Emotion, Ethics, and Conceptual Engineering: toward an affective-ethical framework

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	This study develops the Affective Ethical Model of Conceptual Engineering (AEMCE), a framework we introduce to address a critical and underexplored gap in conceptual engineering: the emotional dimension of concepts. While traditional normative conceptual engineering has focused on the application of concepts to moral and social applications, it has largely overlooked the overwhelming emotional impact a concept may have on individuals. These emotional resonances, whether harmful, isolating, or manipulative, are often ignored, creating ethical blind spots. The Affective Ethical Model of Conceptual Engineering rectifies this by introducing affective accountability and ethical adequacy as foundational criteria for conceptual success. This model is structured around four iterative and interdependent stages: Diagnosis, Design, Circulation, and Evaluation, which are operationalized through the Affective Performance Test. These rigorous mixed methods protocol empirically assesses both emotional engagement and harm reduction. The Affective Ethical Model of Conceptual Engineering demonstrates how concept revision, such as reframing the term "illegitimate child" in Algeria, can promote linguistic justice and social integration, transforming harmful labels into more neutral, inclusive language. This redesigns Conceptual Engineering not as an instrument of intellectual clarity but as a moral technology that has the capacity to transform the moral and emotional infrastructure of society. As a blend of emotional intelligence and philosophical accuracy, the Affective Ethical Model of Conceptual Engineering will provide a new concept of engineering, which improves the sense of moral quality in social life.

Intruduction

The study of conceptual philosophy has historically considered conceptual analysis (CA) to clarify and describe existing concepts. However, contemporary movement of conceptual engineering (CE) examines how concepts should be changed or replaced to meet moral and practical goals, modifying the task to focus on improving concepts rather than just describing them (Isaac et al., 2022). The paper assumes that concepts are not just descriptive tools, but mechanism shaping experiences, norms, and social possibilities. Continuing the Foucault (1980) paradigm of power-knowledge, concepts are understood as carriers of power relations, capable of enabling or constraining individuals and communities. Against this backdrop, this paper asks: What distinguishes CE from traditional CA, and why must affect and ethics be central to conceptual revision? Although CA prioritizes descriptive clarity, the proponents of CE foreground the normative and ethical aspects of conceptual use (Köhler& Veluwenkamp, 2024). Accordingly, CE requires a justice-oriented approach[1] (Adam, 2024). This necessity stems from the danger that uncritically attending to the established definitions of social categories may perpetuate inequality (Oliphint, 2023). According to Podosky (2022), many inherited concepts are ethically and politically damaging, and thus CE requires redesign to enhance justice, intelligibility, dignity, and empowerment. However, the affective dimensions of concepts are significantly underdeveloped in the CE field (Zembylas, 2023). Specifically, the existing justice and conceptual revision models value epistemic and practical success measures, thus disregarding emotional injury, alienation, and psychological harm generated by defective concepts (Stockdale, 2023). Such negligence is unsustainable, failing to ask: how do concepts feel, who are they alienating, and what emotional formations do they replicate? Research in colonial and educational settings likewise highlights that emotional considerations are routinely neglected in ethics and engineering pedagogy (Tormey et al., 2025). In this respect, the paper addresses the major gap in CE: the absence of a framework that would combine emotional, social, and ethical concerns in the conceptual revision.

The central hypothesis of this paper is that the incorporation of affective and ethical aspects of CE in broadening the conceptual engineering process to be more holistic will lead to the creation of a more comprehensive conceptual revision process, which would consider emotional resonance and psychological damage, as well as the more traditional epistemic and practical issues. Namely, we assume that the Affective-Ethical Model of Conceptual Engineering (AEMCE) will enhance the effectiveness and fairness of conceptual modifying because it is a more inclusive, emotionally sensitive, and ethically based method of conceptual modifying. While the CE approaches devote little focus to the ethical and emotional dimensions of conceptual transformation, this work fills one of the major gaps in the field. To meet this need, we develop the Affective Ethical Model of Conceptual Engineering (AEMCE), our new framework, which is a combination of affective

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[1] A justice-oriented approach is a methodology that revises concepts with the explicit aim of mitigating structural injustice and improving the inclusion of those most impacted by these concepts.

responsiveness and ethical analysis. The model establishes how emotional resonance, and moral concerns may inform fairer, more inclusive and socially responsible types of conceptual revision." In four interconnected steps: Diagnosis, Design, Circulation, and Evaluation, the paradigm views conceptual change as an ethically and emotionally responsible endeavor. Rather than being a matter of taste, conceptual revision is defined as a required response to injustice, affective harm, and shifting social conditions.

