different scenarios, Study 4b used a between-subjects design. Study 4b was preregistered (<https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=si5ps5>).

Method

Participants

Given that the previous studies were sufficiently powered, we sought to recruit a similar sample size per condition as in the previous studies. Participants were native English speakers from the United States who were recruited on Academic Prolific (www.prolific.co). Three hundred and two participants completed Study 4a and nine failed an attention check, leaving 293 participants (38% female, $M_{\text{age}} = 37.52$). Six hundred and one participants completed Study 4b and 20 failed an attention check, leaving 581 participants (53% female, $M_{\text{age}} = 34.50$). Results remained unchanged when including all participants. Participants were compensated \$0.37 for their participation in Study 4a and \$0.32 in Study 4b.

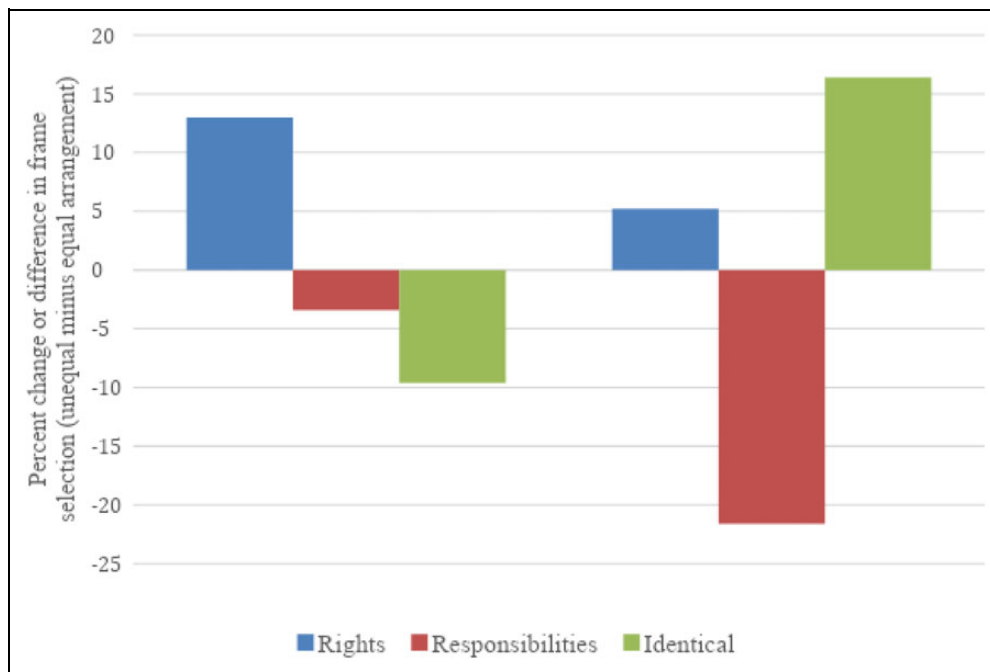


Figure 1. Change (Study 4a) or difference (Study 4b) in selection of framings (unequal arrangement minus equal arrangement).

Materials

Vignettes. A vignette describing the writing of a contract between a supplier and a distributor was framed either in terms of equal demands from both sides or in terms of unequal demands from both sides. In the equal condition, the vignette read as follows:

A supplier and a distributor enter a contract specifying a time frame for delivery and payment. The supplier requires some flexibility in delivering the goods and the distributor requires some flexibility in transferring payment.

In the unequal condition, the vignette described an unequal demand between the two sides. One counterbalanced condition read as follows:

A supplier and a distributor enter a contract specifying a time frame for delivery and payment. The supplier requires some flexibility in delivering the goods but the distributor doesn't require flexibility in transferring payment.

The other counterbalanced condition described the distributor, rather than the supplier, as requiring flexibility in fulfilling the contract.

Procedure

In Study 4a, which was within-subject, participants first read the vignette describing equal demands and then read the vignette describing unequal demands. In Study 4b, which was between-subjects, participants were randomly assigned to one of the two vignettes. For the vignette describing an unequal

demand, a counterbalance randomly assigned participants to one of the two descriptions in which either the supplier or the distributor requires additional time to fulfilling the contract.

