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Cultural Diversity and Moral Philosophy, and their Relationship with Families and the Upbringing of Children

This paper examines cultural diversity and social capital through a controversial lens associated with moral philosophy. It does so specifically in the context of family and childhood relations. It makes the case for the significance of universalism. The premis put forward is that some universal values within a community are likely to bring social capital benefits, greater social cohesion , more bridging capital, all of which are pertinent to the upbringing of children, than the alternative - their absence. The question is asked whether a considerable constituent element of universalism is feasible in our multicultural society, and if so what might its scope be? The canon of moral philosophy is reviewed for what it has to offer around current debates over multiculturalism that are preoccupying social and family policy analysis in the UK and elsewhere.

Consideration is given as to how the arguments for an element of universalism emerge in philosophical thought and what our choices might be from such conceptual largesse in developing a response to cultural diversity. Probing the long standing philosophical divergence between absolutism and relativism, the issue arises as to whether there can be a synthesis of ways of living from a humanist perspective. A debate on moral commonality is called for in the context of families and the upbringing of children, with human rights presenting an initial, though not exclusive, point of reference.

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