From Conceptual Analysis to Conceptual Engineering

CA is the core of the analytic tradition in philosophy and has attempted to explicate the semantic form and formal properties of concepts. CA is typified by an insistence on epistemic clarity, in which concepts are taken to be definable and stable objects (Strawson, 1992). However, the conceptual clarity of CA is based on the assumptions of ontological objectivity[1], which does not sufficiently consider the historical, political, and ethical grounds of the concepts of analysis (Haslanger, 2020; Podosky, 2022). Despite the indispensability of CA with its focus on epistemic clarity, it appears to have certain drawbacks, especially regarding covering the ethical and affective aspects of concepts, aspects that are central to CE. It is often the case that the severe conceptual exactness required by CA, the implication of its rigorous nature of definition, often overlooks the implications of concepts in practice. This weakness is particularly obvious in moral and social contexts, in which conceptual clarity would not be sufficient to solve problems related to harm, dignity, and inclusion. However, systematic conceptual definitions often obscure the political consequences of concepts, and the CA position of epistemic neutrality, the assumption that conceptual analysis can be carried out without moral, political, or cultural influence, hides power dynamics (Queloz, 2022). John Rawls (1971) used reflective equilibrium, a method of achieving coherence between principles and intuitions by mutually adjusting them, demonstrating the epistemic orientation of CA; he aimed to reconcile intuitions with justice principles, but, like descriptive methods, ethical and affective issues were secondary. Critiques also identify this gap, Zembylas (2024) and Stockdale (2023), arguing that CA is often deficient in acknowledging the affective aspects of injustice.

The ethical care concept, which Belleri (2021) examines, builds a theoretical background on the work of Carol Gilligan (1982) and Joan Tronto (2020). The critiques of Gilligan of the traditional theory of moral reasoning and the emphasis on care of Tronto as a political ethic both highlight an important weakness of the theory of CA: it claims epistemic neutrality, concealing the way concepts shape and sustain the social ties. Carnap (1950) first expressed the possibility of intentional conceptual modification through his approach of explication, which entails defining the vague, indeterminate concepts (explicanda) by clearer, more specific concepts (explicata) to increase logical rigor, simplicity, and fruitfulness. However, Carnap concentrated mostly on the epistemic domain and largely overlooked the ethical implications of such amendments. This exclusion corresponds to the

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[1] the view that concepts correspond to mind-independent, objectively existing features of the world

critiques of epistemic purity of CA, where the inability to integrate normative issues can inadvertently strengthen the status quo and privilege (Isaac et al., 2022). CE consists of a continuation of this legacy where epistemic rigor and moral responsibility are combined, whereby modifications to conceptual frameworks must be evaluated not only for their ontological accuracy, which is the extent to which a concept accurately represents what exists, the but also for their impact on human experience. The main methodological distinctive feature of CA is its use of thought experiments and intuitive apparatus, the evidence of conceptual assertions by the pre-theoretical intuitions, as in the case of the epistemic examples of Gettier (1963) in the philosophy of mind or the Twin Earth scenarios of Putnam (1975)[1]. These tools may verify the sufficiency of the definition when subjected to counterfactual guidelines, but at the same time, they demonstrate the weaknesses of CA. This trend has been labeled by critics like Cappelen (2018) as the analysis merry-go-round, a perpetual game of definitions and counterexamples that appear disconnected from the real-life social relevance. These criticisms have acquired empirical support in the new area of research in experimental philosophy (X-Phi). Continuing the works by Knobe (2019) and Swain et al. (2008), scientists have illustrated the existing systematic variation of participants in their evaluations of the meaning of concepts; it becomes clear that intuitions are significantly different when dealing with a philosophical case in terms of different cultures and contextual backgrounds, thus raising concerns about the assumption of universal conceptual competence that CA makes (Stockdale, 2023). Moreover, recent work by Löhr (2023) and Podosky (2022) holds that the alleged ethical neutrality of CA is a myth; when applied to the concepts as analytically constructive, besides perceiving the concept as being formed through the inclination of analytical objects, CA can, in fact, support well-established social hierarchies. As an example, the continual use of the concept of intelligence without criticism keeps racial and ability-based discrimination alive (Benjamin, 2019; Dembroff, 2020). All these instances help to reveal that the unwillingness of CA to make the normative assessment is a meaningful shortcoming: it makes the ambiguity visible, but it cannot do anything to remedy the factual injustice.

