

## Human Behavior – Nature and Nurture

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Why did the Egyptian men gang rape Lara Logan (she called it ‘raped by hand’) during the spring uprising of 2011 while the Japanese acted so civil in the face of a triple disaster (tsunami, earthquake and nuclear radiation) during the same period? Which one of these two situations represents true human nature?

I have been trying to understand the reasons for differences between Japanese serenity and Arab aggression. In hearing and watching news reports during the tragic events in Japan and the uprising in the Arab world, I couldn’t help but notice how both groups responded to disaster. The Japanese refrain from displaying emotions publicly. In Arab cultures they outwardly express rage as an expression of loyalty to their groups.

As far as I understand both Japanese and Arabs mistreat women as second-class citizens, but there is a difference. In Japan, women make financial decisions at home and are free to get higher education, whereas, Arab women are beaten, stoned, honor murdered or publicly humiliated if they deviate from the norm. I am not sure if it is due to human nature or economic prosperity. In the Arab world, wealth remains in the hands of just a few while the masses are poor.

Japan is always at the forefront whenever help is needed in any part of the world. While Japan was hit by an 8.9 earthquake, its own rescuers were helping New Zealand cope with their earthquake. In the Arab world, Japan has served as a leading donor to the Palestinians via UNWRA, and has also provided assistance to the Palestinian Authority, Lebanon, Jordan and Yemen – to name a few. In contrast the Arab world did not do anything worth mentioning for the recent disaster in Japan.



The Japanese do not hesitate in criticizing themselves and correcting their own mistakes. The Japanese do not burn churches and synagogues nor do they kill Christians and Jews. They do not need to prove their existence by constantly being in conflict with others. This is in contrast to the Arabs who are still in search of a more stable and satisfying sense of identity.

Human nature is an evolution. It is a mixture of nature and nurture. By nature all adhere to the survival of the fittest. When our basic needs are satisfied we display peace and compassion which is a product of nurture. The Arabs have been deprived of individual freedom and prosperity for thousands of years. They have always lived under tyrants. The spring revolution has failed everywhere except in Egypt and Tunisia. In Egypt and Tunisia the rulers were deposed because the military wanted it so. In other parts the military supports the tyrants. In reality they are still under the thumbs of the tyrants.

Human behavior is a product both of our innate human nature and of our individual experience and environment. Our civil behavior is a product of our environment and socialization. The animal behavior in us is innate. Evolutionary psychologists see human nature as ‘a collection of psychological adaptations that often operate beneath conscious thinking to solve problems of survival and reproduction by predisposing us to think or feel in certain ways’ (Nancy Kobrin, PhD, Joan Lachkar, PhD in Psychology Today, March 25, 2011)

Both Japan and the Arab world have demonstrated true human nature. The former is attributed to nurture (evolutionary) and latter is attributed to nature (innate). That is what I think.