Moral motivation within groups

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Chapter 5

General Discussion

Moral motivation refers to the motivational force that morality judgments exert on individuals. The aim of the current dissertation was to examine how moral motivation operates within groups. Groups evaluate the behavior of individual group members in the extent to which it contributes to goal attainment—that is, the extent in which individual group members act in line with the groups' standards and as such validate the group's positive social identity (Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears, 1995; Levine & Moreland, 1994; Marques, Abrams, & Serôdio, 1998; Moreland & Levine, 1982). Intragroup evaluations thus provide a group with valuable insights in the legitimacy of the positive social identity, and help to elicit desirable behaviors from individual group members. Because individuals care deeply about how the group evaluates them, these evaluations affect their motivational responses in validating the group's positive social identity (e.g., Branscombe, Spears, Ellemers, & Doosje, 2002). The research described in the current dissertation examined the impact of morality judgments on group members motivational responses, and compared these to the impact of competence judgments, the latter which up until recently were considered to be the primary driving force behind motivated behavior in groups (e.g., Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Ellemers, 1993).

Taking on a social identity approach, which explains what drives individuals as members of social groups (e.g., Hornsey, 2008; Postmes, Haslam, & Swaab, 2005), I investigated intragroup evaluations from three different group perspectives: In Chapter 2, I focused on evaluations of group members' own prior behavior; in Chapter 3, I addressed evaluations of another group member's behavior; and in Chapter 4, I examined evaluations of prospective group members. In the experiments described in these chapters, I distinguished between different types of motivational responses, namely affective, cognitive, psychophysiological, and behavioral responses. Considering the importance of morality for individuals and groups (e.g., Aquino & Reed, 2002, Leach, Ellemers, & Barreto, 2007), the central hypothesis was that intragroup morality judgments generally impact more strongly on group members' motivational responses than competence judgments. In the next section, I will summarize the main research findings.

Overview of the main findings

The central hypothesis tested in the current dissertation was that morality judgments have a more pronounced impact on group members' motivational responses than competence judgments. In Chapter 2, I found that this prediction was supported for negative, but not for positive, morality judgments. In Experiments 2.1a and 2.2, group members recalled a situation in which their own prior behavior was evaluated by the group as either immoral or incompetent, after which affective and cognitive responses were assessed. The results revealed that group members reported more negative affect after their prior behavior was evaluated as immoral compared to incompetent, and this mediated their cognitive responses in terms of perceived coping abilities. That is, negative morality judgments elicited more negative affect which in turn induced lower perceived coping abilities, as compared to negative competence judgments. In Experiment 2.2, I replicated these effects, but this time group members were additionally given an opportunity to restore their image in the group. Results showed that after one's prior behavior was evaluated as immoral, the opportunity to restore one's image as a moral group member alleviated the negative affective responses and increased perceived coping abilities. Thus, although judgments of immorality evoke immediate negative affective and cognitive motivational responses in group members, these responses can be overcome when they get the chance to restore their image as a moral group member.

To further investigate the impact of negative morality judgments of group members' *own* prior behavior on their motivational responses, I examined their psychophysiological responses. In Experiment 3.1 of Chapter 3, group members first recalled own prior behavior that was evaluated as either immoral or incompetent by the group, similar to the manipulations described in Chapter 2. Next, they worked on a group task with several other (fictitious) group members. The primary performance dimension was said to be either morality or competence. Group members could thus display moral or competent behavior in an attempt to restore their image as a moral or competent group member. Following the Biopsychosocial model (BPSM) of challenge and threat (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1996), I assessed group members' cardiovascular responses during the group task. Results revealed that, as

predicted, negative morality judgments induced a state of threat rather than challenge.

In line with the notion that intragroup morality judgments have implications for group members' social identity, I reasoned that negative morality judgments of *another* group member's behavior would arouse motivational responses similar to negative morality judgments of own behavior. To test this idea, in Experiment 3.2 group members were exposed to another group member's prior behavior that was evaluated as either immoral or incompetent. In a similar group task as employed in Experiment 3.1, I again assessed group members' cardiovascular responses which revealed a similar pattern of cardiovascular reactivity as found in Experiment 3.1: Group members showed a relative threat rather than challenge response after being exposed to negative moral (vs. competence) judgments about another group member's behavior.

