MUNI
FI

Introduction to Ethics and Integrity

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Ethics

— A philosophical discipline that examines morality and moral values

— A debate about what is / should be **right**

— Explores the principles of decision making in situations amenable to free will

— From Greek éthos = morality, custom

Morality

– **Individual morality** = a set of beliefs and attitudes about what is right

– Moral = in accordance with conscience

  – Conscience = the ability to know the good and to be reminded of that knowledge

– Members of a group share similar experiences

– **Group morality** = social consensus about what is right

– The question "What is right?" may have different answers from the perspective of different actors

  – There are often conflicts between individual and group morality
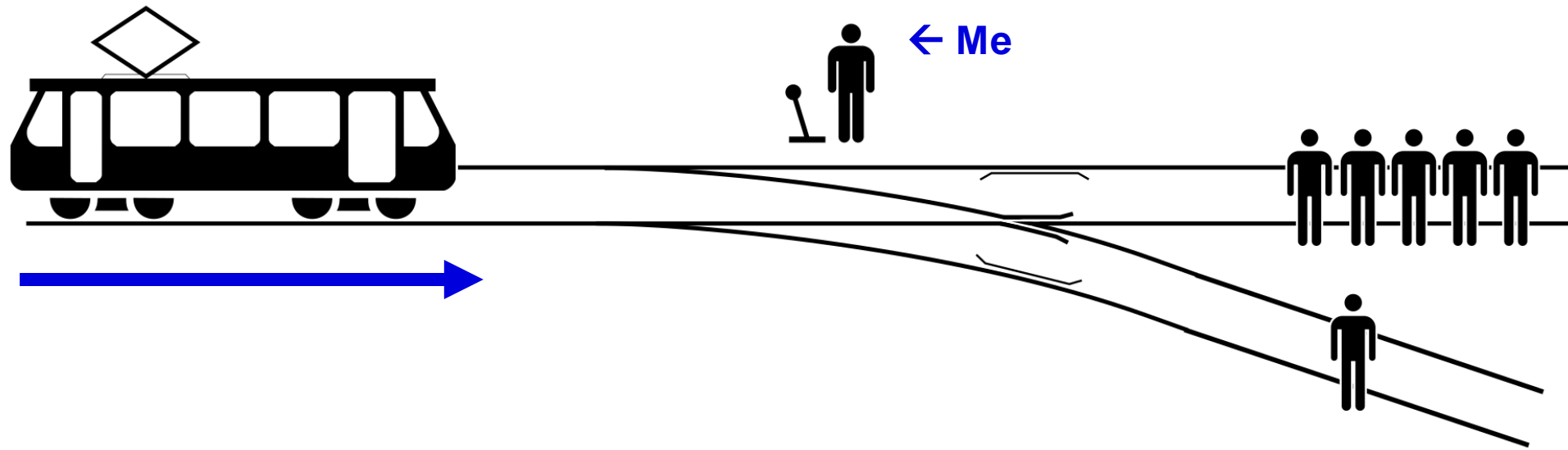
Ethics, Morality, Law

- Ethics = conscious search for the good
  - Philosophical conception of the good
- Morality = the sum of ideas about the good already found
  - Social consensus on what constitutes the **good**
  - Ideological conception of the good
  - **Self-preservation** of the human community

- These ideas are codified
  - Conventions, etiquette = agreed rules of conduct
- Law = necessary good to maintain the function of formal organization
  - Order, a set of enforceable rules and regulations

Ethical Paradigms

— **Descriptive** ethics describes the moral values within society

— **Normative** ethics seeks to determine what conduct should be moral
  - Deals with rights, duties and values

— **Applied** ethics answers specific questions
  - Medical ethics, bioethics, journalistic ethics, ethics in IT...
  - The boundary between normative and applied ethics is not sharp

A Thought Experiment

– Trolley problem
  – An uncontrolled tram hurtling down the tracks
  – Do nothing and let the tram kill 5 people
  – Change the switch and take responsibility for the death of 1 person

← Me

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trolley_problem#/media/File:Trolley_Problem.svg

A Thought Experiment

- Is it right to sacrifice 1 person to save 5 people?

