



“We humans all have the same five taste receptors, but we don’t all like the same foods....

... It’s the same for moral judgments.”

Jonathan Haidt (2012)

Human Behavior and Sustainable Development

Week 6 - OpenMind

WiSe 2019/2020

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ZENTRUM FÜR
LEHRERBILDUNG UND
SCHULFORSCHUNG

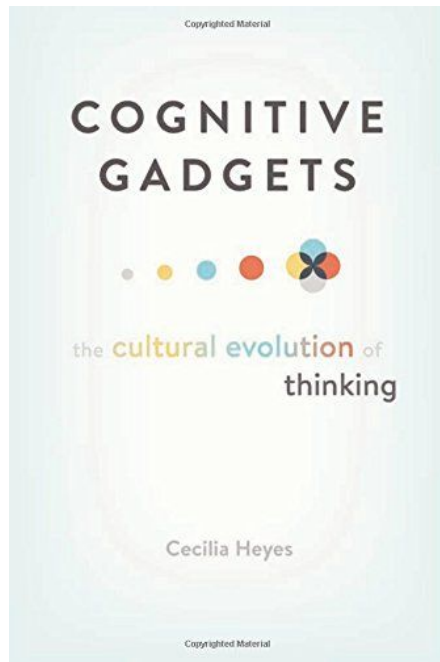
UNIVERSITÄT LEIPZIG



Summary from last week

How much of 'being human' is actually instinctually ingrained in us and how much of it is acquired through culture? How much does our environment and the culture we grow up in influence what we are physically and cognitively capable of?

How flexible are our minds?



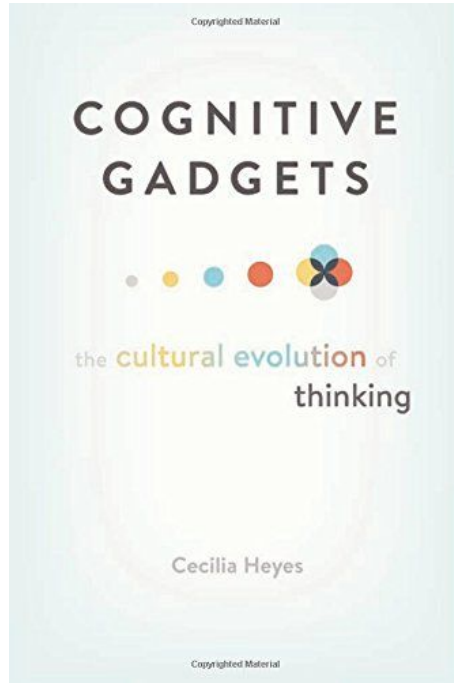
“Cognitive modules”

“classic” Evolutionary Psychology

the mind is, at least in part, composed of **innate neural structures** or modules which have **distinct**, established, and **evolutionarily** developed **functions** (modules for language, for imitation, ...)

Cognitive Gadgets: the human mind has certain **general capabilities**, from which almost all our cultural cognitive capabilities get constructed throughout development (language, imitation, consciousness ...)

→ **“genetic starter kit”**



“Cognitive modules”

“classic” Evolutionary Psychology

The human mind is mostly the product of ***cultural evolution***



The human mind is mostly the product of ***genetic evolution***

Cultural Evolutionary Psychology

Natural selection → Genes →
Brains designed to be shaped by
culture

“Classic” Evolutionary Psychology

Natural selection → Genes → Brains
that understand the world

The human mind is
mostly the product of
cultural evolution



The human mind is
mostly the product
of ***genetic evolution***

Summary from last week

Is mindfulness a form of slow thinking?

Outline

- Moral Foundations Theory
- Teaching materials:
 - Analogy: Moral Taste Buds
 - Noticing our moral taste buds
 - Causes of our moral taste buds
- Causes of behaviors: Tinbergen's questions
- Reflection and discussion



“We humans all have the same five taste receptors, but we don’t all like the same foods....

