

The roots of virtue: A cross-cultural lexical analysis

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Abstract

Although the notion of virtue is increasingly prominent in psychology, the way it has been studied and conceptualised has been relatively Western-centric, and does not fully account for variations in how it has been understood cross-culturally. As such, an enquiry was conducted into ideas relating to virtue found across the world's cultures, focusing specifically on so-called untranslatable words. Through a quasi-systematic search of academic and grey literature, together with conceptual snowballing and crowd-sourced suggestions, over 200 relevant terms were located. An adapted grounded theory analysis identified five themes which together provide an insight into the "roots" of virtue (i.e., the main sources from which it appears to spring): virtue itself (the concept of it); considerateness (caring about it); wisdom (knowing what it consists of); agency (managing to be/do it); and skill (mastery of the preceding elements). The results help shed further light on the potential dynamics of this important phenomenon.

Keywords: virtue, wellbeing, cross-cultural, language.

Introduction

Mainstream psychology has been charged with being rather Western-centric, influenced by the mainly Western contexts in which it has primarily developed (Becker & Marecek, 2008). “Mainstream” in this context refers to the field as a global endeavour (e.g., with international journals and conferences). There have been, and still are, “ethnopsychologies” across the globe; however, Danziger (2006) suggests that the international dominance of the United States since the Second World War has meant that psychology as studied and practised there has been exported globally, to the extent that it now constitutes the hegemonic “mainstream” iteration of the discipline. Thus, concepts, ideologies, priorities, and methods associated with American psychology have come to dominate the international scene. Furthermore, much of the empirical work within this mainstream has involved participants described by Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan (2010) as WEIRD, belonging to societies that are Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich and Democratic. Moreover, many scholars themselves are situated within such contexts, which will influence their perception and interpretation of the world. To give an example that is particularly germane to the present paper, American English is the default language in the field, and as nearly a century of extensive research on the ‘linguistic relativity hypothesis’ has shown, this linguistic bias strongly shapes people’s psychological functioning (e.g., perceptions of time or colour) (Lucy, 1997). Academia has developed methodological ways of addressing such biases, including efforts towards facilitating objectivity (particularly in quantitative paradigms), and encouraging reflexivity (especially in qualitative paradigms) (Finlay & Gough, 2003). However, even with such measures in place, critics argue that the field is still biased towards Western ways of thinking and understanding the world (e.g., its emphasis on individualism) (Becker & Marecek, 2008). As such, the field would benefit from developing greater cross-cultural engagement, awareness, and understanding. This paper aims to contribute to this process, doing so by focusing specifically on virtue.

Virtue

Virtue has been of interest to fields such as moral philosophy for centuries, and continues to be through across diverse fields, as reflected in Snow's (2017) recent Oxford Handbook of Virtue (in which Pettigrove (2017, p.371), for instance, defines it as "persisting excellence of character that could serve the good"). More recently, it has also become a focus of attention in psychology. One of the most prominent systematic psychological approaches to virtue is found in positive psychology, particularly in the burgeoning paradigm of character strengths, and specifically the Values-in-Action (VIA) initiative (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). This is of course not the only approach to virtues in the field; for instance, Haidt and colleagues have generated a fruitful programme of enquiry in this area, which includes attempting to understand political differences on the basis of moral intuitions (e.g., Haidt & Joseph, 2007). Nevertheless, the VIA has attracted considerable attention, and is widely used and researched (even if only mainly by scholars within positive psychology), which makes it of interest here.

The intention of the VIA was to create a taxonomy of strengths, described as "positive traits that a person owns, celebrates, and frequently uses" (Peterson & Park, 2009, p.29). This was envisioned as a comprehensive framework for understanding the ways people thrive and flourish, offering a "positive" counterpart to the deficit-based classificatory systems such as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. Over a three-year period, researchers collaborated to arrive at a schema featuring 24 distinct strengths (Dahlsgaard, Peterson, & Seligman, 2005). The selection was guided by 12 criteria (Peterson & Seligman, 2004): (1) ubiquity (cross-culturally); (2) fulfilling (contributes to flourishing); (3) morally valued (in its own right, not merely instrumentally); (4) does not diminish others (evoking elevating admiration rather than jealousy); (5) non-felicitous opposite (has negative antonyms); (6) traitlike (an individual difference with generality and stability); (7) measurable (empirically); (8) distinctiveness (not redundant, conceptually or empirically,

with other strengths); (9) paragons (strikingly embodied in exemplary individuals); (10) prodigies (precociously shown by some youth); (11) selective absence (missing in some people); and (12) institutions (a deliberate target for cultivation by social practices and rituals). The premise of the theory is that people are more likely to flourish if they use and develop their particular strengths, as has been corroborated in contexts ranging from education (Proctor et al., 2011) to the workplace (Gander, Proyer, Ruch, & Wyss, 2012).

Crucially, for our purposes here, these character strengths were selected and defined, in part, by their implication of virtue. While moral and social desirability were not necessary conditions for the inclusion of a strength, they were certainly key determinants (McGrath, Greenberg, & Hall-Simmonds, 2017). This implication was highlighted by Dahlsgaard et al. (2005), who ordered the 24 strengths according to a class of fundamental virtues. These were assessed as having been valorised throughout history and across cultures, as identified in foundational texts from eight moral and religious traditions (Athenian philosophy, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Taoism). Having identified six virtues, the strengths were distributed among them as follows: (1) wisdom and knowledge (creativity, judgement, perspective, curiosity, and love of learning); (2) courage (bravery, perseverance, honesty, and zest); (3) humanity (love, kindness, and social intelligence); (4) justice (teamwork, fairness, and leadership); (5) temperance (forgiveness, humility, prudence, and self-regulation); and (6) transcendence (appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humour, and spirituality).

In this initial analysis, the identification of virtues, and the distribution of strengths among them, proceeded on intuitive and theoretical grounds. Subsequently, scholars have brought other tools to bear on the VIA, notably factor analysis. Various component solutions have been identified. Ruch and Proyer (2015) obtained a reasonable fit for the proposed six factor classification, while other studies arrived at five-, four-, three-, and two-factor

solutions. Five-factor solutions include: interpersonal strengths, cognitive strengths, fortitude, temperance, and transcendence (Peterson, Park, Pole, D'Andrea, & Seligman, 2008; McGrath, 2014); interpersonal strengths, intellectual strengths, emotional strengths, strengths of restraint, and theological strengths (Ruch et al., 2010; Littman-Ovadia & Lavy, 2012; Azañedo, Fernández-Abascal, & Barraca, 2014); and interpersonal strengths, intellectual strengths, civic strengths, self-assurance, theological strengths (Singh & Choubisa, 2010). Four-factor solutions include: interpersonal strengths, fortitude, vitality, and cautiousness (Brdar & Kashdan, 2010); social strengths, intellectual strengths, temperance strengths, and transcendence strengths (Shryack et al., 2010); agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, and theological strengths (Park & Peterson, 2005); and positivity, intellect, conscientiousness, and niceness (Macdonald, Bore, & Munro, 2008). McGrath (2015b) and McGrath et al. (2017) identified a three-factor solution of caring, inquisitiveness, and self-control. Finally, Peterson (2006) obtained a two-factor solution – corroborated by Ruch et al. (2010) – where the first factor contrasts strengths of the ‘heart’ (emotional expression) versus of the ‘mind’ (intellectual restraint), and the second contrasts self-focused versus other-focused strengths.