- A doctor has 5 patients he can save with a transplant
  - each patient needs a different organ
- Is it right to kill one person and use their organs?
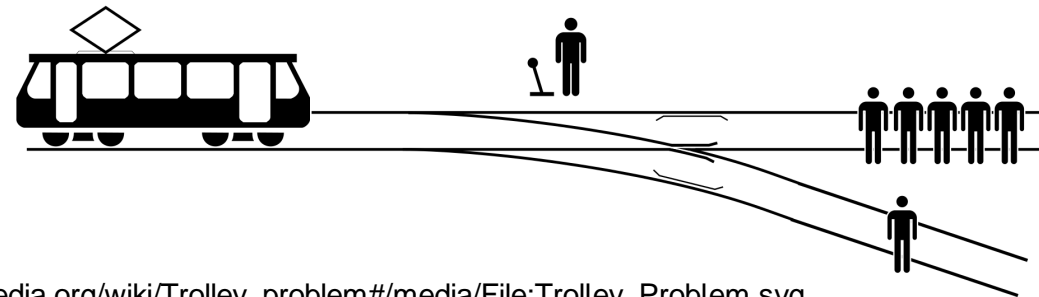 - suppose100% transplant success rate

Moral Dilemma

- It is a situation requiring a choice between options, **each of which** implies **acting contrary to moral values**

- Typically, the options conflict with different values
  - Resolving the dilemma requires consideration of the relative importance of these values

- Finding a way out of a moral dilemma
  - Rational discussion, argumentation
  - Identification of the values in conflict
  - Consideration of consequences
  - Consideration of (preferably all) circumstances

Trolley Problem Variations

– Do nothing, or change the switch?
  - 5 people: sprayers who climbed over the fence (should not be there)
  - 1 person: a worker repairing the tracks, father of 4, breadwinner.
    - Plus, we assured him beforehand that the switch was changed and he was safe.

– And what if one of the sprayers is our best friend/relative?

– A mass murderer gives us a choice: Kill one person or I kill five.

– **What circumstances (and consideration of them) matter?**

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trolley_problem#/media/File:Trolley_Problem.svg

Trolley Problem and Values in Conflict

Kill	Let die
Death of one person	Death of five people
Death of a young person	Death of an old person
Death of a loved one	Death of a stranger
Guilt	Right to survive
Deflect an existing threat towards lesser harm	Create a new threat (albeit with less damage)
Do nothing	Affect the course of events
Do something with *something*	Do something with *someone*

Ethical Theories
How to Recognize what is Moral?

– **Deontology**
  – Establishment of non-negotiable rules and obligations

– **Consequentialism**
  – Only the consequences of actions are relevant in assessing a situation

– **Virtue ethics**
  – Moral character of the individual

– Social contract theory
  – Rules for functioning within society

Deontology

- Unbreakable rules set by a specific authority
  - Rights and obligations
- Deals with the **act as such**
- The theory of divine commandments
  - Morality is what follows from the divine commandments
  - Cultural relativism, influenced by interpretation
- Kant's categorical imperative
  - Use no one as a means to an end
  - The maxima (=highest principle) of every act must be attainable
    - Golden Rule: If everyone behaved in this way, the goal of the act would remain attainable

Consequentialism

- The only determining factor is the (long-term) **consequences** of the act

- Different theories differ on how to compare the consequences

- Utilitarianism: Maximizing utility and minimizing suffering
  - How to define and measure utility?
  - Happiness, satisfaction, pleasure, preferences, objective values...
  - The distribution of wellfare in society also plays a role

- Other theories: Egoism, altruism,...

