

The Principled Pursuit of Happiness:
Virtue's Role in Moral Psychology

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ABSTRACT

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The field of moral psychology has made tremendous advances in the last two decades, spurred on by the reconsideration of many prior assumptions that undergirded its study from the beginning of the twentieth century. These new discoveries largely involved the application of new psychological tools to the puzzles of moral judgment and decision-making, often confirming intuitions ruled out by previous models, which, in turn, needed to be revised to accommodate new evidence. This dissertation seeks to consolidate much of this research under the umbrella concept of “virtue,” showing that this idea has important motivational significance for the study of moral psychology. This concept of virtue will be examined and demonstrated to be of import to three major areas of investigation by moral psychologists: (1) moral judgments, (2) moral decisions, and (3) moral character. This research program will provide a framework from which to argue for a revision of many popular and expert *a priori* assumptions about what the boundaries of morality are and how ethics relates to happiness, and suggest additional avenues for future research.

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Chapter 1: The Modern Incompatibility of Morality and Happiness

Ethical questions have lain at the heart of the human experience since the dawn of civilization. Ancient texts reveal that, despite the varied experiences of early civilizations, questions of good and evil, right and wrong were bound up intrinsically with beliefs about ultimate reality (Bellah, 2011). This nearly universal fact about ethics has been one of its centrally defining characteristics across ages and cultures. As such, many ancient and classical philosophers and theologians reasoned that questions about the “good life” touched upon both senses in which we use the word “good”—a life marked both by personal happiness and by moral excellence (Aristotle, trans. 2009; Aquinas, 1274/1981; Walshe, 1995). This is perhaps most evident in ancient Greek societies, among whose thinkers questions about how to be happy were addressed through appeals to ideals and principles of ethics (Plato, trans. 1992; Aristotle, trans. 2009). It was generally understood that questions of the good for human beings and other animals had a moral answer, and that the personal flourishing of individuals and their ethical character converged.

This approach shifted dramatically with the advent of the Enlightenment. Rationality took a decidedly empirical and rationalist turn (Bacon, 1605/2001), with questions of happiness and morality being subject to the rigors applied to our understanding of other features of the natural world (Locke 1689/1996; Hume, 1751/1983). Morality, no longer seen as intrinsically related to personal happiness, came to be seen as a tool that preserves social peace and tranquility to provide space for other human capacities to achieve what is good for human beings, the idea of a “*summum bonum*” being set aside (Hobbes, 1651/2009). Happiness, no longer inexorably coupled

with morality, was seen as the effective achievement of desired ends (Mill, 1863/2007). I want to argue that this split leads inexorably to a view of morality as a system of rules and obligations the purpose of which is to constrain or regulate decisions and behavior away from anti-social (“selfish”) choices and toward pro-social (“selfless”) choices. This model assumes that what is in one’s own best interest is at best orthogonal to, and at worst in opposition to, what is in the best interest of others.

I aim to show, through a program of research, that this approach to morality is incomplete. The problem with it lies in two category mistakes that can be traced to ways of thinking that came to full maturity in the writings of John Stuart Mill (1863/2007). The first is the category error associating “morality” only with duties and obligations (i.e. what is “forbidden” or “obligatory;” see Cornwell & Higgins, 2014). The second is a conflation of happiness with utility, which reduces “happiness” to the acquisition or achievement of desired results (Bentham, 1776/1988). While these categorizations have led to advances in behavioral sciences and moral philosophy, they fall short of a complete description of how morality enters into judgments, decisions, and lifestyles (Williams, 1986). Centrally, these approaches ignore a long and theoretically fruitful tradition found in virtue ethics (Jost & Jost, 2009), not to mention the intuitions of everyday men and women.

Drawing on ancient and classical thought, I propose an alternative way of viewing both morality and happiness, which, in the end, shows that the two are mutually supporting rather than in tension with one another. This involves expanding the concept of morality beyond the current boundaries of duty and obligation to include the important area of ideals and virtues. It also involves expanding the concept of happiness to mean not only the achievement of desired outcomes or results (“value”), but also the satisfaction of

two additional motivations: establishing what is real (“truth”) and managing what happens (“control;” see Higgins, 2012). I argue and aim to show empirically that these motivations, *when in proper relation with one another*, produce both morality *and* happiness, thereby demonstrating that the two senses of “good” in “the good life” are related by more than just semantics—that doing good and doing well are intrinsically linked. Before laying out this alternative view, it is important first to delineate the source and boundaries of the current perspective.

1.1 *Modern Definitions of Morality*

The study of morality since the Enlightenment has been a project largely dedicated to the locating of external or “objective” foundations on which our moral judgments could rest. Though Enlightenment philosophers from Hume (1751/1983) to Kant (1785/1993) largely accepted the ethical systems provided by a thoroughly Christian European society (MacIntyre, 1981), they desired to systematically explain and justify our moral beliefs and intuitions apart from the doctrines and magisterial authorities that constituted the religious sectors of life. This project was a response to the increasingly undeniable religious pluralism of human beings throughout the world, both within Europe (e.g. the different forms of Christian organization and practice from Anabaptists to Roman Catholicism) and beyond Europe (e.g. the Native Americans across the Atlantic or Muslims in the Middle East and North Africa). Hugo Grotius (1625/2004), the seventeenth century political theologian, is credited with putting forth the argument that moral doctrines (in his case, doctrines regarding international rules of war) require that they be justified *etsi deus non daretur*—which roughly translates to “as if God did not exist.”

Thus began the modern project of discovering rational principles of morality to which all people everywhere, regardless of culture, religion, or ethnic origin could assent with purity of will. Arguments of this era often take on a character similar to those taking place between moral psychologists in our own contemporary era. David Hume (1751/1983), for example, argued that the justification for morality lies in our sentiments like benevolence, whereas Immanuel Kant (1785/1993) argued that only rational principles of consistency can give us a truly universal morality. These arguments parallel those taking place between social-intuitionist moral psychologists on the one hand (e.g. Haidt, 2001), and cognitive-developmental psychologists on the other (e.g. Kohlberg, 1969), with the former rooting our moral judgments in immediate intuitive experience and the latter finding them in our capacities to reason.

It is unnecessary to take sides in the reasoning versus intuition debate in order to see that both Hume and Kant had a common object for their intellectual explorations, in spite of their differences: the rooting of moral judgments in fundamental human characteristics that are intrinsically motivating. For Hume (1751/1983), this took the form of affections or passions, which he argued inexorably push or pull human beings into more beneficent and happiness-maximizing relations with one another. For Kant (1785/1993), this took the form of a need for rational consistency, which he argued must push or pull human beings into acting in ways that necessarily take into account the value of others. Each pushed for universality by grounding morals in faculties presumed to be universally human.

The arguments against each of these perspectives are well known to those familiar with philosophy. Hume's view fails to distinguish between emotions that motivate us to

behave ethically with those that motivate us to behave unethically without acknowledging the need for a 'superior' rational faculty that can adjudicate between the two based on principles that must have their root in something other than those same affections (see MacIntyre, 1981). Kant's view fails to describe how precisely logical consistency is supposed to actually motivate behavior, and often rests some of his ethical arguments on principles obviously drawn from affective faculties (such as in his discussion of the prohibition against suicide; see MacIntyre, 1981).

This quixotic search for a universal grounding moral faculty in which our moral principles could find an objective foundation was eventually implicitly declared a failure by Søren Kierkegaard. Seeing the flaws in each of the arguments (or, rather, reiterating Hume's flaws as revealed by Kant and Kant's flaws as revealed by Hume), Kierkegaard (1843/1988) presented an allegorical work suggesting an alternative view; one in which there is *no* justifying ground for an ethical life aside from the basic decision to live in accordance with ethical precepts. Another way of looking at this move is that it removes moral motivation from the question of action justification, because people are not moral for reasons, since such reasons have no grounding in external reality. Kierkegaard accomplished this through the presentation of ethical choices as flowing from a primordial decision: the decision to either live an ethical life (the life of duty) or an aesthetic life (the life of selfish pleasure; see Kierkegaard, 1843/1988). Even as motivation was surreptitiously removed from the consideration of moral judgment and decision making, morality was placed in direct opposition to the satisfaction of one's desires.

It is in this context that Sigmund Freud was born and raised, and our current understanding of morality in moral psychology can largely be traced to his thought

(1933/1990). Freud, in a way, followed Kierkegaard (1843/1988), arguing that “morality” and what one desires are in a fundamental opposition. For Freud, the rules of society (“morality”—which he eventually associated with the “superego”) were in fundamental opposition to the desires of an individual (personal “happiness” or “pleasure”—conflated first by Mill, 1863/2007—which he associated with the “id”). Freud saw these motivations as being necessarily in conflict: that the desires of the individual will necessarily run up against the demands of society, and the individual’s rational self (the “ego”) would have to somehow navigate between them (Freud, 1933/1990). Thus, even for Freud, moral decision making and action is a matter of primordial choice between ethical duties and selfish pleasures. Piaget (1932/2008)—who, together with Freud, may fairly be called the father of moral psychology—though he distanced himself from Freud’s psychodynamic construction of human psychology, still retained the notion that morality is an essentially rule-based source of social security: either demanding one *act* on one’s *obligations*, or that one *not act* in a way that is *forbidden*. This point of view is so deeply embedded among psychologists that the APA definition of “morality” reflects this “ought premise:”

A system of beliefs and values that ensures that individuals will keep their *obligations to others* [i.e. doing right] in society and will behave in ways that *do not interfere with the rights and interests of others* [i.e. not doing wrong]” (Gerrig & Zimbardo, 2002, emphasis mine).

Today most modern moral philosophers (and many psychologists following them) have organized themselves into two schools: deontology (following Kant) and consequentialism (following Hume and Mill; see Taylor, 2007). However, whether psychologists join with the former group (placing the grounding of these rules in our

reason) or the latter (placing the grounding of these rules in our affections), there is the sense in which these rules are, at best, orthogonal to a happy life. Whether morality is reduced to the principle of maximizing the greatest total happiness or about adhering to a principle of universality, this principle finds its motivating power through the use of an “ought;” a duty that demands integral fulfillment and resists any attempt to exceed it by definition (MacIntyre, 1981; Taylor, 2007).¹ These rules either ensure the security of society so as to allow each person to pursue his or her own good, or they obligate us to work toward that good, but none of them see the fulfillment of these obligations as constitutive of a happy life. Put another way, they all tend “to focus on what it is right to do rather than on what it is good to be, on defining the content of obligation rather than the nature of the good life” (Taylor, 1989). This can be seen in contemporary philosophers of both the deontological school (e.g. Rawls, 1988) and the consequentialist school (e.g. Hare, 1982), both of which argue that the moral Right is prior to the ethical Good.

On this view of morality, living in accordance with ethical principles is at best orthogonal to the achievement of personal happiness, and at worst in opposition to it. This represents a far cry from older views of ethics which argued that personal happiness was bound up with ethical principles (e.g. Plato, trans. 1992; Aristotle, trans. 2009; Aquinas, 1274/1981). This is most obvious with Kantian or deontological views of morality, which explicitly argue that the moral rightness or wrongness of an action is entirely divorced from the happiness of the actor or the consequences of the action (Kant, 1785/1993).

However, another point of view, the consequentialist view, still makes a claim to ground

¹ Further explication of these characteristics and their inability to deal with ethical notions such as supererogation, and for a general explication of the shortcomings of consequentialism and Kantianism taken in isolation can be found in Smart and Williams (1973) and Williams (1981; 1985).

principles of right in an understanding of what's good for human beings, but, as I will argue in the next section, this approach generally relies on a diminished understanding of happiness rather than arguing that they are intrinsically bound up with one another.

1.2 *Modern Definitions of Happiness*

Happiness, like morality, was understood for centuries in a manner far removed from the way the thinkers of the Enlightenment have since conceptualized it. What was once understood to be the experience of acting in accordance with the virtues has become understood instead as simply a desired end-state where pleasure is maximized and pain is minimized (Bentham, 1776/1988). This conflation of happiness and pleasure was probably most notoriously accomplished by John Stuart Mill (1863/2007), who argued for the identification of the greatest total happiness with the highest level of aggregate utility (i.e., highest aggregate desired end-states).

All goods, according to Mill, are essentially quantifiable in terms of this idea of "utility." The moral worth of an individual is determined by how much general utility he or she brings about; those who achieve the greatest amount of general utility are considered the most good. Many economic theorists, while rejecting some of the problematic philosophical confusions of Mill's theory, still endorse this general model of human decision making and motivation where all goals collapse into one maximizing continuum rather than exerting independent influence (e.g. Hare, 1982).

On this view, happiness is something that can be measured through the experiences of pleasure and pain by every individual, summing the multitude of scores with one another. It is an outcome: one that revolves around either the objective satisfaction of desire (or avoidance of loss) or the subjective experience of personal satisfaction (or the

avoidance of pain). Put another way, consequentialism does not argue that happiness is constituted by an ethical way of life, but instead is the result of the satisfaction of one's desires, which may or may not include acting in accordance with ethics, dependent upon how much pleasure one derives from being ethical (Mill, 1863/2007). One ethical principle is brought to bear upon this grand calculation: the greatest total happiness achieved through the satisfaction of the greatest amount of desire is the duty of action (or inhibition).

This ethical approach appeals to many in the fields of moral philosophy and psychology, particularly because it grounds itself in a fundamental aspect of human nature, one which we share with other animals: approach pleasure and avoid pain. This allows those who adopt the view to take an empirical approach to questions about human happiness and morality. Human beings, like all animals, are motivated to approach positive outcomes and avoid negative outcomes. Therefore, an ethical system built upon this fundamental principle should not only largely explain human behavior, but should also lead to an empirically verifiable understanding of morality. This has led to some quixotic attempts to define the principles of ethics once and for all, or at least argue that these premises can lead to an entirely empirical set of moral judgments (e.g., Harris, 2010)

There are two basic problems with this view, however. First, it fundamentally misunderstands important aspects of human motivation. Second, it has a notoriously flawed track record when it comes to predicting human decision making and behavior. Indeed, the entire field of behavioral economics seems created for the purpose of cataloging and classifying the myriad ways in which human behavior deviates from the "rational" prescriptions of expected utility theory; a theory based solely on the principles of

approach and avoidance.

With regard to the first difficulty, reducing human motivation (not to mention the motivation of non-human animals) to approaching positive outcomes and avoiding negative outcomes leaves us with an impoverished understanding of behavior and its purposes.² On the one side, approach and avoidance (or, put another way, valuation of stimuli) can be further subdivided into the promotion and prevention systems (Higgins, 1997; 1998). Goals can be approached as either ideal goals (promotion) or as ought goals (prevention). Furthermore, approach and avoidance represent only one aspect of motivation, that of value (the desire to have good results, see Higgins, 2012). Two other aspects of motivation, truth (the desire to establish what is real) and control (the desire to manage what happens), represent different, and in certain ways perhaps even *more fundamental*, kinds of motivation that are left out of models of expected utility theory entirely.

Even if, for the sake of argument, we grant the satisfaction of desire its place in this system despite its inability to accurately describe the way human beings actually go about making decisions (see Krantz & Kunreuther, 2007 for a summary of and response to the difficulties with expected utility theory), and then we make the additional assumption that these desires (grounded in approach and avoidance) reflect the most fundamental aspects of human motivation, we are still left with a still more serious fundamental problem. These desires, whatever they may be, are, by definition, considered “good.” However, a cursory

² It is perhaps this impoverished understanding that leads many supporters of consequentialist approaches to ethics to believe that deontological and virtue ethical approaches can simply be “consequentialized”—reinterpreted as consequentialist systems (e.g. Hare, 1982; 1993). Philosophers have rejected this approach and, indeed, have recently noted that there are particular approaches to ethics, which, by definition, resist “consequentialization” (Brown, 2011).

glance at the multiplicity of human experience leads one to the obvious conclusion that what is “good” is precisely the question about which there is so much disagreement.

It is precisely the difficulty with this question that motivated Rawls (1988) to banish questions of the Good from the public realm in favor of an overlapping consensus concerning what is Right. Indeed, when you get beyond the basic elements of survival that constitute the secure foundation from which any individual is capable of achieving a happy life, the consensus becomes less and less universal. Even consequentialism, then, is forced to come to terms with a question that it prefers to assume as translatable to some sort of empirical currency: what is the Good? It is precisely when butting up against this question of human flourishing (a fuller definition of “happiness”) that many of the difficulties of ethical systems that exclusively focus on the Right begin to become apparent (Williams, 1985). I will be arguing in this dissertation that they leave to one side fundamental aspects of human motivation, which I consider next.

Chapter 2: The Motivational Alternative

In this dissertation, I aim to show that understanding ethics through the lens of motivation science can provide us with a fuller understanding of both morality and of happiness, and even suggest how the two subjects—far from being in conflict—may actually work together. Consistent with lay intuitions that truly happy people are good people, research on evaluations of happiness have consistently found that assessments of whether a given individual is really “happy” have an irreducibly moral element (King & Napa, 1998; Phillips, Misenheimer, & Knobe, 2011). This suggests that there is a different way to understand morality and happiness than that discussed above—one that can offer a richer understanding of the good life than that provided by a socialized hedonic principle.

A quick overview of ancient wisdom on the subject of happiness finds very scant evidence for a “desired end-state” perspective: Aristotle states that happiness is constituted by a life lived in accordance with the virtues in his *Nichomachean Ethics* (trans. 2009), Jesus of Nazareth admonishes us to put the “Kingdom of God” and God’s “righteousness” before the acquisition of worldly possessions or satisfaction of earthly desires in the Gospel of Matthew (KJV, 1997), the Buddha remarks that the essential qualities for a noble life are ethics and wisdom, explicitly setting aside things like high birth and wealth (Walshe, 1995). These ancient thinkers, as well as contemporary scientists, paint an alternative picture of “happiness” that relates more to “*the good life*” where morality and happiness are inextricably linked. In this section, I will provide a theoretical foundation for expanded understandings of morality and happiness through the lens of motivation.

2.1 *A Motivational Understanding of Morality*

The Right-dominant ethical systems outlined in the previous chapter each assume that morality is the exclusive purview of *oughts*. However, research on regulatory focus theory has shown that reference to duty and obligation is actually only one kind of motivation, associated with the prevention focus (Higgins, 1997; 1998). There is another kind of motivation as well, associated with the promotion focus, which uses lofty ideals and aspirations as its referent. Specifically, the *prevention* focus is associated with the achievement of safety and security goals, and the maintaining of non-losses and avoidance of losses. The *promotion* focus is associated with the achievement of nurturance and growth goals, and the attaining of gains and avoidance of non-gains. Each represents an orthogonal subsystem within the overall approach/avoidance valuation framework. As discussed above, researchers of morality tend to emphasize issues of duty and obligation when studying morality, often seeing behaviors as existing on a single continuum that runs from “forbidden” through “permissible” to “obligated” (e.g. Cushman, Young, & Hauser, 2006). However, the desire for the achievement of ideals is a distinct motivation to that of fulfilling one’s duties and obligations, and the pursuit and attainment of these ideals can just as easily involve morality (Haidt & Joseph, 2004; 2007).

The notion of ideals (or, in the parlance of moral philosophers, the Good) as a kind of value motivation in ethics is not something new. In fact, relative to a prioritization of the Right in moral philosophy, it is actually quite old. The earliest philosophers of ethics through the pre-modern philosophers, from Aristotle (trans. 2009) to Thomas Aquinas (1274/1981), emphasized an ethical system grounded in ideals of human character—the virtues. The movement away from the prioritization of the Good over the Right to its

opposite had a number of motivations, many of which were sound. First, as mentioned above, theories of the Good tend to demand a comprehensiveness that can lead to the exclusion or suppression of alternative theories. This was Rawls's primary argument for the prioritization of the Right over the Good (Rawls, 1988). Second, the Good, resting as it does on ideals of perfection, can lead to despair among those who find it difficult to attain and condescension for those who do not (see Aristotle's treatment of slaves and women in Aristotle, trans. 2009, or the various ways in which this egalitarian spirit led to a more duty-based view of morality in Taylor, 2007). The Right, with its penchant for basic universalism, offers a more easily attained set of precepts, and makes their supersession a matter of choice, rather than goodness.

This is not to argue in favor of maintaining the current valuation of the Right over the Good as it exists in moral philosophy and psychology; only to note that the current state of affairs is not indefensible, and, in arguing for a relaxation of this prioritization, to avoid overlooking the reasons for which it exists in the first place. Nevertheless, the Right's supremacy in morality has led to a number of 'dead ends' in moral philosophy and unanswered questions in moral psychology that a dynamical theory that embraced both the Good and the Right as independently motivating foundations of ethical value might be able to overcome, while still maintaining a vigilant eye to guard against the excesses associated with giving too much priority to the Good. In recent decades, some moral philosophers have been arguing for the conceptual independence of these two ways of grounding morality (Trianosky, 1986).

