

GROUPS AND MORALITY

Colin Wayne Leach, Rezarta Bilali, and Stefano Pagliaro

Across social and personality Psychology, there is renewed interest in morality. Consistent with these fields' general emphasis on *subjective* psychological processes, recent work tends to view any thought, feeling, or behavior that includes a notion of right and wrong as moral (for a review, see Haidt & Kesebir, 2010). This makes moral psychology an unusually diverse topic. Therefore, this chapter reviews a wide swath of relevant work, on topics ranging from personality, self-perception, and self-esteem; to social cooperation, trust, and interdependence; to stereotypes, prejudice, and group identity.

Although social and personality psychologists examine individuals' use of specific notions of right and wrong—based on such concepts as justice, trustworthiness, warmth, cooperation, and harm—they tend to avoid the question of whether individuals' subjective notions of right and wrong are actually moral in an *objective* sense (Blasi, 1990). In this respect, psychology diverges sharply from a philosophical or ethical approach, which typically compares individuals' subjective notions of morality to a conception of morality that is defined objectively by principle or shared practice (Blasi, 1990; for discussions in philosophy, see MacIntyre, 1984; Rawls, 1971). Given that morality is not defined objectively in social and personality Psychology, we must attend closely to which notions of right and wrong researchers consider to be in the moral domain. As explained in the following section, some notions of morality, such as trustworthiness and

justice, are more compatible with an objective sense of the concept, given their basis in principles or shared practices.

Perhaps because social psychology defines moral thought, feeling, and behavior as that which *individuals* subjectively consider right or wrong, the focus has been on individuals in general (for reviews, see Haidt & Kesebir, 2010; Monin & Jordan, 2009; Pagliaro, 2012). Thus, the morality of particular individuals has been relatively neglected by social psychologists. The first section discusses the roots of the individual approach to morality in social psychology. It also reviews distinct approaches to moral personality and honor, which focus on individuals' particular moral self-views.

Although moral personality may appear to have little to do with groups, individual ideas about morality rely on some reference to what a moral person is like (for general discussions, see Harré, 1993). And, whatever their particularities, individuals are moral or immoral in their families, in their neighborhoods, in their workplaces, and in their countries. Thus, even individual morality operates within groups. For these reasons, and others that will be discussed, understanding groups and morality is essential to understanding morality in general. Thus, the second section, reviews four of the central ways in which groups are important to morality. The third section reviews the ways in which perceived morality is important to examinations of stereotypes and prejudice toward out-groups. The fourth section

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reviews theory and research on morality regarding in-groups. As will be seen, morality is at the heart of in-group identity, positive group esteem, and social action. As a result of its importance to views of in-group and out-group, it should not be surprising that morality plays a central role in the quality of relations between groups. This issue is reviewed in the fifth section.

THE INDIVIDUAL APPROACH TO MORALITY

In social Psychology, morality tends to be examined as an individual phenomenon. It is individuals who think, feel, and behave in ways that they consider moral. And it is individuals who sometimes disagree about what counts as moral. Thus, groups are given little place in morality. This individualist approach to morality in social psychology is likely an inheritance of prior philosophical and developmental approaches, which tended to focus on the moral “everyman.”

Philosophical and Developmental Approaches

In many philosophical approaches, an individual's morality is judged by how close it comes to what a rational, moral person with all necessary information would do (for a discussion, see MacIntyre, 1984). For example, in Rawls's (1971) influential approach, individuals in a society should agree to judge questions of justice from an impartial “original position,” in which they are not influenced by who they are as individuals or by their particular situation (e.g., wealthy or poor, male or female, from one ethnic group or another). Thus, jurors in a murder trial should weigh the evidence and judge the defendant's guilt without relying on their personal values and goals and without reference to their life history or life circumstances. Jurors should assume that they, their fellow jurors, and the defendant are equal and thus that the principles of justice apply equally to all involved. This view is built on classic philosophical notions of good moral judgment, most notably David Hume's *judicious spectator*, Adam Smith's *impartial spectator*, and Immanuel Kant's *categorical imperative* (D'Agostino, 2008).

The Kohlberg developmental tradition may also have encouraged an individualist view of morality in social psychology. In the Kohlberg tradition, children are seen as making moral judgments according to the “social conventions” of their parents, their peers, and their society only at the earliest and least advanced stage of their moral development (for a more general discussion of social development, see Chapter 7, this volume). Thus, true, or advanced, moral judgment is made with reference to “universal” principles of justice, rather than individual, group, or community standards (for discussions, see Blasi, 1990; Haidt & Kesebir, 2010). Indeed, as in the philosophical view, the Kohlberg tradition portrays moral individuals as using moral principles impartially, without concern for their individual values and goals, their relationships, their group memberships, or the situation at hand (for a discussion, see Miller, 2006).

As with many other conceptions of human cognition as a generic process, the analysis of the moral everyman examines the generic individual in a generic circumstance. As such, the individualist approach to morality in social psychology examines no person and no place in particular. This leaves the group (as well as the social context more generally) out of morality. Ironically, the individualist approach to morality in social psychology is “an individualism without individuals” (Leach, 2002). By focusing on individuals in general, the individualist approach tends to ignore the ways in which particular individuals differ from one another morally. The next section discusses the work on moral personality and on individual honor and virtue that has been done by personality psychologists and by those social psychologists who are interested in individual differences.

Moral Personality

For most of its history, personality psychology has examined the degree to which individuals see themselves (and others) as possessing particular traits. The most prominent approach today views personality traits in terms of the *five-factor model*, which includes openness and intellect, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism and emotional stability. Personality psychologists have

long viewed *communal* traits (e.g., agreeableness—sympathetic, kind, cooperative, sincere; conscientiousness—dutiful, reliable) as distinct from *agentic* traits (e.g., extraversion, openness and intellect; for reviews, see Paulhus & John, 1998; Wiggins, 1991; see also Rosenberg & Sedlak, 1972). Many studies in the United States show that individuals believe they are more communal than their peers, friends, and family members believe them to be (for a review, see Paulhus & John, 1998). It is unclear, however, whether the agreeableness and conscientiousness factors, or the more general communion dimension they constitute, should be considered moral.

Partly because the five-factor model of personality does not include an explicitly moral factor, several lines of work identify morality as an important additional aspect of personality (cf. Aquino & Reed, 2002). For instance, Ashton and Lee (2008) have found consistent evidence for an honesty–humility factor in more than a dozen languages, including non-Indo-European languages, such as Filipino, Korean, and Turkish. Individuals who see themselves as less honest–humble report more unethical business practices, greater materialism, greater willingness to engage in sexual harassment, a stronger desire for dominance, and more criminality. Thus, seeing oneself as a less moral person is associated with seeing oneself as acting in ways that are less moral.

In a different approach, Park, Peterson, and Seligman (2006) recruited more than 100,000 English-speaking Internet users from 54 countries. These participants were asked to indicate how much they possessed each of 240 personality traits designed to assess the “character virtues” of justice, humanity, temperance, wisdom, transcendence, and courage. Fairness, kindness, and honesty were the traits that participants across countries most ascribed to themselves. These traits are the ones most commonly identified as moral across many different cultural and religious traditions around the world (Dahlsgaard, Peterson, & Seligman, 2005). Similarly, Walker and colleagues conducted several studies with large, diverse samples and found that “the moral person” is imagined to be particularly just, brave, or caring (e.g., Walker & Hennig, 2004).

Just, brave, and caring individuals, however, are believed to have different personality traits. For example, the brave are seen as most agentic and the caring as most agreeable. In contrast, the just are seen as most “moral” and as most honest, principled, and fair (for a broader discussion of justice, see Chapter 4, this volume).

Honor and Moral Virtue

In many cultural traditions, being trustworthy and otherwise moral is one important way in which individuals maintain a sense of honor or virtue (Dahlsgaard et al., 2005; Rodriguez Mosquera, Manstead, & Fischer, 2002b). Although honor currently may operate more explicitly in cultures of the Mediterranean (e.g., Rodriguez Mosquera, Manstead, & Fischer, 2002a), honor is central to the western philosophical tradition (see MacIntyre, 1984). This is likely why the ancient Greek emphasis on moral virtue as a cornerstone of honor appears to be equally strong in people from more and less honor-oriented cultures in the 21st century. Cultural values and norms may dictate how important sexuality, family reputation, and personal achievement are to honor, but the moral virtue of trustworthiness is a more constant concern (Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2002a). As a result, even cultural groups that do not emphasize honor express the view that trustworthiness is important to their self-image. For example, Rodriguez Mosquera et al. (2002a) asked participants in more (i.e., Spain) or less (i.e., the Netherlands) honor-oriented societies how bad they would feel if they were thought to be dishonest and untrustworthy. Across cultural groups, individuals expected to feel very bad about being immoral in these ways. Other studies have found that believing oneself to be more generally “immoral” or a “bad person” is linked to lower self-esteem (for reviews, see Crocker & Wolfe, 2001; Tafarodi & Swann, 2001).