- Consequentialism ignores intention

Virtue Ethics

– It evaluates actions according to how a *virtuous individual* would act in a given situation

  – So the standard is the **agent** of the act.

– Aristotle, Plato: Morality comes from the inner strength of the will, all external consequences are secondary
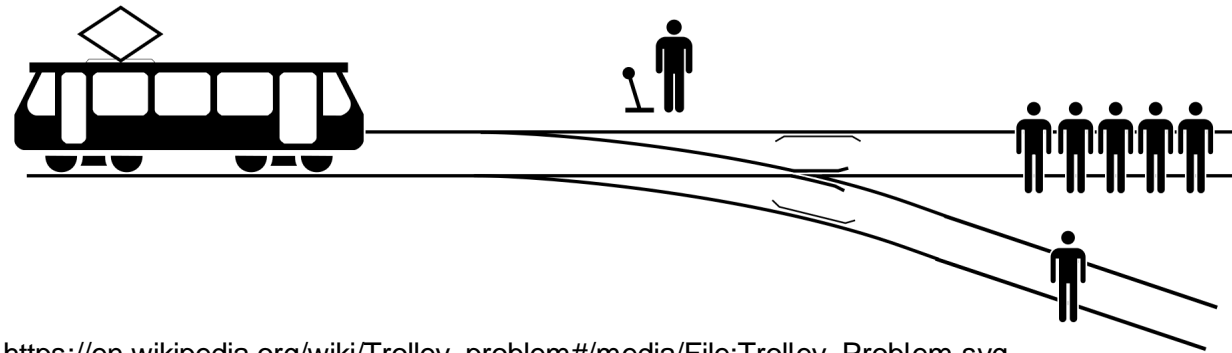
Moral Values and Virtues

– Moral values = principles and standards accepted by groups or individuals that help distinguish right from wrong

– Virtue = a morally good quality

  – A cultivated and habituated tendency to act well

– The opposite is vice = a morally bad trait

  – Also a bad or reprehensible habit

– Values/virtues according to the MUNI Code of Ethics

  – Freedom and responsibility, moral and academic integrity, decency and respect

  – Plurality of opinion, intellectual honesty, critical thinking, mutual respect

  – Objectivity, impartiality, education, rationality, openness, quality, transparency,

  – EC also mentions "vices": bullying, abuse, discrimination, plagiarism, fabrication, falsification

Social Contract Theory

— Enlightenment - the rules of functioning of a (democratic) society

— Rules of interaction in human society
  - Rational individuals choose to accept
  - benefits to the individual and to society as a whole
  - equal opportunities for all

— Absolute vs. limited rights
  - Absolute is e.g. the right to life
  - Limited is e.g. the right to education (depends on the capacity of society)

— Positive vs. negative rights
  - Positive = I can demand (e.g. health care)
    - Thus, it must be determined who has the obligation to ensure that my right is fulfilled
  - Negative = others cannot prevent me (life, freedom of expression)