I want to argue for a similar approach to psychology as has been ably proposed in philosophy (e.g. MacIntyre, 1981). I aim to show that understanding morality as consisting

both of oughts *and* ideals can help us to make sense of some of the ways in which moral judgments as they are actually found puzzle moral psychologists, and provide us with a fuller account of moral motivation in behavior and decision making. I argue for ethics consisting of two distinct systems: a system of oughts that aims at the fulfillment of *duties* and avoidance of *transgressions*, and a system of ideals that aims at the attainment of *virtues* and avoidance of *vices*. The next two chapters will further delineate the character of these two systems. An additional intriguing implication of this linking of the promotion focus to the desire for virtue is that the promotion focus is also associated with feeling happy (Higgins, 2001), thus suggesting that, in this way, the two are intrinsically linked. More will be said on the subject of happiness in the next section.

While an approach to ethics that takes into account the two different kinds of value achieved through the use of moral rules (*prevention*) and virtuous exemplars (*promotion*) can tell us much about how judgments and decisions are made in light of such values, it lacks a full account of how these values impact motivation beyond their desired end-states: that is, how they impose themselves upon us as *true* and also provide imperatives of *action*. That is, they presuppose the presence of epistemic (truth) and volitional (control) motivation whereas it is their relation to truth and control, working together effectively or ineffectively, that must be considered in addition to questions of value (Crittenden, 2012; analogous to the three kinds of fundamental motivation found in Higgins, 2012).

It is precisely this fuller account that is necessary when considering an ethics based upon the virtues that has flourishing as its aim. A morality based on rights, in contrast, only seeks to establish the best set of rules, while the fuller picture aims at an account for the best internal *organization of motives* (value, truth, and control) toward which an individual

can aspire.³ The virtues consist in training of the self so that beliefs, desires, and actions all align, whereas a system of obligatory rules often (though not necessarily) operates *in spite of* one's desires or beliefs. Thus an account of morality that involves an ethics based on virtues demands attention to truth and control motivations as well as value motivations.

2.2 *A Motivational Understanding of Happiness*

Virtues aim at happiness (Aristotle, trans. 2009). Thus any motivational account of an ethics of virtue must also provide a motivational account of happiness. As mentioned in the previous chapter, modern notions of happiness tend to collapse it into a general notion of satisfying desires. This would not be entirely wrong if “desires” were understood in their fullest sense of what makes life worthwhile; that is, referring not only to value motivation (having desired results) but also truth motivation (establishing what is real) and control motivation (managing what happens). This is because ethics, as an account of what it means to flourish, must take into account human nature in its full extent.

Human beings are motivated to understand the world as it actually is, and this motivation exists independent of value motivation (Higgins, 2012). In humans, this takes the form of shared reality. For a variety of reasons, human beings are “hypersocial”—their understanding of the way things are is bound up in the way others understand it (Hardin & Higgins, 1996). This is perhaps most obvious in the area of ethics. Ethical beliefs are not empirical beliefs: they are not “out there” in nature in such a way as to make them capable of precise measurement. And yet, to a certain extent, ethical beliefs carry with them a sense of objectivity (Goodwin & Darley, 2008). One does not say, “Killing an innocent

³ For an allegorical expression of this difference, compare the implicit ethics of Dante's *Inferno* to that of his *Purgatorio*. The former is concerned primarily with behaviors, while the latter is concerned more with motives. The former with what is expected to avoid hell, the latter with what must be achieved in order to merit heaven (Alleghieri, 2011).

person is wrong for me;” one says, “Killing an innocent person is wrong.” Moral notions cannot be merely subjective notions without ceasing to be truly moral notions. They must be objective.

How is this sense of objectivity achieved? Research on shared reality argues that perceived objectivity is a function of shared inner states between or among individuals (Echterhoff, Higgins, & Levine, 2009). These inner states (feelings; beliefs) are always with respect to a third referent apart from the two individuals; i.e., they are always *about* something. With respect to morality, it is precisely this sharing of inner states with respect to certain behaviors (i.e., their valuation as either good or bad, right or wrong) that, when aligned, produce a sense of moral objectivity (a sense that can be disrupted should majorities deviate from what one presumes to be a settled moral issue, see Jago, Cornwell, & Higgins, 2014).

The key takeaway point is that the value of the rule or virtue in question, in order that it be pursued as an ethical goal, cannot be based entirely upon a sense of desire of the self. Morals have their roots in our shared sense of what is objectively true, which could account for their higher perceived objectivity over things like “taste” (Goodwin & Darley, 2008). Thus in order to be happy, one needs not only to pursue goals, but also to pursue goals that one believes are truly worthy and valuable apart from one’s desires alone. In humans, this sense of the worthiness of goals arises out of social interactions with trusted others (e.g., Stryker & Gottlieb, 1981; Stryker & Statham, 1985) through the sharing of inner states (Hardin & Higgins, 1996). Therefore any consideration of human flourishing must have truth motivation as an important element.

Still it is not enough merely to have goals and perceive them as objectively (really) desirable. One also needs to be able to instantiate them in one's own life, and to change one's own behavior dependent upon feedback and progress along the way. This involves the notion of "becoming," another uniquely human capacity (Higgins, 2005b). This could be seen as related to the uniquely human penchant for narrative (Smith, 2007; Bellah, 2011). Through narrative, we get a sense of where we have been and where we are going, and can relate this back to our moral obligations and ideals.

"Call no man happy until he is dead." This quote, sometimes attributed to the ancient Athenian statesman Solon, cited approvingly by Aristotle (trans. 2009), carries with it the idea that human life is, in a sense, always in motion, and that our position relative to our ideals and obligations is always in a state of flux. Thus, the question of whether we are truly happy is always open to change, and thus demands ongoing maintenance of our duties and striving towards ever greater virtue. The sense that one has autonomy to bring about these two ways of having success is, in many ways, just as integral to happiness as their achievement. Ethics, particularly an ethics grounded in the virtues, is related to a life of activity (Aristotle, trans. 2009). One in which one is able to bring about the Right and the Good as a result of one's own action.

Thus, happiness is not merely the satisfaction of desires, but the sense of becoming a truly valuable person and becoming requires controlling one's life, controlling change, managing to make things happen; in brief, it requires control motivation in addition to value motivation and truth motivation (Higgins, 2012). And this is not the end of the story because what is critical is that value, truth, and control motivations *work together* as partners in life's goal pursuits in maintaining duties and striving towards greater virtue. A

full understanding of happiness isn't so much about aggregate desire satisfaction as it is about the degree to which one is capable of shaping one's life in harmony with the way we perceive the world to really be and the ethical values that flow from this reality that we can manage to fulfill, to make happen in our lives—three kinds of motivations working together in concert (see “What is the good life?” in Higgins, 2012; see also the discussion of the “effectiveness of motive organization” in Franks & Higgins, 2012, or Cornwell, Franks, & Higgins, 2014a).

Thus the reason morality and happiness seem orthogonal to one another in spite of lay intuitions to the contrary could be due to overly constrained views of each. By expanding morality to include ethics of the Good as well as morals of the Right and by expanding happiness to mean motivational integrity as well as having desired end-states, we can see a point of convergence between the two in the attainment of the life of virtue.

I have so far laid out what I view to be the conceptual problem facing moral psychology: that it studies only a form of morality based on obligation that aims at maintaining peace and security, and that it is less devoted to the study of ethical notions aiming at happiness (analogous to an emphasis on the Right over the Good; see Taylor, 2007). An alternative approach to ethics, grounded in the virtues, has important implications for three major areas of research in moral psychology: moral judgment, moral decisions, and moral character. In the following three chapters, I will explore empirical evidence for this alternative approach to ethics, and discuss its implications for each of these important areas of moral psychology research.

Chapter 3: Moral Judgment - Virtue as Reference Point

Many researchers in moral psychology have relatively recently demonstrated the importance of unconscious intuitions in the formation of our moral judgments of others' behavior (Haidt, 2001; Cushman, Young, & Hauser, 2006). This represents a departure from traditional investigations of moral psychology, which see moral judgments as an essentially rational or cognitive phenomenon (e.g. Kohlberg, Levine, & Hower, 1983). This development has led to two alternative perspectives within the field.

On the one hand, some see these intuitive judgments as deviations from a rational model of human reasoning. They argue that these intuitions, due to their lack of a foundation in reason, represent at best impediments to the attainment of a higher moral consciousness or moral society (e.g. Baron, 1994; Greene & Cohen, 2004; Greene 2007), and at worst *immoral* deviations from a morally normative model of how decisions *ought* to be made (e.g. some examples explored in Pinker, 2002).⁴ These researchers often highlight the importance of disgust as an emotion for the intensification of moral judgments (Wheatley & Haidt, 2005; Schnall, Haidt, & Clore, 2008), in order then to go on to argue that judgments that they claim are supported by such feelings are illegitimate.

An alternative interpretation is that these judgments do in fact have a foundation accessible to moral reasoning, but that the judgments themselves are made using intuitions. Research on the importance of the concept of "character" to understanding deviations from "rational" models of judgment support this view (Pizarro & Tannenbaum,

⁴ Another possibility is explored by Turiel (1983), who argued that things seen as morally wrong apart from social consensus are "moral;" other normative rules are mere "convention." However, the examples typically invoked by social intuitionists tend not to fit this mold: table manners and incest are arguably on a different ethical plane, at least in our society.

2011). This view involves the invocation of abstract concepts of virtue, the pursuit of which is argued to carry moral force (Haidt & Joseph, 2004; 2007). Disgust, in this case, would simply be a by-product of an otherwise straightforward process, one that we have not been able to pinpoint simply because, similar to old discrepancies between measurement and intuition in the field of personality, “our intuitions have been better than our research” (Mischel & Shoda, 1995).

I believe that seeing moral judgments as motivated by movement toward a particular standard, a standard based either on one’s *ideals* or one’s *oughts*, can aid in understanding the role of intuitions in moral judgments because previous research has shown a connection between the promotion (ideal) focus and making decisions with feelings rather than reasons, and a connection between the prevention (ought) focus and making decisions with reasons rather than feelings (Pham & Avnet, 2004; Avnet & Higgins, 2006). The scenarios of social intuitionists offer a useful context in which to test this hypothesis because individuals using a more intuitive (feelings) process to make judgments of them come to a different moral conclusion than those using a more rationalist (reasons) process (Haidt, 2001). As noted above, these scenarios are of interest to moral psychologists because common judgments that the behaviors are immoral are thought to defy rationality.

However, I want to argue, along with the researchers cited above, that they only defy “rationality” insofar as “rational” reasons for judging an action as wrong are limited to moral systems associated with the Right: systems of oughts. A moral psychology that allows for an ethics of ideal virtues, and not just duties and obligations, would not find these judgments “irrational” (though they would not be *based on reasons per se*). According

to this view, actions without apparent harm are judged as wrong because the person behaving in the associated scenarios is acting in accordance with some vice (which, according to virtue theorists, is understood as a moral defect or impediment to moral ideal perfection; see Anscombe, 2005). In the next section, I will detail this philosophical connection between an ethics of virtue and these intuitive judgments, before exploring empirically whether the promotion or prevention system is more closely associated with them.

3.1 *Insights from Philosophy*

Moral philosophy, as noted above, tends to be divided into two schools when it comes to questions about the *manner* of pursuit of moral goals. On the one hand philosophers have delineated the notion of moral *Right*, or principles of moral *obligation*, which have been the foundation for most systems of deontological (e.g. Kant, 1993/1785) and many forms of consequentialist (e.g. Mill, 1863/2007) ethics. On the other hand, many have also delineated the notion of ethical *Goods*, or *ideals* of moral perfection, which have been the foundation for virtue ethics (e.g. Aristotle, trans. 2009) and more modern notions of ethics that still base their judgments on virtues of character (e.g. some aspects of Hume, 1751/1998). What these two approaches signify are two different moral reference points: the Right signifying the necessary or obligatory standards by which social peace is maintained, and the Good signifying the ideals of character or virtues the attainment of which constitutes a happy or good life.

These two different reference points (the “Right” and the “Good”), in their exploration by philosophers, have led to a number of differences with how ethical goals are processed, one of which is of particular relevance for the present investigation of the

difference between intuition and reasoning in moral judgment. In his magisterial work, *The Sources of the Self*, Charles Taylor (1989) presents two ways rational considerations can provide backgrounds to moral judgments. According to the first,

...one could argue that a great many of our socially defined obligations, including some of the more serious ones, like those forbidding killing, injury, lying, and the like, are shaped in part by the functional requirements of any human society. Social life, with the minimum of trust and solidarity it demands, couldn't consist with unrestricted violence and deceit.

Here we see the sort of rationale typically offered first by those judging incest (Haidt, 2001)—that there is some danger that could undermine the safety of an unborn child or the security of interpersonal relations.

According to Taylor (1989), however, there is a second way to rationally ground these judgments; individuals may,

“...also see these restrictions as justified by a perception of the good. They have some notion of the sanctity or dignity of human life, bodily integrity, and the aspiration to truth which these infringements violate....”

It is these latter considerations that would be more related with a virtue-based form of judgment. Articulating precisely how certain actions violate these aspirational standards would certainly be difficult, particularly to someone who does not share them. Taylor argues that this is most true when dealing with “virtue terms which apply to features of our lives as individuals [...] where everything depends on grasping a certain vision of the good” (Taylor, 1989). This suggests that the “ethics of inarticulacy” (Taylor’s term) may be a product of our inability to articulate abstract principles of the good in a systematic way,

rather than a mere reliance on emotional or affective reactions to behavioral stimuli. Differences in whether feelings (intuitions) versus reasons are experienced as more convincing could be an expression of this tendency.

Another way to say this is that a moral wrong in the Good-referent way of thinking is not so much a matter of doing something that is *necessarily* wrong, but instead acting in a way inconsistent with ideals which one should find intrinsically appealing and inspiring. Being moved by such ideals and not by lesser goals (that may be considered “base” or “common”) is evidence of a virtuous character. In contrast, supplanting these higher ideals for lesser goals is what philosophers have traditionally called a “vicious” act or one tending toward vice (Aristotle, trans. 2009).

This latter point is important, because it suggests how such a system is brought to bear upon judgments of moral wrongs. “Vices” are defects in character reflected in the supersession of lofty aspirational virtues (such as justice or chastity) by goals that are considered less important (such as self-interest or pleasure). The latter goals aren’t *necessarily* or *intrinsically* wrong in and of themselves, but they become wrong when they are pursued in a way that obstructs or comes in direct conflict with the achievement of higher goals. That is, they are wrong insofar as they deprive someone of an ideally virtuous character.

In moral psychology, which tends to focus on judgments of actions taken in isolated vignettes or scenarios, actions are not simply judged with reference to what is necessarily universally obligated. They can also be clues as to the actor’s organization of motives—and action may be considered vicious simply due to the fact that it is the sort of action one expects a person motivated by vice to commit (Anscombe, 2005). This judgment could

occur quite independently of the circumstances of the act itself (i.e. the potential for negative consequences), or its relationship to categorical imperatives of action (i.e. its deductive derivation from principles of duty).

For the purposes of this paper, we will use the word “aretaic” (“arete” is the phonetic representation of the Greek word for “virtue”) to describe judgments occurring with respect to virtues and vices and “deontic” (“deon” is the phonetic representation of the Greek word for “necessity” or “obligation”) to describe judgments occurring with respect to principles of duty and transgression, deriving this terminology from another philosopher who has investigated the two systems and argued for their conceptual independence cited above (Trianosky, 1986). In the next section, I associate these two philosophical reference points with the two self-regulatory systems associated with judging value (Higgins, 2012).

3.2 *Self-Regulatory Reference Points*

These two ways of judging in moral philosophy correspond to two different kinds of reference points, which I associate with the prevention and promotion regulatory focus systems. The former relies on “ought” reference points: standards that provide moral security and protect against harms. The latter relies on “ideal” reference points: standards that provide moral growth and protect against defects of character. Another way to think about the manner in which these two systems function is to view the prevention system as accentuating the *difference* between the “0” status quo and the “-1” of a worse state, whereas the promotion system accentuates the *difference* between the “+1” possible better end-state against the “0” of the status quo. The prevention system uses a moral “0” as its point of reference, whereas the promotion system uses a moral “+1.” Therefore, in

considering any given situation, those using the prevention focus will engage in negative counterfactuals (“Is this satisfactory? What could I have done, or could do, to maintain a satisfactory state?”), whereas those processing in the promotion focus will engage in positive counterfactuals (“Is this optimal? What could I have done, or could do, to make it better?”). Research has shown that the former question is more of a fit for the prevention focus whereas the latter questions are more of a fit for the promotion focus (Markman et al, 2006; Roese, Hur, & Pennington, 1999).

Therefore, in the context of avoiding moral wrongs, those processing a situation in the prevention system would find behaviors wrong if they could cause concrete harm to a moral status quo, whereas those processing in the promotion system would find behavior wrong that feels like it deviates from or impedes the attainment of virtuous ideals (i.e., a feeling that things could have been better). In the parlance of the philosophical schools cited above, the prevention system would be associated with deontic judgments and the promotion system associated with aretaic judgments. Another way of seeing this distinction is that those processing in the prevention system point to a *principle* that, deductively applied, provides security as the reference point in making moral judgments, whereas those processing in the promotion system point to an *exemplar* that, associatively applied, embodies ideals of moral character—rather than asking whether this action is right or wrong in a basic sense (“0;” relevant for prevention), instead asking whether it is the sort of thing a good person would do (“+1;” relevant for promotion). This leaves open the possibility of actions that it might be acceptable to do, but it would be *better* not to do.

This notion of an alternative system of morality is in no way alien to moral psychology. For example, in their theoretical works, Haidt and Joseph (2004; 2007) argued

that virtue ethics provides a useful framework for understanding how moral systems vary between cultures, and explicitly connected moral intuitions with virtue ethics. Right and wrong within communities is not simply reducible to actions that cause some sort of damage or harm (or, put in motivational terms, a *loss*), but those too which inhibit or stall moral growth through the development of vice (which, in turn, is a defect obstructing an ideal character, or, put in motivational terms, a *non-gain*). Virtue ethics is useful, they argue, because it allows the teaching of moral rules more through example than through promulgation of rules, and explicitly allows for the use of intuitions in making moral judgments in a way that deontology and consequentialism do not (Haidt & Joseph, 2004; 2007).

A related line of research on construal level theory has shown that when processing in a higher construal, moral judgments of intuitive or symbolic wrongs are considered more wrong (Eyal, Liberman, & Trope, 2008). The researchers argued that since moral ideals are experienced as cognitively “higher,” processing judgments at a higher construal intensifies them because it brings them closer to the ideals against which they are viewed as wrong (Eyal, Liberman, & Trope, 2008). It is perhaps helpfully relevant to note here that high construal (or abstraction) is also associated with promotion type goals (Pennington & Roese, 2003; Semin et al, 2005).

Other work in moral psychology has shown that judgments of motives are an important aspect of morality beyond behavior and its consequences. For example, for many, perceived meta-desires (what an individual ultimately wants to accomplish) are often the target of moral credit or blame, irrespective of the action itself, noting that when an individual disavows emotions consistent with the striving for an ideal character, the

moral credit typically assigned for his actions is reduced (Pizarro, Uhlmann, & Salovey, 2003). Researchers investigating profiting off of others misfortune have also argued that judgments of the moral wrongness of an action may not only be about whether or not an action transgresses some categorical rule, but also about whether or not an action is “the sort of thing a good person would do” (Inbar, Pizarro, & Cushman, 2011).

Given the above research, there is considerable theoretical grounding already established in the field for seeing virtues and vices as functioning as a system distinct from principles of obligation or duty. We have reason to believe, therefore, that the promotion focus and prevention focus will produce different *manners* of judgment of moral rights and wrongs consistent with the aretaic and deontic approaches to moral reasoning outlined above. We believe that these differences, under particular circumstances, may produce differences in the severity of judgment. We believe the case of non-procreative ‘harmless’ incest offers just such a circumstance.

3.3 *Connection to Intuitive Scenarios*

As noted above, the scenarios put forward by social intuitionists in which a harmless behavior viewed as wrong represents an ideal context in which to test this hypothesis. In particular, the infamous case of non-procreative incest introduced in Haidt, Bjorklund, and Murphy (2000) represents a prime example where “intuitive” and “deliberative” judgments would come into direct conflict, offering an ideal situation in which to test whether these two ways of making judgments have a motivational component.