Across these different approaches to individual morality, it is evident that researchers (and participants in their studies) have a broad definition of what is moral. It also is clear, however, that some traits are more generally and more strongly considered moral. Trustworthiness and justice are the traits that are seen as most moral and are also the

traits that people seem to most want to possess. Although individuals' judgments of their own morality may appear to have little to do with groups, such judgments cannot be made without some reference to a broader notion of what a moral person is like (for general discussions, see Harré, 1993). Thus, notions of individual morality necessarily rely on the use of a reference group by which the self can be judged against the morality of others (for a review, see Leach & Vliek, 2008). In personality Psychology, the moral reference group that individuals use to gauge the degree to which they possess moral traits is typically left implicit. In social psychological research, the moral reference group tends to be examined explicitly.

WHY GROUPS ARE IMPORTANT TO MORALITY

This section reviews four ways in which groups are central to morality. It explains how (a) individuals gauge their own morality by comparison to a reference group that provides a standard of the moral person, (b) morality is not individual but socially shared, (c) individuals' socially shared sense of morality may be necessary to the social coordination required for group life, and (d) morality is of most importance to social interaction because it is inferentially necessary to all other judgments of human goodness.

Reference Groups for Individual Morality

In social Psychology, individuals' belief in their morality often is assessed in comparison to an explicit reference group. Thus, several lines of research have examined to what degree, and why, individuals see themselves as more moral than others.

Moral self-aggrandizement. The tendency to see oneself as more moral than others has been dubbed the *Muhammad Ali effect* because the famous boxer claimed to be "the greatest, not the smartest" (Allison, Messick, & Goethals, 1989). In two studies by Allison et al. (1989), U.S. students reported performing more "good" and fewer "bad" behaviors than "other people" (e.g., helping, stealing, insulting).

Participants, however, tended to see themselves as only somewhat more intelligent than others. In a later study, Van Lange and Sedikides (1998) found that Dutch students self-aggrandized their honesty more than their intelligence (compared with the average student). Importantly, Van Lange and Sedikides examined the reasons for participants' greater moral self-aggrandizement. They found that honesty was seen as a more desirable characteristic to possess, as more under one's personal control, and as less verifiable than intelligence. Only the greater desirability of being honest explained why participants self-aggrandized with respect to that characteristic. Because being honest is more personally and socially desirable than being smart, participants made a stronger claim of being more honest than their peers (see also Paulhus & John, 1998).

In another line of research, Epley and Dunning (2000) found that university students in the United States saw themselves as "holier than thou." That is, they tended to overestimate how much they would donate to charity, cooperate with a peer, or help a peer compared with their actual behavior in the studies. Epley and Dunning found that this sense of individual morality was achieved mainly by overestimating one's own morality, rather than underestimating others' morality. Balci et al., Dunning, and Miller (2008) used a similar approach with elementary and university students from individualist (western Europe, United States) and collectivist (Spain, China) societies. They found individualists to overestimate the degree to which they would share with a peer, donate to charity, or avoid being impolite. Results were consistent with the idea that individualists see themselves as different from others and thus expect to be more moral than others.

In both the Muhammad Ali and the holier-than-thou effects, individuals see their own morality in the context of the morality they ascribe to a group of (less moral) others. Because seeing oneself as more moral than others is an easy way to secure one's moral integrity, this tendency is likely to be pervasive in cultural contexts that emphasize self-aggrandizement, in the moral and in other domains. A self-serving use of a less moral reference group is not the only possibility, however. People sometimes are forced to view their morality in the context of a

highly moral reference group. This was shown recently by Monin, Sawyer, and Marquez (2008) who put participants in a situation in which they acted immorally and then witnessed a peer acting morally in a similar situation. Being exposed to the moral peer appeared to threaten participant's sense of self-worth. Only when this threat to self-worth was reduced were participants better able to recognize that their peer was more moral than they. The threat to self-worth posed by comparison to a more moral referent is an additional reason for moral self-aggrandizement.

Morality as Socially Shared

Individuals can differ in their moral values, the importance of morality to their self-concept, or the specific standards by which they judge moral issues. Morality, however, cannot be purely individual. If each individual operated under a purely idiosyncratic sense of morality, individuals would never have any sense of what others consider moral, and as a result, they would not know what actions to expect from others and would have little basis for deciding how to act themselves. Thus, from a pragmatic perspective, it is difficult to imagine how any family, organization, or society could operate as a social unit without some shared sense of morality.

In clinical psychology and psychiatry, an individual with a purely personal sense of right and wrong is a psychopath who suffers from antisocial personality disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Psychopaths are diagnosed as such for failing to follow social norms and formal rules and laws, and for dishonesty, irresponsibility in meeting obligations, aggressiveness, a disregard for other's safety, and indifference toward others' suffering. In other words, psychopaths do not share the notions of morality common in their group. This is what defines them as abnormal and disordered. Purely personal notions of right and wrong constitute personal beliefs rather than morality.

The fact that morality cannot be a purely personal sense of right and wrong is also clear in the etymology of the word moral. The Latin word *moralis* is derived from the word *mos*, which means more (mor-AY). Mores are "the essential or characteristic customs and conventions of a community" (New

Oxford American Dictionary, 2005). Thus, by definition, morality is a socially shared convention. As such, morality always implies the presence of a group that shares, to some degree, a particular notion of what is moral. Socially shared morality, however, can never be perfectly consensual. Social sharing does not eliminate differences between individuals or between subgroups within a larger group (Nowak, Szamrej, & Latané, 1990). Morality is socially shared within a group because group members have *some* common knowledge of a moral code that is used in the group, however imperfect (see Caporael, 1997; Shweder, Much, Mahapatra, & Park, 1997; and for general discussions in social Psychology, see Bar-Tal, 2000; Bruner, 1994; Moscovici, 1993).

Shared Morality as Necessary to Social Relations

All social interactions require some common ground upon which the involved parties can coordinate their behavior (Brown, 1965; Caporael, 1997; Harré, 1993; Moscovici, 1993; Rai & Fiske, 2011). In the interdependent groups in which humans and other primates live, individuals must have even greater common ground to establish and maintain social relationships. This common ground is morality. This is why morality often is defined as a (shared) set of standards for judging right and wrong in the conduct of social relationships. However it is conceptualized—whether as trustworthiness, cooperation, justice, or caring—morality is always about the treatment of people in social relationships. This is likely why there is surprising agreement across a wide range of perspectives that a shared sense of morality is necessary to social relations. Evolutionary biologists, sociologists, and philosophers all seem to agree with social psychologists that the interdependent relationships within groups that humans depend on are not possible without a shared morality.

Evolutionary perspectives. Morality is assumed to be necessary to social relations in many evolutionary approaches to interaction among humans and other primates (for reviews, see Axelrod & Hamilton, 1981; Brewer, 1999; Caporael, 1997; Cosmides &

Tooby, 2005; Fry, 2006; see also Bowlby, 1982). In his 1871 book, *The Descent of Man*, Darwin argued that morality evolved in primates because it is adaptive and thus advantages the individuals and groups that possess it (Fry, 2006). At a more concrete level, a number of ethnologists have used observations of nonhuman primates to argue that morality is essential to the kind of interdependent group living necessary to the survival of such species. On the basis of his work with chimpanzees and bonobos, de Waal (1996) argued that all primates must attend to their reputation for acting rightly because it has serious implications for their physical and social well-being. A primate with a reputation for treating others unfairly can suffer serious social sanctions, such as being given less food, less grooming, and less protection by the group. He or she may even be physically sanctioned through fellow group members' violent attacks.

Other research on nonhuman primates has revealed a number of ways in which strong social ties, and the lasting cooperation they enable, benefit *individuals* reproductively and otherwise (see Cheney, Seyfarth, & Smuts, 1986). Although male baboons are quite aggressive in their pursuit of power and prestige (and procreation), such competition requires them to be in the company of other dominant males (Smuts, 1985; in social psychology, see Fischer & Rodriguez Mosquera, 2001). This leaves the females and less dominant males unattended. Smuts has recorded numerous cases of male baboons grooming long-standing female "friends" and caring for these females' offspring. These less dominant males also sometimes have sex with the females and thus are likely to be caring for some of their own offspring. This sort of "friends with benefits" arrangement is only one of the dramatic ways in which morality can be advantageous to individuals in evolutionary terms.

Societal perspectives. At least since Aristotle's (350 BC/1947) *Nicomachean Ethics*, theorists of society have emphasized the need for a system of morality to govern social exchange. For Aristotle, a system of justice was necessary to the existence of civil society. A similar view may be found in early 20th-century sociological and anthropological analyses of

how communities function. This perspective typically is called *functionalism*. Although functionalist approaches have been criticized for being post-hoc interpretations of group living, a good deal of contemporary sociological research continues to assume that a shared sense of morality is necessary for the social organization of people into groups, institutions, and social systems (for a review, see Fehr & Gintis, 2007).