Moral Machine

– The moral dilemmas of an autonomous vehicle programmer

– https://www.moralmachine.net/

– Based on the trolley problem
  – Do nothing and let the tram kill 5 people
  – Change the switch and take responsibility for the death of 1 person
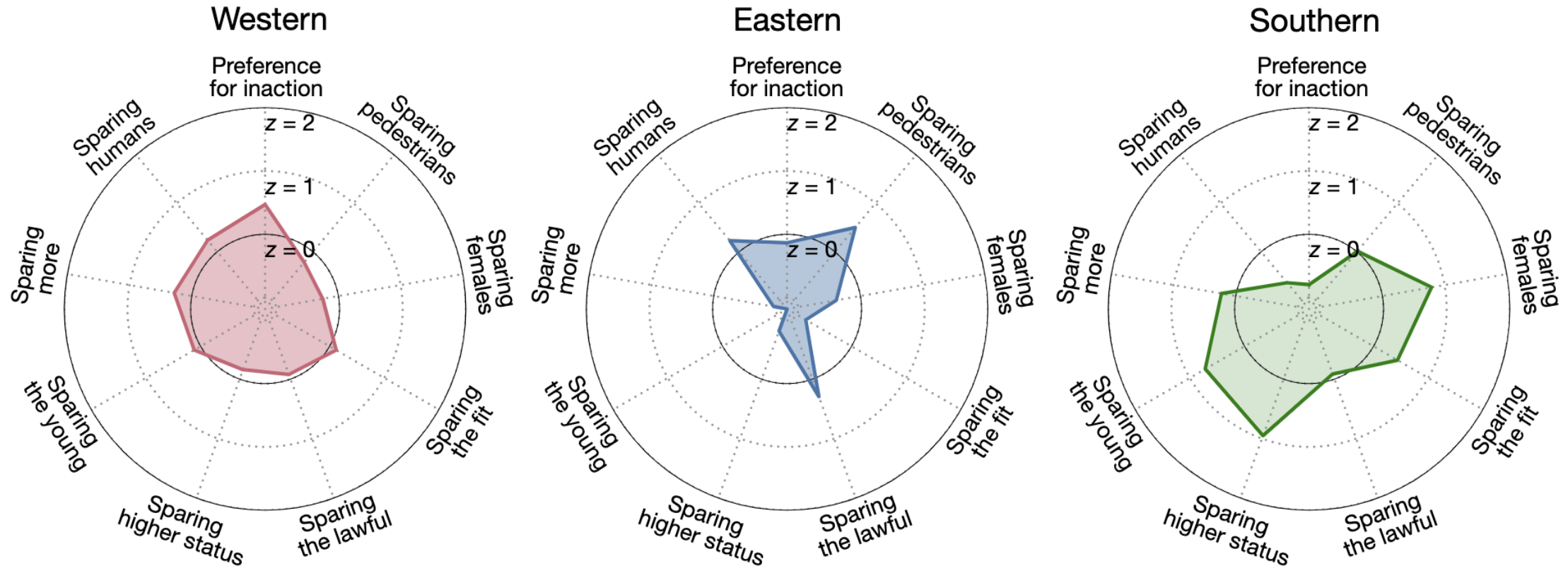

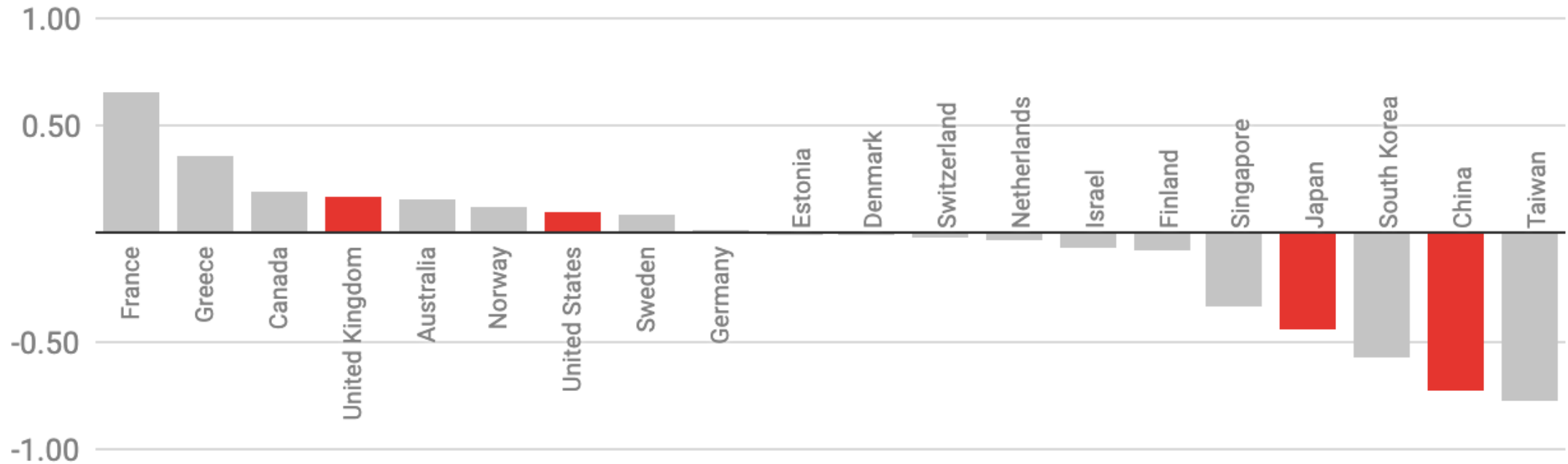https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trolley_problem#/media/File:Trolley_Problem.svg