The scenario involves a brother and sister who decide to make love a single time, both using contraception, and agree to keep it a secret afterwards without doing it again in

the future. Most people see this behavior as morally wrong, but when asked why they believe such behavior is wrong, they generally rely on deliberative consequentialist arguments that are actually undercut by the explicit facts of the scenario (e.g., a baby resulting from such a union could have deformities; the family of the brother and sister could be emotionally hurt by learning about the act; see Haidt, 2001).

But are these consequentialist arguments the only kinds of reasons why those who morally oppose incest believe it to be wrong? Historically, this has not been the reasoning. For example, Augustine of Hippo, writing in the 5th century in *City of God* (1993) gives the following justification for moral opposition to incest:

As, therefore, the human race, subsequently to the first marriage of the man who was made of dust, and his wife who was made out of his side, required the union of males and females in order that it might multiply, and as there were no human beings except those who had been born of these two, men took their sisters for wives—an act which was as certainly dictated by necessity in these ancient days as afterwards it was condemned by the prohibitions of religion. For it is very reasonable and just that men, among whom concord is honorable and useful, should be bound together by various relationships; and one man should not himself sustain many relationships, but that the various relationships should be distributed among several, and should thus serve to bind together the greatest number in the same social interests.

He then goes on to reference pagan laws which allow for brothers to marry their sisters, but that even in these circumstances where it is permissible, it is still considered wrong by

“custom” which, “with a finer morality, prefers to forego this license.” So according to Augustine, incest is wrong not because of its negative consequences, but because it substitutes the ideal of broadly extending familial love over the lesser good of satisfying “sexual lust.” Augustine himself recognized the need for two distinct standards in ethics, often making a distinction between “precepts” or “commands” on the one hand, and “counsels” on the other. The former represent what is “lawful,” whereas the latter represent what is “perfect.” Thus, he states that if something is a counsel, “it is lawful to do, but it is *better* not to do” (Augustine, 2009, emphasis mine).

This is in line with a more contemporary example as well. The Church of England, in a 1987 resolution, decreed that “sexual intercourse is an act of total commitment which belongs properly within a permanent married relationship” and then goes on to enumerate those sexual practices deemed illicit which “fall short of this *ideal*” (our emphasis). “Christians,” says the same document, “are called to be *exemplary* in all spheres of morality” (my emphasis). That is, membership in this particular community involves holding oneself and one’s own to a “higher” moral standard, i.e., to be “exemplary,” rather than referencing what is generally universally obligated. Given the connection between virtues and intuitions (Haidt & Joseph, 2004; 2007) and between ideals and feelings (Avnet & Higgins, 2006; Pham & Avnet, 2004), it should come as no surprise that these judgments about what is morally best would take place intuitively, rather than deductively or deliberatively.

Thus we see that in many cases, morals of sexual propriety, when argued for by those who actually hold them throughout history, tend to occur with reference to *ideals* of moral perfection. This would be especially relevant for the promotion system, which is associated with striving for the maximum best, in a way that the prevention system is not

(Higgins, 1997, 1998; Shah & Higgins, 1997). Thus, for cases like incest, the relevant question may not in fact be, “Can anything *bad* come of this?” Instead, it may be, “Can anything *good* come of this?” Even if the first answer is “no,” the second answer may also be “no,” and thereby the action may be judged to be wrong by those for whom moral gains versus non-gains are especially important (i.e., those with a promotion focus). The following series of studies aimed to examine this central question. Results in favor of this hypothesis would argue for the importance of concepts of virtues (and vices) in moral judgment.

Study 1: Bad Effects Versus Non-Good Effects

In this study, we examine the basic effect of an experimental induction into either a promotion focus or prevention focus on moral judgment severity. If the promotion focus is more severe, the “vice” hypothesis will be supported. I will also determine whether the effects are mediated by emotional reactions, including disgust,⁵ judgments regarding bad effects of the action, or judgments regarding good effects of the action.

Methods

Participants

Fifty-five participants (27 females and 28 males) were recruited from the Mechanical Turk subject pool for the sum of one dollar. There were no significant sex differences for any of the variables measured in this study. Participants were randomly assigned to each of the conditions described below.

Procedure

⁵ This is especially relevant in this case, since disgust has been associated with the intensification of moral judgments (Schnall, Haidt, & Clore, 2008), and would be more associated with the prevention focus because it is an emotional reaction that is associated with rejection of a negative (Higgins, 1997; 1998).

After providing informed consent, participants were induced into either a promotion or a prevention state via priming using the Regulatory Focus Induction Instrument (Freitas & Higgins, 2002; Higgins, Roney, Crowe, & Hymes, 1994). This instrument primes participants into thinking about their hopes and aspirations (promotion ideals) or their duties and obligations (prevention oughts). The *promotion* induction was worded as follows:

For this task, we would like you to think about how your current hopes and aspirations are different now from what they were when you were growing up. In other words, what accomplishments would you ideally like to meet at this point in your life? What accomplishments did you ideally want to meet when you were a child? In the space below, please write a brief essay describing how your hopes and aspirations have changed from when you were a child to now.

Similarly, the *prevention* induction was worded as follows:

For this task, we would like you to think about how your current duties and obligations are different now from what they were when you were growing up. In other words, what responsibilities do you think you ought to meet at this point in your life? What responsibilities did you think you ought to meet when you were a child? In the space below, please write a brief essay describing how your duties and obligations have changed from when you were a child to now.

Following this instrument, participants were presented with a set of scenarios of widely varying moral relevance, content, and valence. Five of these scenarios were designed to act

as general “filler” ethical dilemmas and scenarios (chastising a family for littering, prioritizing loyalty over merit when choosing whom to give a raise, adopting a handicapped child when receiving a tax break for doing so, keeping one’s promises to an acquaintance, and quitting a job rather than recanting unpopular religious beliefs). These scenarios were included to mask the fact that participants’ judgments of incest were of particular interest in the study, thereby avoiding demand effects that might be extant if the incest scenario were presented in isolation from other scenarios and dilemmas. There were no regulatory focus predictions associated with any filler scenarios and there were no consistent effects across studies, nor was the content of any scenario related to the central purpose of this research. For these reasons, results from these filler scenarios will not be subject to analysis.

One of the scenarios was the incest scenario of interest (placed third; again, in an effort to avoid demand effects caused by placing it too prominently), which was worded as follows:

A brother and sister are alone in the house and decide to make love just once.
The sister is already taking birth control pills and the brother uses a condom.
They both enjoy the act but decide not to do it again. They promise each other to keep it a secret.

In order to avoid biasing responses since the valence of the scenarios was mixed, for each scenario, participants were asked to judge both how morally wrong the behavior was (9 = “extremely morally wrong”; 1 = “not at all morally wrong”) and how morally right the behavior was (1 = “not at all morally right”; 9 = “exceptionally morally right”). Since participants consistently judge incest to be morally *wrong*, and therefore it would be

difficult to interpret moral *rightness* judgments for this behavior (especially given the asymmetry of wrongness and rightness judgments suggested in work by Janoff-Bulman, Sheikh, & Hepp, 2009), we focused our analysis on moral wrongness judgments.

For each behavior, participants were also asked two questions about the ultimate outcomes of the behaviors in the scenarios: “To what extent do you think something good will result from this action?” and “To what extent do you think something bad will result from this action?” Each of these questions was rated on a scale from 1 to 9 with 1 representing “not at all likely” and 9 representing “very likely.” Finally, participants were also asked to rate their current emotional reactions on a scale from 1 to 9 with 1 representing “not at all” and 9 representing “very much” on each of the following emotional dimensions: happiness, anger, disappointment, sadness, disgust, anxiety, and elation.

Analysis

Given the nature of our main dependent variable (moral wrongness), and our desire to potentially control for a variety of covariates, we approached the data using standard linear models. However, given the negative skew of the data (due to the heavy selection of the most extreme judgment “9” by a large proportion of participants), making the data resistant to transformation to a normal distribution, we thought it best to supplement these analyses with an additional form of analysis. Given the large proportion of extreme judgments, variance comparisons can serve as an indication of deviation from that extreme judgment and thus as an indication of ambivalence in making the judgment, so we included robust variance comparison tests to measure this spread (Browne & Forsythe, 1974) in addition to the linear regression results.

Results

Manipulation checks. The promotion and prevention essays were rated for their content by two raters who were blind to the experimental assignment. Raters were asked to indicate on scales varying from 1 to 5 (1 = “not at all;” 5 = “very much”) the degree to which the essays were about (1) the achievement of ideals or aspirations, and were about (2) the fulfillment of duties and obligations. Raters were also asked to indicate the degree to which the essays were about (3) approaching a positive goal, and were about (4) avoiding a negative problem on the same scale. These latter evaluations were necessitated in order to distinguish the specific ideal/ought construct of regulatory focus with the more general approach/avoidance construct associated with the hedonic principle. In recent research concerning moral motivation, regulatory focus theory has been treated as a particular expression of a more general theory of approach and avoidance (Janoff-Bulman, Sheikh, & Baldacci, 2008; Janoff-Bulman, Sheikh, & Hepp, 2009; Janoff-Bulman, 2009; Janoff-Bulman & Carnes, 2013). However, regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997; 1998) proposes that the promotion system and the prevention system are two distinct kinds of approach and two distinct kinds of avoidance, and there is support for distinguishing regulatory focus from the more general approach/avoidance construct (e.g., Förster et al, 2001; Scholer & Higgins, 2008; Spiegel, Grant-Pillow, & Higgins, 2004). Nevertheless, since experimental manipulations can induce both promotion/prevention and approach/avoidance (cf. Friedman & Förster, 2001; Friedman & Förster, 2005), and there are chronic measures (e.g., Lockwood, Jordan, & Kunda, 2002) that do not clearly differentiate between these constructs (Summerville & Roese, 2008), it is useful to establish that the effects in our research are due to differences in the ideal/ought distinction of regulatory focus and not the more general approach/avoidance distinction.

Interrater reliability was high for ratings of ideals ($\alpha = 0.93$), oughts ($\alpha = 0.96$), approach ($\alpha = 0.85$), and avoidance ($\alpha = 0.73$), so averages were taken of the two sets of ratings. As expected, those primed with the promotion focus prompt ($M(\text{ideals}) = 4.72$; $M(\text{oughts}) = 1.16$) wrote essays significantly more about ideals ($t(53) = -16.83, p < 0.001$) and significantly less about oughts ($t(53) = 24.33, p < 0.001$) compared to those primed with a prevention focus prompt ($M(\text{ideals}) = 1.77$; $M(\text{oughts}) = 4.63$). There were no significant differences with respect to approach ($t < 1$) or avoidance ($t < 1$). Thus, as expected, the experimental manipulation was successful in inducing either a promotion focus or a prevention focus but not a general approach or avoidance state.

Judgments of Incest. Consistent with the “vice” hypothesis above, those induced into a promotion state ($M = 8.36$) saw non-procreative incest as significantly more wrong compared to those induced into a prevention state ($M = 7.4$; $\beta = 0.28, t(53) = -2.09, p = 0.04$). This main effect can be seen in Figure 3.1. Our hypothesis is also that these mean differences are the result of a different *manner* of judgment based on the reference point being used. Specifically, those making more deontic judgments (in the prevention system) are judging whether or not the behavior conforms to necessary oughts (moral “0”), that is, *whether or not* the behavior is permissible or forbidden. Those making more aretaic judgments, in contrast, are judging the degree to which this action deviates from ideals of character (moral “+1”), that is, judgments about *how* non-good the behavior is. Thus, we would expect judgments of incest to be less severe in the prevention condition because

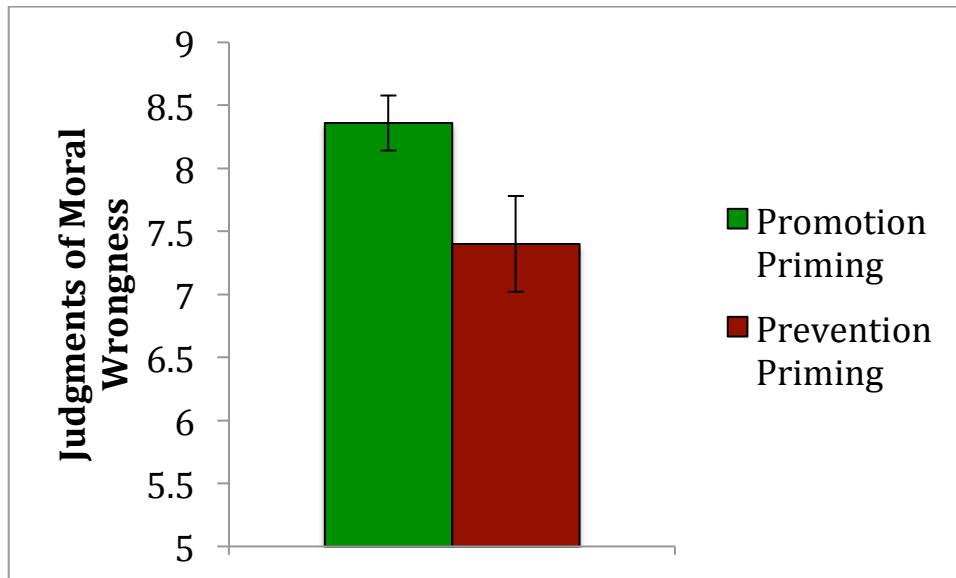


Figure 3.1: Moral wrongness of incest over regulatory focus priming (error bars represent +/- 1 standard error relative to the mean).

some participants are judging incest as *not wrong at all*, whereas some in the promotion condition are simply judging it as *less wrong*.

If this is the case, then we should see variance differences. Applying a robust test for the equality of variances between the groups (see Brown & Forsythe, 1974), we found a significant difference in variance between conditions ($F(1, 53) = 6.98, p = 0.01$), with the standard deviation of the prevention condition ($SD = 2.06$) being significantly higher than that of the promotion condition ($SD = 1.12$). This can be seen in a graph of the variance in responses in Figure 3.2.

Emotional reactions. There were no significant differences between ideal and ought priming conditions with respect to happiness ($t < 1$), anger ($t < 1$), disappointment ($t < 1$), sadness ($t < 1$), disgust ($t(53) = 1.60, p = 0.11$), anxiety ($t < 1$), or elation ($t < 1$). Nor did any of these emotional reactions significantly predict the strength of the judgments of incest (anger: $t < 1$; disappointment: $t < 1$; sadness: $t < 1$; disgust: $t < 1$; anxiety: $t < 1$;

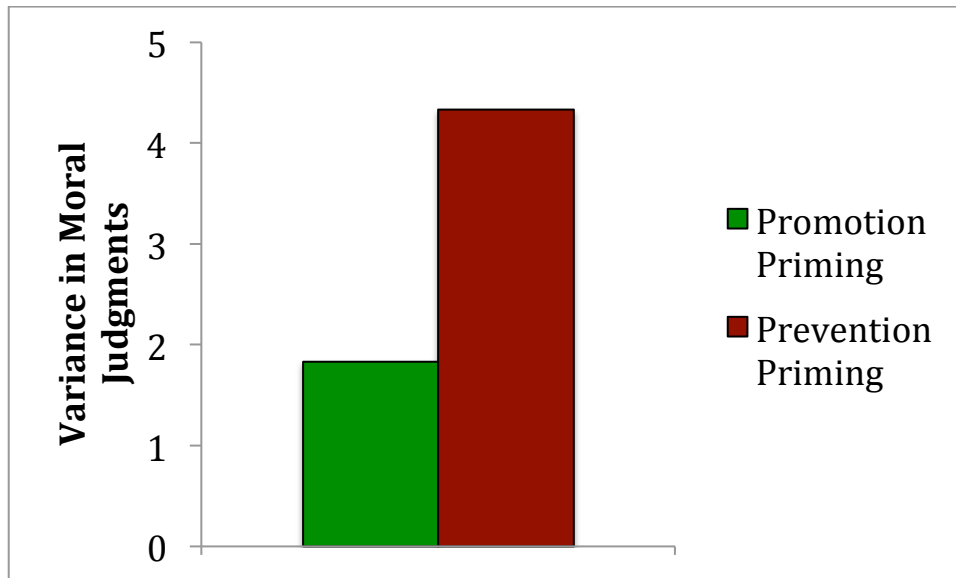


Figure 3.2: The impact of motivational induction on the variance of moral judgments of incest.

elation: $t < 1$), though the relation to happiness was marginally significant ($\beta = 0.22$, $t(53) = 1.68$, $p = 0.10$).⁶ This suggests that judgments of incest are not merely the product of negative emotional reactions to it, and are related to intuitions with a real foundation.

Good and Bad Effects. Since incest on average was rated as very morally wrong ($M = 7.84$), and to compare the two kinds of avoidance (prevention avoidance and promotion avoidance), we reversed the ratings of good effects to give us a scale of bad effects versus non-good effects. Not surprisingly, predicted bad effects were significantly associated with judgments of moral wrongness ($\beta = 0.28$, $t(53) = 2.15$, $p = 0.04$). However, ratings of non-good effects had a much stronger association ($\beta = 0.61$, $t(53) = 5.68$, $p < 0.001$). It should be noted that these effects appear to be independent, because they both remain significant

⁶ It is perhaps interesting to note that the stronger participants negative judgment, the happier they felt in the promotion condition ($\beta = 0.41$, $t(24) = 2.19$, $p = 0.04$). It is perhaps possible that making intense moral judgments (i.e. “closing the moral gap” between scenarios and one’s intuitive ideals) creates a sense of success or happiness. Unfortunately, we did not measure an emotion corresponding to prevention success, so the interpretation of this is effect is only speculative at this point.

in a multiple regression (bad effects: $\beta = 0.24$, $t(52) = 2.34$, $p = 0.02$; non-good effects: $\beta = 0.60$, $t(52) = 5.75$, $p < 0.001$). This further bolsters the notion that the distinction between types of avoidance (avoiding bad effects versus avoiding non-good effects) is orthogonal to avoidance itself. In addition, consistent with the hypothesis that promotion-related negative judgments would be stronger than prevention-related negative judgments (for this case where negative consequences of the act are absent), the promotion-related non-good effect was stronger than the prevention-related bad effect.

We further examined the relationship with respect to the main ideal/ought difference of the manipulation described above to determine whether controlling for predicted non-good or bad effects reduces the impact of the manipulation to non-significance. The manipulation's relationship to ratings of wrongness of incest were, if anything, strengthened by controlling for predicted bad effects in a multiple regression ($\beta = 0.32$, $t(52) = 2.56$, $p = 0.02$), suggesting independent effects. However, when controlling for predicted non-good effects, the relationship dropped to non-significance ($\beta = 0.15$, $t(52) = 1.41$).

This latter effect raised the intriguing possibility that the manipulation of promotion or prevention focus through the induction priming was having an indirect effect on judgments of incest via differential judgments of whether such an action would inhibit the achievement of some good (the failure to "hit the target of" a virtue; see Swanton, 2001). We therefore conducted a bootstrapped mediation test (10,000 repetitions), and found a significant indirect effect of regulatory focus manipulation on judgments of moral wrongness of incest through predictions of the non-good effects of that action (bias-corrected 95% CI = [-1.045, -0.003]).

These results, in terms of differentiating between the hypotheses listed in the introduction, are strongly consistent with the “intuition” or “vice” hypothesis. Those primed with ideals were more judgmental of harmless incest compared to those primed with oughts, and this effect was independent of judgments of negative effects of the action (i.e. consequentialist reasons for negatively judging incest) and of negative emotions including disgust. This should not be surprising, since a recent review of the literature argued that disgust acts merely as an intensifier of existing judgments rather than as a source of those judgments (Pizarro, Inbar, & Helion, 2011), and even while arguing for a greater emphasis on intuitive judgments in moral psychology, Haidt (2001) cautioned against wholly conflating moral intuitions with moral emotions.

These results strongly suggest that ideal virtues (and vices as ideal discrepancies) do act as moral reference points in making moral judgments, and not every behavior is understood as being judged on a scale of absolute deliberative duties and obligations. However, though these results are consistent with this hypothesis, there is a need for additional evidence that more directly supports the more general hypothesis that the two motivational systems are representative of the two types of moral systems. If this more general hypothesis is correct, then three predictions should obtain.

First, prompting participants to rely on their intuitions or reasoning when making their judgments should significantly influence the difference in the intensity of judgments. If those processing in the promotion focus are judging through the application of tacitly held ideals (a “fit”), forcing them to engage in deliberative reasoning (a “non-fit;” see Avnet & Higgins, 2006) instead should reduce the intensity of their moral judgments (whereas this should have relatively little effect on prevention focused participants if they are

already engaged in deliberative reasoning and it is precisely their reasoning which is leading to the less intense moral conclusion). Second, if the prevention focus is related to processing using deliberative consequentialist reasons in their judgment, then the introduction of potential negative consequences to the scenario should increase the intensity of their negative judgments (particularly relative to those processing in a promotion focus whose judgments should not be impacted by the presence or absence of negative consequences as reasons). Finally, if the promotion focus is related to making judgments based on tacitly held ideals and not just applying a baseless “gut” reaction to aversive stimuli (e.g., a disgust reaction), then the effect should disappear among those who do not hold those ideals (whereas this should have relatively little effect on prevention focused participants if they are not using ideals to begin with as the basis for their judgments). These three hypotheses will be tested in Studies 2a, 2b, and 2c, respectively.