... It’s the same for moral judgments.”

Jonathan Haidt (2012)



"We humans all have the same five taste receptors, but we don't all like the same foods. (...) Just knowing that everyone has sweetness receptors can't tell you why one person prefers Thai food to Mexican. (...)

It's the same for moral judgments. To understand why people are so divided by moral issues, we can start with an exploration of our common evolutionary heritage, but we'll also have to examine the history of each culture and the childhood socialization of each individual within that culture."

Jonathan Haidt (2012)



What do these pictures have in common?
What human behaviors can we observe?
What do these situations have to do with sustainability?

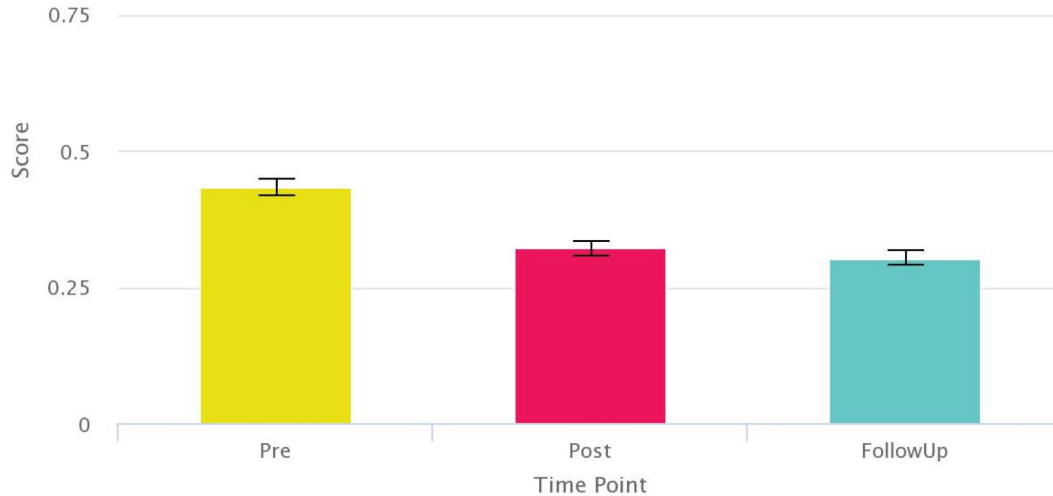
OpenMind online course



- an education program developed to help people understand their minds, take perspective and cultivate constructive conversations about complex issues
- reached more than 17,000 users across almost 40 countries, in high schools and colleges
- Teacher's guide: p. 57-72 (Our Mind)
- Websites: <http://OpenMind.globalesd.org> , <http://openmind.evoleipzig.de> , <https://openmindplatform.org/>



Ingroup-Outgroup Polarization



Taking part in the OpenMind course lead to a more depolarized and more flexible attitude of participants

Next weeks: OpenMind online course



- Follow these instructions (also on Moodle):
- Go to the following link to access OpenMind:
<https://openmindplatform.org/app-user>
- Create a username and password with GuidedTrack. This will enable you to save your progress and log in from different devices.
- After creating your username and password, you will be prompted to enter an access code. Enter: **HanischUniversityofLeipzigF19** (case sensitive).
- if there are problems: e-mail Susi - susan@globalesd.org

Analogy map

= comparing familiar phenomena and unfamiliar/abstract phenomena by common underlying principles, processes etc.

Common principles	Taste buds	“Moral taste buds”

Teaching Material/ Group work

Moral taste buds analogy



Can you think of expressions and proverbs in your language that make an analogy between taste/food and the “goodness” or “badness” of human behaviors?

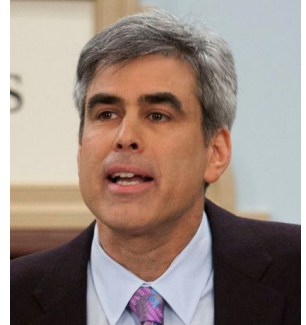
Lesson evaluation and PCK reflections

How is this lesson relevant to ESD (e.g. climate action)? School subjects?