Global Preference Survey

- Millions of people from 233 countries

- 40 million decisions in moral dilemmas

- Study published in Nature

- The division of the world into three cultural clusters: West, East, South

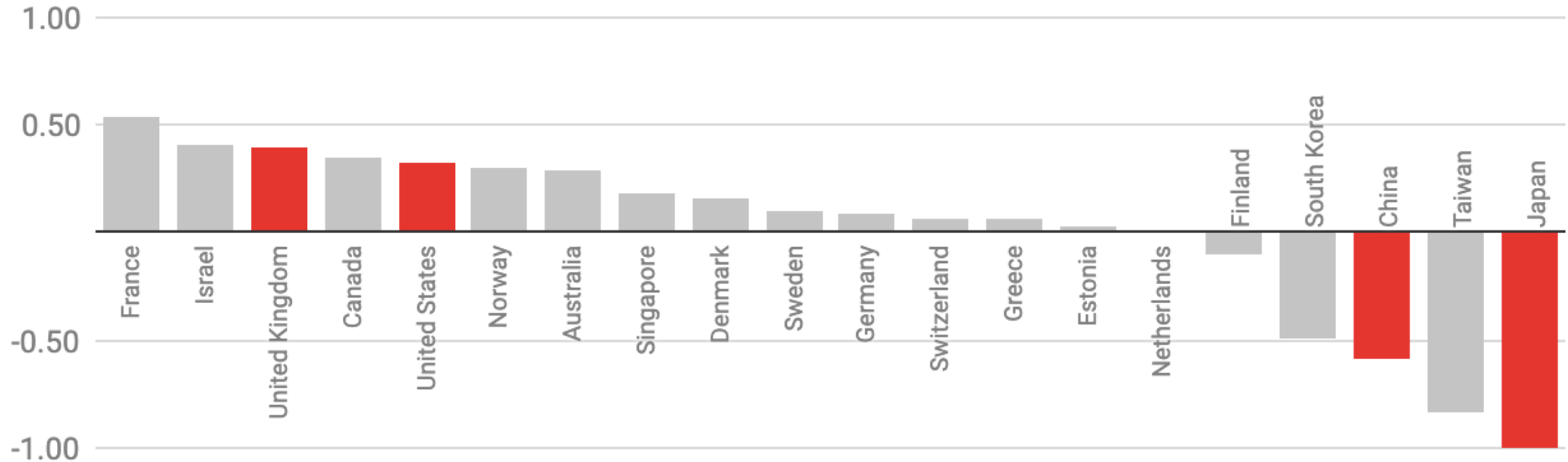# Cultural Clusters: West, East, South
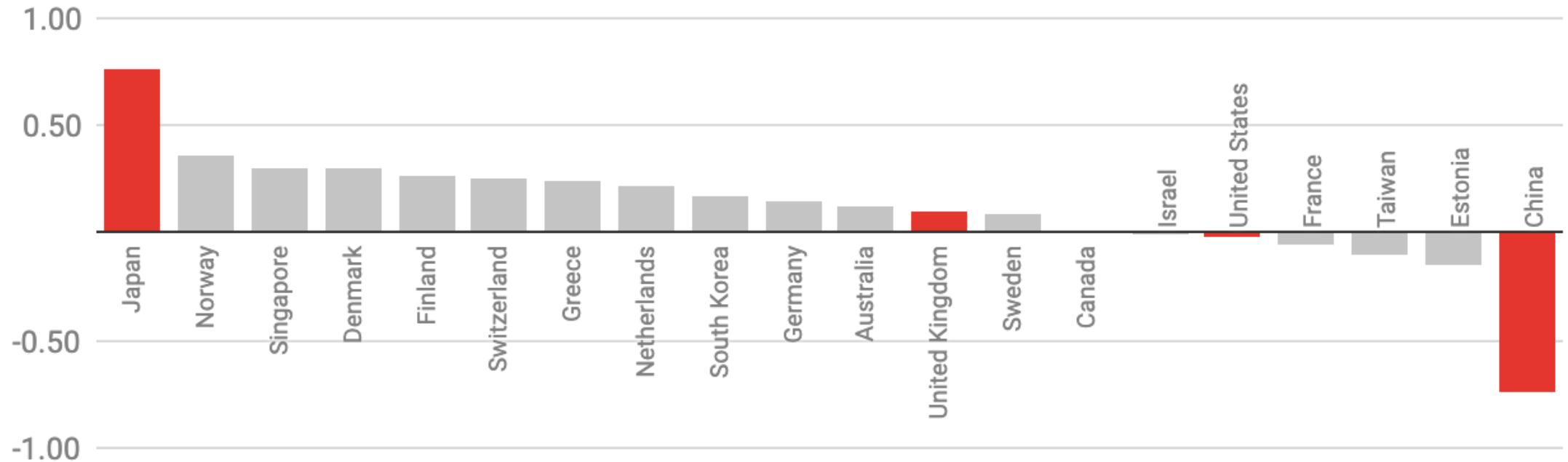
Save the Young, or the Old?