In Experiment 4.3 of Chapter 4, I followed up on this and employed yet another group perspective to intragroup evaluations: Group members' psychophysiological responses to *prospective* group members. The results revealed that considering the credentials of prospective group members, who were judged in terms of morality or competence, is motivationally engaging and relevant for the group, yet this did not invoke a clear pattern of challenge or threat responses. I will consider a possible explanation for this observation in the next section. Taken together, Chapters 3 and 4 provide support for the impact of intragroup evaluations on group members' psychophysiological responses. Intragroup judgments of immorality and incompetence—regardless of whether they target the self, another group member, or a prospective group member—arouse cardiovascular responses that indicate task engagement and goal relevance. Overall, intragroup judgments are thus engaging and relevant for the group, and imply a psychophysiological readiness to act on the judgment. More specifically, negative *morality* judgments of group members' own as well as another group member's behavior are more pronounced than those of a prospective group member, and induce a psychophysiological pattern indicative of threat rather than challenge.

Demand/ resource appraisals of becoming a moral group member

Interpreting the results of Chapters 2 and 3 in terms of situational demands and available personal resources (i.e., perceived coping ability), there are apparent inconsistencies between group members' cognitive and psychophysiological responses. For example, the results of Experiment 2.2 show that group members' perceived coping abilities increase after reminders of prior negative morality judgments in the prospect of a chance for restoration. This indicates that the prospect of an opportunity in which individuals can restore their image as a moral group member causes a shift in their perceived coping abilities. Whereas a reminder of one's prior behavior judged as immoral elicits the perception that the demands outweigh the available resources, considering an upcoming opportunity to restore one's image triggers the perception that there might be sufficient resources available to meet the situational demands. However, the results of Experiment 3.1 demonstrate that providing group members with an actual opportunity to restore their moral image (again after recalling behavior that was previously evaluated as immoral), elicits a psychophysiological pattern indicative of threat rather than challenge. This suggests that the demands of the actual image restoration are perceived to outweigh the resources that group members had available for doing so. Thus, at the cognitive level an anticipated opportunity to restore one's image as a moral group member led to a perceived balance in demand/resource appraisals, whereas actually engaging in such restoration activity led the situational demands to be perceived as to outweigh available resources, as deduced from cardiovascular markers indicative of threat rather than challenge.

There are several possible explanations that might account for the apparent discrepancy between group members' cognitive and psychophysiological responses in terms of demand/ resource appraisals. The first concerns the timing of measurement. Whereas the cognitive responses are measured in *anticipation* of the image restoration, the psychophysiological responses are measured *during* the actual image restoration itself. It may well be that in anticipation of the group task in which group members would get the opportunity to restore their image as a moral group member, they feel able and secure enough to do it, resulting in the perception that there are sufficient resources available to deal with the situational demands. However, when

actually being in the process of image restoration, the uncertainty regarding the ability to accomplish this goal and the anticipated consequences of failing the attempt, arguably become increasingly salient, resulting in heightened attention to the situational demands. In other words, when actually attempting to restore one's image as a moral group member, reflecting on the consequences of failing in terms of the diagnosticity of immorality (e.g., Skowronski & Carlston, 1987), could plausibly have overruled the anticipated ability to do so.

A second explanation for the discrepancy in group members' cognitive and psychophysiological responses concerns the level of analysis. Cognitive demand/resource appraisals are measured at the conscious self-report level, whereas the psychophysiological demand/resource appraisals are measured at an implicit cardiovascular level. Whereas cognitive appraisals presume a deliberate assessment of situational demands in relation to available personal resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1991), the appraisal process can also be unconscious and based on affective cues (e.g., Blascovich & Mendes, 2000; Blascovich, Mendes, Hunter, Lickel, & Kowai-Bell, 2001). Hence, the (deliberate) assessment of demands and resources resulting in cognitive appraisals might be different from the (implicit) assessment resulting in psychophysiological motivational states of challenge and threat. Although earlier work on the BPSM and intrapersonal processes documented correlations between cognitive appraisals and cardiovascular responses, more recent work on intergroup interactions acknowledges the difficulty of correlating self-reports with implicit cardiovascular processes (e.g., Mendes, Blascovich, Lickel, & Hunter, 2002; Tomaka, Blascovich, Kelsey, & Leitten, 1993). Self-reports are susceptible to self-presentational motives and demand characteristics, which are particularly relevant in situations of image restoration where individuals' dispositions and abilities are questioned. Individuals' deliberate cognitive appraisals of the demands and resources are thus likely to be affected by such self-presentational motives, and might plausibly account for the discrepancy with their implicit psychophysiological responses.