Clearly, the solutions have considerable overlaps, and many factors actually share the same labels. Moreover, these articles indicate that solutions other than the one settled on could have been obtained, since determining the optimal solution is partly a judgement call (albeit one based on well-established procedures, such as tests of model fit in confirmatory factor analysis; Schreiber et al., 2006). For instance, McGrath (2015b) explores the merits of one-, two-, three-, four-, and five-component solutions, before justifying his preference for a three-factor solution. That said, he identifies, at the broadest level of analysis, a single factor of “good character,” encompassing all elements of positive functioning. This refracts into two second-tier components, goodness and inquisitiveness, which pertain to moral concern and intellectual interest respectively. Goodness then refracts still further, subdividing into caring

and self-control, thereby providing McGrath's three-component solution. Interestingly, McGrath states he was keen to find "common ground" between virtue perspectives that are "psychological" (i.e., psychometric self-report data) and "cultural" (i.e., valued historically) (p.408). Thus, his decisions around the component solution was based partly on "intuitive appeal," picking a solution "consistent with culturally meaningful concepts of virtue." For instance, he was influenced by the Aristotelian notion of three pathways through which excellence leads to fulfilment: social, intellectual, and productive (Curren, 2008).

So, there is a burgeoning literature on the nature and structure of virtue. However, to some extent this literature suffers from the issue raised above, namely Western-centricity, as the scholars involved have recognised (McGrath, 2015). That is not to say the research has lacked a cross-cultural dimension. The original six-factor structure for the VIA was obtained by consulting traditions from across the world (Dahlsgaard et al., 2005), while the studies above cover numerous countries, not only the USA (Peterson et al., 2008; Shryack et al., 2010; McGrath, 2014), but also India (Singh & Choubisa, 2010), Australia (Macdonald et al., 2008), Germany (Ruch et al., 2010), Spain (Azañedo et al., 2014), Israel (Littman-Ovadia & Lavy, 2012), and Croatia (Brdar & Kashdan, 2010). However, as McGrath (2015b) points out, participants in most of those studies could be deemed "WEIRD" (Henrich et al., 2010). Moreover, the VIA initiative is driven by a concern with developing a universally applicable framework, featuring constructs that appear to be shared across cultures. As such, there may be merit in also looking for virtue-related constructs that have *not* necessarily been shared as such, but are potentially unique to a particular culture. Such concepts can be identified in the form of "untranslatable" words.

Untranslatable Words

Before outlining the significance of untranslatable words, it will help to situate this paper more generally with respect to cross-cultural scholarship. It is common to differentiate cross-

cultural research into “universalist” and “relativist” positions (with Berry, Poortinga, Segall, and Dasen (2011) further separating these into extreme and moderate versions). The universalist perspective – evident in many studies above – aims to identify universal aspects of psychological functioning, possessed irrespective of cultural location. Such work is usually guided by positivist epistemologies, highlighting how people globally share similarities across human processes, including virtues and strengths (McGrath, 2015a). Conversely, relativist scholars tend to endorse some form of social constructionism. However, many scholars tread a middle ground, acknowledging universals, but also recognising that these can be shaped by cultural context. This ground is reflected in Berry et al.’s (2011) identification of “moderate universalism,” namely work that “emphasises that there exist both differences and similarities in behaviour across cultures” (p.8).

One can identify this middle ground in some VIA studies. For instance, McGrath (2015a) reviewed VIA assessments across 75 countries. Although the report largely endorsed the universality of the VIA, it also acknowledged cultural variation in the prominence of particular virtues and strengths. The present paper likewise aligns with this middle-ground. It takes seriously cultural diversity, recognising variation in the way cultures experience and understand virtue (and life more broadly). Yet it eschews the idea that people do not share some universal qualities and concerns. Moreover, it suggests that cultures can *learn* from the variation that does exist, including discovering new ideas and practices that may be relevant to one’s own culture. One way of doing so is through engaging with untranslatable words.

Although untranslatability is a contested phenomenon, it generally refers to a word that lacks an exact equivalent in a given other language. (Please see Lomas (in press) for a more detailed theoretical consideration of the nature of untranslatability.) Interest in such words is manifold. First, they can assist in understanding other cultures’ values, traditions, and ways of being (Wierzbicka, 1997). The theoretical context here is the aforementioned

linguistic relativity hypothesis (LRH) – sometimes referred to as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, following the influential work of Sapir (1929) and Whorf (1940) – which holds that language influences how people experience, understand, and perceive the world. As one might imagine, within the broadly-constituted LRH are diverse positions that to an extent map onto the universalist-relativist spectrum outlined above.

Stronger formulations of the LRH veer towards Berry et al.'s (2011) “extreme relativism,” endorsing forms of determinism whereby language inextricably constitutes thought. In relation to untranslatable words, this view implies that only people enmeshed within the culture that produced a given word can truly understand or experience the phenomenon it refers to. For instance, Taylor (1985) argues there is no way out of the “hermeneutic circle,” in which concepts can only be understood with reference to others in that language. He writes, “We can often experience what it is like to be on the outside [of the circle] when we encounter the feeling, action, and experiential meaning language of another civilization. Here there is no translation, no way of explaining in other, more accessible concepts” (p.23-24). However, other perspectives are situated further along the spectrum towards “moderate relativism” and even “moderate universalism.” From these stances, such words may to an extent be comprehensible to people outside the culture, holding some universal relevance. For instance, Wierzbicka (1999) suggests we can indeed approximate a feel for what untranslatable words refer to. One may not appreciate the full nuanced richness of a term compared to people “inside” the culture, as “verbal explanations of such concepts cannot replace experiential familiarity with them and with their functioning in the local ‘stream of life’” (p.8). Yet, “it is not true that no verbal explanations illuminating to outsiders are possible at all.” Even without understanding a word’s full panoply of meanings and uses in its original language, something of its nature may yet be appreciated.