Another possibility is that those processing in the promotion focus simply judge all immoral behavior more severely than those processing in a prevention focus. We address this possibility in Study 3a. Finally, it is possible that this promotion-prevention effect is particular to the case of non-procreative incest, or is somehow tied to the particular induction method in question, rather than theoretically tied to differences in regulatory focus associated with these two systems of moral judgment. These possibilities are addressed in Study 3b.

Study 2a: Intuition Versus Reasoning

This study explored whether those processing in the promotion focus will have their judgments significantly impacted by a prompt to use their reasoning (a “non-fit”) rather than their intuition (a “fit”) in making those judgments. As discussed earlier, intuitive

processing in the ethics of virtue is implicitly tied to abstract ideals of moral perfection (Haidt & Joseph, 2004; 2007). Thus, forcing promotion-focused participants to use their deliberative reasoning instead could potentially disrupt such processing and reduce moral judgment intensity. In contrast, prompting prevention-focused participants to use their deliberative reasoning should have relatively little effect if they already use reasons to make their judgments without needing to be prompted to do so (Avnet & Higgins, 2006), and this reasoning is leading to less intense moral judgments.

Methods

Participants

One hundred eighteen participants were recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk for the sum of one dollar. Participants consisted of 45 males and 73 females. Since females judged incest as significantly more wrong ($M = 8.33$) than males ($M = 7.13$; $t(116) = -3.20$, $p = 0.002$), sex differences were included as a covariate in all of the following analyses.

Participants were randomly assigned to the conditions below.

Procedures

The procedure in this study was identical to Study 1 with the exception that half of the participants were randomly assigned to a "reasoning" condition and half to an "intuition" condition. Following the regulatory focus induction, participants were presented with the scenarios, but with a prompt preceding them telling them to use either their reasoning or their intuition to make their judgments. The "reasoning" prompt was worded as follows:

Please read the following scenarios and rate them on the scales provided. **We are interested in your beliefs about each of these behaviors, so please use**

your reasoning to make your judgments.

The “intuition” prompt was worded as follows:

Please read the following scenarios and rate them on the scales provided. **We are interested in your feelings about each of these behaviors, so please use your intuition to make your judgments.**

The scenarios presented were identical to those used in Study 1.

Results

Manipulation Checks. Two raters blind to the experimental conditions rated the content of the essays in a manner identical to that used in Study 1. Interrater reliability was very high with regard to how much the content reflected ideals ($\alpha = 0.91$) or oughts ($\alpha = 0.92$), and with respect to whether the essays involved approaching something positive ($\alpha = 0.88$) or avoiding something negative ($\alpha = 0.83$). Importantly, those induced into a promotion focus ($M(\text{ideals}) = 4.82$; $M(\text{oughts}) = 1.32$) wrote essays rated as significantly higher on ideal content ($\beta = 0.95$, $t(115) = 34.76$, $p < 0.001$) and lower on ought content ($\beta = -0.95$, $t(115) = -31.77$, $p < 0.001$) than those induced into a prevention focus ($M(\text{ideals}) = 1.44$; $M(\text{oughts}) = 4.73$). Unlike the previous study, those induced into a promotion condition ($M(\text{approach}) = 4.85$; $M(\text{avoidance}) = 1.25$) also wrote essays rated as more about approaching a positive ($\beta = 0.20$, $t(115) = 2.18$, $p = 0.03$) and less about avoiding a negative ($\beta = -0.25$, $t(115) = -2.80$, $p = 0.01$) compared to those induced into a prevention focus ($M(\text{approach}) = 4.60$; $M(\text{avoidance}) = 1.65$). Because of this, we controlled for approach and avoidance ratings in the following analyses.

Intuition Versus Reasoning. Consistent with the vice hypothesis, among those primed with promotion ideals, there was a significant difference between judgments

performed using intuition versus reasoning, with those in the intuition condition ($M = 8.55$) rating incest as more wrong than those in the reasoning condition ($M = 7$; $\beta = 0.36$, $t(53) = 2.94$, $p = 0.01$). This was not the case for those primed with prevention oughts ($t(59) < 1$).⁷ This is consistent with the proposal that finding incest wrong in a promotion ideal focus (vs. a prevention ought focus) is more associated with intuition than with reasoning. As one might expect, given these results, there is a significant interaction between the regulatory focus induction and the judgment conditions ($\beta = 0.35$, $t(111) = 2.24$, $p = 0.03$), with those in a promotion state rating incest as more wrong when asked to use their feelings or intuition, and those in a prevention state rating incest as more wrong when asked to use their reasoning.⁸ These results are pictured in Figure 3.3. These results are consistent with the notion that abstract, intuitive reasoning is less readily articulated than more concrete reasoning (Cushman, Young, & Hauser, 2006), and, these results suggest, can be disrupted when reasoning is attempted.

Interestingly, with respect to measurements of variance, asking promotion-focused participants to make their judgments using reasoning rather than feelings makes them have a more deontic pattern of judgment. A robust comparison of variances of promotion-induced participants showed that those in the deliberative (“reasoning”) condition ($SD = 2.66$) had significantly higher variance than those in the intuitive (“feelings”) condition ($SD = 1.22$; $F(1, 54) = 20.51$, $p < 0.001$). In line with the mean differences above, there were no differences between intuitive ($SD = 1.86$) and deliberative ($SD = 2.02$) conditions for those

⁷ These results were similar when not controlling for sex differences (promotion ideals: $\beta = 0.38$, $t(52) = 2.96$, $p = 0.01$, 95% CI = [0.53, 2.75]; prevention oughts: $t < 1$).

⁸ This result was also significant when not controlling for sex differences ($\beta = 0.32$, $t(112) = 2.00$, $p = 0.05$).

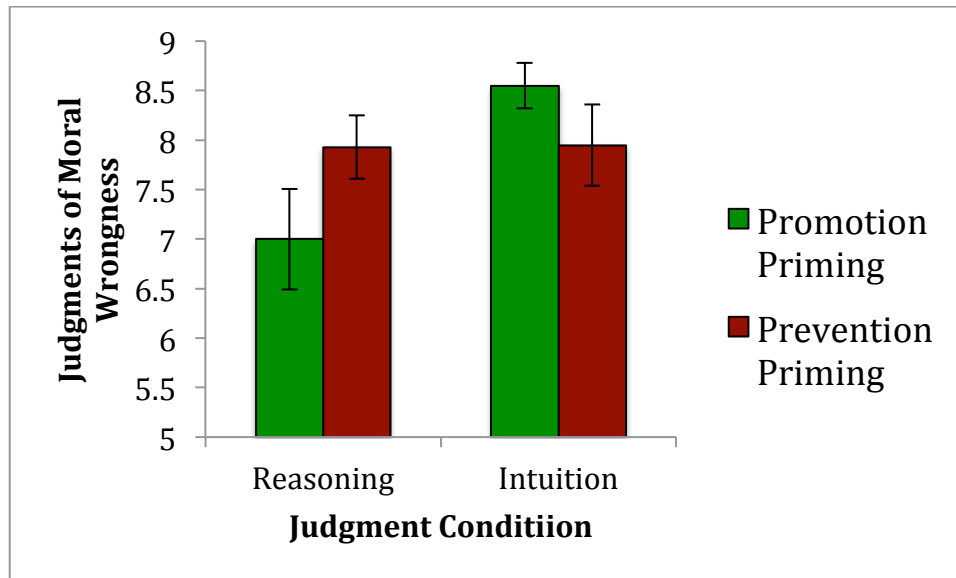


Figure 3.3: Moral wrongness of incest over regulatory focus priming by reasoning versus intuition (error bars represent +/- 1 standard error relative to the mean).

induced into a prevention focus in terms of variance ($F(1, 60) < 1$). A graph of the variances across conditions is available in Figure 4.4.

These results are consistent with the literature showing that promotion-focused individuals tend to rely on feelings in judgments, whereas prevention-focused individuals tend to rely more on reasons (Pham & Avnet, 2004; Avnet & Higgins, 2006). They are also consistent with the theory linking the two reference points to the two self-regulatory systems in moral judgment. This latter point is especially important because it suggests that prompting the use of “feelings” and “intuition” to make one’s judgment is *not* sufficient to induce a process where an ideal reference point is used. Promotion-focused participants will use an ideal reference point in judging ‘vice,’ even when they are not prompted to use their “feelings” and “intuition.” But prevention-focused participants will not do so even when prompted to use their “feelings” and “intuition” because a prevention focus is about oughts and not ideals. This is perhaps due to the greater flexibility in thinking associated

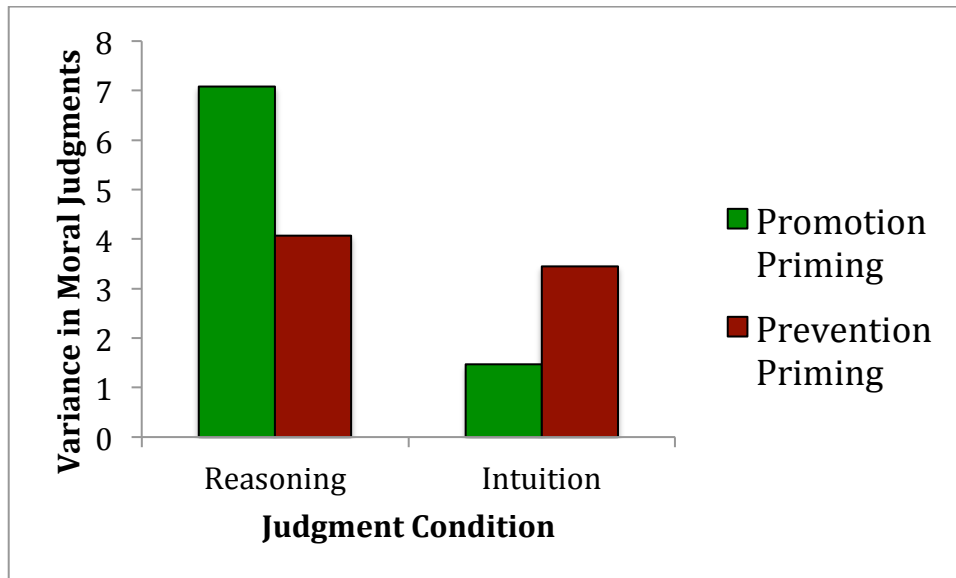


Figure 3.4: The impact of regulatory focus and directions for how to judge the scenarios on the variance of moral judgments of incest.

with the promotion focus, and, in contrast, the greater degree of perseverance associated with the prevention focus (Friedman & Förster, 2001). This would explain why prevention priming plus the intuitive (“feelings”) prompt did not increase severity of judgment (or variance). In the next study, we examine what happens when there is the possibility of negative consequences for the ‘incest’ behavior.

Study 2b: Negative Consequences Absent Versus Present

If adding negative consequences as reasons makes everyone judge incest as more wrong because everyone reasons consequentially, then we should see an increase in the severity of the judgment in both prevention *and* promotion groups. However, if the mechanism underlying negative judgments of ‘incest’ in the promotion system involves tacitly held ideals as a reference point rather than concrete consequences of the behavior, then the introduction of negative consequences should intensify the negative judgments of prevention-primed participants but not promotion-primed participants (or at least

increase judgmental negativity significantly more for prevention-primed participants than promotion-primed participants).

Methods

Participants

One hundred twenty-one participants were recruited from Mechanical Turk for the sum of one dollar. There were 45 males and 76 females. Female participants judged incest as significantly more wrong ($M = 8.54$) than male participants ($M = 7.44$; $t(119) = -3.45$, $p = 0.001$), so sex differences were included in all of the analyses below. Participants were randomized into the four study conditions below.

Procedure

In this study, we used the Regulatory Focus Induction Instrument (as in Studies 1 & 2) in order to induce participants into either a promotion or a prevention state. Following the induction, half of the participants, from random assignment, saw the same (no negative consequences) scenarios as those presented in Studies 1 and 2a in the same order. The other half saw exactly the same scenarios except that the incest scenario was altered so as to suggest the possibility of direct negative consequences as a result of the incest. The new version of the scenario was worded as follows:

A brother and sister are alone in the house and decide to make love just once.

The sister is not taking birth control pills and the brother does not use a condom. They both enjoy the act but decide not to do it again. They do not promise each other to keep it a secret.

This version of the scenario allows for the possibility of negative consequences in the form of conception of a deformed infant or unhappiness of those who hear about the incest,

which are two of the major reasons participants present for objecting to the incest mentioned by Haidt (2001) and Haidt, Bjorklund, and Murphy (2000).

Results

Manipulation Checks. In a manner identical to that used in previous studies, participant essays were rated for their content by two raters blind to the experimental condition. Interrater reliability was very high with regard to whether the essay content was more about ideals ($\alpha = 0.92$) or oughts ($\alpha = 0.94$), and relatively good with regard to whether the essay was more about approaching a positive ($\alpha = 0.66$) or avoiding a negative ($\alpha = 0.66$). Those induced into a promotion state ($M(\text{ideals}) = 4.89$; $M(\text{oughts}) = 1.17$) wrote essays significantly more about ideals ($\beta = 0.92$, $t(118) = 25.69$, $p < 0.001$) and significantly less about oughts ($\beta = -0.93$, $t(118) = -27.85$, $p < 0.001$) compared to those induced into a prevention state ($M(\text{ideals}) = 1.67$; $M(\text{oughts}) = 4.61$). As in Study 1, unlike in Study 2a, however, there were no significant differences between the groups with respect to whether the essay content was more about approaching a positive ($\beta = 0.10$, $t(118) = 1.07$, $p = 0.29$) or avoiding a negative ($t < 1$).

Negative Consequences Absent Versus Present. Consistent with the results from the previous study, among those participants viewing the “no negative consequences” version of the scenario used in Studies 1 and 2a, those induced into a promotion ideal state judged the behavior as more morally wrong compared to those induced into a prevention ought state ($\beta = 0.28$, $t(43) = 2.02$, $p = 0.05$).⁹ Interestingly, this difference reversed among

⁹ This effect is only marginally significant when not controlling for sex differences ($\beta = 0.25$, $t(44) = 1.77$, $p = 0.08$), or when controlling for approach and avoidance essay content ($\beta = 0.25$, $t(41) = 1.74$, $p = 0.09$).

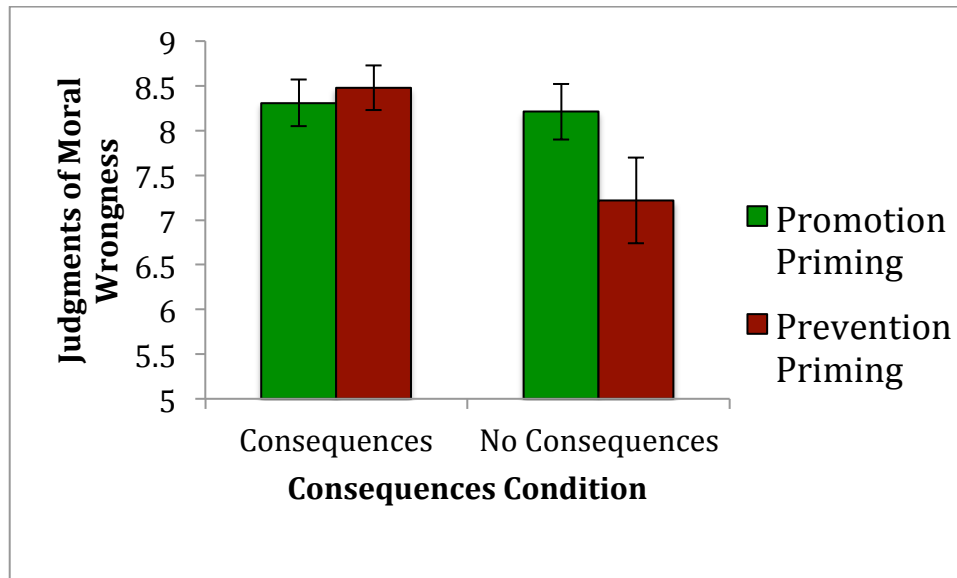


Figure 3.5: Moral wrongness of incest over regulatory focus priming by the potential for harmful consequences (error bars represent +/- 1 standard error relative to the mean).

those who viewed the new “consequences” scenario, though not significantly ($t(72) < 1$).¹⁰

This was due to a significantly more severe judgment among prevention-focused participants for the “consequences” scenario ($M = 8.48$) versus the “no consequences” version ($M = 7.21$; $\beta = 0.37$, $t(52) = 2.99$, $p = 0.004$), as hypothesized.¹¹ Also consistent with our prediction, there were no significant difference between the judgments in the “consequences” versus “no consequences” scenarios among promotion-focused participants ($t(63) < 1$).¹² This difference in differences was strong enough to yield a significant interaction between the scenario type and the regulatory focus induction ($\beta = -0.33$, $t(116) = -2.02$, $p = 0.05$).¹³ These results are illustrated in Figure 3.5. This is consistent with the two kinds of processing related to the two moral systems laid out

¹⁰ This is also true when not controlling for sex differences ($t < 1$).

¹¹ This effect is still significant when not controlling for sex differences ($\beta = 0.33$, $t(53) = 2.57$, $p = 0.01$).

¹² Again, this is true even when not controlling for sex differences ($t < 1$).

¹³ This effect is only marginally significant when not controlling for sex differences ($\beta = -0.32$, $t(117) = -1.86$, $p = 0.07$). It remains significant when controlling for approach and avoidance content ($\beta = -0.33$, $t(114) = -1.97$, $p = 0.05$).

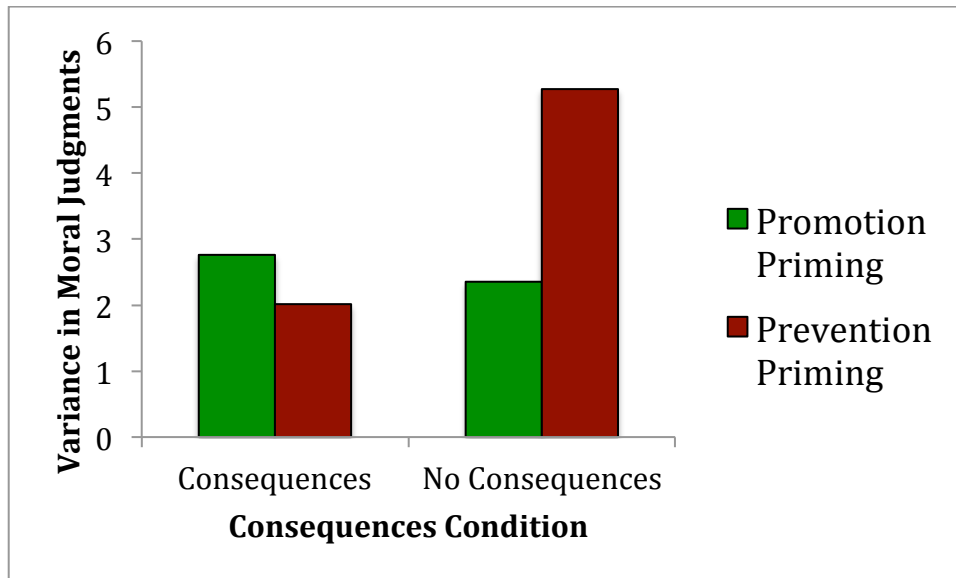


Figure 3.6: The impact of regulatory focus and the potential for harmful consequences on the variance of moral judgments of incest.

above.

Variance differences between groups were also in line with results from previous studies. In the no-consequences condition, similar to Study 1, those in the prevention condition showed significantly higher variance ($SD = 2.34$) than those in the promotion condition ($SD = 1.53$; $F(1, 44) = 4.28, p = 0.04$). Also in line with the mean results reported above, those in the prevention condition showed significantly higher levels of variance in the no-consequences condition ($SD = 2.34$) compared to the consequences condition ($SD = 1.42$; $F(1, 53) = 9.19, p = 0.003$). This is consistent with the idea that there is a clearer deontic negative value when negative consequences are possible than not possible. In contrast, there was no difference between the no-consequences ($SD = 1.53$) and the consequences ($SD = 1.66$) conditions for those induced into a promotion focus ($F(1, 64) < 1$). Finally, there were no significant variance differences between those in the promotion condition ($SD = 1.66$) and those in the prevention condition ($SD = 1.42$) in the

consequences condition ($F(1, 73) < 1$). A graph of the responses across conditions is available in Figure 3.6.