A third possible reason for the seeming discrepancy between group members' cognitive and psychophysiological responses in terms of demand/resource appraisals concerns a theoretical explanation of the psychological meaning of the goal of image restoration. According to Blascovich (2008b), when trying to achieve a superordinate goal (i.e., restore

one's image as a moral group member), individuals might need to approach several subordinate goals (i.e., show moral behavior in a group task). As long as the superordinate goal is desirable, individuals will approach undesirable, or threatening, subordinate goals. Although in the current research I did not control for the hierarchical order (i.e., superordinate vs. subordinate) of group members' goals during the tasks, is it plausible that the nature of the tasks following the intragroup evaluations induced respectively a superordinate or subordinate goal in group members. For instance, considering the importance of morality for individuals' identity (e.g., Aquino & Reed, 2002; Leach et al., 2007), the superordinate goal of becoming a moral group member (i.e., anticipating image restoration; Experiment 2.2) could increase its desirability, and consequently be less demanding (e.g., less uncertainty that this is what one needs to do). However, the increased desirability of becoming a moral group member could have made the subordinate goal of showing moral behavior (i.e., actual image restoration; Experiment 3.1) more demanding, and therefore more threatening (e.g., more required effort to accomplish the task). The anticipation of reaching the higher order goal of being a moral group member might therefore be perceived as less demanding than actually behaving morally in a group task.

The lack of a clear distinction between the motivational states of threat and challenge in individuals' responses to prospective group members (Experiment 4.3, Chapter 4) could also be interpreted in terms of a demand/resource balance. That is, the balance between demands and resources appeared to be relatively similar in dealing with a prospective group member who is different from the group, regardless of whether this individual lacked or excelled in morality or competence. The high uncertainty of the situation itself—insufficient information about the prospective group member as well as the group task ahead—increased the demands of the situation to the extent that they outweighed group members' resources to protect the group's positive social identity, irrespective of the evaluative domain. If this is the case, then conditions that alter group members' demand/resource appraisals should result in a clear distinguishable challenge or threat pattern. Indeed, it has been shown that increasing group members' knowledge about the situation (i.e., a personal resource) can result in subsequent challenge when interacting with an

ingroup deviant (i.e., a situational demand; Frings, Hurst, Cleveland, Blascovich, & Abrams, 2012).

Overall, the demands of situations in which group members need to protect their positive social identity, in relation to the personal resources they have available to cope with these situational demands, seem to underlie a range of group members' motivational responses. To illustrate, morality judgments of group members' own prior behavior, an ingroup member's behavior, and a prospective group member increase the uncertainty of the situation, and affect group members' assessment of their abilities in coping with the judgments; these result in different cognitive and psychophysiological responses.

Behavioral responses towards prospective group members

In examining group members' behavioral responses to intragroup morality judgments, the experiments reported in Chapter 4 employed another perspective to intragroup evaluations. In Experiment 4.1 and 4.3, group members were confronted with a prospective group member who, compared to the group, lacked morality or competence. That is, the prospective group member was said to attach less value to morality or competence, and consequently be less likely to display moral or competent behavior. Because group members anticipated a group task in which morality or competence was the primary performance domain, they were given the opportunity to discuss with the other (fictitious) group members whether or not they wanted the prospective group member to join their group for the group task. By means of a questionnaire they supposedly could structure their thoughts and form an opinion about the prospective group member. Via chat simulation (Experiment 4.1) or video circuit (Experiment 4.3) they next allegedly sent messages to their group members explaining why they did or did not want the prospective group member to join the group for the group task. Results revealed that a prospective group member who lacked morality, compared to a prospective group member who lacked competence, was derogated more and aroused more social identity threat. Consequently, group members were more inclined to exclude a prospective group member who lacked morality than a prospective group member who lacked competence. Again, these results support the central hypothesis that negative judgments about morality impact more strongly on group members' motivational responses than negative

competence judgments; this is also evident from behavioral responses towards a prospective group member.