The current paper aligns with this latter stance. And, in that sense, beyond just being informative vis-à-vis the culture that created the word, such words can enrich *other* lexica. This phenomenon of cultures “borrowing” words is central to language development. Indeed, of the more than 600,000 lexemes in the OED, the percentage of borrowed words is estimated to be as high as 41% (Tadmor, 2009). Such borrowings are known as “loanwords,” although more specific terminology identifies varying levels of assimilation into the host language. Of particular interest here is *why* words are borrowed. Many are what Haspelmath (2009) calls “loanwords by necessity,” where the recipient language lacks its own word for a particular referent (e.g., if a new practice or idea is introduced to a culture). Thus, the loanword is used for pragmatic reasons, allowing speakers to articulate concepts they previously struggled to. In Lehrer’s (1974) terminology, such words fill “semantic gaps,” namely “the lack of a convenient word to express what [one] wants to speak about” (p.105). Such gaps are what make words untranslatable, indicating phenomena that have been overlooked or undervalued by one’s own culture, but which another culture has identified and labelled.

From that perspective, such words can enrich the English lexicon, and enhance the nomological network in fields like psychology. This is desirable, given the aforementioned point that academic psychology tends to be Western-centric. That is, its nomological network largely involves concepts that have been identified in English. It would therefore be useful to augment this network with constructs which have not yet been identified, as signalled by an untranslatable word. Indeed, such augmentation has already occurred, in a limited way, for decades, with psychology borrowing selectively from other languages – “other” from the perspective of English, the dominant mode of communication in the field – notably German (e.g., Gestalt), Greek (e.g., eudaimonia), and Latin (e.g., ego). (Such borrowing becomes more extensive when you consider that much of the terminology that is regarded as English, rather than a loanword, in fact derives from Greek, including “psychology” itself.)

That said, encouraging cross-cultural exploration of other lexica does not mean such borrowing is straightforward. Structuralism and post-structuralism have shown that words are embedded within complex networks that endow them with meaning, including associations that one could only appreciate by being enmeshed within that culture (Wierzbicka, 1999). As such, if a word is transplanted to another context, this network will not be retained. Even so, something of its nature may yet be appraised. For instance, the Sanskrit loanword *karma* has been borrowed to refer broadly to causality with respect to ethics. Most English speakers probably do not know how it relates to other Sanskrit terms, nor its wealth of meanings in Hindu and Buddhist teachings (e.g., in relation to the rich repository of insight and guidance found in the *dharma*, the Buddhist path). Nevertheless, they evidently find the word useful, and deploy it in ways not completely discordant with its original meanings. Moreover, in the process of borrowing, words organically form connections with relevant concepts in the *new* language (e.g., *karma* being understood through ideas around sin and justice).

As such, untranslatable words can help psychology deepen its understanding of the person, even if the way it defines and deploys such terms diverges from how they are used in their original context. To that end, this paper looks to refine our understanding of virtue by considering untranslatable words that relate to this topic. Its two research questions are: (a) what concepts pertaining to virtue can be identified in other languages that have not been similarly identified in English (as signalled by an untranslatable word); and (b) what are their implications for our understanding of virtue?

Methods

Background to the Study

The context for this paper is recent work by Lomas (2016), who is developing a lexicography of untranslatable words relating to wellbeing. The lexicography's central premise is that such words can enhance the nomological network in psychology, as elucidated above. In the paper

establishing the lexicography, Lomas (2016) identified 216 untranslatable words pertaining to wellbeing through a “quasi-systematic” review of academic sources and grey literature (i.e., outside conventional academic channels, like websites focused on untranslatable words). This original study did not undertake a conventional systematic review of its topic, mainly because there were deemed an insufficient number of papers in academic psychology journals to permit that. Nevertheless, it deployed a systematic search process, hence *quasi-systematic*. Readers interested in this process are encouraged to consult this original paper; suffice it to say that the process included several protocols, e.g., examining the first 20 websites returned when entering “untranslatable words” into Google. Once the 216 words had been identified, suitably robust definitions were sought through various means, including on-line dictionaries, peer-reviewed academic sources (across all fields of academia), and bilingual colleagues.

The words and their definitions were then analysed using a variation of grounded theory (GT), a qualitative methodology which allows theory to emerge inductively from the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It was a variation of GT in that it followed its three main coding stages (open, axial, and selective). In a process of open coding, the data – the words and their definitions – were examined for emergent themes. This phase was assisted by other GT processes such as memoing and initial theorising. Then, axial coding involved comparing themes in a process of constant comparison, and grouping these into categories based on conceptual similarity. Six main categories were produced, which in turn paired into three meta-categories: feelings (positive and ambivalent), relationships (love and pro-sociality), and development (virtue/character and spirituality). Finally, selective coding saw the identification of a single “core” category, which in that case was wellbeing. Applying GT to a lexical data-set in this way is somewhat unconventional, and may not meet some people’s expectations of what GT is or should be. That said, there is great heterogeneity in the studies purporting to use GT (Cutcliffe, 2005), and arguably Lomas’s analysis is sufficiently aligned

with GT principles to be considered one such example. Alternatively, one may prefer just to regard it as a version of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) that “borrows” from GT.

Subsequent Data Collection and Analysis

Subsequent to Lomas’s (2016) initial paper, the lexicography has expanded to nearly 1,000 words. This is partly through crowd-sourced contributions to a website created to host the project (www.drtilomas.com/lexicography), and partly through follow-up enquiries by the current author via what might be termed “conceptual snowballing.” Roughly, of the nearly 800 words collected since the initial paper, 500 have been provided by website visitors, and 300 through conceptual snowballing. The term snowballing derives from study recruitment, where participants facilitate the participation of additional people. This metaphor of has been borrowed to reflect the way enquiries into an untranslatable word might lead a researcher to encounter related concepts. For instance, although nearly 100 languages are represented in the lexicography, many words hail from a select group that are particularly well-studied in psychologically-oriented literature, consisting of Chinese, French, German, Greek, Japanese, Pāli, and Sanskrit. Thus, an enquiry into a word from these languages would often lead the researcher to a text in which related words are discussed. Such words would then also be added to the lexicography.

In thus adding a word – whether based on a suggestion to the website, or through snowballing – the same checking procedure was followed as in Lomas’s (2016) initial paper. Definitions were sought through various means, including on-line dictionaries, peer-reviewed academic sources, and bilingual colleagues. Moreover, once these words and their definitions had been added to the lexicography, they were then accessible on the website for public inspection. In some instances, people with knowledge of the word and language in question then provided feedback, suggesting a refined or augmented definition of the word. (At a rough estimate, of the nearly 2,000 messages to the website so far, around 300 have related

and led to the amending of a definition.) This peer and public feedback provides – in addition to that from bilingual colleagues – a further credibility check (which is valued in GT).