In sociology, anthropology, and other social sciences, Durkheim is seen as the father of the functionalist approach to understanding how morality works in society. This is because Durkheim argued that "morality [. . .] is not a concept external to society but rather part of its essence" (Bellah, 1973, p. x). Bellah pointed out that Durkheim viewed society as an organism with interdependent parts, in which each part must work with the others for the body to function. At some level, this is very similar to the evolutionary perspective discussed earlier. As a sociologist, however, Durkheim emphasized the social and historical evolution of societies, rather than the genetic evolution of the species. For instance, in *The Division of Labor in Society*, Durkheim (1893/1947) argued that the "organic solidarity" that guides relationships in modern society relies on a shared notion of justice (Bellah, 1973).

Sociologists from the *symbolic interactionism* perspective, pioneered by Cooley and Mead in the early 20th century, also view a shared sense of morality as essential to social life. According to symbolic interactionism, individuals must attend to their reputation as moral because the way they are seen by important others determines their sense of self-worth as well as their treatment by the group (Cooley, 1902; for a review, see Scheff, 2000). Although the symbolic interactionist and ethological perspectives are quite different, they agree on the fact that individuals attend to their reputation as moral because it has serious implications for their physical, psychological, and social well-being.

Perspectives on interpersonal interactions.

Unlike the more macrolevel social relations emphasized in the evolutionary and societal perspectives on morality, social psychology focuses on the micro-level social interactions within groups. According

to this perspective, individuals attend to others' morality because it is an important guide concerning how to interact with them (for reviews, see Brewer, 1999; Brown, 1965). Indeed, it is unwise to ask the uncharitable for help, to trust a liar, or to lend to a thief. Because no one can be sure that his or her interaction partner will be moral, individuals must have some degree of trust to cooperate in interactions (Axelrod & Hamilton, 1981; Brewer, 1999; see also Bowlby, 1982). According to the philosopher of language Paul Grice (1975), even the simplest conversation between two people requires each to gauge the other's trustworthiness and to cooperate on the basis of some minimal degree of trust.

In an influential approach, Bales (1950) showed that individuals in small groups attend to the "socio-emotional" side of their interactions to establish the social relationships necessary to progress on "instrumental" tasks, such as making decisions and attaining resources. Similarly, research on procedural justice shows that the perceived trustworthiness of in-group members is a major determinant of individuals' willingness to cooperate with other members of their team, organization, neighborhood, and so forth (for reviews, see Skitka, 2003; Tyler & Blader, 2003; see also Chapter 4, this volume). Game theory is another influential view of interpersonal interaction that focuses on morality by emphasizing trust and cooperation (for reviews, see Axelrod & Hamilton, 1981; Fehr & Gintis, 2007). In a long line of research, Schopler, Insko, and colleagues showed that the choice to cooperate or compete in team prisoner's dilemma games requires trust and cooperation *within the team* to make a joint decision about whether to trust and cooperate between teams (for a review, see Schopler & Insko, 1992; for a discussion of conflict between groups, see Chapter 6, this volume).

Morality as Inferentially Necessary

Without a sense of another's morality, we can have little confidence in our judgments about his or her virtues. This is part of the reason that Aristotle (350 BC/1947) emphasized the notion of moral character in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. If a person lacks moral character, it is difficult to know if his or her apparent moral thinking, feeling, or behavior is genuinely

moral. Among the different aspects of morality, trustworthiness is most important because it is most inferentially necessary to judgments of who is moral (Leach, Ellemers, & Barreto, 2007). If we cannot be sure that a person is trustworthy, we cannot be sure that he or she is genuinely just, kind, or cooperative.

The inferential importance of trustworthiness is suggested by the fact that people are so adept at inferring others' trustworthiness that they do this very quickly and spontaneously in interactions, on the basis of very little information. In a study by Willis and Todorov (2006) participants were exposed to novel faces for either one tenth of a second, half a second, or a second and then judged the attractiveness, likeability, honesty and trustworthiness, competence, and aggressiveness of the faces. Even when exposed to the faces for only one tenth of a second, participants made fairly confident judgments of people's honesty and trustworthiness very quickly (in about 1.7 seconds). Judging nonmoral traits, such as likeability and competence, took longer.

Further evidence that trustworthiness is essential to the inference of human morality comes from numerous studies showing that trustworthiness is what people find most desirable in other people and what they most attend to in forming impressions of others. In an influential set of studies, Anderson (1968) asked university students in the United States to indicate how much they would like a person who possessed each of 555 personality traits. "Sincere" and "honest" people were most liked. Of the five most desirable traits, four were related to trustworthiness (sincere, honest, loyal, truthful). Very similar results regarding honesty were found by Van Lange and Sedikides (1998) in a study of Dutch university students.

In a slightly different approach, Cottrell and Neuberg (2005, Study 1) asked 48 U.S. students to rate 13 personality characteristics, including the Big Five, with their ideal person in mind. Participants rated trustworthiness as most important and most necessary for this ideal person. Cooperativeness and agreeableness were the second and third most important personality characteristics. In a second study, Cottrell and Neuberg asked participants about the characteristics they considered most

important for an ideal group member (e.g., in a study group, workplace, group of friends). Across these interdependent relationships, individuals tended to rate trustworthiness as the most important characteristic for the ideal other to have. Cooperativeness typically was rated as second most important. People also *attend* to the trustworthiness of others consistently across situations (Reeder & Spores, 1983). In a recent study, Brambilla, Rusconi, Sacchi, and Cherubini (2011) found that Italian university students were more interested in gathering information about an individual's trustworthiness (i.e., honest, sincere, trustworthy, righteous, respectful) than their warmth (i.e., kind, friendly, warm, likeable, helpful) or competence (i.e., intelligent, competent, efficient, skillful, capable) when asked to form a global impression of the individual. Furthermore, using a social dilemma game, De Bruin and Van Lange (2000) found that information about a partner's trustworthiness had greater influence than information about their competence (i.e., competence, skill) on participants' expectation of cooperation from the partner. This led participants to be more cooperative toward a benevolent than a competent partner.

That trustworthiness is most necessary to the inference of morality also is suggested by the evidence that trustworthiness is viewed in similar ways across societies. For instance, Dahlsgaard et al. (2005) analyzed the virtues extolled in some of the world's most influential moral traditions: Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Athenian philosophy, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The only virtues explicitly discussed in all eight traditions were justice and humanity, both of which include trustworthiness. Temperance, wisdom, and transcendence were mentioned less explicitly and less consistently. Courage was the least consistently discussed virtue. In a different approach, Vauclair and Fischer (2011) had large samples in 56 countries indicate how "justified" they believed 10 moral behaviors to be. About half of the behaviors involved dishonesty, such as cheating on one's taxes or claiming undeserved government benefits. The other half of the behaviors involved more clearly normative issues regarding sexuality (i.e., prostitution, homosexuality, divorce) and human life (i.e., suicide,

euthanasia, abortion). Vauclair and Fischer found that people across countries varied a good deal in the extent to which they justified normative behaviors, but there was little difference across countries in justifications of dishonest behavior.

The inferential power of immorality. The inferential power of information about another's morality is heightened in the case of negative information. For instance, Martijn, Spears, van der Pligt, and Jakobs (1992) found negative information to be weighed more heavily than positive information when people formed an impression of another's morality, but not of their competence. Here again, information about trustworthiness is particularly powerful. Recently, Brambilla, Rusconi, et al. (2011, Study 2) found that negative information about a person's trustworthiness was viewed as more diagnostic than negative information about their warmth. Several approaches to person perception argue that dishonest behaviors are taken to be especially diagnostic of immorality because people anticipate that only dishonest people act dishonestly (e.g., Reeder & Brewer, 1979; Skowronski & Carlston, 1987). In contrast, both honest and dishonest people may commit honest acts, partly because honest behavior is normative and rewarded. In fact, Reeder and Covert (1986) found that a single dishonest behavior can alter an expectation of honesty, whereas a single honest behavior cannot alter an expectation of dishonesty. For these reasons, Reeder and Brewer (1979) refer to morality as a "hierarchically restrictive" concept—an immoral act encourages the inference that the actor is an immoral person.

Trafimow and Trafimow (1999) suggested that the view of morality as hierarchically restrictive is similar to the 18th-century philosopher Kant's distinction between perfect and imperfect duties. On the basis of his principle of the categorical imperative, Kant argued that some aspects of morality, such as honesty, always should be observed regardless of the circumstance. These are perfect duties. In contrast, other aspects of morality, such as warmth, cooperation, and charity, sometimes could be flouted. These are imperfect duties. This is another approach that views trustworthiness as an especially important aspect of morality, distinct from other aspects of right and

wrong. Trafimow and Trafimow (Study 1) found that U.S. university students expressed the view that people would have to do less to undermine a view of them as honest than to undermine a view of them as warm, cooperative, or charitable. A second study showed that inferences about another person's honesty were unaffected by the circumstances of their behavior, whereas inferences regarding other aspects of morality were affected by circumstances (see also Study 4).