Following each vignette, participants were asked, "Given this mutual [unequal] demand, which formulation of the relevant clause in the contract do you think is more fair?" The three answer choices in the equal condition were: *Each party has a right to have the contract fulfilled within 3 weeks; each party has a responsibility to fulfill their part of the contract within 3 weeks; or both formulations are equally fair.* The three answer choices in the unequal condition were *The (distributor/supplier, counterbalanced) has a right to have the contract fulfilled within 3 weeks; The (supplier/distributor, counterbalanced) has a responsibility to fulfill their part of the contract within 3 weeks; or both formulations are equally fair.* The first two answer choices were presented in a randomized order. Finally, participants completed an attention check in which they were asked to indicate what period of time was discussed in the clause in the contract out of six possible answer choices.

Results and Discussion

Study 4a

Participants indicated that the rights framing of the clause in the contract was more fair when describing an unequal demand (19.1%) than when describing an equal demand (6.1%), but that the responsibilities framing was more fair when describing an equal demand (53.6%) than when describing an unequal demand (50.2%). The framings were viewed as identical when describing an equal demand (40.3%) more than when describing an unequal demand (30.7%). A McNemar test for paired nominal data revealed that the rights framing was selected as fair more

frequently in the unequal condition than in the equal condition, $\chi^2(N = 293) = 22.82, p < .001, OR = 4.45$ (see Figure 1). Selection of the responsibilities framing did not differ between conditions, $\chi^2(N = 293) = 0.76, p = .38$.

Study 4b

Participants indicated that the rights framing of the clause in the contract was more fair when describing an unequal demand (12.2%) than when describing an equal demand (7.0%), but that the responsibilities framing was more fair when describing an equal demand (65.0%) than when describing an unequal demand (43.4%). The framings were viewed as identical when describing an unequal demand (44.4%) more than when describing an equal demand (28.0%). The rights framing was selected as fair more frequently in the unequal condition than in the equal condition, $\chi^2(1) = 4.53, p = .033$, Cramer's $V = .088$ (see Figure 1). The responsibilities framing was selected as fair less frequently in the unequal condition than in the equal condition, $\chi^2(1) = 27.39, p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .217$.

The results of Studies 4a and 4b reveal that participants perceived a rights framing as more fair when describing an unequal (vs. equal) arrangement. To the extent that a rights (vs. responsibilities) framing increases the perceived unfairness of unequal distributions, a rights framing can also guarantee the recognition that a disadvantaged party is perceived as being disadvantaged. Both studies also revealed a stronger preference for the responsibilities (vs. rights) framing in all conditions, apparently reflecting a baseline preference for conceiving of interpersonal interactions in terms of responsibilities than in terms of rights.

General Discussion

Although rights and responsibilities are often treated as substitutable framings, the present investigation reveals that they lead to different judgments. Studies 1–3 revealed that people judge an asymmetric distribution as less fair when framed in terms of rights (vs. responsibilities). Furthermore, Study 4 revealed that people are more likely to judge a rights framing as more fair when formulating a contractual guarantee for an unequal distribution, relative to their judgments when formulating a contractual guarantee for an equal distribution. These findings demonstrate that a subtle framing manipulation can increase or decrease people's sensitivity to unequal distributions and suggest that people might be more opposed to inequality when it is framed in terms of unequal rights than in terms of unequal responsibilities.

We suggested that the difference between responsibilities and rights in shaping judgments of unequal distributions might stem from the greater sensitivity of responsibilities (vs. rights) to context. In particular, responsibilities appear to be more dependent on individual capacities (Cover, 1987) and relationships (Moghaddam et al., 2000). If so, people might be more likely to attribute unequal distributions framed in terms of

responsibilities to context than unequal distributions framed in terms of rights and therefore perceive them as less unfair. While these studies demonstrate that rights and responsibilities differentially affect the judgment of unequal distributions, they are silent regarding the precise reason why this is so. We note that even for a well-documented manipulation of framing that leads to the endowment effect (Kahneman et al., 1991), the precise explanation is still disputed (Morewedge & Giblin, 2015), yet this does not diminish from its theoretical and practical significance. Nevertheless, identifying why alternative framings lead to different judgments is critical to understanding the generalizability and the boundary conditions of the effect and is an important avenue for future research.

One implication of these findings is with regard to the normative equivalence of rights and duties. Some legal scholars have argued that rights and duties are normatively equivalent (Bentham, 1780/1970; Hohfeld, 1917, 1919), whereas others contend otherwise (Cover, 1987; Hart, 1982; Porat, under review). While the present investigation addresses their descriptive equivalence rather than their normative equivalence, framing effects carry important implications for behavioral law (Ulen, 2014). For instance, the present findings suggest that in order to guarantee the entitlements of workers, a contract between workers and employers would best be framed in terms of worker's rights than in terms of employer's responsibilities.