That said, it must be acknowledged that this subsequent phase of data collection and analysis could not be regarded as systematic (not even in the “quasi-systematic” sense of Lomas’s (2016) original paper). The spirit of the lexicography is an evolving resource that will always be a work-in-progress. After all, there are some 7,000 languages in existence, and it is unlikely that any one research project could study them all and retrieve their relevant words. However, that does not mean one cannot usefully analyse the lexicography’s existing words and emergent themes/categories, even if such analyses are incomplete and subject to revision. Indeed, despite the addition of around 800 new words since Lomas’s original paper, these have not altered the overall thematic structure created in that paper, with the words being accommodated within its framework of meta-categories and categories. In that respect, subsequent work on the expanded lexicography has resulted in publications focusing on four of the six categories identified in the original paper: spirituality (Lomas, 2018a), love (Lomas, 2018b), positive emotions (Lomas, 2017b), and ambivalent emotions (Lomas, 2018c). To that end, the current paper focuses on the category of virtue/character, which comprises over 200 words at present.

These words were once again analysed using the GT variation developed in Lomas’s (2016) original paper. Once again, the data comprised a set of words and their definitions. These definitions had been refined and checked in the ways outlined above (e.g., consulting dictionaries, peer-reviewed sources, and bilingual speakers, together with website feedback). In the first stage of open coding, the words and their definitions were examined for thematic content. Next, words were grouped together through constant comparison into five themes. This process could be described as intuitive, evolving, and iterative, both in terms of how words were aggregated into themes, and how the themes were conceptualised. In terms of

aggregating words into themes, this process could be deemed intuitive since, unlike in factor analysis (with its recourse to statistical techniques), choosing which thematic structure provides the “best fit” for the data mainly relies on the researcher’s informed judgement (with the author being the sole researcher). In that respect, it was a judgement that evolved. For instance, some themes here include subthemes, such as “considerateness” (which involves “awareness” and “care”), and agency (which involves “willpower” and “self-control”). At early stages in the analysis, thought was given to having these subthemes be themes in their own right. However, aggregating them into larger composite themes ultimately seemed the most parsimonious solution. The process was also iterative, with the thematic labels being revised, including in response to the peer review process. For instance, the fourth theme was initially called “autonomy,” and then “self-determination, before “agency” was settled upon as optimal on the advice of a reviewer. However, it is acknowledged that this analytic process is somewhat idiosyncratic, shaped by the personal inclinations and perspectives of the author. For example, the fifth theme is labelled “skill,” mainly based on how the idea of skilfulness is used in Buddhist teachings (as discussed below). Thus, other researchers could easily have chosen to configure and label the themes differently, based on their own situatedness and reading of the data. Finally, a single “core” category was generated, namely virtue. A version of this core category had been in mind from the start of the analysis, so it cannot be deemed a truly inductively-derived core category. That said, prior to the analysis undertaken for this present paper, the category had been labelled “character.” However, subsequently it was renamed “virtue,” as this was a better fit with the themes generated inductively here.

Results and Discussion

The words analysed fell into five broad themes: virtue; considerateness; wisdom; agency; and skill. Collectively, one might regard these as the “roots” of virtue, i.e., the main sources from which virtue springs. These are illustrated in figure 1 below, which is not intended to be

sequential or circular, but rather implies that all themes are interlinked (as indicated by the double-headed arrows). The themes are discussed in turn below, featuring a selection of relevant words.

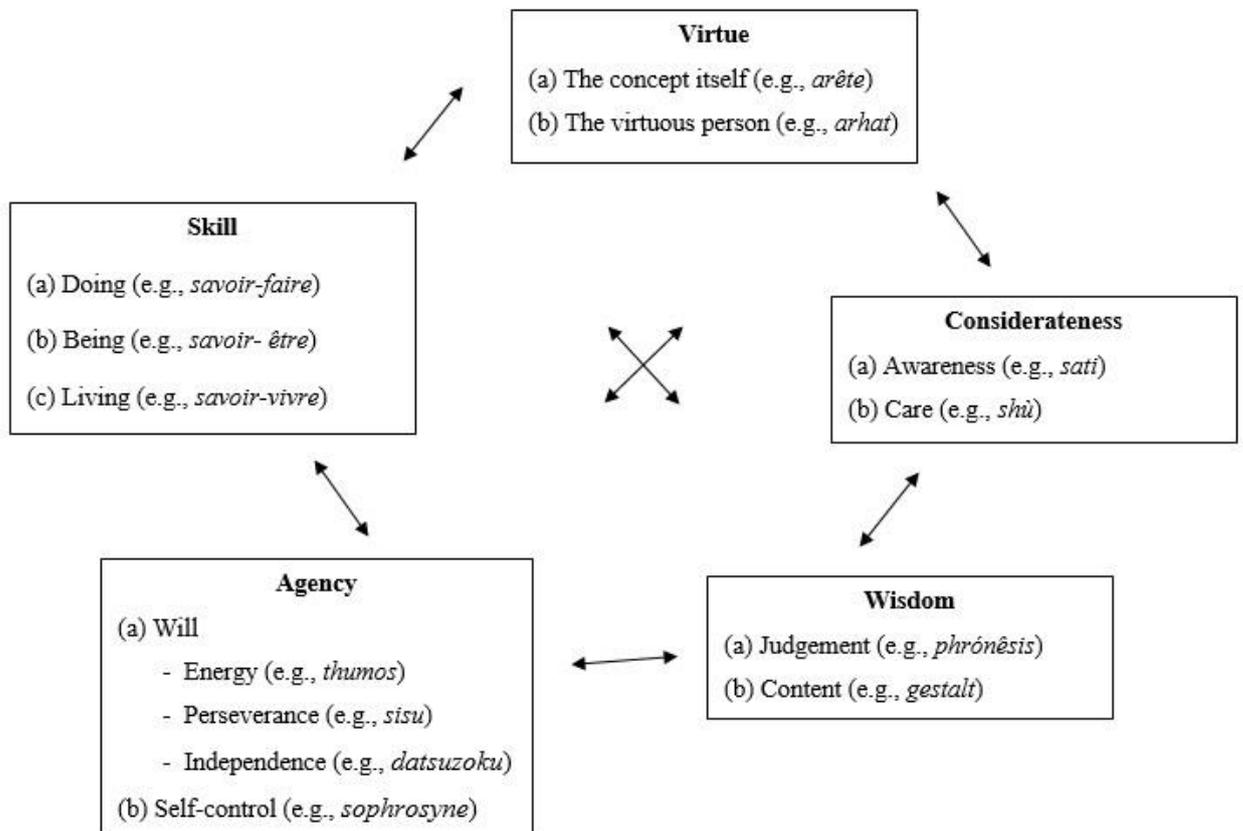


Figure 1. An illustration of the main themes

Virtue

The analysis begins with the foundational concept of virtue itself, the notion that a person can *be* virtuous. This represents a meta-theme which encompasses all the specific virtues and strengths found in taxonomies like the VIA. In that sense, it mirrors McGrath’s (2015b) analysis, which, prior to resolving into a three-factor solution, obtained a single broad factor of “good character.” Likewise, in a psycho-lexical analysis of the Dutch language – focused on the Big Five personality framework – DeRaad and Van Oudenhoven (2011) similarly