These results show that those processing in the promotion focus are unaffected by the possibility of negative consequences relative to those in the prevention focus. Put into virtue ethical terms, acts of incest are equally indicative of vice regardless of whether those acts lead to negative consequences or not (Anscombe, 2005). In contrast, the introduction of potential negative consequences significantly increased wrongness intensity for those in the prevention system. This is consistent with the proposal that those in the prevention system make their judgments based upon the information contained within the scenario, being more sensitive to potential consequences of the act than in the overall character of the actors. The final study in this series will assess whether those processing in the promotion focus are more impacted by tacitly held moral ideals compared to those processing in the prevention focus.

Study 2c: Purity Ideals

If the promotion focus is in fact associated with using moral virtues as an ideal reference point in moral judgment, then the greater intensity of judgments relative to those processing in the prevention focus should be present only when the ideal referent of which these behaviors are discrepant is actually held by the individual making the judgment. Furthermore, this effect would establish that the intuitions used in the promotion focus are based on something specific and morally relevant (i.e., an ideal referent), rather than just some generalized “gut” reaction. Using moral foundations theory, this study explores whether the difference found in previous studies is only present among those who place an emphasis on ideals of sexual purity, measured here by the purity/sanctity foundation of

moral foundations theory (Graham et al, 2011). Moral foundations theory connects these foundations to moral intuitions (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009), which, as we have shown above, should be relevant for the promotion focus but not the prevention focus.

Methods

Participants

We recruited 63 participants (28 males and 35 females) from Amazon's Mechanical Turk for this study for the sum of \$0.50. Since there were sex differences with respect to the harm foundation ($M(\text{male}) = 3.67$; $M(\text{female}) = 4.10$; $t(61) = -2.20$, $p = 0.03$) and marginally significant differences with respect to approach essay content ($M(\text{male}) = 4.5$; $M(\text{female}) = 4.89$; $t(61) = -1.87$), all of the following analyses controlled for sex differences. Participants were randomly assigned to the conditions described below.

Procedure

Prior to the regulatory focus induction, participants filled out the 30-item Moral Foundations Questionnaire (MFQ; Graham et al, 2011). This questionnaire consists of two sets of 15 items asking first whether participants take certain factors into account when making moral judgments, and then the degree to which they agree or disagree with particular moral statements. This questionnaire provides a score of endorsement in five different foundations. Participants also filled out the Moral Motives Questionnaire (MMQ; Janoff-Bulman, Sheik, & Baldacci, 2008) after the Moral Foundations Questionnaire.

Following these questionnaires, in a manner identical to that in Studies 1, 2a, and 2b, participants were induced into either a promotion or a prevention state using the Regulatory Focus Induction Instrument described above. They were then presented with the same moral scenarios as in the other studies in the same order.

Results

Manipulation Checks. Essays were rated in the manner done in previous studies. Interrater reliability was very high with respect to whether the content reflected ideals ($\alpha = 0.91$) or oughts ($\alpha = 0.89$), and whether the essay was about approaching something positive ($\alpha = 0.85$). Reliability was relatively good for whether the essay was about avoiding something negative ($\alpha = 0.62$). Essays written by those in the promotion condition ($M(\text{ideals}) = 4.86$; $M(\text{oughts}) = 1.02$) were rated as significantly more about ideals ($\beta = 0.89$, $t(60) = 15.76$, $p < 0.001$) and significantly less about oughts ($\beta = -0.89$, $t(60) = -15.26$, $p < 0.001$) compared to those written by participants in the prevention condition ($M(\text{ideals}) = 1.58$; $M(\text{oughts}) = 4.40$). As in Studies 1 and 2b, the conditions did not differ significantly with respect to whether the essays were more about approaching a positive ($t < 1$) or avoiding a negative ($t < 1$).

Morality Surveys. As expected, only the purity/sanctity foundation from the MFQ was significantly related to judgments of incest ($\beta = 0.28$, $t(60) = 2.31$, $p = 0.02$). This is consistent with research that has described incest as a paradigmatic “purity” violation (Horberg et al, 2009; Young & Saxe, 2010). None of the other foundations was significantly related to judgments of incest (harm/care: $\beta = 0.21$, $t(60) = 1.63$, $p = 0.11$; fairness/reciprocity: $t < 1$; ingroup/loyalty: $t < 1$; authority/respect: $t < 1$). These results provide further evidence for the domain specificity of the MFQ. In contrast, none of the moral motive areas from the MMQ was significantly related to judgments of incest (self-restraint: $\beta = 0.14$, $t(60) = 1.14$, $p = 0.26$; self-reliance: $t < 1$; social justice: $t < 1$; social order: $\beta = 0.13$, $t(60) = 1.01$, $p = 0.32$). Given these results, the analyses examining the impact of regulatory focus below make exclusive use of the results from the purity

foundation.

Regulatory Focus. Consistent with our previous studies, those in the promotion ideal condition viewed incest as more wrong (mean score = 7.43) than those in the prevention ought condition (mean score = 7.12), though the overall effect in this study was not significant.¹⁴ However, this appears to be due to those participants that rated themselves low in purity concerns. If purity concerns are divided by median split, the previously found effect of promotion-focused individuals judging incest as more wrong than prevention-focused individuals attains significance among those high in purity concerns ($\beta = 0.34, t(30) = 2.05, p = 0.05$).¹⁵ There is no significant regulatory focus effect among those low in purity ($t(27) < 1$).¹⁶ Looked at another way that relates to the central purpose of Study 2c, purity concerns significantly predict moral judgment intensity in the promotion condition ($\beta = 0.60, t(27) = 3.92, p = 0.001$),¹⁷ but not in the prevention condition ($t(30) < 1$),¹⁸ suggesting a difference in the manner of judgment consistent with our hypotheses. As one might expect given these main effects, there is a significant interaction between regulatory focus induction and purity concerns ($\beta = 0.65, t(58) = 2.00, p = 0.05$).¹⁹ This effect is illustrated in Figure 3.7.

Regarding variance differences, similar to the results above, there was a significant

¹⁴ It is worth noting here that the intensity of judgments of moral wrongness in this study were marginally significantly lower than the mean from Study 2a ($t(62) = -1.84, p = 0.07$) and significantly lower than the mean from Study 2b ($t(62) = -2.63, p = 0.01$), suggesting that filling out morality questionnaires prior to making judgments (the only difference between this study and Studies 2a and 2b) may influence the intensity of those judgments.

¹⁵ This relation is only marginally significant when not controlling for sex differences ($\beta = 0.32, t(31) = 1.88, p = 0.07$), but remains significant when controlling for approach and avoidance content ($\beta = 0.36, t(28) = 2.18, p = 0.04$).

¹⁶ This remained non-significant when not controlling for sex differences ($t < 1$).

¹⁷ This is also significant when not controlling for sex differences ($\beta = 0.61, t(28) = 4.03, p < 0.001$).

¹⁸ Again, this remained non-significant when not controlling for sex differences ($t < 1$).

¹⁹ This effect is only marginally significant when not controlling for sex differences ($\beta = 0.61, t(59) = 1.90, p = 0.06$) or when controlling for approach and avoidance content ($\beta = 0.65, t(56) = 1.96, p = 0.06$).

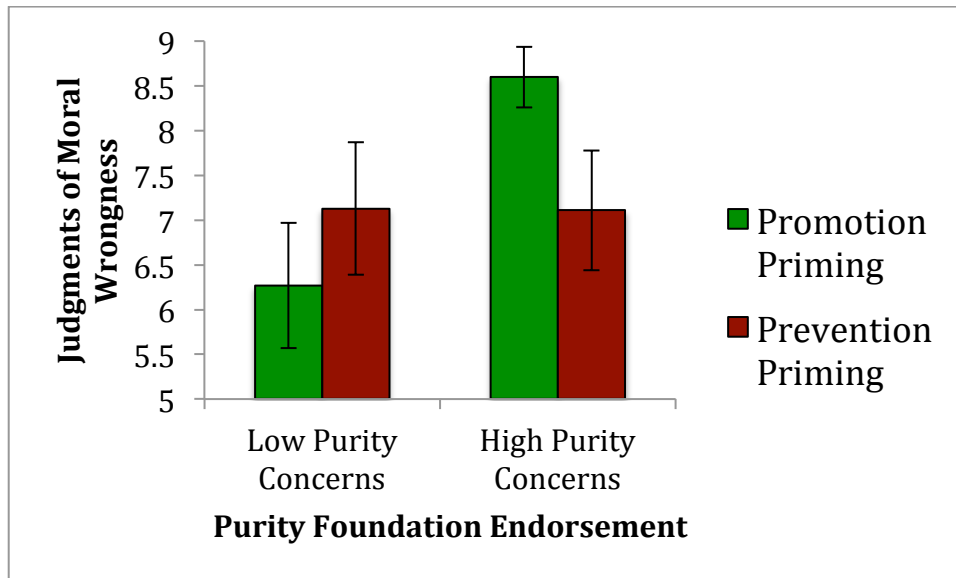


Figure 3.7: Moral wrongness of incest over regulatory focus priming by endorsement of the purity/sanctity moral foundation (error bars represent +/- 1 standard error relative to the mean).

difference in variance between those induced into a prevention state ($SD = 2.83$) and those induced into a promotion state ($SD = 1.30$) among those high in purity concerns ($F(1, 31) = 13.29, p = 0.001$). In contrast, there were no differences between conditions among those low in purity concerns ($F(1, 28) < 1$). This appears to be due to the fact that those rating themselves as high in purity concerns have significantly lower variance ($SD = 1.30$) compared to those rating themselves as low in purity concerns ($SD = 2.71$) when induced into a promotion focus ($F(1, 28) = 15.35, p = 0.001$). Among those induced into a prevention focus, variance did not seem to vary regardless of whether they rated themselves high ($SD = 2.83$) or low ($SD = 2.85$) in purity concerns ($F(1, 31) < 1$). The variance of responses across conditions is available in graph form in Figure 3.8.

Thus we see in this study that the differences arising from the different moral reference points only occur when the individual doing the judging actually upholds the

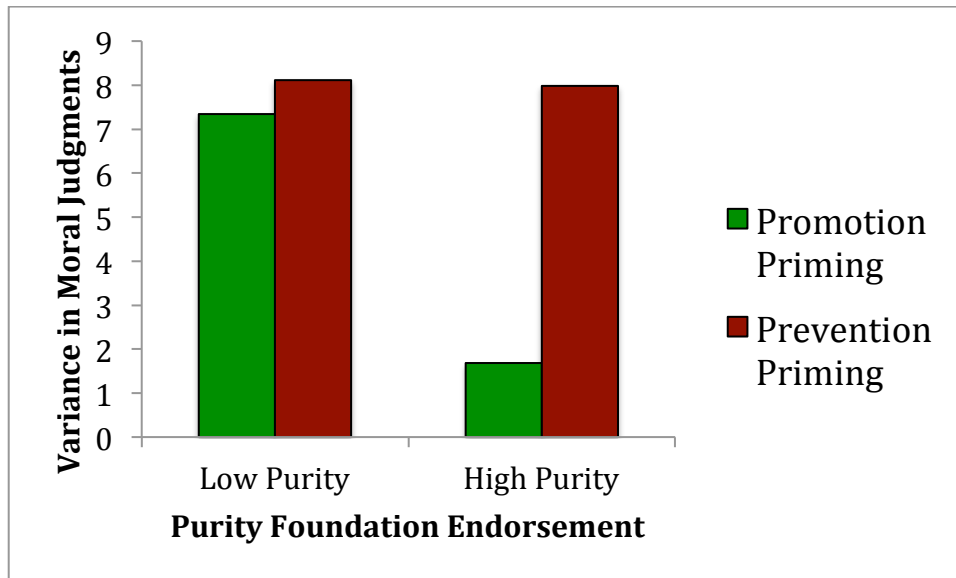


Figure 3.8: The impact of regulatory focus and purity concerns on the variance of moral judgments of incest.

virtuous point of reference in question as morally relevant. Thus there were only significant differences between the two reference points among those high in purity foundation endorsement. Among those low in purity foundation endorsement, presumably all judgment was made deliberately with respect to an obligatory reference point.

Though the effects in the previous three studies belie the possibility that those in the promotion focus always show more intense moral judgments than those processing in the prevention focus, it is important to continue to establish boundary conditions. Another such boundary condition is situations that involve *both* vice and transgression. These situations should produce equally intense judgments in promotion and prevention.

Study 3a: Boundary Conditions

This study was designed to discover another boundary condition for the effects found in the previous studies. Study 2b has shown that when actor negative consequences are a factor in the scenario being judged, those processing in a prevention focus judge the

action as equally wrong as those processing in a promotion focus. In this study, we extend this finding to an entirely new scenario where actions violate *both* promotion and prevention standards. This study can provide convergent evidence that the difference in judgment intensity between promotion and prevention that was found in Study 1 is related to the difference between the standards themselves and not simply a basic judgment effect that generalizes across all scenarios.

Methods

Participants

Eighty-six participants (32 males, 53 females, 1 unspecified) were drawn from the Columbia Business School's Behavioral Research Lab participant pool to complete the survey for a chance to win a raffle prize of \$75.00. There were no significant sex differences for any of the variables of interest in the study. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the three conditions described below.

Procedure

The study design was identical to that used in Study 1 except that one third of participants were also randomly assigned to a control condition. This condition, based off the one used by Cornwell and Higgins (2013), involved writing an essay about behaviors or activities that could be either promotion or prevention behaviors, worded as follows:

For this task, we would like you to think about how your current day-to-day behaviors and activities are different now from what they were when you were growing up. In other words, what sorts of things do you do on a day-to-day basis at this point in your life? What did you do regularly when you were a child? In the space below, please write a brief essay describing how your

behaviors and activities have changed from when you were a child to now. Following the priming, in this study, scenarios were presented in random order to participants, the incest scenario among them. Importantly, and most germane to the specific aim of this study, we also included a cheating scenario (replacing the littering scenario) where *both* deontic and aretaic failures were present in order to show that when a case was relevant to both systems of judgment there would no longer be a difference between promotion and prevention. The cheating scenario was worded as follows:

A student is taking an exam for which he did not study. He repeatedly cheats by copying answers off of the girl sitting next to him, who he knows studied for the exam thoroughly. He doesn't score as well as she does, but he does much better than he would have had he not cheated off her exam.

This scenario contains elements of both kinds of judgment. On the prevention deontic side, cheating on an exam violates a rule that, when not upheld, undermines the entire enterprise of test taking; that is, avoiding this behavior avoids a loss. On the promotion aretaic side, cheating reveals a moral vice, showing contempt for virtues like honesty, integrity, and industry, and supplanting them for self-interest in the form of a good grade that is more banal; that is, avoiding this behavior avoids a non-gain. We should therefore expect no difference between the promotion and prevention groups when judging this scenario.

Results

Manipulation Checks. As in the previous studies, two raters blind to experimental condition judged the content of the essays provided during motivational priming.

Interrater reliability was high with regard to ratings of the degree to which essays were

about ideals ($\alpha = 0.86$) or oughts ($\alpha = 0.74$), and with respect to whether the essay was written about approaching positives ($\alpha = 0.88$). It was also moderately good for whether the essay was written about avoiding negatives ($\alpha = 0.68$). Those induced into a promotion focus ($M = 4.59$) were rated as writing essays with content significantly more reflective of ideals compared to those in the prevention condition ($M = 1.79$; $t(54) = -11.25, p < 0.001$) and those in the control condition ($M = 1.67$; $t(55) = -12.17, p < 0.001$). Similarly, those in the prevention condition ($M = 4.37$) wrote essays significantly more about oughts compared to those in the promotion condition ($M = 1.57$; $t(54) = -13.80, p < 0.001$) and those in the control condition ($M = 2.58$; $t(57) = -6.76, p < 0.001$).

With respect to avoiding negatives, there were no significant differences between the promotion and prevention conditions ($t(54) = -1.49, p = 0.14$), nor were there differences between the promotion condition and control condition ($t < 1$) or prevention condition and the control condition ($t(57) = -1.08, p = 0.28$). With respect to approaching positives, there were no significant differences between those induced into promotion compared to those induced into prevention ($t < 1$). Those induced into promotion wrote essays marginally significantly more about approaching positives ($M = 4.67$) than those in the control condition ($M = 4.23$; $t(55) = -1.67, p = 0.10, 95\% \text{ CI}(\text{difference}) = [-0.95, 0.09]$) and those in the prevention condition wrote essays significantly more about approaching positives ($M = 4.76$) compared to those in the control condition ($M = 4.23$; $t(58) = -2.04, p = 0.05$). For this reason, we control for approach content in all the following analyses.

Incest Judgments. Consistent with the results of our previous studies, a regression treating the motivational induction as a categorical variable found that those who were induced into a promotion focus found incest marginally significantly more wrong than

those induced into a prevention focus ($\beta = 0.21, t(82) = 1.70, p = 0.09$).²⁰ The difference, though present, was not as strong as in previous studies, presumably due to the effects seen in Study 2c. That is, college students as a group are more liberal than the general population (even that portion of the population found on Mechanical Turk) and thus may have lower levels of purity concerns as well (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009). Since the effect is weakened when purity concerns are not high, it is no surprise that the effect would be somewhat smaller among college students.

Though the mean differences were less pronounced in this study, importantly, the variance differences were strongly consistent with previous studies. We tested whether the variance differences between conditions replicated from previous studies, and using the same technique used in previous studies, we did find significant differences among the groups ($F(2, 83) = 3.59, p = 0.03$). Examining the standard deviation in each condition shows a step-wise reduction in variance from the prevention condition ($SD = 2.96$), through the control condition ($SD = 2.13$), down to the promotion condition ($SD = 1.65$). Inspecting each contrast revealed that, similar to the mean differences above, this difference is apparently driven by the difference between the promotion and prevention conditions ($F(1, 54) = 6.86, p = 0.01$). These effects are most clearly seen by examining a graph of the variance of responses, which is shown in Figure 3.9. These results are consistent with the hypothesis supported by previous studies that the mean differences are driven by a significantly different *manner* of making moral judgments where the deontic value processing of prevention considers a judgment of “*not wrong at all*” when negative

²⁰ This effect was still marginally significant when not controlling for approach content ($\beta = 0.21, t(83) = 1.66, p = 0.10$).

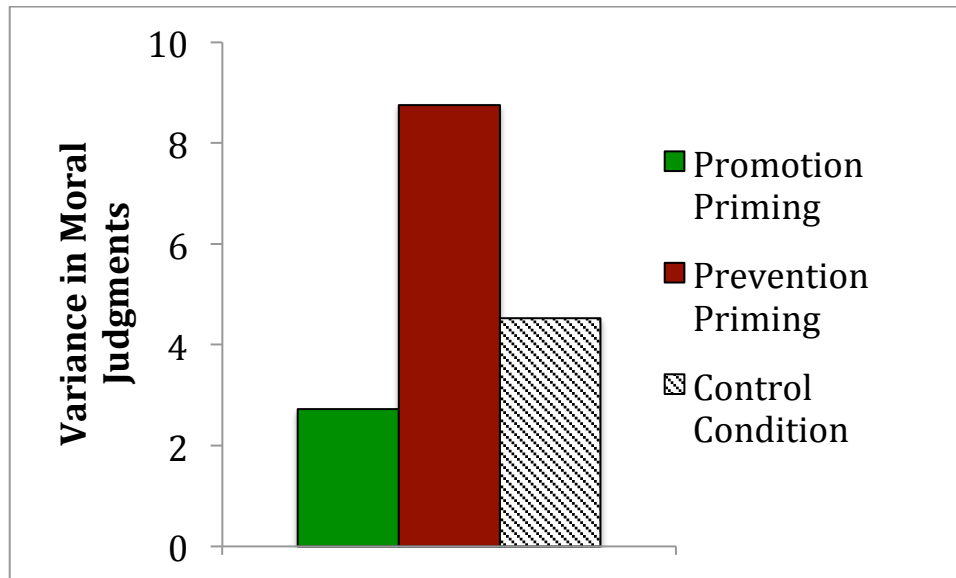


Figure 3.9: The impact of motivational induction on the variance of responses.

consequences are absent.

Cheating Judgments. Unlike the judgments of incest, a regression found, as predicted, no differences in judgment intensity between the promotion and prevention groups ($t < 1$).²¹ This is apparently due to those in the prevention condition judging cheating more harshly than incest because the cheating scenario has negative consequences and the incest scenario does not. Paired t-tests comparing within-subjects moral judgments in the cheating scenario to those in the incest scenario found significant differences only for those induced into a prevention focus ($t(28) = 2.63, p = 0.01$), but not for those induced into a promotion focus ($t(26) = 1.20, p = 0.24$), nor those in the control condition ($t < 1$). These comparisons are illustrated in Figure 3.10. Also in contrast to the incest judgments, there were no significant differences in the variance between the groups for the cheating scenario ($F(2, 83) = 1.29, p = 0.28$). This is consistent with the notion that

²¹ This effect remained non-significant when not controlling for approach content ($t < 1$).