To address these criticisms, CE shifts its direction of questioning philosophically to normative reconstruction. According to Cappelen (2018), CE is the evaluation and optimization of our representational apparatuses; it is no longer description but intentional, purposeful intervention. In this regard, CE occurs as a normative procedure with an appreciation of the ethical implications of its conceptual interventions, hence making sure that the conceptual interventions are guided by moral accountability (Isaac et al., 2022). In place of the efforts of the authors of Burgess, Cappelen, and Plunkett (2020), along with the prevailing tendency, CE seeks to ascertain the objectives of our concepts: to withstand injustice, promote a sense of belonging, and reflect the reality in morally responsive

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[1] Gettier cases refer to the scenarios in which justified true belief does not imply knowledge in philosophy of mind or the Twin Earth cases in which Putnam asserts that meaning is not a factor of the mind only, but rather of the outside world also.

manners. Isaac et al. (2022) state that constructive orientation of CE combines analytic preciseness with social responsibility, thus recognizing that conceptions serve as tools that construct rather than mirror the world. CE has an elegant lineage into Haslanger (2012, 2020), allowing conceptual revision within the intersection of feminist and social epistemology, as well as to Haraway (1988), who emphasizes the contextual nature of knowledge. Combined, these perspectives assert that conceptual effort should address both epistemic facts and matters of justice. Notably, CE does not reject CA; on the contrary, it is based on its diagnostic foundation. CA offers the much-needed mapping of the current conceptual framework, and CE may transform this clarity into normative advice. This relationship takes over the conflict between the descriptive and prescriptive ones, as Thomasson (2020) and Varga (2021) argue that even the descriptive clarification reveals the previously suppressed assumptions that may be subject to an ethical attack. In that regard, the CA epistemic accuracy allows the moral aspiration of CE. The poignant elucidation of epistemic injustice[1], as Fricker (2007) articulates, is that a deficiency in normative participation in the conceptual clarification may leave one perpetuating harm, and engineering concepts to achieve interpretive fairness may reconcile the epistemic and moral realms. In this way, CE uses philosophy as a normatively engaged practice, stepping philosophy out of an abstract search for understanding by putting it to a normative use associated not only with analytic precision but also with justice and human prosperity.

Table 1. *Comparative Relationship Between Conceptual Analysis and Conceptual Engineering*

Conceptual Analysis (CA)	Conceptual Engineering (CE)
Descriptive aim: Clarifies existing concepts.	Prescriptive aim: Revises and improves concepts for moral and affective adequacy.
Provides conceptual clarity and reveals hidden harms.	Evaluation informs future analyses.

Building Concepts with Care

CE performs as a philosophical re-evaluation that occurs prior to the ethical responsibility of conceptual work and serves as a type of normative intervention project (Burgess et al., 2020) that goes beyond the descriptive mapping provided by CA. This intentional, purposeful intervention focuses on reconfiguring concepts to achieve justice, inclusion, and recognition, thereby requiring a justice-seeking approach toward concepts. CE's central aim is to redesign inherited concepts that are not only vague but also ethically and politically damaging, finally resulting in the ability to become intelligible, dignified, and empowered. The strength of CE lies in its dual mandate to achieve the analytic precision and moral responsiveness (Cappelen et al., 2020). This intellectual rigor, along with a sense of ethical devotion, is reflected in the ameliorative method[2] and suggests methodological pluralism

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[1] The harm done to someone in their capacity as a knower due to prejudice or structural inequality.

[2] The ameliorative technique is characterized as the process of evaluating to clarify concepts within the framework of normative aims, including fairness, inclusion, and dignity.

(McPherson & Plunkett, 2019), allowing the integration of different normative lenses, such as consequentialist, deontological, or care-ethical approaches (Belleri, 2021). The framework considers harms to morality, showing that institutional conceptual prohibitions foster epistemic injustice, which forms hermeneutic gaps that erase the voices of marginalised populations (Ajmani et al., 2024).

Implemented practice is reflected in conceptual transformation in such cases as the reconceptualisation of addiction as a health issue (López-Ramírez et al., 2023), the development of sexual harassment as an actionable juridical concept (Schultz, 2018), and the concept of non-binary identity (Ásta, 2023). AEMCE pursuit is based on the synthesis of some of the existing models, expounding the Explication Model by Carnap (1950) and adopting the needs of the social justice expressed in the reformist model of Haslanger (2012) and the formalised Conceptual Ethics of Burgess and Plunkett (2013a). Furthermore, the model is informed by pragmatic and functional models, such as Chalmers' Epistemic-Pragmatic Model (2021), the Socio-Cultural Model (Novaes, 2020), and Veluwenkamp's Impactful CE Model (2024), and generalises the steps that an engineer follows during procedural assistance through the CE in Practice (CEP) Model (Isaac et al., 2022). Although the current models of CE have a strong normative commitment and procedural progress, a fundamental weakness persists: the lack of evaluation of affective and emotive influences. While these frameworks are superior in assessing concepts for logical rigor and political justice, they typically fail to examine the pathways through which concepts damage, stigmatize, or ostracize individuals and groups. As an example, the models that concentrate on epistemic and pragmatic utility only, like those proposed by Chalmers (2021) or a CEP Model (Isaac et al., 2022), lack the required theoretical mechanisms to prioritize the socio-emotional harms and stigmas of concepts. This leaves a major gap: the emotional and psychological implications of the conceptual failure have been made subservient to the concerns of clarity and functionality. AEMCE directly fills this major gap. It moves beyond the limitations of current frameworks by focusing on the affective impact of concepts and formalising their assessment.