Further questions, comments...

Moral psychology

- basic insight: moral judgment is based primarily on fast and automatic processes, rather than on slow, conscious and rational thinking.
- Moral Foundations Theory (J. Haidt): people across different socio-cultural backgrounds seem to share a number of moral intuitions



Jonathan Haidt



Joshua D. Greene

Six important moral intuitions



Care / Harm

Protecting others from harm, compassion, empathy, Aversion to violence, neglect



Loyalty / Betrayal

Fidelity to one's own group, patriotism, sacrifice for one's own group, Aversion to betrayal, infidelity



Fairness / Cheating

Others should have equal rights, obligations, opportunities
Aversion to cheaters, free riders



Authority / Subversion

Respect for traditions, established institutions, lawful authorities, leadership positions, order, stability, Aversion to instability and change



Liberty/ Oppression

Aversion to oppression, restriction of freedom, deprivation of liberty



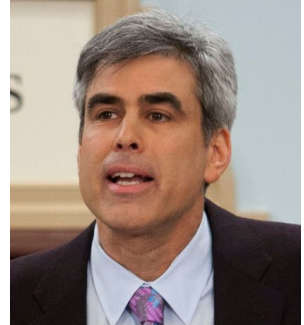
Purity, Sanctity

Adoration of what is considered "pure" and "holy"
Aversion to norm violations and pollution

Do you see some connections to the principles for cooperation?

Moral foundations theory

- Moral Foundations Theory (J. Haidt): people across different socio-cultural backgrounds seem to share a number of moral intuitions
- other potential candidates: "truth", "honesty," or "ownership"
- but: people differ in how strong a moral intuition is in any one situation
E.g. differences between liberals/political left and conservatives/political right



Jonathan Haidt

Moral vocabularies

- Moral intuitions are also associated with certain **emotions**, and this is often reflected in the **choice of words** when people express their opinions about moral issues.
- "That's disgusting", "Shame on you!", "Axis of evil", "That's just unfair", "Stop this rip off!" → people are strongly influenced by their moral intuitions when they speak out on a matter.
- That **alone does not mean that this is bad!** → Emotions matter for our motivations!
- But: moral language distorts facts, simplifies complex issues; people use moral language to win others for one's movement, stir fear and hatred etc.
→ Awareness of moral language in people's opinions

Moral vocabulary

Claims of fact	Claims of value/morality	Claims of policy
factual, historical, causal, predictive claims	Opinions “It is unethical/ wrong/right/ outrageous...”	Often derived from facts+values “We should (not)...” “We oppose...” “We advocate...”

Moral vocabulary

The language people use can tell us about the role of moral intuitions in their opinions and arguments

Harm	Fairness	Liberty	Loyalty	Authority	Purity
cruel defend protect suffer endanger	equal fair justice rights discriminate tolerant	free sovereign liberate control force oppress	collective loyal together unite enemy betray	duty honor respect tradition	preserve pure contaminate disease disgust

Adapted from Moral Foundations Dictionary: <http://moralfoundations.org/othermaterials>