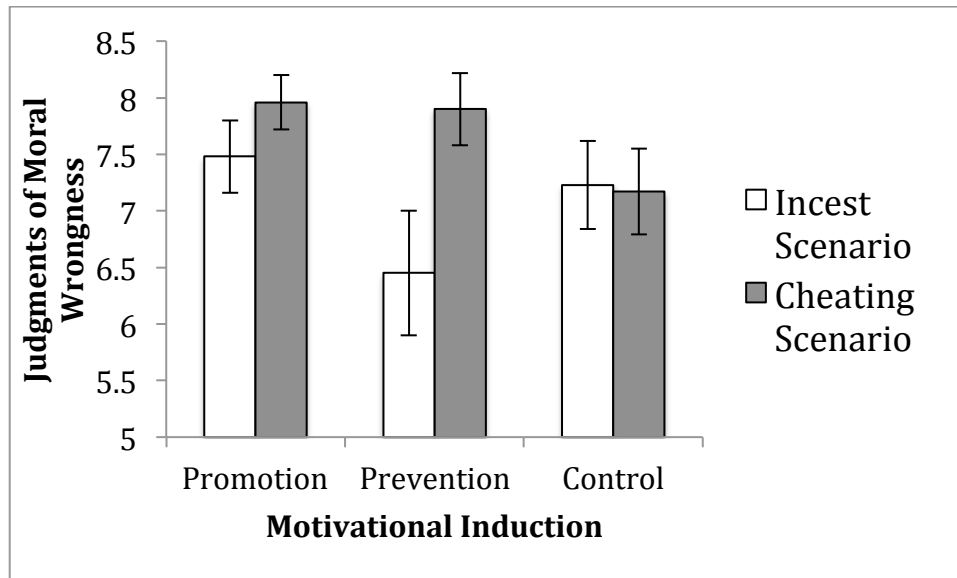


Figure 3.10: The impact of motivational induction on judgments of moral wrongness of incest and cheating (error bars represent +/- 1 standard error relative to the mean).

prevention processing of moral judgments is uniquely interested in their deontic value, rather than their aretaic value, since the cheating scenario, unlike the incest scenario, contained a deontic wrong that eliminated a judgment of “*not wrong at all*,” thereby reducing the variance in judgments relative to judgments of incest.

These results show that the effects found in the previous studies were not due to those processing in a promotion focus simply providing more intense negative judgments in general. Rather the judgments show differences when the two different reference points cause those doing the judging to reach two different moral conclusions. In a situation where behavior is discrepant from both kinds standards, there is no difference between conditions. This is important to note, since, even between philosophers of completely different schools, there is more agreement in the content of morality than not (MacIntyre, 1981). However, this study also raises a potentially problematic possibility: perhaps the promotion-prevention difference is only present for the incest scenario. In the final study,

we address this potential issue by extending the effect to an additional intuition-related scenario.

Study 3b: Extensions

This study will determine whether the effect of promotion making more severe negative judgments than prevention generalizes beyond the prototypical incest scenario to another scenario involving intuitive moral judgments; specifically, whether or not it is moral to eat one's dog (Haidt, Koller, & Dias, 1993). This study will also include an approach/avoidance induction to show that the important distinction is, in fact, the ideal (promotion)/ought (prevention) distinction. Finally, this study will induce the regulatory focus induction in a different manner to demonstrate that the effect is not restricted to a particular type of focus induction.

Methods

Participants

One hundred seventeen participants were recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk online panel for the sum of 50 cents. Participants consisted of 65 males and 52 females. There were no significant sex differences for any of the measures involved in the study. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions described below.

Procedures

In this study, participants were randomized into one of four conditions—prevention approach, prevention avoidance, promotion approach, and promotion avoidance—using a well-established method (Cesario, Grant, & Higgins, 2004). The method induces one of the above states by asking participants to list either a goal that they “ought” to do (prevention) or a goal that they “ideally” would like to do (promotion). They were then prompted to

describe a tactic to either “avoid anything that could go wrong” (avoidance) or “make sure that everything goes right” (approach) in order that the goal be realized. If the distinction between promotion and prevention is reducible to approach versus avoidance, then the two manipulations should have parallel effects. Following the induction, participants were presented with the same scenarios and questions in the same order as those presented in the previous studies (including the incest scenario), except that one of the scenarios (the littering scenario) was replaced with the familiar dog-eating scenario from Haidt, Koller, & Dias (1993). It was worded as follows:

A family has had a dog for almost twelve years and has become very attached to it. One day the dog is playing in the street and gets hit by a truck and is killed. The family decides to bring home the body, cook it, and eat it. They bury the remains in the backyard.

In terms of the deontic judgment, there are no obvious negative consequences of this behavior nor are any universal necessary laws broken. However, one may judge the use of a pet for food to be supplanting higher ideals (e.g., love, respect) for baser ones (e.g. satisfaction of hunger), and thus judge it to be wrong in an aretaic manner.

Results

Manipulation Checks. In a manner similar to previous studies, two raters blind to experimental condition judged the essays provided by participants. In this study, the goal was judged with respect to whether it represented an ideal or an ought, and the tactic was judged with respect to whether it was an approach or avoidance tactic. Interrater reliability was high for all judgments including ideals ($\alpha = 0.87$), oughts ($\alpha = 0.88$), approach ($\alpha = 0.72$), and avoidance ($\alpha = 0.75$). Consistent with the goals of the study, those

induced into promotion ($M(\text{ideals}) = 4.39$; $M(\text{oughts}) = 1.62$) chose goals rated significantly more as ideals ($t(115) = -10.56, p < 0.001$) and significantly less as oughts ($t(115) = 10.68, p < 0.001$) compared to those induced into prevention ($M(\text{ideals}) = 2.11$; $M(\text{oughts}) = 3.94$). There were no differences with respect to approach ($t < 1$) or avoidance ($t < 1$) dependent upon whether participants were induced into the ideal or ought condition. Conversely, those who were induced into the approach condition ($M(\text{approach}) = 4.44$; $M(\text{avoidance}) = 1.74$) wrote strategies rated as significantly higher in approach ($t(115) = -4.77, p < 0.001$) and lower in avoidance ($t(115) = 4.31, p < 0.001$) compared to those induced into the avoidance condition ($M(\text{approach}) = 3.46$; $M(\text{avoidance}) = 2.71$). There were no differences based on whether an approach strategy or an avoidance strategy was used either for ratings of ideals ($t < 1$) or oughts ($t < 1$).

Ideals/Oughts; Approach/Avoidance. Consistent with the results of the previous studies, those asked to develop a strategy with respect to an ideal goal judged incest as more wrong ($M = 8.26$) than those asked to develop a strategy with respect to an ought goal ($M = 7.45$; $\beta = 0.20, t(115) = 2.20, p = 0.03$).²² In contrast, there was no effect of approach versus avoidance on moral judgment intensity ($t < 1$).²³ Similarly, those primed with ideals judged the dog-eating family as significantly more wrong ($M = 7.74$) than those primed with oughts ($M = 6.77$; $\beta = 0.21, t(115) = 2.34, p = 0.02$) with no impact of the approach and avoidance distinction ($t < 1$).²⁴ These effects are illustrated in Figures 3.11 (incest) and 3.12 (dog-eating).

²² This was true even controlling for approach and avoidance content ($\beta = 0.20, t(114) = 2.22, p = 0.03$).

²³ This effect remains non-significant when controlling for ideal or ought content ($t < 1$).

²⁴ Again, these effects remained for ideal vs. ought controlling for approach/avoidance ($\beta = 0.22, t(114) = 2.40, p = 0.02$) and for approach vs. avoidance controlling for ideal/ought ($t < 1$).

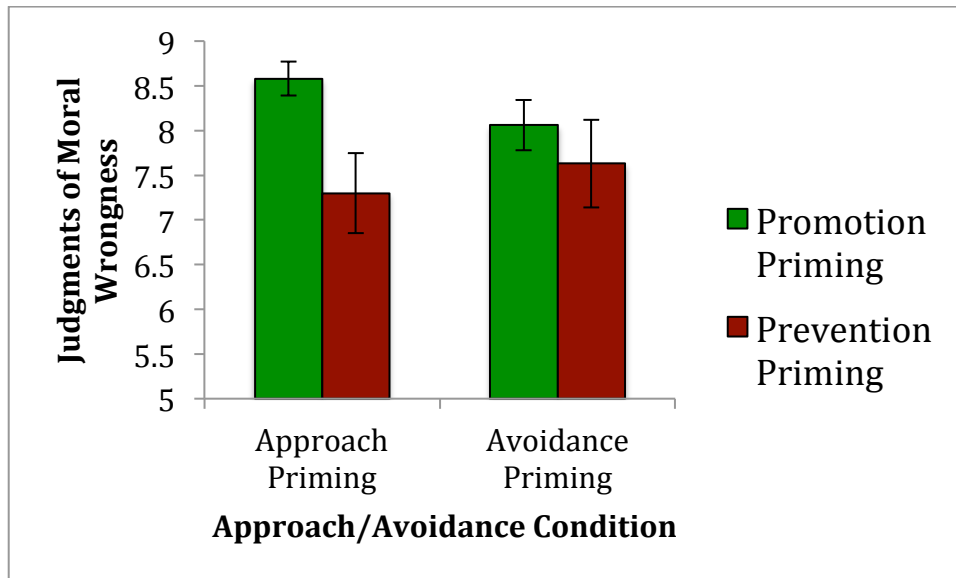


Figure 3.11: Moral wrongness of incest over regulatory focus priming by approach versus avoidance priming (error bars represent +/- 1 standard error relative to the mean).

We were also interested in whether the variance effect found in Study 5 was also found in this study that used a different manipulation of focus. Indeed, we did find using a robust variance comparison test that the variance for the prevention-ought condition was significantly greater than the variance for the promotion-ideal condition for both the incest scenario (ideal: SD = 1.42; ought: SD = 2.54; $F(1,115) = 8.72, p = 0.004$) and the dog-eating scenario (ideal: SD = 2.04; ought: SD = 2.43; $F(1,115) = 4.44, p = 0.04$). This again is consistent with the notion that the effect of the ideal/ought distinction on the severity of judgment reflects differences in the *manner* of judgment associated with the judgment's referent.

3.4 The Role of Virtue in Moral Judgment

The results of these studies show that, consistent with the theoretical research of social-intuitionists, judgments against certain behaviors persist even when these behaviors are harmless (Haidt, Bjorklund, & Murphy, 2000; Haidt, 2001). This does not appear to be

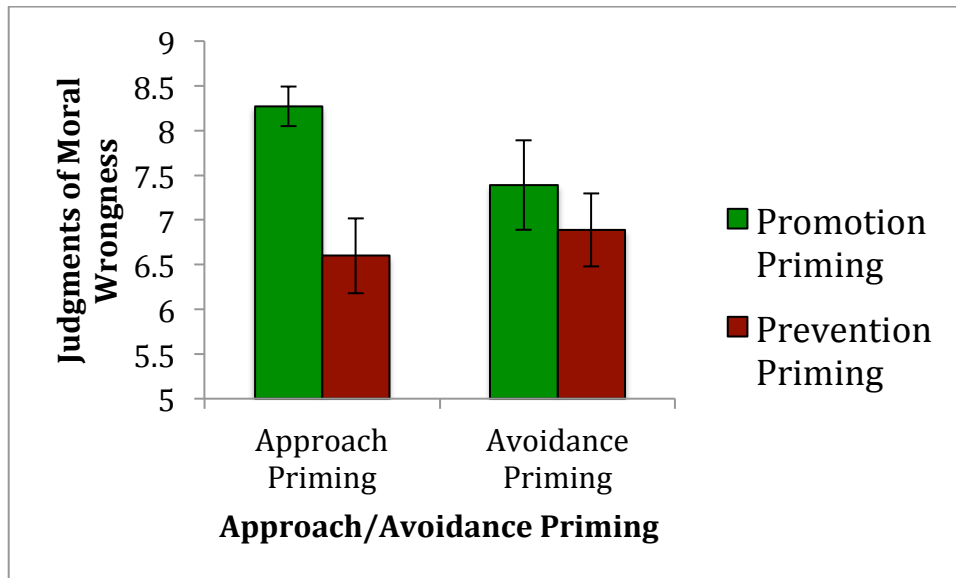


Figure 3.12: Moral wrongness of family dog-eating over regulatory focus priming by approach versus avoidance priming (error bars represent +/- 1 standard error relative to the mean).

simply a function of particular emotions like disgust (an agitation-related negative emotion), otherwise such behaviors would be seen as more wrong when processing in the prevention system rather than the promotion system (Higgins, 2001). Furthermore, it does not appear to be entirely based upon extremely unlikely negative consequences, because the judgments in the promotion focus are unaffected by the introduction of actual negative consequences into the scenario, and instead is related to holding relevant moral ideals and being able to access them intuitively. Finally, the increased severity of negative judgments for prevention-focused participants when negative consequences are present (*vs.* absent) in the scenario is consistent with their judgments being based on deliberative reasoning.

These studies are consistent with the notion that there is an alternative reference point against which people judge behaviors beyond simple matters of basic duty and obligation. Since these reference points are used while processing in the promotion focus,

it stands to reason that they would have a “+1” or “ideal” character to them. The most familiar concept in the ethical philosophy and moral psychology literature is the concept of a virtue or a virtuous character, against which a multitude of behaviors may feel wrong even if they don’t pass a more “rational” (i.e., consequential reasons) standard of duty and obligation (e.g. a rule like the categorical imperative or a rule like the duty to bring about the greatest total happiness). This is consistent with the theoretical work of moral psychologists (Haidt & Joseph, 2004; 2007; Pizarro & Tannenbaum, 2011), and provides additional context to recent research on moral judgments (e.g. Inbar, Pizarro, & Cushman, 2011).

3.5 Implications for Future Research

We see here that the differences dividing moral psychologists for the past two decades may, in part, have a motivational root. Judgments based on intuition do have a functional foundation, but this is not generally accessed through deliberative reasoning. Thus they should not simply be dismissed as overgeneralized emotional reactions to aversive stimuli (Pinker, 2002), nor should they be seen as necessarily problematic and necessitating overriding by deliberative faculties (Green, 2007). Instead they should be seen as occupying an important place alongside the more universalized and analytical moral judgments.

These standards should not necessarily be in conflict with one another, though at times it may become necessary to choose between them. However, it has also been argued that the two types of goals may actually in many ways be mutually dependent upon one another, with the deontic judgments goals a basic foundation from which the aretaic goals can be pursued (Timmerman, 2005), and the aretaic goals providing a sense of ultimate

purpose or “spirit” behind the law-like deontic goals (MacIntyre, 1981). Without the stability provided by prevention standards, promotion standards cannot be effectively pursued. Without the inspiration of the ideal standards, the ought standards can begin to feel stale and pointless.

This research also provides support for a renewed interest in virtue ethics as a source of potential understanding regarding the way our moral judgments work. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, philosophers since Rawls have been drawing lines between the Good and the Right, often giving priority to the Right for the sake of social peace (e.g. Rawls, 1971; 1988). However, others within the field of philosophy have argued for the conceptual independence of the two types of moral standards (Trianosky, 1986). Indeed, contemporary explorations of one often implicitly or explicitly rely on the other in providing a comprehensive understanding of how morality is structured (see, for example, the argument against torture in Waldron, 2005). Recent work in ethics, still underway, has also been examining precisely how virtue ethics can provide standards of judgment (Swanton, 2001). All of this research should be of considerable interest to moral psychologists.

In terms of other theories of psychology, this research has quite a number of implications. Different reference points mean different ways of applying moral foundations (Graham et al, 2011), as well as possible differences in the relative emphasis on avoiding moral wrongs or approaching moral rights (Janoff-Bulman, Sheikh, & Hepp, 2009). There is also research on moral judgment showing differences between actions causing “impurity” and those causing “harm” (Young & Saxe, 2010). Perhaps ideals of perfection are related to the former type of judgment, whereas obligations associated with social peace are related

to the latter type. The upshot is that understanding moral judgments as judgments of an action's relation to particular standards or reference points, and then further recognizing that two distinct kinds of standards exist, has the potential to systematize many of the unexplained phenomena arising within moral psychology as a field ever since the social intuitionist approach was first proposed (Haidt, 2001).

Morality, however, is not simply about defining the terms in which we perceive and evaluate the world. It is also about how we engage with it. Moral standards don't simply provide reference points for our judgments of ourselves and others, they also provide guides for behavior and decision making. In the next chapter, I review research showing how this regulatory focus lens of seeing the distinction between duty and virtue can lead to advances in understanding moral decision making and moral behavior as well.

Chapter 4: Moral Decisions - Virtue as Self-Guide

The previous chapter introduced the idea that perceptions of value can be related to two different kinds of standards, oughts and ideals, with the latter being theoretically associated with theories of virtue and showing patterns consistent with theories of virtue in the philosophy literature. This is only one area of moral psychology, though one that has received considerable attention by psychologists throughout the study of morality.

Another important area, one less comprehensively studied, but still examined throughout psychology's history (e.g. Hartshorne & May, 1928; Darley & Batson, 1973; Rushton, Chrisjohn, & Fekken, 1981), is the area of moral behavior. Essentially, assuming that human beings are, like other animals, motivated by self-interest, what compels or encourages them to act in line with moral values and standards? In a phrase: why be good?

This chapter will be devoted to understanding how moral values translate into moral behavior through self-control. It is in this area where the modern view, derived from a Freudian model of motivation—that morality is essentially in conflict with happiness—is most apparent. This view is that people will behave in a self-interested manner unless they are otherwise impeded by social pressure, the threat of punishment, or internalized moral norms (Freud, 1933/1990). “Morality” in this sense, is an impediment to happiness, or at least one's own happiness.

How do these standards arise and obtain moral force? Most psychologists trace their origins to some kind of evolutionary root, whether that root be kin selection, group selection, or some version of tit-for-tat reciprocity (e.g. Smith, 1974; Wilson & Sober, 1994). These evolutionary mechanisms are posited to be responsible for selecting for particular

genes that produce certain emotional reactions to a variety of stimuli that either inhibit or force the animal to engage in particular actions (Dawkins, 1976). In this sense, morality is, at best, free from deliberative decision making, in the sense described by theories that view moral justification as just-so stories confabulated to make sense of intuitive unconscious motives (Haidt, 2001), or at worst, opposed to deliberative decision making, consistent with theories that view moral emotions as outdated mechanisms that ought to be overridden by a rationalist (typically utilitarian or consequentialist) ethic (Greene, 2013). These researchers often point to the power of moral emotions to motivate moral behavior (Batson et al 1983; Ciadini, 1991), and, at times, the comparatively impotent power of moral reasoning to do so (Colby & Damon, 1992; Hart & Fegley, 1995; Thoma et al, 1999).

What these theories have in common is their separation of deliberative decision making and the motivation to engage in moral behavior. They tend to see moral emotions as operating primarily as constraints on otherwise rational behavior (Greene, 2007), rather than seeing them as reflecting goals that give meaning to decision making. Once again moral standards are at best orthogonal to, and at worst opposed to, the pursuit of happiness (even, in this case, the happiness of others; cf. Baron, 1994).

A motivational understanding of morality takes a different view. Under this view, moral emotions are not the driver of moral action so much as they are the feedback resulting from perceived distance between one's actual self and one's moral self-guides (Higgins, 1987), whether those guides be ideal- or ought-self guides (associated with the promotion and prevention focus, respectively; see Higgins, 1998). Furthermore, moral action is activity carried out in order to either *maintain* congruency between one's actual self and self-guides or *attain* congruency. As above, this would mean that moral goals can

enter decision making in two ways: as either *duties* that demand fulfillment (*maintaining* congruency between the actual- and ought-self), or *virtues* that inspire striving (*attaining* congruency between the actual- and ideal-self). The relationship of these goals to emotions is more complex than simply emotion versus cognition often proposed by other models: duties may indeed be experienced as inhibiting or encouraging action irrespective of one's own self-interest or happiness, but attaining virtue as an actual self-ideal standard congruency produces happiness (Higgins, 1987). Furthermore, they are *both* emotional, or, at least, related to emotions; they simply relate to different emotions (see Higgins, 2001).