Individuals seem to share a concern for evaluating others' morality because doing so is essential for choosing how to interact with them. Indeed, a shared sense of morality seems necessary to the kind of interdependence and cooperation required of human beings, given their intense sociality. Across a wide range of theoretical perspectives, there is agreement that trustworthiness is a particularly important and consequential aspect of morality. Across contexts and across cultures, people share the view that trustworthiness is the cardinal moral virtue. Even our primate cousins seem to agree. Given the importance of morality (particularly trustworthiness) to group life, it should play an important role in people's thoughts and feelings about, and behavior toward, out-groups.

Out-Group Morality

Except when an out-group is so disliked, or so unimportant, that it is ignored (see Harris & Fiske, 2009), people should have great interest in an out-group's morality (see also Chapter 11, this volume). Given its importance to inferences about people in general, trustworthiness should be an especially important aspect of the perceived morality of out-groups. For example, in team prisoner's dilemma games, a team's decision to cooperate or compete with another team is based, to a large degree, on that team's trustworthiness (for a review, see Schopler & Insko, 1992). Teams that have cooperated with one's own team in the past have shown that they are *trustworthy*. Teams that have competed when one's own team tried to cooperate have shown that they are *untrustworthy*. Thus, a team's moral reputation is central to the choice to cooperate with them. In-groups benefit most when they cooperate with trustworthy out-groups and compete with untrustworthy ones (Axelrod & Hamilton, 1981).

This section discusses the role of morality in out-group evaluation and prejudice. Somewhat surprisingly, the perceived morality of out-groups has been examined less extensively than the perceived morality of individuals. For example, prevailing two-dimensional models of out-group evaluation ignore perceived trustworthiness or fairness and focus on the more general perception of out-group power and benevolence (also called agency and communion, or competence and warmth). Research on prejudice focuses on perceived threats or political attitudes with little attention to their moral content. Thus, this review of two-dimensional models of out-group evaluation and prominent approaches to prejudice highlights the ways in which attention to specific aspects of morality, such as trustworthiness, can enrich examination of these important topics.

Two-Dimensional Models of Out-Group Evaluation

At the most general level, people (whether individuals or groups) are evaluated along two general dimensions (for reviews, see Abele, Cuddy, Judd, & Yzerbyt, 2008; Brown, 1965; White, 1980; Wiggins, 1991). The names given to these two dimensions of person evaluation vary widely—agency and communion, task and socioemotional, instrumental and expressive, dominance and nurturance, competence and warmth. The dimension variously referred to as competence, agency, or dominance includes characteristics indicative of human *power*. The dimension variously referred to as warmth, communion, or nurturance includes characteristics indicative of human *benevolence* (Leach et al., 2007; Leach, Minescu, Poppe, & Hagendoorn, 2008). The dimensions of power and benevolence are found in beliefs about the traits of women and men (for a review, see Williams & Best, 1990), ethnic groups (Brewer & Campbell, 1976; LeVine & Campbell, 1972), and many other groups in society (for a review, see Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008). As with people's impressions of individuals (for a review, see Wojciszke, 2005), the perceived benevolence of an out-group is generally important in determining how positively the out-group is evaluated (for reviews, see Abele et al., 2008; Cuddy et al., 2008).

Because benevolence refers to the positive treatment of people, this dimension of person evaluation is similar to some conceptualizations of morality. As a result, the benevolence dimension of person evaluation sometimes is referred to as a “moral” dimension (Wojciszke, 2005). As shown in the first section of this chapter, however, such a broad conceptualization of the moral obscures the unique role of trustworthiness in inferences about other’s morality. Indeed, out-group members can be seen as warm, friendly, and likeable without being seen as moral people who can be trusted (Leach et al., 2007, 2008). Thus, it is important to distinguish perceptions of out-group trustworthiness from perceptions of less obviously moral aspects of out-group benevolence, such as sociability (also referred to as warmth, communion, or nurturance).

Image Theory

Image theory has been used widely in the field of international relations to examine the characteristics ascribed to countries (for reviews, see Herrmann, 1985; Jervis, 1976). Five negative images (enemy, barbarian, imperialist, dependent or colonial, rogue) and two positive images (ally and father) fit within the three-dimensional framework shown in Figure 5.1. Each image is a product of three features of the

relations between groups: goal compatibility (cooperative vs. competitive), relative strength (stronger vs. weaker), and cultural status (superior vs. inferior; see Alexander, Brewer, & Herrmann, 1999; Herrmann & Fischerkeller, 1995). For example, an ally is an equal power and status partner for cooperation, but a father is stronger and superior and thus can be relied on for protection. Because a rogue is inferior in power and status, it is less threatening than a stronger enemy, imperialist, or barbarian.

With little loss of information, the seven images can be mapped onto the more common two-dimensional model of person evaluation by combining power and status into a more general power dimension (see Figure 5.2). Although the perceived goal-compatibility dimension is akin to benevolence, perceived goal compatibility is more clearly moral in content because it establishes whether the out-group can be trusted to use its power and status benevolently (Alexander et al., 1999). For example, in a study of interethnic perceptions in the United States, Alexander, Brewer, and Livingston (2005) found that European Americans evaluated African Americans as threatening enemies or barbarians who could not be trusted to control their competitive, potentially violent, impulses. However, European Americans evaluated Native Americans as trustworthy

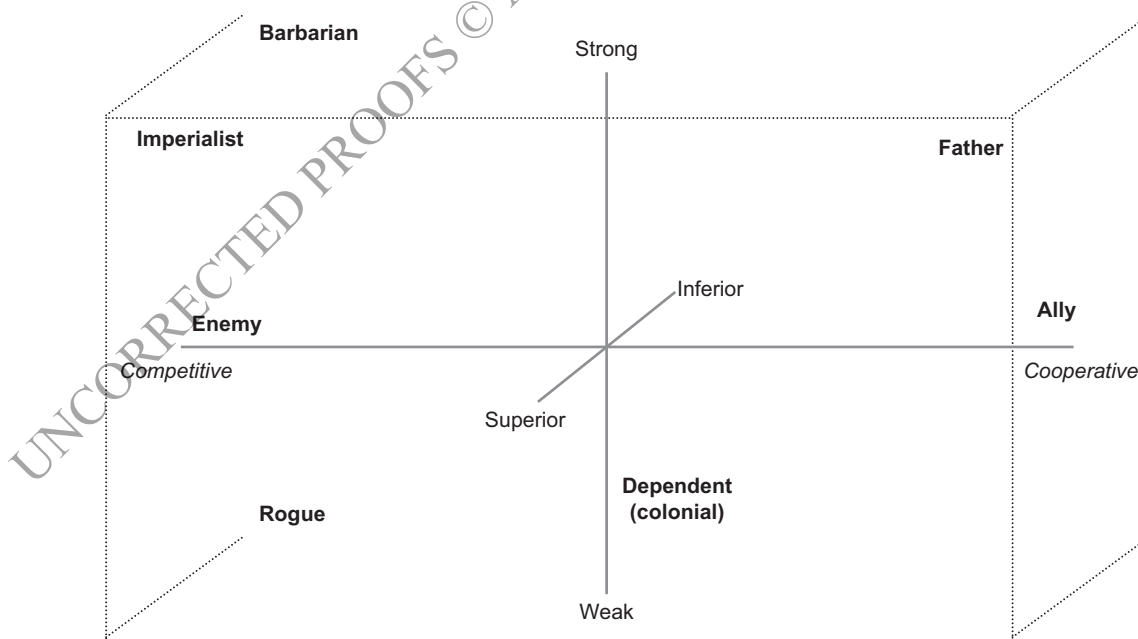


FIGURE 5.1. Image theory’s three-dimensional model of out-group evaluation.

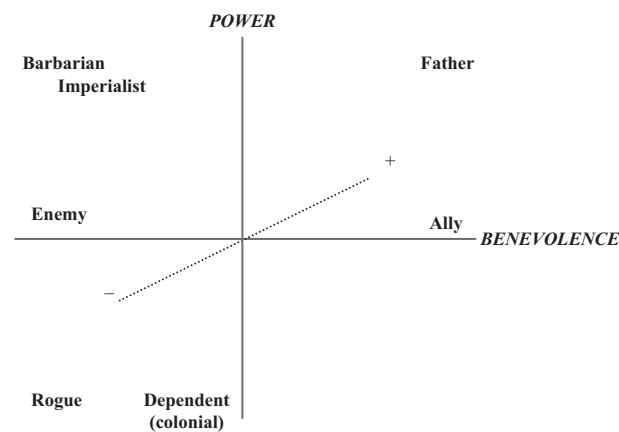


FIGURE 5.2. Image theory's model of out-group evaluation integrated into the two-dimensional model of power and benevolence.

but weak dependents who they needed to guide and protect. In contrast, African Americans and Native Americans viewed European Americans as untrustworthy imperialists who had the strength and status to (unfairly) dominate and exploit others.