identified a broad virtue factor. This foundational concept of virtue is reflected in terms across cultures, each of which could be deemed untranslatable (in that they cannot be perfectly translated as “virtue”), and so bring further nuance to our understanding of this idea. For instance, thinkers in classical Greece emphasised the importance of *arête*. This was an overarching mark of virtue, encompassing the specific qualities that constitute it (of which various taxonomies were developed, such as Plato’s (380 BCE) valorisation of *sophia*, *andreia*, *sophrosune*, and *dikaiosuné*, which can be rendered roughly as wisdom, courage, self-restraint, and justice). *Arête*, then, would mean excelling at any or all, denoting general excellence or quality. The term did not only apply to humans, but to anything that excelled at its “inherent” purpose (such as an athletic horse). In relation to humans, it often signified *moral* excellence, although it also included meanings that would not usually be linked to morality today, such as physical prowess. Similarly, it is often translated simply as “virtue,” a word derived from the Latin *virtus*, frequently regarded as equivalent to *arête*. As with *arête* though, *virtus* had certain connotations, reflective of the culture at the time, that we would not now associate with virtue, such as “manliness.”

As to what virtue consists of, Aristotle emphasised the notion of *mesos*, i.e., mean or middle (with *mesos* the basis for these English terms themselves). In relation to Aristotle, its importance is usually highlighted by the label “golden mean,” whereby the virtuous course of action treads the delicate middle line between the opposing vices of excess and deficiency (e.g., courage represents the optimal point between rashness and cowardice) (Telfer, 1989). This is not simply an appeal to moderation, nor splitting the difference between oppositional qualities, such as truthfulness and untruthfulness (e.g., being moderately truthful). Rather, it means one’s reaction should be carefully calibrated based on the context, and may fall anywhere on a spectrum as appropriate. This notion of skilfully treading a middle line is common to many traditions. For instance, the Buddha referred to his path as the *Madhyama*

Marga, Middle Way in Sanskrit. That said, one must be wary of drawing false equivalences between apparently similar ideas. In this case, the Buddhist Middle Way has been interpreted in various ways, not all compatible with Aristotle's golden mean, including the transcending of dualistic thinking itself (Garfield, 1995). This point is important to bear in mind generally throughout analysis. Just because terms have been assembled within a theme does not imply they necessarily mesh harmoniously; on occasions, terms may be in tension or conflict.

There are then numerous appellations for people who manage to attain virtue. Some describe exemplars who have reached specific religious/spiritual peaks. For example, the term Buddhism derives from the honorific *Buddha*, given to the historic person of *Siddhārtha Gautama*, which translates as "Awakened one." Relatedly, *arhat* is sometimes used synonymously with *Buddha*, with both denoting superlative human beings. For instance, the *Dhammapada* describes an *arhat* as "firm as a high pillar and as pure as a deep pool free from mud... wholly freed, perfectly tranquil and wise" (cited in Buddharakkhita, 2008, p.44). Most religious/spiritual traditions have similar descriptors for their exemplars, of which there are far too many to detail here. (And again, to emphasise the point above, such descriptors are not identical, and there may indeed be significant differences between traditions in how their exemplars are conceived.) However, one more term does warrant mention, the Yiddish *mensch*, as in addition to its Judaic religious/spiritual connotations, it more generally denotes a "good human being in its fullest sense," and has become a loanword on that basis (Blumberg, 2006, p.724). Added to this are words that, in different ways, describe a virtuous person. For instance, the German adjective *fein* conveys bearing and grace, encompassing nobility, honour, tenderness, uniqueness, and authenticity (Baer & Olshanskaya, 2014).

Thus, numerous words bring subtle nuances to the general notion of virtue. Such terms then generate further questions as to its dynamics, including *why* a person might be

virtuous, how they would know *how* to, and how they would *manage* to. These are addressed in the following three sections, under considerateness, wisdom, and agency respectively.

Considerateness

A crucial component of virtue appears to be considerateness (a term derived from the Latin *consideratus*). It might help to think of this as a motivational aspect of virtue: although it itself is an expression or manifestation of virtue, it arguably *also* plays something of a causal role as a driving force behind its cultivation. This is the case in Buddhist teachings, for instance, with respect to the Pāli notion of *sati* (Lomas, 2017a), which we shall consider below. In terms of the VIA factor analytic components, this theme has parallels with such factors as interpersonal strengths (Peterson et al., 2008), agreeableness (Park & Peterson, 2005), niceness (Macdonald et al., 2008), and caring (McGrath, 2015b). The latter quality in particular was central to the analysis here. However, this theme of considerateness comprised *two* essential qualities: awareness and care. That is, to care about the impact of one's actions (both on others and oneself), arguably one must first be aware of that impact (since logically it is hard to care about things one is unaware of).

Regarding awareness, a notable term in this respect is the aforementioned *sati*. This is a complex, polysemous term, with a rich history of evolving meanings, about which much could be said (Lomas, 2017a). Indeed, most terms explored here justify in-depth treatments, exploring their nuances at length; however, to achieve the comparative analysis aimed for here requires an inevitable trade-off between depth and breadth. Thus, with *sati* it is sufficient to note it is the basis – as a loan translation, i.e., semantic borrowing – for mindfulness, which has become somewhat ubiquitous in the West. For instance, drawing on treatments of *sati* in the Pāli canon, Kabat-Zinn (2003, p.145) defines mindfulness as “the awareness that arises through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment.” However, in its original Buddhist context, *sati*

had an implicit moral dimension (e.g., of the impact of one's actions, and the extent to which they align with Buddhist precepts), even if this dimension is not necessarily retained in modern conceptualisations of mindfulness. In addition, Buddhism has other terms around awareness that explicitly embed a moral dimension, like *apramāda*, interpreted as “awareness... with regard to the sphere of qualities of good conduct” (Carter, 2005, p.280).

In addition to awareness of one's actions, considerateness involves *caring* about their implications, which means caring generally about others. As per taxonomies of virtue, there are likewise numerous schemas relating to kindness and compassion. To again use Buddhism as an example, Theravada schools valorise four *brahma-vihārās*, a phrase that translates as “abodes of brahma” (with *Brahma* being the Vedic term for the creative deity). In this context the term denotes four qualities – qualified by the adjective *apramāṇa*, meaning immeasurable or boundless – that practitioners are encouraged to cultivate: *maitrī* (often rendered as “loving-kindness”); *karuṇā* (compassion); *muditā* (sympathetic happiness); and *upeksha* (equanimity). Or consider classical Greek, which had a wealth of terms relating to affection and love – as outlined in depth in Lomas (2018b) – including *storgē*, denoting familial bonds; *philia*, which pertains more to companionship; and *agape*, for charitable, selfless love.