Interestingly though, the prospective group member did not yet contribute to the positive social identity of the group, and yet aroused social identity threat. Merely considering an individual with a moral deficiency as a prospective group member is a potential threat for the positive social identity, and therefore group members are motivated to distance themselves from such individuals. This distancing seems to occur at two levels: The psychological as well as the physical level. First, group members *psychologically* distance themselves from an individual who lacks morality by perceiving a greater difference between the individual and the group. Second, group members *physically* distance themselves from an individual who lacks morality by socially excluding that individual from upcoming group activities.

Judgments of immorality versus morality

As indicated before, the general hypothesis was that morality judgments would have a more pronounced impact on group members' motivational responses than similar competence judgments. The results discussed so far support this notion, but specifically examined responses to *negative* morality judgments. In several experiments I also examined the impact of *positive* morality judgments. In Experiment 2.1b for example, group members reflected on their own prior behavior that was evaluated as being either moral or competent. Afterwards I assessed their affective responses. The results demonstrated that judgments of competence elicit more positive affect than judgments of morality. If morality judgments, regardless of their valence, would always elicit stronger motivational responses than competence judgments, then such judgments would have elicited also more positive affect. Although this is not what our results revealed, they are in line with research demonstrating the asymmetrical valence effects of morality and competence judgments. Whereas positive information about competence is regarded as more diagnostic of individual dispositions than positive information about morality (e.g., Martijn, Spears, Van der Pligt, & Jakobs, 1992; Reeder & Spores, 1983; Skowronski & Carlston, 1987), it is comprehensible that judgments of competence elicit stronger positive affective responses than judgments of morality.

In addition, in Experiment 4.2 group members were confronted with a prospective group member who ostensibly distinguished him-/herself positively from the other group members in the domain of morality or competence. That is, the prospective group member allegedly attached more value to morality or to competence, and was therefore more likely to display moral or competent behavior than the other group members. Similar to Experiment 4.1, group members were then given a questionnaire that supposedly helped them to structure their thoughts about the prospective group member, after which they had the opportunity to discuss whether or not to include the prospective group member in the group. Results revealed that group members experienced less social identity threat in the presence of a highly moral rather than a highly competent prospective group member, and were consequently more willing to include the highly moral prospective group member. These results are thus also in accordance with prior research demonstrating the impact of positive information about competence in terms of its perceived diagnosticity for the individuals' dispositions (e.g., Skowronski & Carlston, 1987), because a highly competent individual is perceived as more threatening for the group than a highly moral individual.

Taken together, the results of two experiments (Experiments 2.1b and 4.2) directly rule out the possibility that morality judgments always impact more strongly or more negatively on group members' motivational responses. In fact, it seems that the motivational force of morality judgments mainly pertains to *immorality*. Judgments of immorality are shown to elicit strong negative motivational responses in group members. More specifically, judgments of immorality elicit negative affect, lowered perceived coping abilities, a cardiovascular pattern indicative of threat rather than challenge, and a greater inclination towards social exclusion. Next, I will discuss the implications and limitations of the experiments reported in this dissertation, and provide directions for future research that emerge from the current research.

Implications for moral psychology

Research over the past decade has established the importance of morality for individuals' personal identity (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Monin & Jordan, 2009) and social identity (Leach et al., 2007). Recent research has also begun to

explore the implications of moral motivation (e.g., Bauman & Skitka, 2009). Morality judgments have been linked to the regulation of behavior at the both the individual and the group level. For example, morality judgments affect individual goal striving (Jordan, Mullen, & Murnighan, 2011; Sachdeva, Iliev, & Medin, 2009), and group members' motivation to adhere to the group's norms (Ellemers, Pagliaro, Barreto, & Leach, 2008; Pagliaro, Ellemers, & Barreto, 2011). Surprisingly, however, very little is known about how morality regulates the behavior of individuals *within* groups. The research reported in the current dissertation thus contributes to the growing body of literature that documents the implications of moral motivation. In doing so, I adopted a social identity approach and focused on intragroup processes, thereby aiming to fill the void between behavior regulation at the interpersonal and intergroup level. In this dissertation, I examined how morality judgments regulate the behavior of individuals within groups.