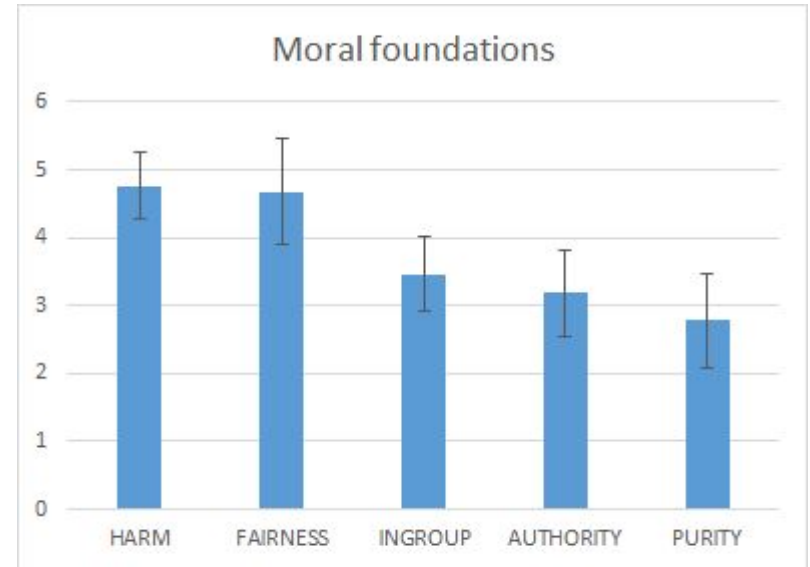
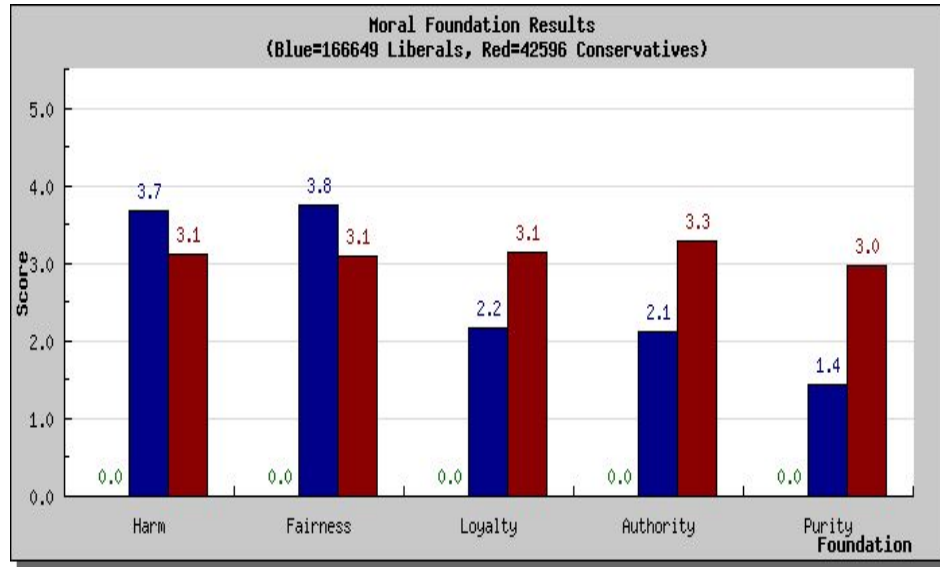
Teaching Material/ Group work

Noticing moral intuitions

Election posters: a source for noticing moral language!



Moral Foundations Questionnaire



Moral Foundations Questionnaire
(n=21, ZLS module 2016)

http://www.yourmorals.org/5f_new2_process.php

Lesson evaluation and PCK reflections

How is this lesson relevant to ESD? School subjects?

Further questions, comments...

Causes of our moral taste buds

- **Evolutionary history:** Do our animal relatives have such moral intuitions?
- **Development:** Are we born with these moral intuitions? How do they develop?
- **Immediate mechanisms:** What environmental factors trigger our moral intuitions, how do they work in the body?
- **Function:** Were these moral intuitions good for something? Did they have a function for survival in our evolutionary history? How do these moral intuitions function today?

Lesson evaluation and PCK reflections

How is this lesson relevant to ESD? School subjects?

Further questions, comments...

Tinbergen's Questions in behavioral biology

Our behaviors have many causes, from immediately prior factors, to events in our individual past, to factors in our cultural and evolutionary history.