These diverse forms of care might all be regarded as instances of the more general “golden rule,” which articulates an ideal of reciprocity. This principle has been developed by many traditions, from Confucianism to Judaism. With the former, the Analects include a passage in which Confucius is responding to the question of whether there is a “single word that can serve as a guide to conduct throughout one's life?” He replies with *shù*, which he defines as “Do not do to others what you would not want others to do to you” (cited in Allinson, 2003, p.29); he then further describes this reciprocity as the very essence of *rén* (humaneness). Also implicit in such terms is a sense of *why* one should be considerate in this way. Concepts such as *rén* describe a moral sensibility in which others are deemed *inherently*

worthy of good treatment. Moreover, terms like *apramāda* embed an understanding of processes such as *karma*, which in contexts like Hinduism and Buddhism describes a theory of causality with respect to ethics, whereby ethical actions not only benefit the recipient, but the actor too (e.g., vis-à-vis future positive outcomes and mental states) (Kang, 2009). Thus, with *apramāda*, not only would a person recognise the inherent value of treating others well, but from a perspective of enlightened self-interest, realise that they themselves also benefit. That is not to say virtue is ego-centrally motivated; the point is just that, in addition to their primary other-centred motivations, the virtuous actor may gain *further* motivation from understanding that acting thus is also likely to assist their own flourishing (Frimer et al., 2011). So, in various ways, considerateness helps explain why people might want to be virtuous. It also provides people with clues as to *how* to act virtuously. This form of moral understanding then comes to the fore with the third theme.

Wisdom

Considerateness encompasses motivations for virtue, and moreover may indicate what virtue consists of in a given situation. This notion of understanding is then brought to fruition with the theme of wisdom. Recall that, with respect to the golden mean, this does not simply mean mechanically bisecting two extremes, but skilfully judging the best course of action relative to the situation. How, then, can one judge? Here we come to the importance of wisdom and understanding. In terms of the VIA factor analytic components, this theme has parallels with factors such as cognitive strengths (Peterson et al., 2008) and intellectual strengths (Ruch et al., 2010). Two important concepts from classical Greece in this respect are *sophia* and *phrónêsis*, which Aristotle regarded as the two “intellectual” virtues (Fischer, 2015). The former denotes a more abstract, theoretical, or even transcendent wisdom, whereas the latter depicts a “practical” intelligence, determining ends (i.e., what goals to pursue) and the best means of attaining them. Aristotle contrasted both with other epistemological concepts, like

episteme, which pertains to knowledge (e.g., in a scientific sense), and *techne*, which concerns craft skills and practical expertise.

Terms relating to wisdom are found across the world's languages, all with nuances derived from their cultural context. While it is beyond the scope here to cover all such terms, by way of example, it is instructive to consider one language that is particularly rich in this regard. Courtesy of a rich philosophical tradition over recent centuries, German has a unique lexicon of concepts relating to wisdom. Some began as relatively common terms in discourse, before assuming specialised meanings in academia, particularly philosophy and psychology. In these latter contexts, many became loanwords, harnessed initially by scholars, before sometimes becoming even more widely adopted. *Weltanschauung*, for instance, initially referred to a world-view or outlook, i.e., an overarching philosophy of life. However, it also began to be deployed by scholars, most prominently Dilthey, to articulate the epistemological claim that people appraise the world from a particular standpoint; this notion then played a key role in fields like psychoanalysis, hermeneutics, and critical thought (Makkreel, 1992).

Similarly influential are *Gestalt* and *Ganzheit*, which have provided the foundation for entire paradigms within psychology. While the former initially just meant form or shape, it was harnessed in a philosophical context by von Ehrenfels (1890), who used it to denote the overall configuration of something, and moreover to depict the whole as being other (often "greater") than the sum of its parts. He further saw *Gestalt* processing as a fundamental feature of the mind, whereby people grasp patterns as a whole. The concept led to paradigms like *Gestalt* psychotherapy, associated with Perls (1969, p.71), who saw it as being concerned with "the total existence of a person." Similarly, *Ganzheit* connotes unity, completeness, and an "integrated whole," and is often rendered as holistic (Wolvekamp, 1966, p.196). This concept led to fields like *Ganzheit* Psychology, described as the "holistic study of human

nature”; indeed, when Wundt established his Institute for Experimental Psychology in 1879, his work was often referred to as *Ganzheit* Psychology (Blumenthal, 1975).

The foregoing section, while obviously not exhaustive, highlights the role of wisdom in virtue. However, in addition to striving to be virtuous (considerateness), and knowing what it consists of (wisdom), these count for little if one cannot *manage* to be virtuous.

Agency

While considerateness and wisdom are necessary for virtue, in themselves they may not be sufficient. For one must be *able* to be virtuous, as covered by the fourth theme here, agency. There is a considerable psychological literature on the importance and nature of agency. For instance, in Ryan and Deci’s (2000) theory of self-determination, agency – labelled using its near-synonym autonomy – is conceptualised as one of three essential psychological needs, alongside competence and relatedness, that “appear to be essential for facilitating optimal functioning of the natural propensities for growth and integration, as well as for constructive social development and personal well-being” (p.68). In the present context, agency can be regarded as the freedom and capacity to make and pursue one’s own value-driven choices. With respect to virtue, this appears to involve two counterpart factors: willpower (e.g., motivation to do right), and self-control (e.g., refraining from doing wrong).

With willpower, relevant words fall into three broad areas: energy, perseverance, and independence. In terms of the VIA factor analytic components, these sub-themes have parallels with factors such as fortitude (Peterson et al., 2008), emotional strengths (Ruch et al., 2010), self-assurance (Singh & Choubisa, 2010), and vitality (Brdar & Kashdan, 2010). Taking energy first, many languages have terms conveying vitality and passion (see Huta and Ryan, 2010, and Vallerand, 2012, for the importance to wellbeing of vitality and passion respectively). One of the earliest and most important is the classical Greek *thumos*. While sometimes rendered as “spiritedness,” it carried many important meanings, including soul,

spirit, will, temper, and courage, and was described as “the principle of life” (Lynch & Miles, 1980, p.3). Similarly, there are terms expressing energy and enthusiasm, like the Swedish verb *orka*, defined as “to have enough energy to be able to” (Johansson & Nordrum, 2016 p.186). Some terms invoke a mythological or spiritual conception of power, like *orenda* (of the Huron people), and the related concept of *mana* (found in Polynesian languages). Both ideas are rooted in worldviews that view the cosmos as suffused with spiritual energy/power that can be harnessed by people, particularly in exceptional circumstances (Saraydar, 1990).