As discussed above, the results of the experiments reported in this dissertation provide support for the central hypothesis that morality judgments impact on group members' motivational responses, and that this is particularly true for *negative* morality judgments. These findings are in line with prior theorizing and research that report asymmetrical valence effects of morality and competence. That is, whereas positive information about competence is perceived to be more diagnostic of individual dispositions than positive information about morality; negative information about morality is perceived to be more diagnostic of individual dispositions, but also as more stable, and therefore to be of greater predictive value for future behavior than negative information about competence (Martijn et al., 1992; Reeder & Spores, 1983; Skowronski & Carlston, 1987). Not surprisingly then, the research in this dissertation demonstrated that particularly judgments of group members' immorality impact strongly on their motivational responses.

These effects, however, emerged in the face of salient prior moral transgressions. That is, in the experiments reported here, group members recalled their own prior behavior that was evaluated by the group as immoral (Chapters 2 and 3), were exposed to the prior immoral behavior of an ingroup member (Chapter 3), or were confronted with a prospective group member who lacked morality (Chapter 4). In all these experiments, there were thus either direct recollections of moral transgressions present, or those were

indirectly implicated by the manipulations. The explicit or implicit salience of moral transgressions, considering the diagnosticity of negative information about morality, might (partially) account for the impact of judgments of immorality on group members' motivational responses. In other words, group members' pronounced negative motivational responses to judgments of immorality might be partially induced, or enhanced, because they coincided with reminders of moral transgressions. In order to fully understand the motivational power of morality, the impact of morality judgments should also be examined without salient prior moral transgressions. Indeed, there is recent research that suggests there are benefits to emphasizing the motivation to display moral behavior (e.g., morality judgments about future behavior) for group processes and intergroup relations (e.g., Does, Derks, & Ellemers, 2011; Janoff-Bulman, Sheikh, & Hepp, 2009). This implies that morality judgments, when not coincided with moral transgressions, can also impact positively on the motivated responses of individuals in groups. Framing a goal as moral thus appears to have implications for behavior regulation in groups. Future research should continue to explore the motivational force of morality and morality judgments, also in the absence of prior moral transgressions.

Related to this point, it would be interesting to gain insight in the extremity of moral vs. competent behaviors and transgressions. As the results of the experiments described in Chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation indicate, judgments of immorality (i.e., moral deficiency) impact more negatively on group members' motivational responses than judgments of incompetence. Yet, with the present data I cannot rule out that this is because immoral behaviors are (perceived as) more extreme than incompetent behaviors. Indirect support against this possible alternative explanation comes from the experiments reported in Chapter 4, which show that prospective group members with a moral deficiency are condemned more than prospective group members with a competence deficiency. If immoral versus incompetent behaviors that are equal in their (perceived) extremity impact differently on group members' motivational responses, for example because they are more likely to be attributed internally than externally (e.g., Skowronski & Carlston, 1987), this would provide further support for the notion that morality judgments operate as a unique motivational force. Future research can thus systematically vary or

control the extremity of moral and competence transgressions to further our understanding of the motivational power of morality.