A comparison of countries piloting self-driving cars: If the bar is closer to 1, respondents placed a greater emphasis on sparing the young; if the bar is closer to -1, respondents placed a greater emphasis on sparing the old; 0 is the global average.

Save More Lives?

A comparison of countries piloting self-driving cars: If the bar is closer to 1, respondents placed a greater emphasis on sparing more lives; if the bar is closer to -1, respondents placed a smaller emphasis on sparing more lives; 0 is the global average.

Save Pedestrians, or Passengers?

If the bar is closer to 1, respondents placed a greater emphasis on sparing pedestrians; if the bar is closer to -1, respondents placed a greater emphasis on sparing passengers; 0 is the global average.

Consequences?

For law-makers

For manufacturers

For customers

For pedestrians

For the drivers of other cars

Bridging the Cultural Differences

— What values are universally valid in a globalised world?

— See [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)

Dilemma Game

- Designed at [Erasmus University Rotterdam](#)
- Paper version and app for Android and iPhone
- Originally designed for teaching research integrity

- Description of the situation and four possible outcomes
- Each player chooses one option
- Discussion of the reasons for the decision
- During the discussion, players can change their decision

Dilemma Game: Trolley Problem

I am a programmer in a company that develops systems for autonomous cars. I have to program a system that will determine how the car will behave in the event of an unforeseen event. However, I have no say in this myself, as the whole system has gone through an extensive approval process involving many ethics committees from various international institutions. However, I am aware that it will still be me who will put the system into operation. What should I do?

A. I will not deal with the ethics of the system, I do not feel responsible for the behavior of the system because it was decided without my intervention.

B. I will learn in detail about the approval process, raise relevant questions and objections, but I will do the work even if my objections are rejected.

C. I will learn about the approval process in detail, raise relevant questions and objections, and if the answers are unsatisfactory and my objections are not addressed, I will refuse to do the job, ask to be reassigned or quit.

D. Since I don't want to bear that moral burden, I will ask for reassignment or quit.