The Affective–Ethical Model of Conceptual Engineering (AEMCE)

The AEMCE is a model that intentionally considers the gaps in affect and ethics that were found in the theoretical frameworks of the antecedent models. It achieves this by focusing on the affective impact of concepts and formalising their assessment, moving beyond the limitations of current models to ensure concept revision considers emotional resonance, dignity, inclusion, and social justice. This approach is structured around four interconnected phases of Diagnosis, Design, Circulation and Evaluation of the engineering process in which moral and affective criteria are assembled systematically. Unlike standard models, which predict Carnapian virtues (e.g., simplicity, clarity) and epistemic norms, AEMCE reverses the hierarchy by considering the ethical assessment of experienced harm as an entry point.

The central meta-principle of the model is the Principle of Foundational Adequacy[1] that, in the case of conflict, affects the effect-ethical idealistic norms, such as harm reduction, dignity, and inclusion, as normative primacy should take place over Carnapian epistemic values such as precision, simplicity, and fruitfulness. Therefore, a concept will not be admissible in case it does not meet affect-ethical adequacy, no matter how well it merits in terms of epistemology. The functions of Carnapian virtues are limited to perfecting the pragmatic achievement of a concept after the necessary affective underpinnings have been built. The model is explained by the reformulation of the very concept of "addict" to mean a person with a substance-use disorder (SUD) that is implemented in stages in a sequence.

The Four Iterative Stages:

Diagnosis

The first stage, Diagnosis, commences with a critical assessment of the emotional, moral and political harms in a conception of the use and reception of a concept. AEMCE focuses on experiential consequences of a conception of a subject and community, as opposed to taking some conceptual dysfunction as descriptive inadequacy (Cappelen & Plunkett, 2020). The question that will lead in this stage is: does the concept harm the psyche, continue the stigma, or go against the fundamental ethical principles such as respect, dignity, and autonomy? To illustrate by example, the word "addict" tends to generate shame and stigma and reduce a complex individual to one identity that is negatively loaded. The empirical evidence of the existence of this self-stigma through public health studies and first-person accounts demonstrates the fact that it hinders healing and robs people of agency and moral personhood (National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA], 2023).

Design

The second stage, Design, aims to develop a normatively improved conceptual alternative that may reduce harm and favor ethical and emotional remedies, following the initial problem Diagnosis. Importantly, the AEMCE uses principled differentiation between the target community and the general community that would incur the danger of majoritarian capture. The people with the SUDs altogether make the target community, which has normative priority because their lived situation defines the ethical imperative of change. This model manages the pluralism that is bound to happen in this target community and ensures that if some voices are to be weighted, the ranks are made with a Stakeholder Calibration Matrix (SCM), which transcends a mere majority by considering direct affective impact and domain expertise. The general community is the rest of the population and organizations that play a second-tier role oriented on what the social community requires, but upon which its consensus is not capable of superseding the ethical requirements of the target community. The core Design question is the following: Does the new concept reinstate dignity, enhance inclusion, and correspond to the ethical objectives and gain

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[1] The Principle of Foundational Adequacy is the AEMCE requirement that posits that epistemic virtues, such as clarity and simplicity, are subordinate to affective-ethical objectives, including harm reduction, dignity, and inclusiveness.

acceptance from the impacted communities? As an example, rather than using the term"addict", one may use the term " person with a substance-use disorder (SUD)" to reestablish the human subject as the focal point of the discourse. The practice follows person-first language and is quite common within organizations, including the American Psychological Association (2023) and the World Health Organization (2020). The emotional appeal is evident, expressing sympathy and evoking empathy, as opposed to oppression. The Principle of Foundational Adequacy stipulates that the early stage of a concept should meet the ethical and affective aims; only after that are the Carnapian excellences of the notion to be maximized.