Future research is needed to investigate the cross-cultural generalizability of these studies which sampled North Americans. Rights might increase the perceived unfairness of unequal distributions only in cultures where equality is explicitly endorsed, such as in the United States. Alternatively, rights may increase support for explicitly endorsed values only in countries that chronically think in terms of rights, such as in the United States (Hong et al., 2001), while responsibilities may increase support for explicitly endorsed values in countries that chronically think in terms of responsibilities. In addition, following the equivalence between duties, obligations, and responsibilities that appears in the literature, the studies only tested for the influence of responsibilities vis-à-vis rights. Nevertheless, there may be meaningful differences between these terms that remain to be explored.

Cross-cultural differences in the endorsement of equality have been attributed to differences in values (Schwartz, 2006): some cultures value egalitarianism, whereas other cultures value hierarchy. However, given that cultures differ in their emphasis on rights or responsibilities (Chiu et al., 1997; Hong et al., 2001; Markus & Kitayama, 1991), the present investigation suggests that another source of cultural variation with regard to the endorsement of equality may be how egalitarianism is framed. The value of egalitarianism may be more consequential in a culture that emphasizes rights than in a culture that emphasizes responsibilities, even if both cultures value egalitarianism to the same extent. Future research can examine this question.

Framing social relations in terms of rights versus responsibilities may affect additional types of judgments. Rights may increase perceived unfairness, but responsibilities may sensitize people to other considerations in moral reasoning. For instance, to the extent that responsibilities are rooted in concrete interpersonal relationships (Moghaddam et al., 2000), a responsibilities framing may lead people to prioritize relational types of moral judgment (Rai & Fiske, 2011) more than abstract considerations of fairness and equality.

Alternative framings of rights versus responsibilities may also affect judgments outside the domain of moral reasoning. To the extent that some rights are viewed as inherent to being human (“natural rights”), framing the loss of an entitlement in terms of rights may foster a prevention mindset (Higgins, 1998). For example, losing access to healthcare from one’s employer may foster a stronger prevention mindset when the healthcare is framed in terms of the employee’s rights than in terms of the employer’s responsibilities. In addition, the legal literature has noted that rights contain special normative force—rights are trumps that supersede other considerations (Dworkin, 1984). To the extent that this is also true at the descriptive level, then framing social relations in terms of rights may lead to more extreme judgments than when framed in terms of responsibilities. For example, a contractual relationship between two parties that face a conflict may be more difficult to reconcile when each side is assigned rights than when each side is assigned responsibilities. The range of judgments and behaviors that may be shaped by being framed in terms of rights versus responsibilities is potentially broad and requires systematic investigation. More generally, the ability to frame the same arrangement in terms of rights or in terms of responsibilities might be leveraged to nudge people’s behavior (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008), and consequently the precise manner in which these different framings affect judgment requires systematic investigation.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This research was supported by a grant from the Minerva Center for Human Rights at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem to the first author and by grants from the Templeton Religious Trust (TRT0189) and the National Science Foundation (grant no. SES-0962080) to the second author.

ORCID iD

Allon Vishkin  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9655-7449>

Note

1. Following Bentham and others, we use the terms *duties*, *obligations*, and *responsibilities* interchangeably (Hart, 1982, footnote 20; see also Chiu et al., 1997; Cover, 1987; Hong et al., 2001).