Willpower is not only a question of energy, but also perseverance. Some words here are particularly vital, viewed as integral to or characteristic of their culture. Finnish celebrates *sisu*, which, beyond mere perseverance, is exalted as a nation-defining quality of courageous determination that has enabled the country to thrive in adversity (Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004). Somewhat similarly, the Arabic *sumud* connotes steadfastness, but more deeply can describe a determined existential struggle to persist and survive (Nassar, 2011). Added to these are terms that further trace the contours of perseverance. For instance, three Greek terms are deployed in the New Testament to describe the legendary forbearance of Job: *hypomonē* (conveying constancy and endurance); *kartería* (stubbornness and toughness); and *makrothumeó* (patience).

Thirdly, willpower also involves independence, as reflected in various words, some with more positive connotations than others. Positioned as more benign are terms expressing yearning for freedom. For instance, German has *Fernweh* and *Wanderlust* to convey longing for distant lands and/or travel. Relatedly, the Japanese *datsuzoku* exalts freedom from habit and routine, and has been embraced by traditions such as Zen (Lomas, Etcoff, Gordon, & Shonin, 2017). By contrast, other terms walk a fine-line between admiring the audacity of agency, while conveying wariness at excessive free-spiritedness. These include the Yiddish *chutzpah*, with connotations of brazenness and nerve, and the German *Willkür*, which

describes following one's own will, but with a somewhat disparaging sense of wantonly disregarding rules and conventions.

Thus, many cultures do not view independence as an unqualified good, but recognise it potentially leads to problematic waywardness. People can have multiple, even conflicting drives, some benign, some malign. As such, adaptive agency needs the restraining hand of self-control to guide it. In terms of the VIA factor analytic components, this sub-theme has parallels with factors such as temperance (Peterson et al., 2008), strengths of restraint (Ruch et al., 2010), conscientiousness (Park & Peterson, 2005), and of course self-control (McGrath, 2015b; McGrath et al., 2017). Various words valorise self-control, or alternatively lament its absence. Greek is particularly rich in that regard. For instance, classical thinkers exalted *sophrosyne*, which depicts excellence of character and soundness of mind, associated with self-restraining qualities like temperance and moderation. Similarly, *autexeusious* describes self-mastery, exercising agency independently of the passions/emotions. Conversely, from a deficit perspective, Aristotle suggested that immoral people suffer from *akrásia* – weakness of will – that prevents them acting in their best interests. However, Aristotle brought an interesting perspective to bear on the issue of self-control. Many theories of virtue emphasise the importance of self-control for its enactment. For instance, Baumeister and Exline (1999) suggest that “insofar as virtue depends on overcoming selfish or antisocial impulses for the sake of what is best for the group or collective, self-control can be said to be the master virtue” (p.1165). For Aristotle though, that one requires self-control to act virtuously would actually reveal lack of virtue, since a virtuous person would intrinsically want to act morally (Telfer, 1989). This example reinforces the point above that even though a given construct or theme may pertain to virtue, there can be significant differences in how these are regarded across and within traditions and cultural contexts.

Finally, the outcome of the qualities featured in the four themes above is an ability to live skilfully, as the final theme elucidates.

Skill

If one cares about virtue (considerateness), knows what it consists of (wisdom), and can pursue it (agency), the result is a covetous capacity to live skilfully. I am not merely using “skill” and “skilful” instrumentally here, implying a technique or ability which one might either use or set aside as expedient. Rather, the spirit in which the term is invoked relates to the Buddhist notion of *upāya*, which although usually translated as skill, refers more to a cultivated way of being that involves the ability to live well, which in that context especially means cultivating and enacting virtue (Pye, 2004). Thus, skill here means virtue in its broadest sense, not just being moral/ethical, but a more general excellence (as per *arête*). In terms of the VIA factor analytic components, this theme aligns most with factors such as interpersonal strengths (Peterson et al., 2008), civic strengths (Singh & Choubisa, 2010), and social strengths (Shryack et al., 2010), although it also contains elements not represented by these factors (such as practical capabilities, as elucidated below). This sense of skilful living is reflected in various French nouns based around *savoir*, such as *savoir-faire*, *-être* and *-vivre* (Sercu, 2002). *Savoir* is one of two French verbs meaning to know, and denotes “knowing how to” (in contrast to *connaître*, which refers more to knowing someone or something). Each compound term thus traces different nuances of this notion of skilfulness.

Perhaps most well-known is *savoir-faire*, featuring the verb *faire*, meaning to make or do. This conveys knowing how to behave in a given situation, and is often described using synonyms such as diplomacy, finesse, and poise. It can also refer to practical, technical, or problem-solving skills. These varied meanings are captured in a range of words. Skilfully undertaking a task is reflected in the Greek *praxis*, which can simply mean deed or action, but in philosophical terms describes the process through which a theory or skill is enacted or

embodied. Greek also featured *kairos*, signifying the right/opportune time to do something, or also the right measure in doing it. *Kairos* was a central topic in Greek literature and rhetoric, as seen in the proverb attributed to Hesiod (circa 7th Century BCE): “Observe due measure, and proportion [*kairos*] is best in all things” (Kinneavy, 2002, p.58). This ideal of *kairos* also pertains to the theme of wisdom, particularly the golden mean. (This kind of coding dilemma is common in qualitative analysis, where codes can often be situated within multiple themes.) Skilful problem-solving is reflected in the Portuguese *desenrascanço*, roughly translatable as disentanglement, which describes imaginative resourcefulness in the face of new/unexpected situations or problems. Likewise, the Italian verb *arrangiarsi* means to make do or get by – often prefixed by *l'arte d'* (the art of), as is *desenrascanço* – particularly in difficult circumstances. (That said, it sometimes has negative connotations, e.g., something achieved through underhand methods.)

The second *savoir* term is *savoir-être*, which appends “to be,” thus implying knowing how to “carry” oneself. This has similar connotations to *savior-faire*, with both described using terms like diplomacy, tact, and social grace. However, *savoir-être* has an even greater emphasis on interpersonal skills (in contrast to the more practical qualities implied by *savior-faire*). Such skills are reflected in the Greek *eunoia*, from *eu* (good, well, beautiful), and *noia* (mind, thinking). This not only depicts an inner quality of mind, but an interpersonal phenomenon, whereby a person transmits goodwill, empathy and approval to others, and inspires these in others in return. Or take the German *Konfliktfähigkeit*, which denotes an ability to manage interpersonal conflict constructively (e.g., without becoming personally embroiled). Capturing more a sense of open-mindedness and flexibility is *kokusaijin*, which rose to prominence in Japan towards the end of the 20th Century. Meaning “international person,” it describes someone who is cosmopolitan, usually well-travelled, and generally adept at engaging with other cultures (Yoneoka, 2000). *Savoir-être* can also connote grace,

charm, and elegance, depicting a beautiful character. This is reflected in the Italian noun *leggiadria* – described as “poetry in motion” (Fermor, 1998, p.124) – which played a key role in Renaissance art, encompassing such qualities as gracefulness, loveliness, prettiness and elegance. On a somewhat different note, one finds valued aesthetics associated with Japanese culture, and Zen in particular, such as *shibumi* and *shizen* (Lomas et al., 2017). The former articulates a simple, unobtrusive, and effortless beauty, while the latter relatedly identifies beauty with naturalness, an absence of pretence, contrivance, or premeditation. Such qualities are prized, not only in artworks, but especially in people, where they are seen as embodying the kinds of insight and practice that Buddhism upholds, such as disavowing attachments, and cultivating a life that is simple, clean and pure.