Research on international views of the United States also supports image theory. In the aftermath of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, Glick et al. (2006) found that students in 11 countries viewed the United States as imperialistic because it was believed to be arrogantly dominating the world. Bilali (2010) found similar views in Turkey. In Lebanon, the barbarian image of the United States was prevalent among those who perceived the United States to have bad intentions in international affairs (Alexander, Levin, & Henry, 2005). In Italy, Capozza, Trifiletti, Vezzali, and Andrighetto (2009) found that left-wing respondents saw the United States as a barbarian, enemy, or an imperialist who could not be trusted. Right-wing participants, however, saw the United States as an ally and father who could be trusted to offer paternal protection to weaker countries. By focusing on specific images, image theory is able to examine the important role that the moral characteristic of trustworthiness plays in the evaluation of out-groups with varying power and status.

Stereotypes

Agency and communion. Agency and communion have long been viewed as the most prevalent characteristics in terms of which people are evaluated

(for a review, see Wiggins, 1991). Agency refers to seeking and gaining power in relationships through the exercise of autonomy, competence, achievement, status, and strength. Communion refers to interdependence in relationships based on sociability, cooperation, and caring. Agency and communion have been examined most extensively in work on stereotypes of men and women (for reviews, see Abele et al., 2008; Ridgeway, Boyle, Kuipers, & Robinson, 1998).

In one of the most comprehensive lines of research on sex stereotypes, Williams and Best (1990) asked 100 male and female university students in each of 30 countries (across the Americas, Western Europe, Asia, and Australasia) to indicate the degree to which 300 adjectives described women and men. Both men and women tended to describe men as much more agentic in *positive* ways (strength, activity, autonomy, and achievement) and *negative* ways (dominance, aggression). In contrast, women and men tended to describe women as somewhat more communal (exhibiting affiliation, nurturance, and succorance). Although Williams and Best assessed a wide variety of traits, it is unclear how morality is involved in the sex stereotypes they examined. Of the characteristics assessed, only dominance and aggression appear to have an overtly moral tone. Men, it seems, are seen as less moral in these ways. The view of women's morality is unclear, however. Because both agency and communion imply, but do not specify, morality, it is unclear whether women are seen as more or less

moral than men given their supposedly greater communion and lesser agency.

In an influential study, Eagly and Kite (1987) asked about 300 university students in the United States to describe 28 countries using a list of 41 traits. These traits were used to examine the general dimensions of agency (e.g., dominant, aggressive, competitive, independent, self-confident, ambitious) and communion (e.g., honest, kind, friendly, likable). Americans, the in-group, were the only group seen as high in both agency and communion. In contrast, Iranians were seen as almost as high in agency and very low in communion. Allies to the United States—such as the Japanese, Irish, English, Canadians, and Australians—were seen as equal to Americans in communion, but as somewhat less agentic. Poles and Indians were seen as high in communion but relatively low in agency.

Although these results are telling at one level, they also show how inattention to morality can make it difficult to interpret the perceived agency and communion of out-groups. For example, Americans and Iranians were both seen as quite agentic in this study. This is possible because agency included “positive” agency (e.g., independent, self-confident, ambitious) as well as agency likely to be seen as immoral (i.e., dominant, aggressive, competitive). In further analyses, Eagly and Kite (1987) found that Iranians were seen as especially aggressive, hostile, and competitive. This is a decidedly immoral type of agency. In contrast, the English were seen as especially intelligent, cultivated, and independent. This is a more positive, fairly amoral, form of agency. Without direct attention to the moral content embedded in agency and communion stereotypes, however, the key characteristics for understanding the evaluation of out-groups—such as trustworthiness and fairness—cannot be examined directly.

Competence and morality. In a pair of studies, Phalet and Poppe (1997) asked high school students in Russia, Byelorussia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic about the traits of ethnic groups in those countries and in three powerful Western European countries (England, Germany, and Italy). They used a two-dimensional approach to group perception similar to one based on agency

and communion, providing participants with a list of traits indicating competence (e.g., efficient, self-confident, intelligent, competitive, slow, clumsy) and morality (e.g., honest, tolerant, modest, aggressive, selfish, rude). Participants viewed morality as a more desirable characteristic for out-groups to possess than competence. This fits with the research on views of individuals reviewed in the first and second sections of this chapter.

In Phalet and Poppe (1997), participants’ perceptions of a country’s economic and political power accounted for more than 80% of the competence the country was believed to possess (see also Poppe & Linnsen, 1999). This resulted in the English being stereotyped as highly competent, whereas Turks and Gypsies were stereotyped as highly incompetent. Interestingly, 25% of the perceived morality of the out-groups was explained by perceived territorial or economic conflict with that out-group (see also Poppe & Linnsen, 1999). Thus, people from other eastern European countries were perceived as least moral because they were seen as most in conflict with the in-group. Unfortunately, the role of morality is obscured by the fact that both stereotype dimensions include aspects of morality known to be important in person evaluation. The competence dimension includes the trait of competitiveness and the morality dimension includes the trait of honesty. As in research on the agency and communion dimensions, morality seems to be embedded in two-dimensional models of stereotypes in ways that make it difficult to understand its precise role in intergroup perceptions. This is also true of recent work on the dimensions of competence and warmth.

Competence and warmth. Fiske, Glick, Cuddy, and colleagues (for a review, see Cuddy et al., 2008) have advanced another two-dimensional model of stereotypes that diverges somewhat from agency and communion. In this model, the traits warm, friendly, good natured, well intentioned, sincere, and tolerant are seen as indicating out-group warmth. This dimension is very similar to Eagly and Kite’s (1987) communion, as it combines trustworthiness and sociability in a way that obscures the importance of perceived trustworthiness. Fiske and colleagues’ competence dimension includes the traits

competent, capable, intelligent, confident, competitive, skillful, and independent. Thus, it overlaps substantially with the positive aspects of agency but excludes the negative, potentially immoral, aspects of agency, such as aggressiveness.

Typically, Fiske and colleagues have asked individuals to indicate how particular groups are stereotyped in society. For instance, Fiske et al. (2002) found that high-status groups such as Jews, feminists, Asians, and the rich were thought to be stereotyped as very competent but only moderately warm. In contrast, elder adults, housewives, and those with disabilities were viewed as highly warm but incompetent (see also Ridgeway et al., 1998). Welfare recipients, the homeless, poor Blacks, and poor Whites were said to be seen as low in both competence and warmth. As in Poppe and colleagues' studies (Phalet & Poppe, 1997; Poppe & Linnsen, 1999), stereotypes of competence were strongly tied to the perceived status of the group, whereas stereotypes of warmth were moderately tied to perceived competition with the group.

Interestingly, a notable minority of groups are not well characterized by the two-dimensional model of competence and warmth. For example, participants report that gay men, Arabs, Blacks, blue-collar workers, Muslims, migrant workers, and Native Americans are stereotyped as moderately competent and warm. It seems unlikely that all of these groups are viewed so neutrally. It seems especially unlikely that gay men, Arabs, Muslims, and migrant workers are not thought to be stereotyped in more negative ways. As Fiske et al. (2002) have pointed out, these results suggest that the dimensions of competence and warmth do not fully capture the characteristics ascribed to out-groups, such as gay men, Arabs, Muslims, and migrant workers. Because aspects of morality—such as trustworthiness, peacefulness, and fairness—are likely to be central to such stereotypes, direct attention to moral characteristics should improve research on the evaluation of out-groups. Some of the most recent work in this area incorporates explicitly moral characteristics into the study of stereotypes.

Moral content of stereotypes. Although moral traits such as honesty and aggressiveness sometimes

are included in one or both of the two dimensions used to examine stereotypes, these traits are not conceptualized as moral. In addition, such moral traits are not distinguished from other benevolent traits (e.g., warm, friendly). This stands in stark contrast to work on the evaluation of individuals, in which moral characteristics such as trustworthiness and fairness are a focus of attention.

Inspired by circumplex models of personality traits and person perception (White, 1980; Wiggins, 1991), Leach and colleagues offered a reinterpretation of two-dimensional models of stereotypes (Leach et al., 2007; Leach et al., 2008). Figure 5.3 shows their model as a circumplex of group characteristics. Leach and colleagues argued that previous two-dimensional models describe the content of stereotypes only at the most general level. Although useful as an integrative framework, the dimensions of power and benevolence are too abstract to represent the specific moral and other characteristics important to the evaluation of people (whether as individuals or as groups). Thus, power and benevolence should be treated as latent dimensions to which more specific characteristics are related. Leach and colleagues argued that specific stereotypes of out-groups as competent, strong, prestigious, and active fall on the general dimension of power. As such, some out-groups' power will be represented in the form of competence whereas other out-groups' power will be represented in the form of strength or prestige. Although these are all ways of representing a group's power, a group seen as competent is not stereotyped as powerful in exactly the same way a group seen as strong. The same distinction is made between the general dimension of benevolence and the specific characteristics related to it. Trustworthiness, cooperativeness, sociability, peacefulness, and caring are all seen as specific ways in which a group can be seen as benevolent.

In one of several studies, Leach et al. (2007, Study 3) showed that trustworthiness (i.e., honest, sincere, and trustworthy) and sociability (warm, friendly, likeable) are distinguishable clusters of traits that individuals ascribe to groups. Trustworthiness was especially tied to a view of a group as correct (i.e., right or wrong), whereas sociability was especially tied to a view of a group as communal.

