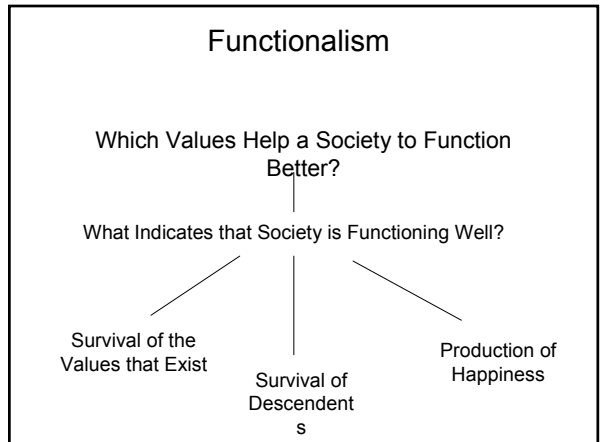
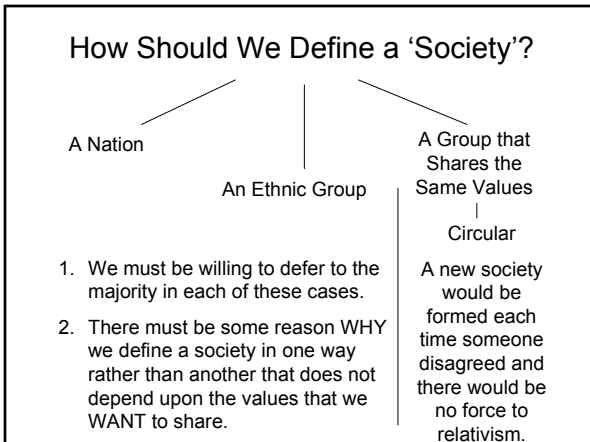
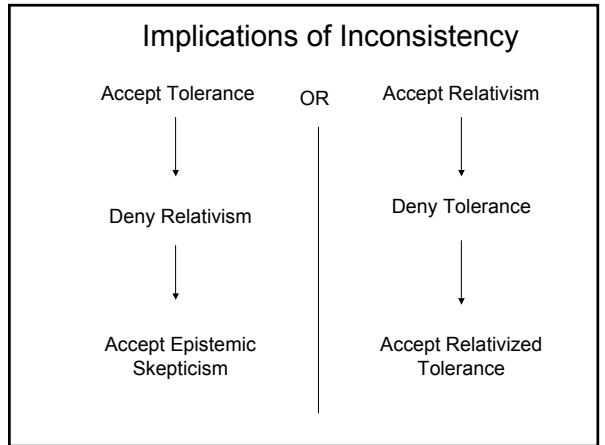
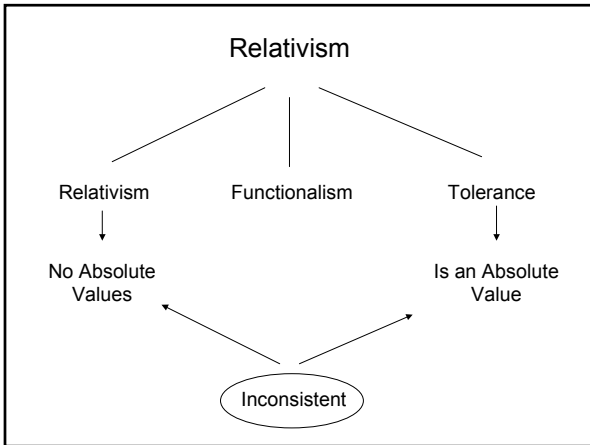


Williams on Relativism

The Components of Relativism

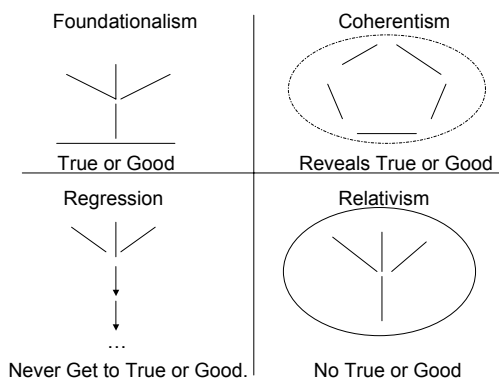
1. Principle of Relativism: 'Right' means (& can only mean) 'right for a given society'.
2. Functionalism: 'Right' should be understood in a functional sense (what is right for a society is what enables a society to function well).
3. Tolerance: Therefore, we should be tolerant of other societies' values.



Why Should We Function Well?

1. One has a reason to do something only if there is something about that which the action aims toward that makes it worthy or good.
2. Functioning well must be good, or there must be no reason to function well.
3. And if Functionalism is true, then there is something toward which society has a reason to strive.
4. Therefore, if Functionalism is true, then functioning well must be good.
5. So, if Functionalism is true, then there is at least one value that is not relative.
6. Furthermore, if functioning well should be understood as survival or production of happiness, then survival or happiness are not relative.

How Reasons Work: 4 Views



Reasons Outside a Framework

Any truly subjective or relative account will be unable to offer reasons for anything that people do or believe outside their framework, i.e, there will *always* be a point at which they say:

There is *no reason* why I/we I/we just feel like it or I/we just do it, because there is nothing *objectively* good (there are no true ethical propositions).

The Components of Relativism

1. Principle of Relativism: 'Right' *means* (& can only mean) 'right for a given society'.
- ~~2. Functionalism: 'Right' should be understood in a functional sense (what is right for a society is what enables a society to function well).~~
- ~~3. Tolerance: Therefore, we should be tolerant of other societies' values.~~

4 Reasons to Reject Relativism:

1. Majority Rules. If someone brainwashed most of society (including you) into thinking that murder is good, would it *really* be good?
2. It's Wrong to Disagree. If most of society believes that murder is good and you don't, are you really wrong to disagree with them?
3. No Moral Progress. If our society changes from believing that murder is good to believing that it isn't, our society has not gotten any better.
4. Seems Absurd. If a minority try to change the majority's belief, the minority are wrong *before* they change the majority's belief, but right *afterwards*.