Circulation

The third stage, Circulation, focuses on spreading and incorporating the novel concept into current discourses, institutions, and practices. Based on Haslanger's cultural-semantic strategies (2023) and Prinz's affective theories (2020), this stage will analyze the types of discursive processes, emotionally appealing stories, and involvement of stakeholders needed to bring the concept to the ethical triumph. The main question in this case is: which discursive processes (media, advocacy, policy) must normalize the new concept and give its preferred emotional import to the masses and professionals? The use of person-first language has been advocated by increasing numbers of public health campaigns and advocacy organizations (MedlinePlus, National Library of Medicine, 2024) to discourage individuals from using derogative terms to describe themselves, such as "addict". This transformation is supported by emotionally touching stories that foster compassion and reconceptualize individuals with a substance-use disorder as people who deserve care and support in society.

Evaluation

The final stage, Evaluation, requires ongoing Evaluation of how effective the emotion and moral functioning of the engineered concept is. This stage is motivated by the notion of "Conceptual Ethics" introduced by Burgess and Plunkett (2013b) to comprehend the operation of the new concept and its potential to impose new harms with limited expectation of its new function, inspired by the conceptual ethics skepticism described by Eklund (2021). The key question is: Has the new concept managed to avoid harm, and what are the negative unintended consequences or affective challenges that have started to develop over time? Though a person with SUD has made a positive contribution in general discourse, critics observe that in some situations, it may be too clinical or depersonalized. For example, certain recovery communities, in a demonstration of the pluralism and elasticity within CE, reclaim terms like "in recovery" or even the word "addict" to politically empower themselves (Faccio et al., 2025). Therefore, it is not the pervasive adoption of a single term that determines the success of the model, but rather the proliferation of the respectable conceptual repertoire, which broadly as much as possible serves a multiplicity of, and to some extent, even opposing, self-identification strategies. Where there is a more basic conflict concerning the Circulation, the model becomes dictated by the Prioritization of the Harm Principle that requires direct action to act in line with the minimization of the most

systemic and gravest harm. It is impossible to define all emotional and moral registers using a single term. In essence, the Affective Performance Test (APT), a multi-method process that is systematically described in the next section, is used to empirically confirm the latter step. In this paper, we provide the APT for the first time. The concept of combining these components into a single, cohesive evaluative framework is novel, even if it makes use of well-known psychological and sociological instruments including the Social Distance Scale, the Perceived Stigma Scale, the Implicit Association Test, and conventional qualitative techniques. The objective was to develop a useful method for evaluating the structural and emotional effects of conceptual transformation. Both this integrated structure, and the term "Affective Performance Test (APT)" are unique to this work and have not been utilized in prior publications.

Affective Performance Test (APT)

The Affective Performance Test (APT) is a central tool in the operationalization of affective resonance, which brings the notion of affective resonance out of the realm of a philosophical dream to a viable, empirically justifiable standard of Evaluation applicable to CE. As the empirical validation model of AEMCE, the APT systematically monitors the emotional and moral effects of conceptual revision in all four stages by relying on mixed-methods triangulation.

This approach is supported by three main elements:

1. The arm uses quantitative approaches, which include structured questionnaires and implicit measures (e.g., Implicit Association Tests), to produce reproducible measures of harm reduction. Psychometric indices are used as pointers to emotionally and ethically appropriate conceptualisations by users, monitoring certain changes in stigma, self-stigma, and social distance.
2. This element operationalises uptake processes, conceptual rebuilding processes, conceptual friction processes, and narrative empowerment processes with the help of focus groups, testimonials, social media content and archival discourse. These qualitative methodologies are critical in following the impact of conceptual change gains to achieve the affective and social legitimacy among the target community.
3. Finally, the process integrates Normative Accountability Benchmarking, where empirical results (from psychometrics and qualitative analysis) are strictly evaluated against the broad-based ethical standards of AEMCE. This ensures that the emotional response and social reception generated by the new concept do not exceed ethical competency.

The combination of these factors operates synergistically: psychometrics measures the reduction of harm, qualitative methods measure standardization, and normative benchmarking provides the moral control. With such triangulation, the affective dimension is converted to a powerful, empirically reasonable measure of conceptual success.

Shaping Ethical Change with AEMCE

The four steps of AEMCE constitute a coherent, cyclic process, wherein the Evaluation and Circulation stages are explicitly intended to inform the Diagnosis and Design stage, ensuring that practical insights yield new diagnoses and enhancements. As a result, CE will never be a final one but a cyclic process. It is based on the iterative Design, which counters the skepticism of theorists like Cappelen (2018), who argues that the mechanisms of conceptual change are inscrutable to humans. By making the Circulation and the empirically justified Evaluation phase iterative, this model converts the inscrutability difficulty into a Design characteristic: when engineers cannot make complete predictions of uptake, they need to acquire the methods of continuous monitoring and feedback and community consultation. Moreover, AEMCE's scope extends beyond the mitigation of detrimental conceptions; it also encompasses the formulation of novel concepts, responding to issues highlighted by theorists such as Simion and Kelp (2023) and Isaac et al. (2022).