Tinbergen's questions are a helpful heuristic for exploring and sorting these different types of causes into four categories



Ethologist
Niko
Tinbergen
(1907-1988)

Tinbergen's Questions

Tinbergen's questions are a helpful heuristic for exploring and sorting these different types of causes into four categories:

- **Immediate** triggers and proximate physiological mechanisms
- Causes in the **development** of individuals
- Causes in ancestral (**cultural and evolutionary**) history
- Causes that are related to the **function** or adaptive value of the behavior and that cause an individual to repeat the behavior (or not), or that lead to the behavior becoming more or less common in a population.



Ethologist
Niko
Tinbergen
(1907-1988)

Tinbergen's Questions

We can use Tinbergen's questions to explore the causes of pretty much any human behavior/trait!



Ethologist
Niko
Tinbergen
(1907-1988)

Evolutionary history: Moral intuitions/social emotions across species

- Roots of empathy (care, harm) with mammals (care for offspring)
- Roots of fairness in social animals (aggression and frustration around resource distribution, motivation to share with others - primates, dogs/wolves, etc.)
- Roots of liberty/oppression and authority/subversion in social animals with social hierarchy
- Roots of loyalty/betrayal with between-group competition
- Roots of disgust with avoidance behavior (need to avoid pathogens)



Role of development

- Are we born with these moral intuitions?
- Or: How do they develop over a lifetime?

Role of development

Video tip / Idea for
project (lesson)