Consistent across all experiments reported in this dissertation, morality was operationalized at the trait level. As outlined before, individuals engage in trait inferences to evaluate and predict future behaviors. Moral traits, such as trustworthiness, honesty, and sincerity (Leach et al., 2007), give rise to behavioral expectations and therefore provide an appropriate level of analysis in examining the social implications of morality judgments in terms of group members' motivational responses. However, considering the abstract nature of morality, varying from that which is "good" and "right" to virtues such as "no harm" (e.g., Aquino & Reed, 2002; Haidt & Graham, 2007), it is plausible that merely activating the concept of morality automatically triggers a higher order goal than the more concrete notion of success as indicated by competence. Indeed, competence seems to be more specific to certain aspects of the self (e.g., excellence in academia is not related to excellence in sports), whereas morality seems to easily spill over to different aspects of the self (e.g., honesty on the job implies honesty in the game). Although the conceptualizations of morality and competence were kept constant within and between experiments, based on these data I cannot rule out the possibility that merely mentioning morality activated a higher order goal (i.e., beyond the trait level) for group members than mentioning competence. That is, morality judgments might automatically activate the superordinate goal of being a moral group member (e.g., being trustworthy), whereas competence judgments might merely activate the subordinate goal of being a competent group member (e.g., performing well on a specific task). Activation of such a superordinate goal, considering its importance for individuals' identity, could have increased the situational demands, thereby eliciting more pronounced negative motivational responses (e.g., Blascovich, 2008b). This suggests that morality judgments are in general more demanding than competence judgments, because they represent a more desirable, superordinate goal for group members. Note, however, that depending on the specific situation (e.g., the nature of the task, such as anticipating image restoration vs. actual image restoration), the hierarchical order of the goal and consequently the demands of dealing with morality judgments can vary. In general, however, these will be higher than the demands of dealing with competence judgments. Future research might

systematically vary the hierarchical order of group members' moral and competence identity goals (i.e., superordinate vs. subordinate), for example by stressing the importance of the specific task at hand, to gain further insight in the processes on which moral motivation operates.

Additionally, it would be fruitful to gain insight in the content of group members' moral behavior. In other words, it would be interesting to examine *which* behaviors group members judge to be immoral and consequently as threatening to the positive social identity of the group. In examining group members' motivational responses, I compared morality judgments of behavior in terms of, e.g., trustworthiness, to the more obvious competence judgments of task performance and success. Although morality was defined as trustworthiness, honesty, and sincerity, and group members were instructed to recall behavior that was judged in these terms, the specific nature of (im)moral behaviors remains unclear. In the research described in this dissertation, the focus was on the social implications of morality judgments in terms of group members' motivational responses, not on the content of morality judgments per se. Nonetheless, it would be interesting to gain insight in what exactly group members perceive to be (im)moral acts. A content analysis of group members' descriptions of moral and competent behaviors could provide a valuable source of information for this purpose.

Implications for group processes

The research in the current dissertation also contributes to our understanding of intragroup processes and group dynamics. Whereas competence has long been considered as the primary domain on which groups and group members are evaluated, because it provides an indication of the group's and individual's status (e.g., Ellemers, 1993; Fiske et al., 2002), the current research demonstrates the importance of morality judgments for intragroup processes. Specifically, in multiple experiments I demonstrated the unique motivational force of morality judgments on a range of responses, relative to the impact of competence judgments. The results of these experiments thus indicate that it is important for research on intragroup processes to take the evaluative domain into account when judging group members. Whereas the focus of the current dissertation was on group members' motivational responses, the domains of intragroup evaluations might prove important for other group processes and

phenomena, such as task performances, monetary outcomes, leadership, membership status, cooperation, and norm compliance, to name but a few. For example, in light of the current financial crisis, recent morality judgments of bankers seem to affect their status and monetary rewards, which arguably used to be primarily determined by judgments about their competence. Future research should continue to examine the impact of morality judgments on different group dynamics and relations.

The centrality of group members' demand/ resource appraisals for their motivational responses (e.g., cognitive and psychophysiological) is of particular importance for our understanding of behavior regulation within groups. Greater situational demands increase the salience of situational difficulties, in terms of, for example, level of uncertainty, required effort, and perceived danger, which most likely causes a vigilant approach to goal striving. Consequently, this might render group members particularly sensitive to failures and avoid taking risks (e.g., Higgins, 1998), which might result in less adaptive behavioral changes and induce stress (Blascovich, 2008a; Folkman, Lazarus, Gruen, & DeLongis, 1986). Considering that intragroup evaluations aim to protect the positive social identity and help to elicit desirable behaviors from group members (Moreland & Levine, 1982), evaluations that increase the situational demands might be counter-effective because group members become primarily concerned with the fear of doing something wrong. This might manifest itself in, for example, helplessness, domain disengagement, and withdrawal. On the other hand, when group members perceive that they possess sufficient resources to meet the demands of the intragroup evaluation, for example when they have enough knowledge to solve the situation, they might be more willing to speak up or be creative in their attempts to validate the group's positive social identity. This might in turn be beneficial for the group as a whole. Future research should continue examining how group members' demand/ resource appraisals affect their motivational responses.