Such a perspective depends on the motivating power of these moral standards, and the realization that one's actions affect the relationship between one's actual self and these respective self-guides. An important premise of this approach is that the relation between this present actual self state and the self-guide end-states can *change* as a result of action or inaction, and this change will bring about differing emotional feedback depending on the way it has changed. Furthermore, this view suggests that such moral goals are not necessarily unconscious, and that they can be factors brought to bear during the course of reasoning about an action's effects on the relation between the various regulatory selves, albeit in different ways dependent upon which self-guide is active. This is consistent with recent research that prior cognition can influence one's intuitions about moral judgment (Van Bavel et al, 2012). Finally, it should be noted that differently valued end-states (dutiful oughts and virtuous ideals) and the means by which they are achieved (how the change comes about through action—vigilant control or eager control) can work together to produce regulatory fit and strengthen engagement (Higgins, 2000; 2005a), which in this

case would involve increases in the moral behavior in question. In the following sections, I will consider the theoretical foundation for this approach.

4.1 *Happiness and Multiple Goals*

Interestingly, a way in which both deontological and consequentialist views of morality agree is in their understanding of the decision process itself, which sees decision outcomes as expressing maximal preferences, commonly known as expected utility theory. Deontologists and consequentialists have different approaches to how decisions are to be carried out in these cases (either in spite of these considerations or consistent with them, respectively), but they share a model of in what a decision ultimately consists. This theory of decision making has had its share of challenges (indeed, the entire field of behavioral economics is in many ways devoted to producing theories surrounding all of the ways in which expected utility theory fails to accurately describe human decision making), though it has largely survived in one form or another, albeit with significant revisions (e.g. Prospect Theory, see Kahneman & Tversky, 1979).

A major difficulty with collapsing morality into a means of aggregate utility maximization is that one's ethical choices do not exist within a temporal vacuum. They take place across time, with each moral decision being in some ways related to and in some ways independent of each other moral decision. They also take place in the context of a *life*, meaning that each decision has an impact on one's moral status relative to some constructed narrative about oneself and one's life (Smith, 2007). They also take place in the context of a reality that is socially constructed (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), with goals that are viewed as objectively motivating because they are shared with those in whom one trusts (Hardin & Higgins, 1996). Happiness itself is a matter of social construction, and not

so easily divorced from notions of a “good life,” which, in turn must find its source in social construction (Durkheim, 1912/2008). Faced with such basic facts, how can one ethic seek to create universal rules by which the greatest total happiness is to be attained?

I believe the reason such approaches have had success in the past century is because there is a remarkable amount of convergence across cultures and circumstances with respect to the question regarding what one’s happiness depends on—up to a point. When one is speaking about alleviating gross injustice, securing social peace, or feeding the hungry, there is near unanimity with respect to whether or not persons deserve or benefit from such things (though, sadly, there may still be disagreement about who counts as a “person” in such circumstances). Thus, rules that behave as constraints on decision making ensuring that one’s decisions avoid harm or support basic rights for others is a comfortable fit with a decision theory that abstracts deciding individuals out of their time and circumstance. The difficulties arise when one desires to strive for something higher, which would be associated with virtues, not just rights and obligations.

A theory of decision making, if it is ever to leave behind the view that morality functions entirely as a constraint on plan selection, is going to need to shift away from the basic model of expected utility theory in which all goals are essentially interchangeable. It is also going to need to incorporate notions like exemplary traits, virtues, and excellences that may be motivating for their own sake, not subject to a common currency with other goals, and yet not behaving as constraints on decision making but instead *adding* to the available plans of action from which an individual may select (within the context of the model presented in Krantz & Kunreuther, 2007; see Cornwell & Krantz, 2014). Such a view would also have to see decisions as occurring within a particular context, and the goals in

such a decision process as drawing upon available social categories, and, essentially, involving an ongoing relation to particular goals.

This last point is crucially important, particularly for the subject of this chapter. Moral decisions are not simply single, isolated decisions about what it is right or good to do in this particular circumstance divorced from all other circumstances (though researchers often inadvertently treat them as such). Instead, moral decisions are instances of judgment involving the selection of particular paths or routes to take (or avoid) in the ongoing *pursuit* or *maintenance* of particular goals. The options are not always obvious until the goals themselves are clarified, and, for this reason, human ethical goals are goals that involve ongoing management and *control*—control enacted through the making of a decision.

4.2 *Insights from Philosophy*

Irrespective of the particular moral rules and ideals of different philosophical schools and religious traditions, they hold in common the notion that one's relation to these ethical notions unfolds over time. That is, regardless of whether these traditions emphasize idealism, duty, or some combination of the two, they all have as a premise that one's actions have the potential to make a contribution to the moral self. Thus, moral decisions and behavior are seen as being in relation to some moral goal.

Returning to the distinction between the Right and the Good discussed in the previous chapter, we can see how each can be understood as unfolding across time, thus demanding ongoing *control*, by considering the thought of their prototypical philosopher: Kant and Aristotle, respectively. For Kant (1785/1993), a good will (the only thing, he argues, that is good without qualification) requires ongoing maintenance. It requires the

inhibition of immoral actions or the pursuit of immoral desires. It also requires (albeit imperfectly) the enactment of certain general actions. This is crucial, particularly in the imperfect duty case, because the question of whether one's duties are fulfilled is a matter of reflection both on the present situation (in which one brings one's duties to bear on the particular behaviors demanding activation or inhibition), what one's duties are perceived to be, and the degree to which you feel you've fulfilled those duties. For example, the obligation to use one's gifts for the greater good that Kant identifies as an "imperfect duty" would involve bringing to bear past behaviors on any individual case to know whether or not this duty has already been fulfilled or whether action is obligatory to fulfill it.

With Aristotle (trans. 2009) this ongoing relationship is also apparent. Virtues, by their very nature as inspirational examples of moral perfection, are not entirely attainable. However, one can view one's behaviors as being in line with progressing towards those virtues and thus find encouragement in acting them out, or one could similarly see one's behaviors as impeding or stagnating this progress and thus avoid them. Critically, since these behaviors can never perfectly bring an individual to the virtuous end-state (or perfectly avoid a vicious end-state), one must see his or her behaviors as progressing toward or away from these states in a continual way.

4.3 *Morality and Becoming*

Human beings have been viewed as notable in the animal kingdom for being "moral" animals (Smith, 2007). In order to understand how a comprehensive and robust ethics can arise in humans, it may be worth looking at an aspect of our cognition that is unique to humans: namely, the sense of becoming (Higgins, 2005b). "Mental time travel" was posited as a unique feature of human cognition (Tulving, 2002); essentially our ability to envision

pasts and futures that are not currently available to the senses and bring them to bear upon our current experience, judgments, and decision making. This will be seen to be enormously important for our moral decision making as well.

This is crucial for the field of ethics, because ethics, as argued above, is something that inherently unfolds across time. Moral standards are goals that require ongoing pursuit or maintenance—ongoing *control*. This is especially important for *virtue-seeking*, where the ultimate goal is abstract, and thus, demanding of pursuit rather than integral fulfillment (Taylor, 2007). Another way to put this is to say that the movement or orientation towards the goal (in this case, a virtuous character) that is instantiated in behavior is what is motivating, rather than the belief that the behavior will achieve the goal itself. Virtues (and vices) motivate with respect to the direction that the behavior in question carries the one who performs it, by revealing certain motives that are either consistent with an ideal character or inconsistent with it (Anscombe, 2005). The “becoming” nature of this way of approaching ethics is apparent in that one’s orientation can always be reevaluated with respect to an exemplar of ideal character—not so much “where do I stand?” as “how am I doing?”

Though this is most obvious in the case of the virtue-seeking, it is also visible with respect to *duty-fulfillment*. Though duties involve integral fulfillment (i.e. they are either fulfilled or they are not fulfilled; moral status is not achieved through orientation or progression in the same manner as ideals) they can still unfold across time. A duty may involve constant maintenance (resistance to certain temptations) or a general principle of action (giving to charity once in a while). For example, a person who tutors less fortunate children out of a sense of duty may then feel as though she is not obligated to participate in

a local soup kitchen every week, not because she does not have a duty to act on behalf of the poor, but because she considers that duty fulfilled. The “becoming” nature of duties lies instead in the requirement that they be accompanied by vigilance, since one’s moral nature in this scheme is always open to loss, and thus ongoing maintenance is required. One may even go “above and beyond” the call of duty in this case, not in order that one develops a virtue, but instead to create a safety “buffer” between one’s self and discrepancies with one’s ought-self.

Emotion plays a central role here. Emotions provide internal feedback about one’s current position and orientation with respect to one’s goals (Higgins, 2001). The threat of non-fulfillment of duties is the experience of guilt—an emotion that signals that one’s actual self and ought-self have a discrepancy (Higgins, 1987). These emotions motivate one to action, either through extra vigilant resistance to further temptation, or to a search for a means by which to restore one’s moral status quo. On the other hand, the experience of having fulfilled one’s duties is a sense of peace or quiescence—emotions that signal that there is nothing further that needs to be done and that continued resistance to immoral action is not as paramount (Higgins, 1987). As alluded to above, someone motivated by duty-fulfillment may do “extra” deeds to feel a greater sense of moral security or peace, but one’s moral status doesn’t achieve any attendant improvement. In either case, these emotions call for *vigilance* as a means of maintaining these moral standards.

With respect to virtue-seeking, the deprivation of virtue in one’s actions creates a sense of disappointment in oneself—an emotion that signals that one’s actual self and ideal-self have a discrepancy (Higgins, 1987). Such an experience could demotivate one’s desire to orient oneself away from certain virtues that one feels are a hopeless enterprise,

or, alternatively, just the threat of such a state may itself be motivating—virtues and ideals bring a sense of meaning or purpose with them; if these virtues and ideals are not pursued, life may be drained of all meaning. Philosophers have hypothesized that this threat of a flattened moral horizon is actually far more prevalent in the modern West relative to an older notion of a threat of spiritual danger for immoral action (Taylor, 1989). On the positive side, progression towards virtues, or actions or inhibitions that reveal one’s motives as ideally organized, provide a set of attendant motivating positive emotions—the state that once was commonly understood as “happiness,” but in the case of morality, maybe understood as feeling “virtuous” (Higgins, 1987). This sense of progress could motivate an individual to pursue these goals even further. In either case, these emotions call for *eagerness* as a means of striving towards these moral standards.

An important theoretical take-away point is that these emotions signal where one stands with respect to one’s moral self, and thus provide a sense of the means by which one may orient oneself toward their achievement. Put another way, emotions provide individuals with the capacity to author their moral destinies—give them the means by which they can *control* or manage what happens to their moral status. Interestingly this notion of autonomy or self-control is central to moral theories whether they come from the virtue-seeking schools of the Good (see the arguments regarding “voluntary” decisions in Aristotle, trans. 2009) or the duty-fulfillment schools of the Right (see the multitude of references to autonomy in Kant, 1785/1993), or whether they are found in religious ethics, which often embrace forms of both (Niebuhr, 1963/1999).

4.4 *Regulatory Self-Guides and Regulatory Fit*

This conceptualization of ethical behaviors as being a way of *controlling* one's actual self relative to one's ideal and ought selves brings in another notion that will be a central theory to understanding what follows here and in the next chapter: the notion of regulatory fit (Higgins, 2000; 2005a). Regulatory fit is the experience of a convergence or "fit" between one's goals and the manner by which one goes about fulfilling them; something that has been shown to affect moral judgments with respect to the self (Camacho, Higgins, & Luger, 2003). Since the effects of regulatory fit are not limited to judgments, we should expect that they should apply to intentions and behaviors as well (Motyka et al, in press). Since both the construal of moral standards as having a particular kind of value (see the previous chapter) and the capacity of each individual to take control over one's own moral destiny (see above) are elements of moral action and decision making, it stands to reason that when these moral standards are paired with the appropriate means by which to carry them out, they will be experienced as additionally motivating (Higgins, 2006) and be more likely to be carried out.

In the following studies, we test this basic proposal about the convergence of value and control motivations (Higgins, 2012). In the process, we test another central theory of this chapter: that virtue motivates behavior in a different manner compared to duty. If duties and virtues do indeed represent two kinds of moral reference points, as posited in the previous chapter, then when means associated with those reference point's motivation (promotion in the case of virtue or prevention in the case of duty) are combined with those categorizations, the match between value and control should produce more moral behavior consistent with principles of regulatory fit (Higgins, 2000; 2005). This will be tested in three different ways. First, framing of a moral behavior as either a dutiful obligation or a

virtuous ideal to reveal whether this produces more charitable giving when interacted with participant regulatory focus. Second, assessing of emotions following either an immoral or moral action to see if they fit with the conceptualization of different emotional associations with one's ideal or ought self. And third, priming different kinds of moral framing in order to see if this produces classic fit effects in determining whether or not to volunteer one's time when given the opportunity.

Study 1: Charitable Behavior from Fit

This study will determine whether chronic regulatory focus interacts with framing a charity appeal that fits promotion or prevention. Within the charity appeals themselves, participants received framing related to either virtue-related concerns or duty-related concerns to determine whether there is an interaction between chronic regulatory focus predominance and charity appeal framing.

Methods

Participants

One hundred two participants recruited through the Columbia University Behavioral Research Lab completed this study. They were compensated five dollars for their participation. The participants consisted of 38 males and 64 females. There were no significant differences according to sex for any of the variables discussed in the analysis.

Procedure

Participants were asked to fill out the 11-item Regulatory Focus Questionnaire in order to determine their chronic regulatory focus in terms of promotion pride and prevention pride (Higgins et al, 2001). The scale consists of 11 questions aimed at determining the degree to which an individual perceives himself or herself as effective or

ineffective at obtaining promotion or prevention goals. Though these scales are generally orthogonal, they can also work against one another when dealing with motivational matches and mismatches (Shah, Higgins, & Friedman, 1998). For this reason, our research called for a determination of promotion and prevention *predominance* (i.e. the degree to which one shows stronger promotion pride *or* stronger prevention pride). To this end, we subtracted the computed prevention scores from the promotion scores in order to assess whether an individual was predominantly promotion focused or prevention focused. A positive score indicates a promotion focus predominance while a negative score indicates a prevention focus predominance. Again, although promotion and prevention are generally orthogonal constructs, in this design they will be working against one another, so we are primarily interested in which focus is dominant, rather than the overall strength of chronic regulatory focus.

Participants were also experimentally induced into a promotion or prevention state using the Regulatory Focus Induction Instrument introduced in the previous chapter (Freitas & Higgins, 2002). Because participants contextually induced into a promotion focus will be more likely to construe charitable giving in terms of gains and non-gains, while those induced into a prevention focus will be more likely to construe charitable giving in terms of non-losses and losses, this contextual induction could also interact with predominant regulatory focus to affect the amount of charity giving.

Following the regulatory focus induction, participants were asked to complete a filler task solving anagrams that they were led to believe was the purpose of the study. The purpose of this task was to give participants the sense that the study was complete when they later make the choice to donate or not to donate. They received either high or

moderate performance feedback for their performance (randomly assigned) in order to contribute to the perceived reality of this portion of the study. This feedback had no significant effects on any of the variables discussed below, and did not moderate any of the relationships among the variables. Nevertheless, we control for the random assignment in all of our analyses.

Following the feedback, they were asked a series of follow-up questions about mood and motivation, consistent with the cover story that this was the primary focus of the task. After these questionnaires were complete, participants were paid for their participation, signed a form stating that they had received their payment, and were led to believe that the study was complete. The experimenter then presented the participants with a half sheet of paper containing an appeal to donate any or all of their study earnings (totaling \$5.00 given in single bills) to *Habitat for Humanity*.

The appeals were worded exactly the same, except for the final sentence. One wording was intended to appeal to a participant's sense of *duty*, the other was intended to appeal to a participant's sense of *virtue*. These phrases were drawn from the two versions of ethical practice presented in MacIntyre's (1981) work—the two conceptualizations of morality in which we were interested—and were randomly assigned. The *Duty-Fulfillment Appeal* concluded with the following sentence:

We ask that you consider our duty to the less fortunate as you make your decision.

The *Virtue-Seeking Appeal* concluded with this sentence:

We ask that you consider the sort of person you aspire to be as you make your decision.

Participants had the opportunity to donate a portion of their earnings in denominations of one dollar, or donate nothing at all if they chose. The goal of this procedure was to ensure that every participant had exactly the same amount of money to donate and the same sense that the money available for donation was earned. Following the donations, participants were debriefed concerning the actual purpose of the study, and their donations were passed along to *Habitat for Humanity*.

Since the majority of participants (56%) chose not to donate, and an additional 34% donated 1 dollar, to deal with the high variability of other responses introducing a considerable amount of error into our model, we collapsed donations into three categories: no donation (coded as “0”), small donation (1 dollar; coded as “1”), and large donation (>1 dollar; coded as “2”).

Results and Discussion

First, there did appear to be an interaction between chronic regulatory focus predominance and contextual focus priming regarding the amounts participants were willing to give. There was a marginally significant interaction between chronic promotion or prevention predominance and situationally induced regulatory focus, with participants who had greater predominant promotion giving more when contextually induced into a promotion state, and participants who had greater predominant prevention giving more when contextually induced into a prevention state ($\beta = 0.37$, $t(96) = 1.75$, $p = 0.08$). These results are pictured in Figure 4.1.

More importantly, there was also evidence of a fit between the two chronic motivational systems and the two forms of motivational appeal that were drawn from the philosophy literature—a fit between the chronic promotion regulatory focus and the

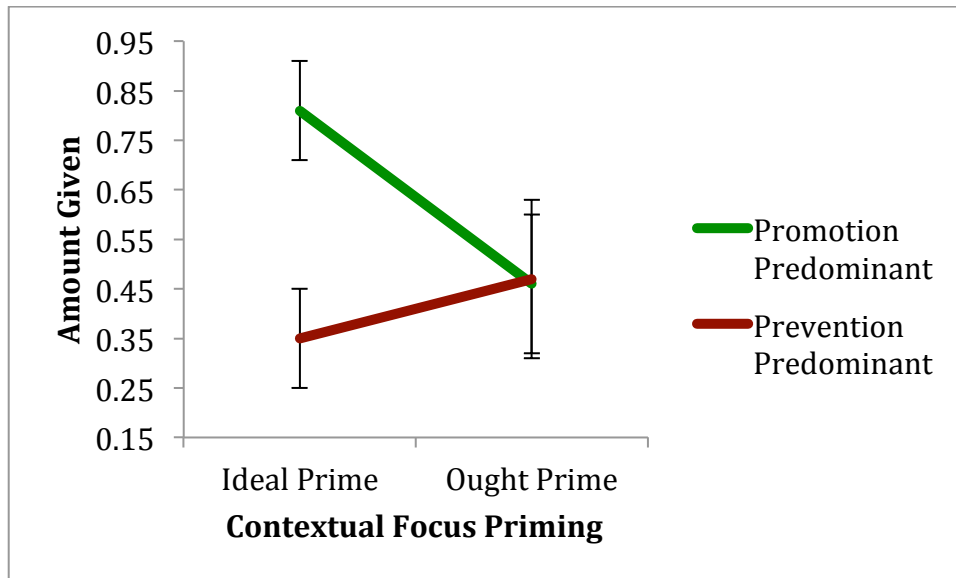


Figure 4.1: Amount given predicted by priming and chronic regulatory focus predominance.

Virtue-Seeking Appeal on the one hand, and the chronic prevention regulatory focus and the Duty-Fulfillment Appeal on the other. Specifically, participants who had greater predominant promotion gave more in the Virtue-Seeking condition compared to the Duty-Fulfillment condition, and participants who had greater predominant prevention gave more in the Duty-Fulfillment condition compared to the Virtue-Seeking condition ($\beta = 0.30$, $t(96) = 2.02$, $p = 0.05$). This is illustrated in Figure 4.2.

These results are consistent with the hypothesis that matching an individual's chronic orientation toward value (promotion predominant; prevention predominant) with his or her preferred means of going about achieving moral goals (virtue seeking; duty fulfillment) creates a "fit" that increases charitable giving. A limitation of this study is that the charitable giving took place in view of the experimenter. To address the possibility that this could create additional motives, we designed a study in which the giving would be private.