Both the Diagnosis and the Design phases may be used in case of conceptual invention in which new representational resources are needed (e.g., the appearance of the category "non-binary" as a new gender), which is how CE may become a tool of repair and innovation of our linguistic and social activity. In order to consider scalability and its application to less value-related, or neutral (as in technical science or law), concepts, the model is applied as a hierarchy, where the affective harm is minimized, the ethical-affective condition is realized, and the Design and Evaluation procedure is inverted, focusing on the optimization of the Carnapian virtues of clarity, simplicity, and fruitfulness. This is the flexibility that highlights the generality of the model as a conceptual improvement framework. This model focuses on CE as a process in which ethics and affect serve as a guide and resource, respectively, transforming the CE theory into a continued, normative, socially situated, continuous process. In contrast to the traditional models where the emphasis is laid on the precision or functional use, AEMCE demands that the concepts should also feel right to invoke the sense of dignity, inclusion, and care. It is this combination of moral content and emotional sensitivity that makes CE better equipped to be both a sword of philosophical clarity and a sword of social justice. Since this approach has been mentioned earlier, it now explores the resistance of AEMCE to philosophical issues that have long undermined CE.

Challenges and Opportunities in AEMCE

The systematic analysis of AEMCE should always commence with the Evaluation of the challenges that have shaped the CE domain. The three conventional arguments: indeterminacy, inscrutability, and political imposition have long persistently challenged the feasibility of CE. The objections regarding the alteration of subject matter and Wittgenstein's (2009) critique of conceptual divisions, along with the doubt in intentions toward conceptual control raised by Quine (2018), Cappelen (2018), and Wittgenstein (2009), raise doubts about the potential for CE to possess a robust theoretical and practical foundation. Our model improves this by incorporating inferential continuity into the Design

stage, structuring around iterative feedback mechanisms through Circulation and Evaluation, and assigning ethical responsibility to impacted communities, instead of theorist hermits. In this manner, the model will invert these classical objections into existential threats that would conceptually design responsibly. A complex set of contemporary challenges reshapes the field today, emerging from the social, technological, and political conditions of twenty-first-century concept use. The supreme issue in this case is the Challenge of Conceptual Injustice and Imposition, which highlights the risk of perpetrating or amplifying the dominance of the dominant group by CE to the disadvantage of the communities that a conceptual revision is meant to safeguard (Fricker, 2007).

Critics warn that CE may drift toward moral authoritarianism or ideological domination (Ludlow, 2014; Koch & Ohlhorst, 2024). AEMCE's ethical infrastructure is designed precisely to neutralize this threat. SCM is a manner of alleviating conceptual colonialism through giving a weighted normative precedence to the target community based on direct affective influence. Ethical pluralism, drawing explicitly on consequentialist, deontological, and virtue-ethical rationales, is institutionalized within the Design stage to avoid ideological monopolies. Due to the perpetual open-ended nature of Evaluation, the approach guarantees that no engineered concept becomes dogmatic or immune to change. Rather, conceptual power is decentralized to lived experience, thus transforming the risk of coercion into a regime of democratic conceptual accountability. The second grand current challenge is the Challenge of Empirical Failure, a modern variant of the Measurement Problem[1] (Scharp, 2020). CE has faced challenges to demonstrate that its interventions produce genuine moral or social effects, as opposed to merely improving linguistic clarity. Combined with the Inscrutability Challenge (Cappelen, 2018), opponents contend that conceptual transformation is excessively opaque and causally complex to be intentionally engineered. AEMCE's framework directly addresses these concerns by embedding the Affective Performance Test (APT) into its Evaluation procedure. Modeled partly on Carnap's (1950) notion of fruitfulness but extended into the ethical domain, the APT triangulates psychometric evidence, qualitative testimony, and structural social indicators. This methodology provides the empirical conditions needed to verify whether a conceptual revision genuinely reduces harm, enhances dignity, and improves descriptive reliability. The inscrutability of conceptual change is acknowledged and transformed into a Design principle: the mandatory feedback cycle between Circulation and Evaluation regards unpredictability as an epistemic condition that facilitates iterative enhancement. A further pressure arises from the Challenge of Conceptual Acceleration and Fragility, driven by digital communication, social-media discourse, and algorithmic concept drift[2].

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[1] The phrase is employed similarly to logic and the philosophy of science, where "measurement problems" relate to the question of whether a theoretical property is quantifiable in a precise manner; in this context, it signifies doubt regarding the feasibility of empirically measuring the effects of conceptual engineering, as opposed to merely hypothesizing about them.