In examining group members' motivational responses, I argued that these were aimed at validating the positive social identity of the group. Intragroup evaluations give group members insight in the extent to which this goal is attained, and communicate whether their, as well as other group members', behavior is in line with the group's standards. The intragroup evaluations, as operationalized in the experiments reported in this dissertation,

implicitly created group norms about the group's expected level of morality and competence in order to validate the positive social identity. The intragroup evaluations thus indicated discrepancies between the behavior of the majority of the group members (i.e., normative behavior) and one individual (e.g., the self as group member, another group member, a prospective group member). Yet, in none of the experiments were the group's norms regarding morality or competence explicitly formulated or communicated. In this regard, the current research only indirectly assessed group members' motivational responses to the group's moral or competence norms.

Despite this more implicit approach to group norms, it is important to note that the research reported in this dissertation showed consistent results. The results demonstrate the robust nature of the central notion that intragroup morality judgments impact on group members' motivational responses, in particular because group members displayed these motivational responses in experimentally created groups. That is, the groups in which group members arguably strived to validate their positive social identity had no meaning outside the laboratory. This maximized experimental control over the intragroup evaluations, since it ruled out the possibility of confounds with personal history or prior encounters between group members, or transgressions other than the ones made salient by the manipulations. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to examine how actual violations of moral norms affect intragroup interactions and impact on group members with a shared history. For example, individuals might find it more difficult to exclude an immoral fellow group member with whom they share a long history than would be the case with a group member in an experimental group whom they never met, because of other identity protection concerns (see Hornsey, De Bruijn, Creed, Allen, Ariyanto, & Svensson, 2005; Van Leeuwen, Van den Bosch, Castano, & Hopman, 2010).

In preexisting groups, group members also tend to vary in their membership status. That is, individual group members can for example be full prototypical members, marginal members, new members, or deviant members. In the current research, and partially due to the use of experimental groups, the status of group members was kept constant within experiments. In the experiments described in Chapter 2 and 3, individuals were all considered to be full and equal members of the group. In Chapter 4, I distinguished between

full members and prospective group members. Membership status, however, is important for group members because it indicates how much respect they receive from the group and consequently legitimizes the positive social identity of the group (e.g., Branscombe et al., 2002). Not surprisingly, adherence to the group's norms is particularly important for full group members, because these are the most representative members of the group (e.g., Levine & Moreland, 1994). Consequently, the impact of morality judgments on group members' motivational responses might vary as a function of their membership status. Prospective group members, for example, might be more easily excluded than full members, and marginal members presumably arouse less psychophysiological engagement than full members, because they are less relevant for the positive social identity (for a discussion see also Ellemers & Jetten, 2013; Moreland & Levine, 1982; Pinto, Marques, Levine, & Abrams, 2010). An interesting direction for future research would thus be to examine how the morality judgments of group members who differ in their membership status impact on the motivational underpinnings of intragroup dynamics.

Conclusion

Morality is of particular importance to people; they want to be considered moral and want to belong to moral groups. The research described in this dissertation adopted a social identity approach to morality—by building on the premise that a social identity can motivate individual group members—and examined the impact of morality judgments on group members' motivational responses. Groups evaluate, or judge, the behavior of individual group members, which can help to elicit desired behaviors aimed at validating the group's positive social identity. The experiments reported in this dissertation examined the utilization of morality judgments in establishing this, and compared those to competence judgments. Results systematically demonstrated the motivational force of morality within groups. This moral motivation, however, seems to be primarily driven by group members' concerns for immorality. Judgments of immorality elicit a range of motivational responses that mobilize group members in their pursuit of being a moral group member.