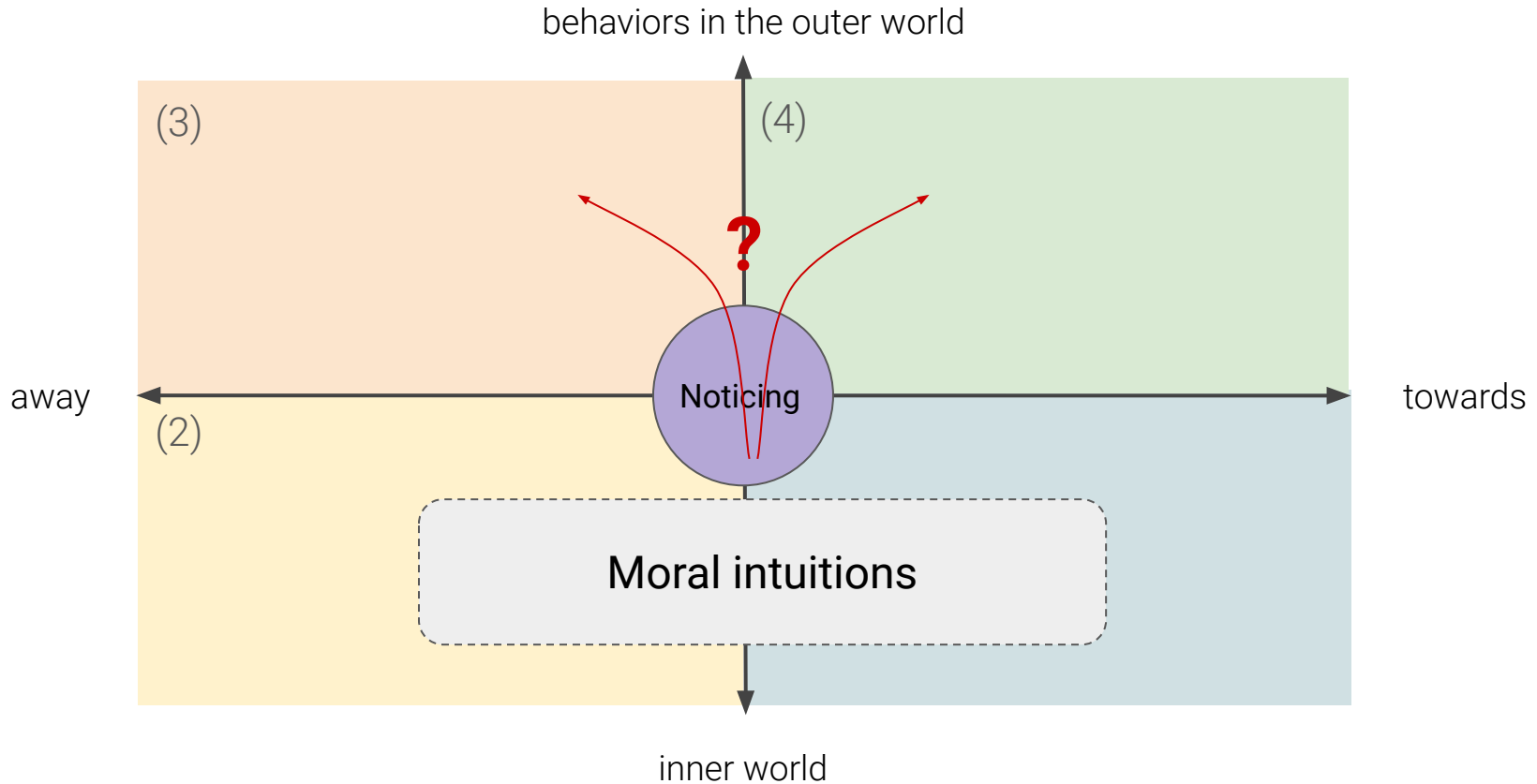
<https://youtu.be/FRvVFW85lcU>

Role of development/individual experience

Classroom idea: Stories of people who have joined radical movements (but then left)

- By what circumstances did this person become part of a radical movement?
- What circumstances led this person to change their previous attitudes and leave the movement?
- What role do the **human need for belonging, identity and respect**, as well as **moral intuitions**, play in this story?
- What role do the **human capacities for flexibility, empathy and learning** play in the story?
- What important conclusions do you draw from the experiences and insights of the person?
 - What can we do to ensure that people do not succumb to radical beliefs or join radical groups?
 - How should we treat people who have radical beliefs or belong to a radical group?

The Prosocial Matrix



Morality binds and blinds

- common purpose and values bind people together (see CDP 1)
- “Hivemind”, ecstasy
- even trivial social markers (color of T-Shirt ...) can make us “groupish”



Morality binds and blinds

- Disgust, sometimes hatred, towards “them”
- Being in a “moral matrix” or bubble
- even trivial social markers (color of T-shirt) can make us feel positive towards “us” and negative towards “them”
- → violating CDP 8?



Morality binds and **blinds**

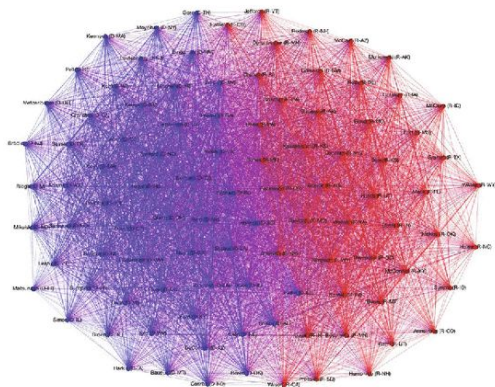
American politics: increasing polarization