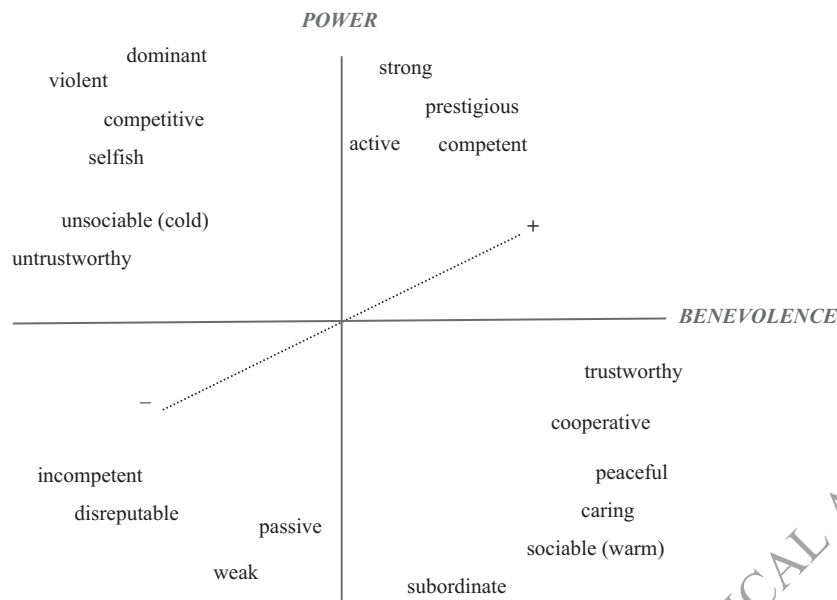


FIGURE 5.3. The two-dimensional model of power and benevolence with specific characteristics represented in a circumplex.

Thus, perceived group trustworthiness was especially moral in character. A more extensive analysis of the model was offered by Leach et al. (2008). In a face-to-face survey of more than 5,000 people in urban settings, they examined stereotypes of Chechens and Jews in the Russian Federation. The characteristics of trustworthiness (i.e., honest, deceitful), peacefulness, and antagonism (i.e., hostile, rude) were associated with a general dimension that corresponded to benevolence. The characteristics smart and shows initiative were associated with a general dimension that corresponded to power. More important, distinguishing among trustworthiness, peacefulness, and antagonistic enabled a more accurate examination of stereotypes than combining these characteristics into a single dimension. Thus, Jews were seen as much more peaceful and less antagonistic than Chechens—who often are stereotyped as Muslim radicals. Neither Jews nor Chechens, however, were seen as especially trustworthy. In essence, Jews were stereotyped as quite benevolent except in terms of trustworthiness. If trustworthiness had not been examined, or if it had been combined with peacefulness and antagonism to create a general score of communion or warmth, a quite important moral aspect of the stereotype of Jews would have been missed.

Building on Leach and colleagues' (2007, 2008) work, Brambilla, Sacchi, Rusconi, Cherubini, and Yzerbyt (2011) recently examined the relative importance of trustworthiness, warmth, and competence in individuals' impressions of out-groups. In two experiments, Brambilla, Sacchi, et al. asked Italian students to imagine that a wave of immigration would bring a previously unknown ethnic group to Italy. The group was described as either high or low in trustworthiness, warmth, or competence. Participants' global impression of the out-group was most affected by its supposed trustworthiness. The out-group high in trustworthiness was evaluated most positively and the out-group low in trustworthiness was evaluated most negatively. In a third study, Brambilla, Sacchi, et al. showed that the ostensible trustworthiness of the out-group had such a large effect on impressions because the out-group perceived as least trustworthy was seen as posing the greatest threat to Italians and to Italy.

Clearly, much more work needs to be done to examine the moral aspects of stereotypes. This requires combining the two-dimensional approach with attention to the specific stereotypes associated with the dimension of benevolence. Although trustworthiness is attracting increasing research attention, cooperativeness, peacefulness, and caring also

demand attention. Interestingly, the perceived fairness of out-groups seems to be ignored. Fairness is likely an important aspect of perceived out-group morality that will have serious and dramatic effects on the orientation to out-groups. Perceived fairness, however, may be harder to gauge than perceived trustworthiness, cooperation, or peacefulness, because fairness is a complicated concept based on many different models (e.g., equitable, egalitarian, distributive, procedural; see Chapter 4, this volume).

Prejudices

Little attention has been paid to the role of perceived morality in prejudice toward out-groups, despite its obvious relevance. A number of approaches, however, to the role of perceived threat in prejudice suggest that moral threat is particularly important. Likewise, the attitudes often used to assess sexism, racism, and other kinds of prejudice appear to include morally tinged sentiments.

Perceived threat. One influential approach is Stephan and Renfro's (2002) threat theory of prejudice, which distinguishes between *realistic* and *symbolic* threats. Symbolic threats are based on stereotypes of an out-group that suggest an opposition to the in-group's cherished values and beliefs. Thus, symbolic threats are often moral in content. Little research, however, has focused on moral threats or examined whether they lead to a particularly virulent form of prejudice.

Cottrell and Neuberg (2005) recently offered a general model of threat in prejudice that focuses more finely on moral threats. In addition to concrete threats to physical safety, health, and material resources, Cottrell and Neuberg suggested that out-groups can be seen as threatening the in-group's interdependent social relationships. Such threats to the reciprocity, "social coordination," and trust that the in-group wishes to have within its social relations are expected to lead to anger and thus aggression. In studies of European American university students, Mexican Americans and African Americans were viewed most clearly as threatening reciprocity, activist feminists were seen as most threatening social coordination, and Mexican Americans were viewed most strongly as violating trust.

In addition, Cottrell and Neuberg argued that an out-group may be seen as threatening the in-group's values in a way that might morally contaminate the in-group. This threat is thought to lead to disgust and thus to promote the maintenance of the in-group's moral values and distancing from the out-group. Native Americans and gay men most often were viewed as holding "values inconsistent with those of the in-group." Thus, Cottrell and Neuberg argued that the particular form of prejudice directed at a group is based on the particular kind of moral threat they are seen as posing.

Morally tinged attitudes. Many researchers measure prejudice with a single scale that assesses a number of interrelated attitudes. One approach that includes morality-tinged attitudes is that of benevolent sexism (for a review, see Glick & Fiske, 2001). The benevolent sexism scale includes attitude items designed to assess the view that women "have a superior moral sensibility" and "have a quality of purity." These attitudes about women's morality, however, are not differentiated from others aspects of benevolent sexism, such as a paternalistic desire to protect women and wanting heterosexual intimacy. As such, the particular role of morality in benevolent sexism is not examined directly.

Several other approaches to measuring prejudice with attitude scales also hint at the role of morality. For example, Crandall's (1994) measure of antifat attitudes includes the view that "people who are overweight are a little *untrustworthy*." In addition, several measures of symbolic and subtle racism include negative sentiments based on the view that ethnic out-groups are advantaged unfairly by policies such as affirmative action, are making "excessive demands," and have "violated cherished values" (Henry & Sears, 2002; Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995). Measures of modern sexism, neosexism, and hostile sexism include much the same sentiment (for reviews, see Campbell, Schellenberg, & Senn, 1997; Glick & Fiske, 2001). As Cottrell and Neuberg (2005) pointed out, all of these beliefs seem to view out-groups as posing a moral threat of some kind. Without direct attention to the moral content of prejudice, however, it is difficult to know how much of a role it plays in negative sentiment. Work on the

political ideology of right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) is more suggestive of the ways in which perceived out-group morality informs prejudice.

Right-wing authoritarianism. In his revival of the concept of authoritarianism in the study of prejudice, Altemeyer (1981, 1988) focused on the three main components of the original work by Adorno and colleagues in the 1940s (for a review, see Brown, 1965): submissiveness, punitiveness, and conventionalism. These three components of RWA all have a moral quality. Conventionalism and submissiveness both involve the individual's subordination to the *moral* authority in their society and the attendant investment in, and observance of, its moral standards (for general discussions, see Funke, 2005; Mavor, Louis, & Sibley, 2010). It is this subordination to moral authority that motivates punitiveness toward those whom the authority deems immoral (Duckitt, 2001).

Numerous studies have shown that the punitiveness of people scoring high on measures of RWA is central to their prejudice toward out-groups (e.g., Haddock, Zanna, & Esses, 1993; Peterson, Doty, & Winter, 1993; for a review, see Altemeyer, 1988, chaps. 4, 5). And it is well established that authoritarianism is associated strongly with hostility toward out-groups seen as threatening moral standards (e.g., Esses, Haddock, & Zanna, 1993; Peterson et al., 1993; for reviews, see Altemeyer, 1988; Duckitt, 2001). For these reasons, contemporary measures of authoritarianism tend to be associated most strongly with prejudice toward gay men, lesbians, and other sexual minorities, who are perceived widely as threats to moral standards (e.g., Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005; Whitley & Lee, 2000; for reviews, see Altemeyer, 1988; Duckitt, 2001). In fact, belief in gay and lesbian immorality is central to homophobia more generally (for a review, see Herek, 1994).