[2] Concept drift in algorithms refers to the phenomenon where the statistical properties of the target variable change with time, potentially leading to a decline in model performance. Online concept drift refers to the

Contemporary conceptual development transpires rapidly and among fragmented audiences. This leads to vulnerability, in which concepts can be borrowed quickly and equally experience distortion, politicization or mutilation of meanings. AEMCE addresses this acceleration by grounding conceptual revisions in the affective and narrative practices of real linguistic communities. The Circulation stage employs advocacy, storytelling, and narrative anchoring (Sterken, 2020; Isaac et al., 2022) to stabilize meaning within lived discursive environments. Meanwhile, the Design phase secures inferential and empirical-role continuity, guaranteeing that although a concept's emotional impact may change, its fundamental domain remains unchanged[1]. This internal discipline mitigates conceptual drift while allowing the flux of contemporary semantic existence.

CE today faces the emergent Scaling and Fragmentation Problem characterized by linguistic communities that are dispersed across extensive and quickly evolving digital networks. Universal conceptual transformation is no longer feasible, and rigid top-down solutions are increasingly obsolete. AEMCE is built to operate within this fragmented landscape: its commitment to conceptual repertoires rather than monolithic conceptual replacements, along with its emphasis on plural community testimony, enables conceptual revisions to adapt to diverse contexts without collapsing into relativism. The model's grounding in affective ethics, rather than prescriptive uniformity, gives it the flexibility required to operate across decentralized, multi-community environments. Taken together, these issues outline the contemporary context of CE. These challenges are incorporated into the structural framework of the AEMCE, which focuses on the conceptual injustice with participatory authority, esprit of empirical uncertainty with triangulated measurement, semantic acceleration with grounded narrative stabilization, fragmentation with the help of ethical plurality and contextual adaptability. In doing so, the proposed framework will reconstrue CE as a paradigm of professional, democratic, and empirically responsible conceptual change, and will be able to maneuver around the social complexity, technological speed, and moral demands that come with conceptual life in the present.

Application of the AEMCE to the Case of Children Born Outside Marriage in Algeria

The case of Algerian children born outside marriage provides a powerful illustration of the functioning of the model. These children are often called in Algerian law and society awlad zina (Arabic: children of sin) or illegitimate and thus face moral condemnation and social stigma (Ngema & Iyer, 2023).

Diagnosis

The AEMCE paradigm begins with an affective-ethical Diagnosis, which treats such pervasive stigma as a symptom of conceptual failure. The existing conceptual frame in the Algerian setting does not simply define a demographic state of affairs; it actively constructs

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gradual alteration of concept application and operationalization in machine-learning systems over time within the online environment.

[1] pecifically, the modified concept retains its explanatory and inferential functions, applies to similar cases, and continues to uphold its supporting patterns, even when its emotional and normative profile is elevated.

moral inferiority, placing mothers as well as children outside the range of complete civic and emotional acknowledgment. Reports from The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2005) and Humanium (n.d.) confirm that the children born out of the marriage still face discrimination in the registration of civil, education and inheritance rights. Legal scholarship has also revealed that Algerian family law's emphasis on "illegitimate" filiation applies a moralized, structural exclusion (Aribi Tabutaid, 2021). These stratified affective and legal harms of shame, ostracization, and bureaucratic erasure are exposed and signify to the AEMCE that the dominant conceptualization of human action is infringing the ideal and commitment to Foundational Adequacy: that any social concept must respect human dignity and avoid comminable harm.

Design

After this Diagnosis, the model proceeds to the Design stage, where conceptual revision is first spearheaded by moral and affective standards and only thereafter by the Carnapian standards of both precision and fruitfulness. The AEMCE sought a different language that would remove moral contamination and would also be practically feasible in an administrative context. Comparative analysis and feedback of the stakeholders allow coming up with several candidate concepts, including a child without known parentage (enfant sans filiation connue), a child born outside the marriage, and child with uncertain filiation. Among these, the term "child without known parentage" is the normatively sufficient one, as it does not concentrate on morality but on the real-world situation. It is also consistent with neutral legal formulations used in other civil-law jurisdictions and in the recommendations against birth discrimination of the UNICEF (UNICEF, 2019). The SCM developed by the model we advance gives the highest epistemic weight to the stakeholders who are directly influenced by the concept, mothers, adults who have undergone the experience of being labeled as illegitimate, and child-protection professionals, and the secondary priority is given to the opinions of the population and religious commentary. The purpose of this weighting is to ensure that conceptual authority is drawn from lived affective experience, rather than succumbing to majoritarian prejudice (Burgess et al., 2020). According to the rule of ethical priority under the model, the revised concept should aim to lower the feelings of shame and structural exclusion first, and then linguistic neatness or legal efficiency should come up.