The third French compound term is *savoir-vivre*, which deploys “to live” to articulate knowing how to *live well*. Indeed, France’s reputation in excelling thus is reflected in several terms – embraced as loanwords/phrases – that embody this ideal. For instance, *joie de vivre* articulates a zest for life; it is, as Harrow and Unwin (2009) put it, “a Weltanschauung, a behavioural mode and form of practice. It is joy generalised, a result of many experiences, a sustained and boundless enjoyment of the here and now” (p.19). Similarly, *bon vivant* describes someone who enjoys and appreciates the good life, as do equivalents in other languages, like the Swedish noun *livsnjutare*. It is also reflected in expressions that encourage people to live fully and/or have a good time, like the Hebrew *la’asot chaim*, which literally means “to do or to make life.” Perhaps here too one could include words that convey the attainment of purpose in life, such as the Japanese *ikigai*, which translates as a “reason for being,” reflecting an appraisal that life is “good and meaningful” (Yamamoto-Mitani & Wallhagen, 2002, p.399).

Conclusion

This paper was guided by a twofold research question: (a) are there concepts pertaining to virtue in other languages that have not been similarly identified in English (as signalled by an untranslatable word); and (b) what are their implications for our understanding of virtue? The analysis itself was driven by (a), and, following an adapted form of GT, the result was an appraisal of (b). In that respect, the analysis identified five key interlinked themes which together might be regarded as the “roots” of virtue – the main sources from which it springs, illustrating why a person might aim, and then actually manage, to be virtuous. The first theme denotes the idea of virtue per se – that one can *be* virtuous (regardless of which specific behaviours constitute virtue). Next, considerateness explains *why* one would want to be, involving two essential qualities: awareness (of the impact of one’s actions), and care (being concerned about any such impact). The third dimension, wisdom, covers knowing *how* to be virtuous, including faculties of judgement and understanding. Fourth, agency addresses the issue of *managing* to be virtuous, involving the *willpower* to be virtuous, and the *self-control* to carry it out. The final dimension is skill, reflecting the notion that successfully enacting the preceding qualities would result in living skilfully, not only with respect to morals/ethics, but more broadly attaining “excellence” (as per *arête*).

It must be noted that this schema – as illustrated in figure 1 above – is simply a representation of the themes identified in the data. It cannot be regarded as a fully-fledged theory or even a model of virtue; that would be beyond the remit of the analysis here. For a start, the lexical search undertaken remains partial and a work-in progress, given that the lexicography currently only features around 100 languages, out of some 7,000 in existence. There are thus likely to be many relevant terms included neither in the analysis above, nor the lexicography as it stands. Moreover, some cultures and traditions have been considered in more depth than others (e.g., Buddhism), which reflects the personal interests of the author,

which drove the conceptual snowballing in certain directions. Moreover, of the words that *have* been included, their analysis has been inevitably restricted, limited by attempting to convey an overarching comparative analysis within the constraints of an article. Moreover, given that translation is a problematic exercise, it will not have been possible to arrive at definitions that would satisfy all speakers of the donor language. Given the fluidity and complexity of language use, there are always many ways of interpreting a given word. Thus, the descriptions here are merely one way of elucidating these terms, and ultimately are based on the author's interpretation of the source material. That said, dictionaries and scholarly sources were consulted in the aim of arriving at valid descriptions.

As such, the analysis is not a complete account of all the potential untranslatable words that exist pertaining to virtue. It is rather an imperfect snapshot of the current state of the lexicography with respect to virtue, one that is partial and subject to revision. However, that does not mean it is without value; even without being "complete," the analysis may still shed further light on virtue, highlighting nuances and complexities that may be missing from accounts that are only in English. In that respect, the analysis may augment the factor analyses of the VIA adumbrated above, although it cannot determine which solution is optimal. The themes have resonances with all the solutions, and yet the analysis does not align perfectly with any, even five-factor ones. Take Peterson et al.'s (2008) structure of interpersonal strengths, cognitive strengths, fortitude, temperance, and transcendence. The only close matches are that the themes of considerateness and wisdom overlap with their factors of interpersonal strengths and cognitive strengths respectively, while agency appears to encompass *two* of their factors (fortitude and temperance). Other than that, the theme of virtue is more of a general component (mirroring McGrath's (2015b) single broad factor of "good character"), and skill perhaps interweaves all of Peterson et al.'s factors, while their factor of transcendence does not match any theme. However, to reiterate, the analysis is not a

refutation of any factor analytic solution. The point of the paper was not a comprehensive assessment of virtue, since that is beyond its scope. Rather, its more modest aim was simply to shed light on aspects of virtue that might be overlooked within current theorising (due to a concept not being identified in English).

In sum, the results do not constitute a new structural model of virtue or strengths that could supplant existing factor-analytically-derived models. Rather, it offers a different “take” on the dynamics of virtue that researchers in the field might find useful. And in that respect, it corroborates Ruch and Proyer’s (2015) contention that there are other means of exploring the structure of virtue and strengths besides factor analysis (which in their case meant harnessing expert ratings). That is, researchers investigating the VIA taxonomy may find conceptual “food for thought” in the present analysis as they interpret their data. For instance, the five-fold thematic structure here may be relevant to theorists making judgements regarding the factorial solutions to their data (as we saw above with McGrath, 2015b). However, it bears emphasising that the analysis here is provisional and partial, and will benefit from being refined through further empirical research, both qualitative and quantitative. With the former, the thematic structure identified here would be strengthened (or challenged) by the inclusion and consideration of many more untranslatable words than the 200-or-so included here. With the latter, it might be feasible to develop a psychometric scale based on the schema developed here, and then subject this to factor-analysis or other such procedures (e.g., expert ratings as per Ruch and Proyer, 2015). This scale and the resulting analysis could then be more directly compared with established factor-analytic solutions to the VIA classificatory schema (beyond the tentative links drawn throughout the paper). Even as it is, though, the analysis may hopefully prove useful to those studying virtue, and can feed into future such work on this topic.

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