Even from this brief review, it should be clear that the perceived (im)morality of out-groups is important to a good deal of contemporary prejudice. The experience of moral threat appears to be especially consequential. Yet the moral side of the negative sentiment in prejudice is rarely the focus of theory and research in personality and social psychology. Although RWAs are especially prone to

morally tinged prejudice, and such prejudice most often is directed at sexual minorities, morality seems to play a more general role in prejudice. As such, it requires more sustained attention in theory and research.

THEORY AND RESEARCH ON MORALITY OF IN-GROUPS

Because morality is so central to relations with others it often is presumed to be less important to people's view of themselves (for a review, see Wojciszke, 2005). As reviewed in the first and second sections of this chapter, however, a great deal of evidence suggests that morality is of paramount importance to the individual self. Given the importance that in-groups have for the self, in-group members tend to see their in-groups as moral and as a result feel good about themselves and their in-groups.

Group Self-Image

Little research has been done on the role of morality in a group's self-image. One early examination, however, was Campbell and colleagues' extensive cross-cultural studies of ethnocentrism (Brewer & Campbell, 1976; LeVine & Campbell, 1972). Brewer (1986) analyzed the traits that elderly locals ascribed to their ethnic in-group in ethnographic interviews conducted in 20 different locations, ranging from the South Pacific to West Africa to the Arctic. Some in-groups were willing to describe themselves as lacking in competence, sociability, prestige, or strength. Some in-groups even described themselves in negative terms, for example, as being aggressive or uncouth. Across this diverse set of ethnic groups, however, members of nearly every in-group described themselves as highly moral (i.e., trustworthy, peaceful, honest).

In a series of five studies, Leach et al. (2007) examined the importance of trustworthiness in individuals' positive evaluation of in-groups. They compared trustworthiness to in-group competence and sociability. The studies used a number of different methods, focused on a number of different in-groups, and included samples of students from several different universities in the Netherlands and England.

Despite this diversity, participants consistently reported viewing trustworthiness as more important to their group-level self than sociability or competence. This also was shown with less direct methods. For example, trustworthiness accounted for more of the positivity in traits ascribed to the in-group than did sociability or competence. In addition, experimental manipulations of trustworthiness in the form of academic honesty had greater effects on individuals' pride and shame with respect to the in-group.

Research on procedural justice also suggests that the perceived trustworthiness of an in-group is a major determinant of members' identification with, and positive feelings about, it (for reviews, see Skitka, 2003; Tyler & Blader, 2003; see also Chapters 4 and 8, this volume). The perceived morality of organizations also affects members' job satisfaction and commitment to the organization (for a review, see Tyler & Blader, 2003). For instance, in two studies conducted in organizations, Ellemers, Kingma, van de Burgt, and Barreto (2011) found that the perception of organizational morality was associated with pride, motivation to work, job satisfaction, and commitment to the organization. Thus, the more employees saw their organization as ethical in the workplace and in the marketplace, the more positive their relationship to the organization.

As at the individual level, individuals not only see their in-group as moral but also tend to see their in-group as *more moral* than out-groups. Thus, members tend to view their in-group as more trustworthy, peaceful, and honest than out-groups (Brewer, 1999). Indeed, morality is the one characteristic that in-groups consistently attributed to themselves more than to out-groups in the many societies studied in Campbell and colleagues' large-scale examination of ethnocentrism (Brewer & Campbell, 1976; Levine & Campbell, 1972). This is consistent with the more general idea that individuals tend to evaluate their in-group more favorably than out-groups in the domains most important to their in-group identity (see Tajfel & Turner, 1979; see also Chapter 8, this volume; for an empirical review, see Bettencourt, Dorr, Charlton, & Hume, 2001). Little is as important to in-group identity as morality in general and trustworthiness in particular (Leach et al., 2007).

Moral Norms and Codes

The moral norms and codes of an in-group express its values and serve as powerful standards by which right and wrong are judged within the group. Moral *codes* establish, through notions of moral obligation and duty, what a moral person should do (for discussions, see Miller, 2006; Shweder et al., 1997). Moral *norms* are an especially powerful injunction to act, because what is right is a much more general and consistent determinant of behavior than what is common (for a review, see Cialdini, Kallgren, & Reno, 1991). Consistent with this fact, Ellemers, Pagliaro, Barreto, and Leach (2008) showed that individual group members were more inclined to follow group norms when they were defined as moral (rather than competent). Moreover, participants needed less time to follow a moral norm, presumably because moral norms appeared more self-evident and unquestionable.

Being moral is a central criterion for being a good group member. For example, Pagliaro, Ellemers, and Barreto (2011) showed that group members followed moral norms because they believed that such behavior earned them the respect of fellow in-group members. In addition, group members believed that meeting moral standards leads others to see them as more central and important to the group. Of course, moral norms also determine how the in-group reacts to those who deviate. In-group members focus their moral sanctions on deviates who share the in-group's moral standards, believing that in-group deviates will be most affected by sanctions (Nugier, Chekroun, Pierre, & Niedenthal, 2009). Research on social dilemmas shows that individuals are even willing to forego material reward (Axelrod & Hamilton, 1981; Schopler & Insko, 1992) or to "pay" (Fehr & Gintis, 2007) to punish an individual who violates a moral norm or code. And once a group member is labeled a deviate, the group is slow to forgive him or her even if the deviance is later deemed acceptable (Chan, Louis, & Jetten, 2010). For all of these reasons, individual group members know that the violation of moral norms and codes raises the risk of physical and material sanctions from fellow in-group members (Cialdini et al., 1991; Fry, 2006). The violation of moral norms and codes also risks the social sanction of being condemned as

a “black sheep” (Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988) by important others (e.g., Gausel, Leach, Vignoles, & Brown, 2012; for a review, see Gausel & Leach, 2011). Thus, moral norms and codes are a powerful force that operates mainly within in-groups, who depend on a shared sense of morality to operate interdependently (see the section *The Individual Approach to Morality*). As Durkheim argued nearly a century ago (see Bellah, 1973), adherence to moral standards maintains group membership and feeds the moral self-image of individual members and the group as a whole (e.g., Leach et al., 2007; Pagliaro et al., 2011).

Morality Between Groups

Many out-groups are seen as immoral because they are purportedly untrustworthy, unfair, or violent. And individuals tend to view their in-group as especially moral and typically as more moral than other groups. When considered together, these two trends make it clear that morality is important in the relations between groups. This section reviews the ways in which moral wrongdoing and “rightdoing” affect intergroup relations.

Wrongdoing

Because people are concerned about being seen as moral by others, they may make great effort to protect their social image from moral condemnation. This can be done by redressing their wrongdoing or by denying it (for a review, see Gausel & Leach, 2011). When wrongdoing is difficult to dismiss, people “misengage” (explained below) or disengage the moral self in an effort to preserve their moral self-image. When wrongdoing is difficult to deny, people may engage in self-criticism or self-improvement.

Misengaging the moral self. A moral self-image is central to an in-group’s historical narratives. In addition to highlighting past glories, group narratives can feed the in-group’s self-image by distorting historical memory to cleanse the past of in-group immorality against out-groups (for a review, see Bilali & Ross, 2012). For instance, in intergroup conflicts, in-groups maintain their moral superiority over their adversary by endorsing narratives that

legitimize in-group violence, delegitimize the opponent, and emphasize the in-group’s victimization (Bar-Tal, 2000). Each in-group perceives itself as the innocent victim and sees its opponent as the immoral aggressor (e.g., Noor, Brown, & Prentice, 2008). Because victims have the moral high ground, groups can compete for victim status to achieve moral superiority.

In a novel line of work, Bonny Brown (2000) conducted a series of experiments designed to examine the effects of moral superiority in intergroup relations. Participants were more likely to restrict an out-group’s rights when they were told that their in-group was morally superior. Manipulations of superior competence did not have similar effects. However, the mechanisms through which moral superiority produces such adverse effects are not well understood. One explanation is that moral superiority motivates members to defend the in-group’s moral self-image against the threat posed by wrongdoing (e.g., Iyer, Jetten, & Haslam, 2012). This can be done by making flattering interpretations of the in-group’s wrongdoing and its consequences for others (e.g., Leidner, Castano, Zaiser, & Giner-Sorolla, 2010). *Moral licensing* provides an alternative explanation. It suggests that performing moral behaviors in the past gives people “license” to behave immorally in the future (for a review, see Monin & Jordan, 2009). Having established their “moral credentials,” people are less motivated to be moral and are thus less likely to monitor the morality of their actions. In other words, believing that the in-group is moral may reduce the likelihood that group members actually will be moral. Where the notion of the moral self is *misengaged* in this way, moral self-aggrandizement can do more than justify wrongdoing. Moral self-aggrandizement can serve as the basis for mistreatment that seems righteous (Leach, 2010).