Senators casting the same votes

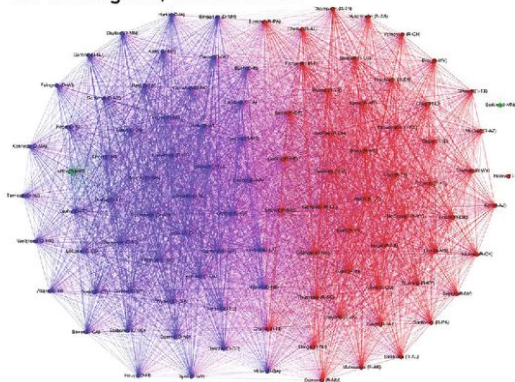
Democrat

Republican

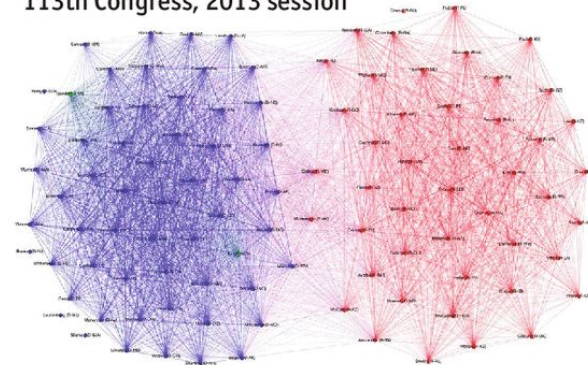
101st Congress, 1989 session



107th Congress, 2002 session



113th Congress, 2013 session



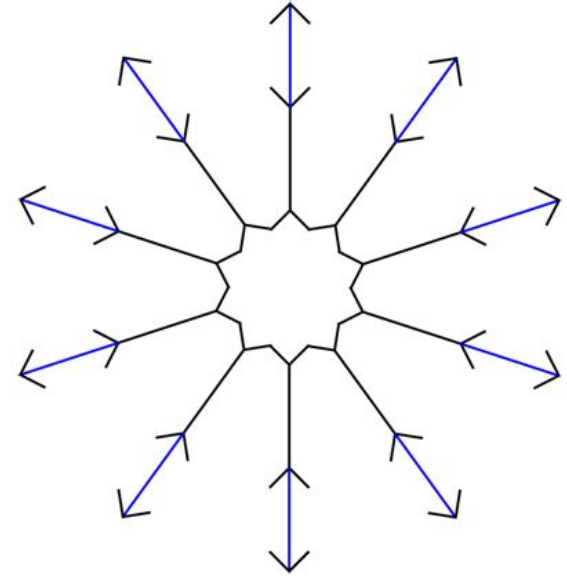
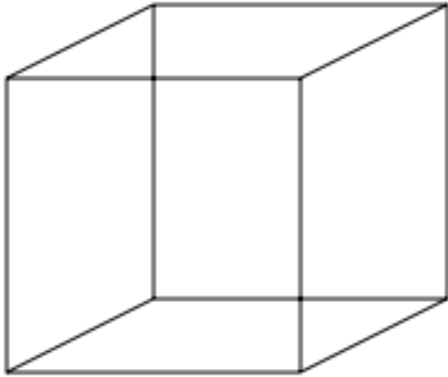
Sources: GovTrack.us, Renzo Lucioni

Independent

Blue dress or white dress?



Different kinds of illusions



How might we use our understanding of the different kinds of optical illusions to increase perspective taking around moral issues?

Project work ideas

- Experiments on sense of fairness and other moral intuitions
 - across species
 - across development
 - across cultures
- Do humans voluntarily share with a stranger? (→ fairness)
- “Fair” does not always mean the same thing (→ fairness)
- Do humans return lost wallets to their owners? (→ honesty, empathy)

Recommended readings

- Teacher Guide p. 62-66, 81-83
- Global ESD pages:
 - OpenMind: <http://OpenMind.globalesd.org>
 - [Teaching Tools / Tinbergen's questions](#)
 - Human Evolution: [Life in Groups](#), [Life with other groups](#)
- EvoLeipzig Website:
 - [OpenMind / Moralische Intuitionen](#)
 - [OpenMind / Wahre Geschichten](#)
 - Menschliche Evolution: [Leben in Gruppen](#) , [Leben mit anderen Gruppen](#)

Homework

OpenMind Step 5 (last)

End of class reflections

What were the most important things you learned today? What was most interesting, surprising, meaningful?

How did today's lesson change your thinking about the following questions:

- How do our minds influence our ability to cooperate towards shared goals?
- Why might it be important for sustainability education to teach and learn about our mind?

What was confusing about today's lesson? What questions do you still have that remain unanswered?