Circulation

After designing a more ethically positive concept, the AEMCE focuses on Circulation, which details how conceptual change is institutionalized socially. Successful Circulation would need a coordinated approach of reform in the Algerian context that integrates the state institutions, the civil society organizations media outlets. Administrative orders through which any mother could be registered as the mother of her child without having to be morally investigated or proved by having her child listed with the paternity physician would serve as a crucial step, eliminating to eliminating a major procedural obstacle pinpointed in Algerian jurisprudence (Aissaoui, 2024). The new terms in the documentation and advocacy materials may be piloted by NGOs (SOS Children's Villages, child-welfare

associations in the country), which will give them a grounded understanding of empowerment. At the same time, communicated campaigns in society should substitute offensive terms like "awlad zina" with the objective term of children of unknown parentage. Personal narratives of families who have experienced the condition could be emphasized in the media and in education, and shift the paradigm to one of rights, not moralistic appeals. Comparative evidence has shown that language changes like these, along with strict laws and educating the public, may help cut down on social distance and implicit bias by a large amount (WHO, 2020). Furthermore, involving religious and community leaders is significant, as incorporating their moral authority aligns with the framework's spirit of inclusive, affect-sensitive Circulation.

Evaluation

The Evaluation stage in AEMCE is not secondary; it is a strong empirical test of the accomplishment of the ethical goal of conceptual change. The Affective Performance Test (APT) operationalizes this stage by integrating psychometric, qualitative, and deliberative measures. APT would come up with testable hypotheses. For instance, researchers might estimate a statistically significant reduction (e.g., by approximately 0.4 standard deviations) [10]in social distance scores and a significant increase (e.g., 25%) in prompt birth registrations within a year of conceptual and legal changes. This would form good primary signs of structural and affective improvement. The researchers would apply the quantitatively Social Distance Scale in its localized form to the willingness to interact with individuals who were termed as children born outside marriage and the willingness to interact with individuals termed as neutral (Bogardus, 1925). The Perceived Stigma Scale (Link & Phelan, 2001) and the Implicit Association Test (Greenwald et al., 1998), two tools based on stigma research, would be used to measure both explicit and implicit affective shifts. According to UNICEF monitoring guidelines (UNICEF, 2025), the objective indicators of structural inclusion would be administrative data on the number of births registered, the time it takes to get certificates, and the number of students enrolled in school. As per the requirements of qualitative design, AEMCE requires the use of focus groups and narrative interviews on mothers, adult survivors of abandonment, social workers, and religious figures, as considered the best practices in application research design (Krueger & Casey, 2015). The subsequent data would be incorporated into deliberative forums among the affected stakeholders, and through deliberation, the concerned parties and the specialists would be able to evaluate whether the conceptual revision did build dignity and lessen harm.

The actualization of these results would empirically validate AEMCE's theoretical assertions, supporting the argument that conceptual modification guided by affective-ethical standards yields quantifiable moral and institutional returns. This demonstrates that CE is not just a semantic practice, but a moral imperative. Furthermore, the model's feedback

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[10] These are the effect sizes that empirical design should strive to achieve observable enhancements that would constitute considerable proof of conceptual success.

iteration ensures reflexivity, allowing the identification and reformulation of superficial reforms (like simple term replacement without institutional modification). This reflexivity is a turning point in favor of purely Carnapian modes, which commonly end at linguistic clarity, without trying to understand embodied harms. In a community where family respect and religious decency are powerful pressures, a model that prefigures emotional and moral processes is the only one that may deliver sustainable conceptual change. The Algerian case, therefore, provides strong arguments that the model's affective transformation approach delivers both philosophical consistency and quantifiable social advancement.

Conclusion

The current study provides empirical proof that conceptual labor is filled with an ethical bias; rather than merely defining objective reality and territory, the notion also creates moral and affective terrain, hence defining the extent to which individuals are regarded as inferior or superior. The results of this study confirm the hypothesis that the implementation of the affective and ethical aspect in conceptual engineering does lead to a more comprehensive perspective in conceptual revision, which is concerned not only with emotional resonance and psychological hurt but also with conventional epistemic and practical issues. Furthermore, practical implementation necessitates extensive institutional coordination, not only in the fields of law, education, and the media, but also in areas beyond philosophy's purview. Future research must assess the generality of AEMCE in diverse languages, cultural, and digital contexts. Making CE a complete effective-ethical science would be the goal. To promote more equitable ideas, the style promotes a new philosophical culture that is morally driven, emotionally sensitive, and scientifically diverse. It holds that compassion and conceptual clarity must be balanced.

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