Disengaging the moral self. The most elaborate conceptualization of how in-groups preserve their moral self-image in the face of wrongdoing is Bandura’s (1999) model of moral disengagement. He argues that serious wrongdoing is made possible when in-group members “disengage” the normal system of moral self-regulation that sanctions the

harm of others. Bandura described four types of disengagement mechanisms: (a) cognitive reconstructing of immoral behavior as moral, (b) displacement or diffusion of responsibility, (c) dehumanization of those harmed, and (d) minimization of the consequences of immorality. Most of these mechanisms have been examined in empirical studies of real or imagined in-group wrongdoing. For instance, Castano and Giner-Sorolla (2006, Experiment 3) confronted European American students with historical evidence regarding the mass killing of Native Americans. Those who were told that the mass killing was an intentional extermination saw Native Americans as less human (for a general discussion of dehumanization, see Chapter 11, this volume). This dehumanization served to reduce the perceived responsibility of European Americans and to legitimize the violence. Because the same standards of morality are thought not to apply to subhumans or nonhumans, violence against such out-groups is not perceived as a moral violation (Kelman, 1973). This has been referred to as *moral exclusion* (Opatow, 1990).

Moral disengagement has important consequences for intergroup relations. It leads to the justification of past misdeeds (e.g., Roccas, Klar, & Liviatan, 2006), greater support of future violence (e.g., Aquino, Reed, Thau, & Freeman, 2007), lower demands for justice (Leidner et al., 2010), and more positive attitudes toward violence (Grussendorf, McAlister, Sandström, Udd, & Morrison, 2002). Because research in this area has focused on the process of moral disengagement and its outcomes, less is known about what might inhibit moral disengagement. This is an important topic for future research.

Self-criticism. In the past decade, social and personality psychologists increasingly have sought to understand why in-groups sometimes engage in moral self-criticism after wrongdoing against out-groups. For example, recent work has examined self-criticism about in-group discrimination and other injustice against out-groups, disproportionate violence, and genocide and other mass killing (for reviews, see Leach et al., 2002; Parkinson, Fischer, & Manstead, 2005). Although a number of self-critical beliefs and feelings have been examined,

guilt about in-group wrongdoing has been examined most extensively (for reviews, see Branscombe & Doosje, 2004; Iyer & Leach 2008). This is likely because guilt is tied strongly to *wanting* to make restitution to the victims of wrongdoing. Little evidence indicates, however, that the passive feeling of guilt is tied to an *actual willingness* to provide restitution for in-group wrongdoing.

Of course, guilt is not the only way to experience self-criticism for an in-group's wrongdoing (for reviews, see Leach et al., 2002; Parkinson et al., 2005; for a general discussion of emotion in intergroup relations, see Chapter 10, this volume). Shame is a more intense experience of self-criticism about in-group wrongdoing against an out-group. Several recent studies in countries as different as Chile, Norway, and Bosnia have shown that shame, like guilt, is associated with wanting to make restitution to a wronged out-group (for a review, see Gausel & Leach 2011). For example, Gausel et al. (2012) found that shame about national wrongdoing against "gypsies" in Norway predicted wanting to personally express contrition to this out-group as well as wanting the country to make financial and other restitution. Anger at the in-group, however, may be the most common feeling about in-group wrongdoing. Unlike guilt, anger energizes people to take action to confront and correct wrongdoing (for a review, see Leach et al., 2002). This is likely why anger appears to be the most consistent and most robust basis for efforts to reform wrongdoing in intergroup relations (for a review, see Iyer & Leach, 2008).

Moral self-improvement. Perhaps due to the widespread view that groups respond to in-group wrongdoing with moral disengagement, there is little attention to the motivation for moral self-improvement in such cases. Moral self-improvement, however, seems to be an important step in preventing future wrongdoing (Gausel & Leach, 2011). If people do not use self-criticism as a first step in improving their moral vigilance, capacity, or skill, they actually have done very little to reduce their risk of repeating wrongdoing. Future research should examine the ways in which moral self-criticism can serve as an opportunity for moral self-improvement. Many cultural traditions see moral

growth as the heart of human growth. For example, in *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle (350 BC/1947) stressed the value of encouraging people to develop their moral facility and the practical skill of applying it in everyday life. Personality and social psychologists should examine individuals' interest and effort in moral self-improvement within groups and between groups.

Rightdoing

The importance of morality to self-image might be taken to suggest that individuals are especially motivated to see their in-group do right. After all, what better way to guarantee that one can view one's in-group as moral than to ensure that the in-group is actually trustworthy, fair, and peaceful? This section briefly reviews research on moral engagement and inclusion as bases for rightdoing in intergroup relations. Given the paucity of work on these topics, there is a great need for more theory and research on the personality and social psychology of moral rightdoing in intergroup relations.

Moral engagement. Perhaps because moral disengagement is thought to be more common in intergroup relations, there is little examination of moral engagement and how it might encourage rightdoing. One potentially useful model is that of Bandura (1999). He argued that an individual's self-regulatory system encourages moral conduct through the promise of self-reward. Thus, moral conduct follows from the expectation of rewards to the self, such as pride, satisfaction, and a sense of self-worth. Given how important morality is to the (individual and group) self, it makes sense to see self-rewards as a motivation to be moral. This view of moral engagement, however, is based on a view of human beings as individualist and hedonistic. That is, individuals are motivated to receive the *individual* reward of feeling good about themselves for being moral. In contrast, more social approaches emphasize moral duty, obligation, and the maintenance of social image and social relationships as the basis of rightdoing. Nevertheless, future work might fruitfully apply the notion of moral engagement to examine the ways in which expectations of reward for the *group self* might increase motivation for group members

to be moral. A group-based feeling of moral pride may be important to such motivation (for a general discussion of emotion in intergroup relations, see Chapter 10, this volume).

Moral inclusion. The moral norms and codes that apply within groups can be extended to the moral conduct between groups. Moral inclusion may encourage rightdoing as it encourages individuals to view as in-group members all people who share their moral standards and who thus are entitled to moral treatment. This inclusive view of humanity is implied in that popular piece of folk wisdom dubbed the "golden rule"—Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. In essence, this simple notion implies a model of universal interdependence, in which all people cooperate out of necessity. It is, in fact, an attempt to redefine all people as part of one interdependent in-group—humanity. Although moral norms and codes often are said to apply universally—to all people under all circumstances—few groups appear to have such an inclusive "moral circle" (Opatow, 1990).

Additionally, shared humanity is no guarantee of moral rightdoing. Although morality operates in a particularly powerful way within groups, including a large circle of people within the group in no way guarantees moral conduct. Indeed, moral norms and codes are broken regularly within groups. Ironically, Morton and Postmes (2011) recently showed that the claim that "we are all human" can be used by members of a perpetrator group to excuse its violence against an out-group it has victimized. The notion that "we are all human" can be distorted into "we are only human" when the group prefers to defend its moral self-image rather than engage in self-criticism. However inclusive the moral circle is made to be, morality always operates imperfectly within groups.

CONCLUSION

Individual morality is an oxymoron. However morality is defined, it is clear that morality is a group phenomenon. Individuals perceive their own morality and that of others in the context of moral reference groups. Moreover, social interaction relies on each party having some minimal sense of the

other's trustworthiness. In fact, this aspect of morality seems essential to the interdependent social interaction necessary to the existence of humans and other primates. This chapter has focused on groups and morality because there is no morality without the groups within which morality is defined and operates.

This chapter reviewed the many and varied ways in which morality is important to thought, feeling, and behavior related to the self (individual and group) and others. Despite vast differences in theoretical perspective and methodological approach, there is general agreement that trustworthiness is the most widely agreed on and important aspect of morality. Whether it is in the impressions formed of individuals or the political relations between groups, trustworthiness is at the heart of the human experience. Other aspects of morality, such as fairness and peacefulness, are also important. Although there is substantial evidence that trustworthiness, fairness, and peacefulness are more clearly moral than other aspects of benevolence, theory and research on morality should distinguish more clearly between morality and benevolence. At present, warmth and communion in social relations often are taken to be equivalent to the more clearly moral characteristics of trustworthiness, fairness, and peacefulness. The study of stereotypes in particular has a great deal to gain from a focus on the explicitly moral content often embedded in these beliefs about out-groups. So too could the extensive work on prejudice benefit from concerted attention to the moral bases of negative sentiment toward out-groups. Sexism, racism, ethnocentrism, and homophobia all appear to be tied to particularly moral sentiments that fuel such animus. The perception of moral threat appears to be part of particularly virulent prejudice and thus is deserving of more focused attention.

Perhaps more careful examination of the moral features of stereotypes and prejudice will enable a better understanding of how such orientations contribute to moral disengagement and misengagement. It seems important to know how the moral derogation of out-groups frees in-groups from applying their own moral standards to those seen as immoral. It also is important to understand how to encourage individuals and in-groups to engage more morally

with other groups. Given that morality is central to people's self-image and social image, social and personality psychology can provide powerful perspectives on the upside and the downside of morality in groups.

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