References

- Bentham, J. (1970). An introduction to the principles of morals and legislation. In J. H. Burns & H. L. A. Hart (Eds.), *Collected works of Jeremy Bentham*. (Original work published 1780)
- Bernard, J. (1981). The good-provider role: Its rise and fall. *American Psychologist*, 1, 1–12.
- Bohner, G. (2001). Writing about rape: Use of the passive voice and other distancing text features as an expression of perceived responsibility of the victim. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 40(4), 515–529.
- Chiu, C. Y., Dweck, C. S., Tong, J. Y. Y., & Fu, J. H. Y. (1997). Implicit theories and conceptions of morality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73, 923–940.
- Cover, R. M. (1987). Obligation: A Jewish jurisprudence of the social order. *Journal of Law and Religion*, 5, 65–74.
- Dworkin, R. (1984). Rights as trumps. In J. Waldron (Ed.), *Theories of rights* (pp. 153–167). Oxford University Press.
- Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Buchner, A., & Lang, A.-G. (2009). Statistical power analyses using G*Power 3.1: Tests for correlation and regression analyses. *Behavior Research Methods*, 41, 1149–1160.
- Fiske, A. P. (1992). The four elementary forms of sociality: Framework for a unified theory of social relations. *Psychological Review*, 99, 689–723.
- Goodnow, J. J. (1998). Beyond the overall balance: The significance of particular tasks and procedures for perceptions of fairness in distributions of household work. *Social Justice Research*, 11(3), 359–376.
- Graham, J., Haidt, J., & Nosek, B. A. (2009). Liberals and conservatives rely on different sets of moral foundations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 96(5), 1029–1046.
- Hart, H. L. A. (1982). Legal rights. In H. L. A. Hart (Ed.), *Essays on Bentham: Studies in jurisprudence and political theory* (pp. 162–193). Clarendon Press.
- Higgins, E. T. (1998). Promotion and prevention: Regulatory focus as a motivational principle. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 30, pp. 1–46). Academic.
- Hohfeld, W. N. (1917). Fundamental legal conceptions as applied in judicial reasoning. *The Yale Law Journal*, 26, 710–770.
- Hohfeld, W. N. (1919). Some fundamental legal conceptions as applied in judicial reasoning. In W. W. Cook (Ed.), *Some fundamental legal conceptions as applied in judicial reasoning and other legal essays, by Wesley Newcomb Hohfeld* (pp. 23–64). Yale University Press.
- Hong, Y., Ip, G., Chiu, C., Morris, M. W., & Menon, T. (2001). Cultural identity and dynamic construction of the self: Collective duties and individual rights in Chinese and American cultures. *Social Cognition*, 19, 251–268.
- Kahneman, D., Knetsch, J. L., & Thaler, R. H. (1991). The endowment effect, loss aversion, and status quo bias. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 5(1), 193–206.

- Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, 98(2), 224–253.
- Miller, J. G., & Luthar, S. (1989). Issues of interpersonal responsibility and accountability: A comparison of Indians' and Americans' moral judgments. *Social Cognition*, 7(3), 237–261. <https://doi.org/10.1521/soco.1989.7.3.237>
- Moghaddam, F. M., Slocum, N. R., Finkel, N., Mor, T., & Harré, R. (2000). Toward a cultural theory of duties. *Culture and Psychology*, 6(3), 275–302. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X0063001>
- Morewedge, C. K., & Giblin, C. E. (2015). Explanations of the endowment effect: An integrative review. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 19(6), 339–348.
- Niemi, L., & Young, L. (2016). When and why we see victims as responsible: The impact of ideology on attitudes towards victims. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 42, 1227–1242.
- Porat, B. (under review). Deciding between contradicting norms: Rights-based law vs. Duty-based law.
- Rai, T. S., & Fiske, A. P. (2011). Moral psychology is relationship regulation: Moral motives for unity, hierarchy, equality, and proportionality. *Psychological Review*, 118, 57–75.
- Schwartz, S. H. (2006). A theory of cultural value orientations: Explication and applications. *Comparative Sociology*, 5, 137–182.
- Thaler, R. H., & Sunstein, C. R. (2008). *Nudge: Improving decisions about health, wealth, and happiness*. Yale University Press.
- Ulen, T. S. (2014). The importance of behavioral law. In A. Zamir & D. Teichman (Eds.), *The oxford handbook of behavioral economics and the law* (pp. 93–124). Oxford University Press.
- Vauclair, C., & Fischer, R. (2011). Do cultural values predict individuals' moral attitudes? A cross-cultural multilevel approach. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 41, 645–657.
- Winkielman, P., Schwarz, N., Fazendeiro, T. A., & Reber, R. (2003). The hedonic marking of processing fluency: Implications for evaluative judgment. In J. Musch & K. C. Klauer (Eds.), *The psychology of evaluation: Affective processes in cognition and emotion* (pp. 189–217). Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Young, L., & Phillips, J. (2011). The paradox of moral focus. *Cognition*, 119(2), 166–178.

Author Biographies

Allon Vishkin is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Michigan. He studies cultural differences in motivation, cognition, and emotion.

Jeremy Ginges is a professor of psychology in The New School for Social Research and a senior fellow at Artis International. His work focuses on understanding cooperation and conflict between groups.

Handling Editor: Jennifer Bosson