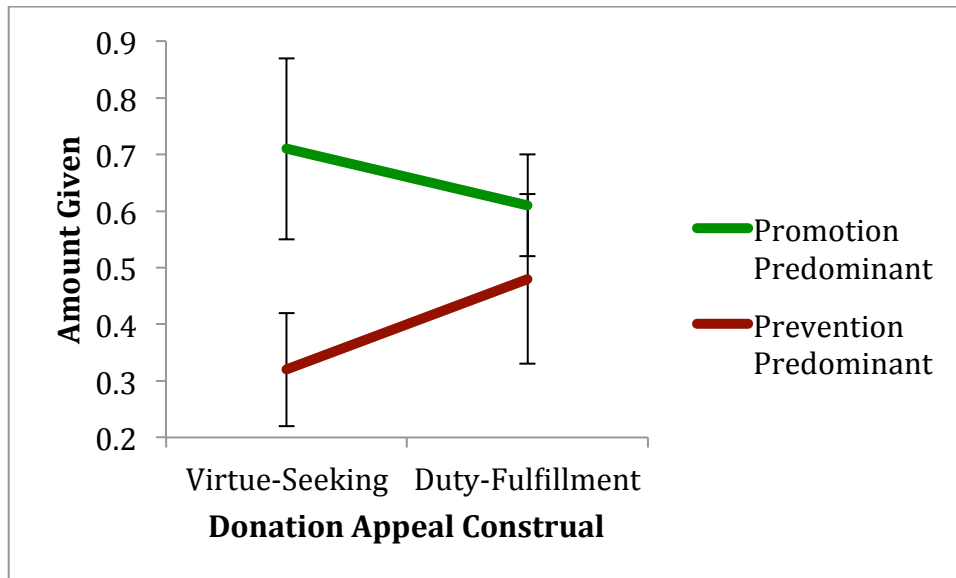


Figure 4.2: Amount given predicted by appeal wording and chronic regulatory focus predominance.

Study 2: Emotions from Charitable Decisions

In this study, we attempted to replicate the basic effect from the previous study (regulatory focus priming x chronic regulatory focus predominance interaction) and extend it by showing that the decision to either give or not give has different emotional consequences for the person dependent upon his or her regulatory focus predominance. We examined whether promotion-predominant individuals show greater differences along a virtuous feelings dimension (an emotion associated with moral gain vs. non-gain) whereas prevention-predominant individuals show greater differences along a guilt feelings dimension (an emotion associated with moral loss vs. non-loss).

Methods

Participants

Ninety-nine participants were recruited from the Columbia University Behavioral Research Lab for the sum of five dollars. Participants consisted of 32 males and 67 females.

There were no significant differences according to sex for any of the variables used in the following analyses. Twenty-six participants (9 males and 17 females) were excluded from the analyses because they answered “yes” to the question probing prior rules regarding charitable giving detailed below. This left a sample of 73 participants (23 males and 50 females).

Procedure

The procedure in Study 2 was identical to that in Study 1 with the exception of the donation part of the study. First, since the interaction between chronic regulatory focus predominance on the one hand and the regulatory focus induction and the appeal wording on the other were redundant, we altered the procedure such that the appeal wording manipulation was replaced with a follow-up questionnaire occurring after the donation detailed below. All participants in this study received identical donation appeals. As in Study 1, following the RFQ, participants were induced into either a promotion state or prevention state using the method described above.

Rather than presenting the donation appeal to participants directly, those taking the study were instead given an envelope containing the appeal, which itself had written on it instructions to place their donation in the envelope then place the envelope with its contents into a basket placed by the door as they leave the room. The instructions contained an inconspicuous “subject number” (placed into the last digits of a lab phone number) of which the participants were unaware in order to match their donation amounts to the variables of interest while maintaining real and perceived anonymity. After participants placed their envelopes into the basket, the experimenter presented them with a follow-up questionnaire asking about their donation experience. Again, this survey was

only connected to their subject number via the same phone number contained in the appeal.

Among the questions on the follow-up questionnaire were: “To what extent did your decision make you feel guilty?” and “To what extent did your decision make you feel virtuous?” (both rated on a scale from 1 - “Not at all” to 9 - “A great deal”). These questions were directed at specifically moral psychological experiences. The first, guilt feelings, would constitute the experience of falling short of a moral obligation standard or not falling short (i.e. failing or succeeding in maintaining an ought *duty*), and so should be more associated with the prevention focus. This feeling has also been associated with failure to do the right thing (Sheikh & Janoff-Bulman, 2010). The second, virtue feelings, would constitute the experience of matching or not matching a moral ideal standard (i.e., succeeding or failing in progressing toward an ideal *virtue*), and so should be more associated with the promotion focus. Put another way, guilt feelings would constitute the experience of moral *loss*, and the lack of guilt feelings the experience of *non-loss*. In contrast, virtue feelings would constitute the experience of moral *gain*, and the lack of virtue feelings the experience of *non-gain*.

The questionnaire also asked if the participants have any habitual *a priori* conventions when it comes to decisions about giving (equivalent to always doubling the tax when tipping in a restaurant). Since these participants would presumably not engage in or experience the self-regulatory feedback in the form of emotions of interest for this study, we excluded any participant that answered “yes” to this question from our analysis. Giving amounts were coded as they were in Study 1.

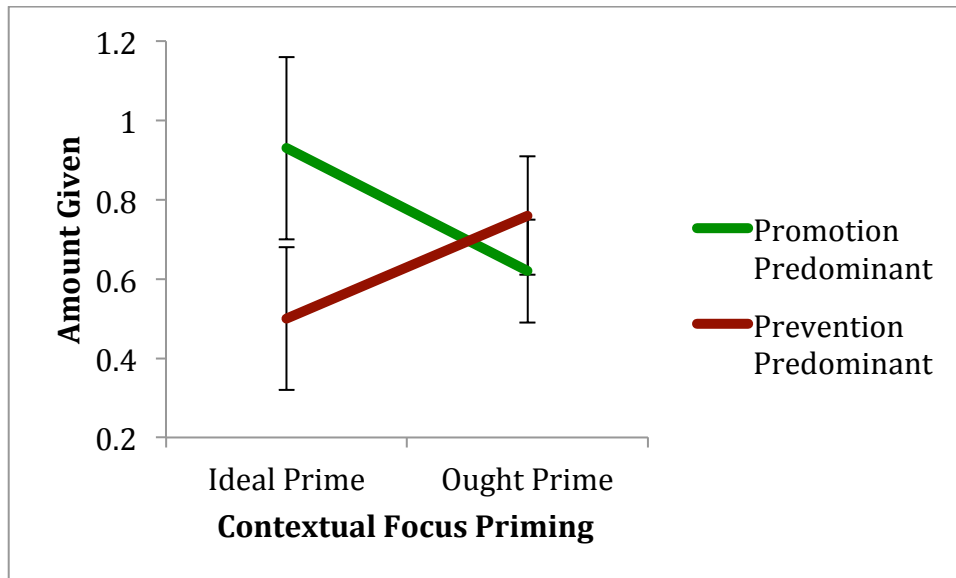


Figure 4.3: Amount given as a function of contextual focus priming and chronic regulatory focus predominance.

Results

As with the previous study, a linear regression showed an interaction effect for amount given between predominant chronic regulatory focus and appeal framing ($\beta = 0.36$, $t(68) = 2.10$, $p = 0.04$). This replication of Study 1 with private giving is illustrated in Figure 4.3. Study 2 also examined for the first time participants perceived sense of virtue and perceived sense of guilt regarding giving or not giving. Given that research has linked emotional experiences to congruency and discrepancy between one's actual and ideal- and ought-self guides (Higgins, 1987), we anticipated emotional differences to emerge based upon differences in chronic regulatory focus pride predominance. Based on this model, we should expect that the largest differences in *feelings of virtue* between those who give and those who fail to give should be those who see themselves as effective in doing those things one *ideally* should do; that is, those who are predominant in chronic *promotion*.

Specifically, the more participants are predominantly chronic promotion, the less they

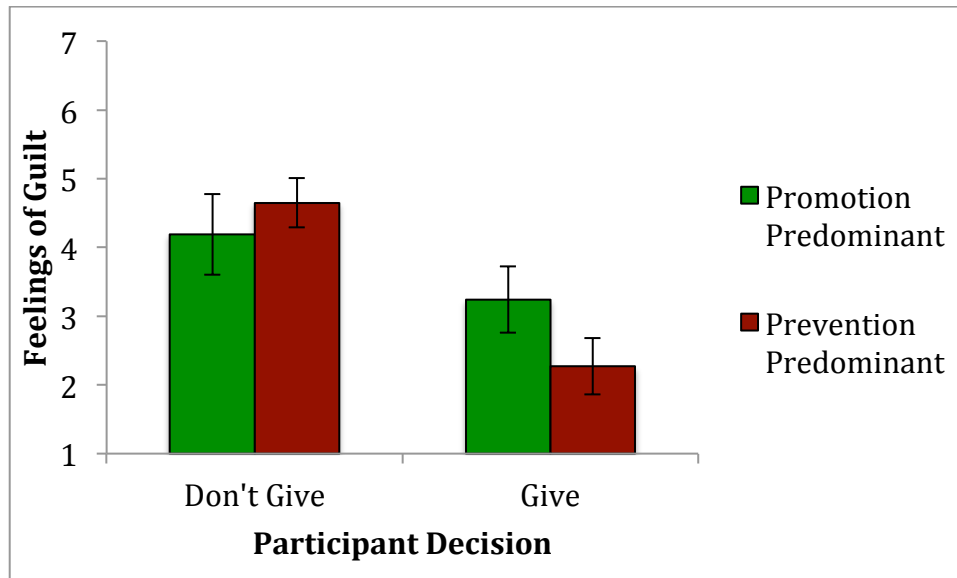


Figure 4.4: Presence of guilt feelings predicted by giving and chronic regulatory focus predominance.

should feel a sense of virtue if they fail to give (*vs.* give). Similarly, we should expect that the largest differences in *feelings of guilt* between those who give and those who fail to give should be those who see themselves as effective at doing things one *ought* to do; that is, those who are predominant in chronic *prevention*. Specifically, the more participants are predominantly chronic prevention, the more they should feel guilty if they fail to give (*vs.* give).

In order to test for differences in reported feelings of low virtuousness (moral non-gain) or guilt (moral loss) as a function of participants' promotion or prevention predominance interacting with whether they did or did not give a donation, we separated our sample into those who were promotion predominant (i.e., have a positive difference score; N = 42) and those who were prevention predominant (i.e., have a negative difference score; N = 32). We found that among those who were prevention predominant, not giving (*vs.* giving) was significantly associated with greater feelings of guilt, controlling for

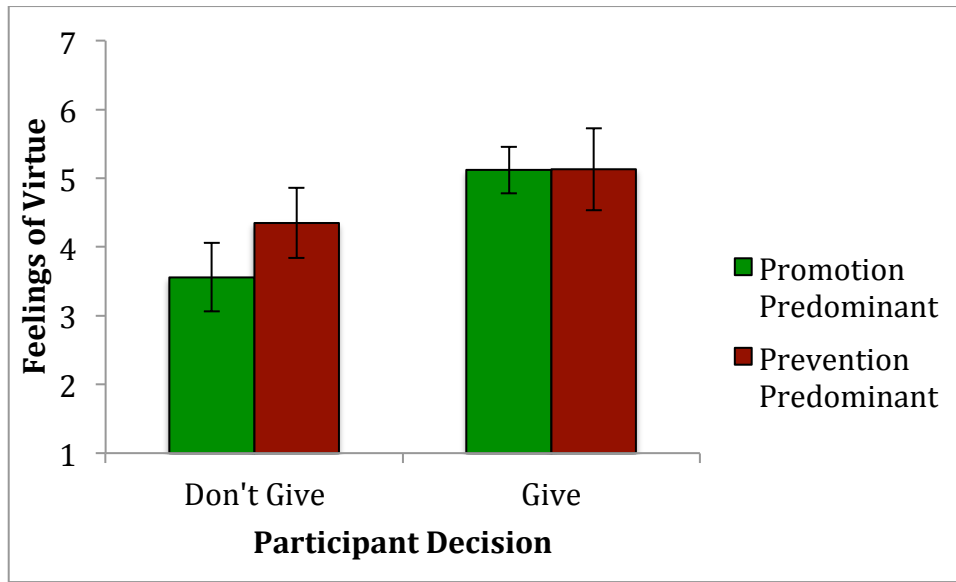


Figure 4.5: Presence of virtuous feelings predicted by giving and chronic regulatory focus predominance.

feelings of virtue ($\beta = 0.62, t(29) = 4.21, p < 0.001$), whereas the association was not significant among those predominant in promotion ($\beta = 0.19, t(38) = 1.09, p = 0.29$). In contrast, among predominant promotion participants, not giving (*vs.* giving) was significantly associated with lesser feelings of virtue, controlling for feelings of guilt ($\beta = -0.39, t(38) = -2.56, p = 0.02$), whereas this association was non-significant among those who were prevention predominant ($t < 1$). These effects are illustrated in Figures 4.4 and 4.5.

These results, in addition to replicating the basic interaction effect found in the previous study, serve to demonstrate that morality-related feelings are related to the way one chronically pursues one's moral goals (through either duty-fulfillment or virtue-seeking).

Study 3: Fit Effects On Volunteering Time

The final study in this chapter extends the previous studies in several ways. Regulatory focus was experimentally induced in a different way, and the dependent variable was altered to a different way of being generous—being generous with one’s time (volunteering) rather than one’s money (charitable donation). In addition, and most importantly, a different kind of regulatory fit effect on moral decisions was examined. Previous research has found that there is an asymmetry between the promotion and prevention systems regarding whether it is positive or negative outcomes, including success versus failure feedback, that strengthens motivation and subsequent action more (e.g., Idson & Higgins, 2000; Idson, Liberman, & Higgins, 2004; Van Dijk & Kluger, 2004, 2011). For the promotion system, motivation and action is stronger when positive (*vs.* negative) outcomes occur or are anticipated, including success versus failure performance feedback, because positive outcomes sustain the *eagerness* that is a fit for the promotion system. In contrast, for the prevention system, motivation and action is stronger when negative (*vs.* positive) outcomes occur or are anticipated, including success versus failure performance feedback, because negative outcomes sustain the *vigilance* that is a fit for the prevention system. In this study, regulatory focus was experimentally induced and then task performance feedback was given that could be perceived as ‘success’ feedback or ‘failure’ feedback. It was predicted that for participants induced into a promotion state, motivation would be strengthened more when the feedback was perceived as a ‘success’ than a ‘failure,’ which in turn would translate into more volunteering of one’s time,

whereas the opposite effect of perceived feedback would occur for participants induced into a prevention state.

Participants

One hundred thirty participants (53 male, 76 female, one unspecified) were recruited from the Columbia Behavioral Research lab. There were no sex differences for any of the variables examined in this study. All participants were randomized to one of the two experimental conditions below. As in the previous study, we queried participants about rules regarding volunteering, and excluded participants who indicated that they did have such rules. Twenty-nine participants (9 males and 20 females) were excluded for this reason, leaving a sample of 44 males and 56 females.

Procedure

Before completing any of the other tasks in the study, participants first completed a moral recall task. This task was modeled on the content of the Regulatory Focus Questionnaire, since the strongest predictor of moral behavior in the previous two studies was regulatory focus pride predominance. Therefore, we designed two recall tasks aimed at either simultaneously lowering one's promotion emphasis while increasing one's prevention emphasis or lowering one's prevention emphasis while increasing one's promotion emphasis. The task asked participants to "recall a time" when they either gave up a gain in order to provide for the needs and security of another person (lowering promotion for the sake of prevention) or incurred a loss for the advancement and growth of another person (lowering prevention for the sake of promotion). Such a task was designed to induce regulatory focus pride predominance in the context of a past moral action accordance with the previous studies.

Following the induction task, participants completed the anagram task from the previous studies, except that in this case they all received identical false feedback. All participants were told they fell into the 72nd percentile, which was slightly above the standard provided for an “A” in a college-level English course. Such feedback could be interpreted a number of different ways depending on the participant, so we followed the feedback with a series of follow-up questions, with one in particular probing participants’ sense of success or failure in the task (1 = “completely a failure” and 9 = “completely a success”). This would constitute the feedback variable, which should produce different subsequent moral decision making dependent upon the regulatory focus system that was experimentally induced by the “recall a time” manipulation (promotion emphasis or prevention emphasis).

After this follow-up questionnaire, participants were presented with a request to help the lab by volunteering to participate in future studies. They were told that future study sessions were each 15 minutes, that they could be scheduled during a time convenient for the participant, and to indicate how many slots for which they would be willing to volunteer.

Finally, before receiving their debriefing, participants were provided with one final follow-up questionnaire to probe their sense of the experience of reasoning about whether or not to volunteer (without pay). Importantly, we included a question to serve as a manipulation check, asking whether they perceived volunteering for research as being more about doing one’s duty or about being a virtuous person (1 = “more about duty” and 9 = “more about virtue”). As in the previous study, we also asked participants to indicate

whether they had any prior rules about how to make these decisions, and excluded those who indicated that they did from our analysis as noted above.

Results

As expected, those participants who received the “recall a time” promotion emphasis perceived volunteering as more about being a virtuous person ($M= 5.76$) compared to those who received a “recall a time” prevention emphasis who saw volunteering as being more about doing one’s duty ($M= 4.83$; $t(94) = -2.05$, $p = 0.04$). This further confirms the association between the prevention focus and an ethics of Right or duty, and the promotion focus and an ethics of Good or virtue. Also as expected, for the amount of volunteering time offered, analyzed with a logistic regression, there was a significant interaction between the “recall a time” manipulation and perceiving the feedback performance as a success versus a failure ($OR = 1.97$, $z = 2.13$, $p = 0.03$), with those participants who received the “recall a time” promotion emphasis volunteering more time when they perceived the anagram performance feedback as ‘success’ feedback than ‘failure’ feedback, and those participants who received the “recall a time” prevention emphasis volunteering more time when they perceived the anagram performance feedback as ‘failure’ feedback than ‘success’ feedback. It is important to remember that all participants received identical feedback; the only difference was in their perception of it as ‘success’ feedback versus ‘failure’ feedback. Importantly, there were no differences in perceptions of success or failure according to promotion or prevention emphasis in the “recall a time” task ($t < 1$).

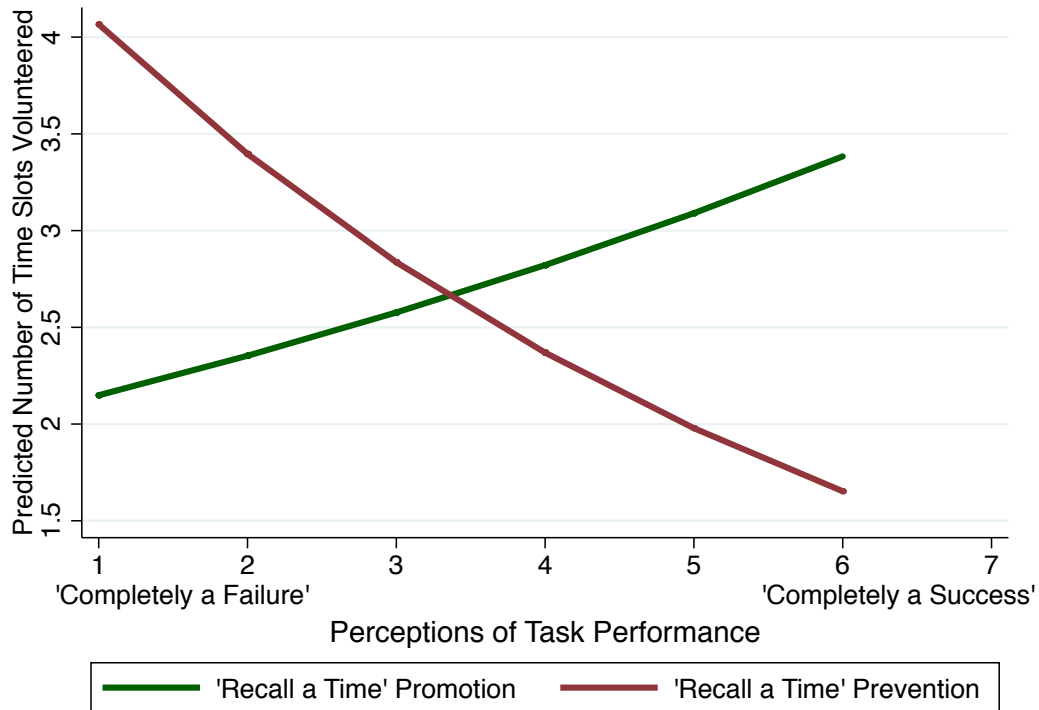


Figure 4.6: The number of time slots volunteered as a function of “recall a time” promotion emphasis or prevention emphasis and perceiving the anagram performance feedback as success or failure.

If the number of hours volunteered was analyzed using a Poisson regression (used for assessing differences in counts) to determine if the interaction produced differences in the number of slots participants were willing to volunteer for, we found significant differences in line with the basic volunteering differences above. Those who received a “recall a time” promotion emphasis volunteered more hours when receiving perceived success (vs. failure) feedback, whereas those who received a “recall a time” promotion emphasis volunteered more hours when receiving perceived failure (vs. success) feedback ($IRR = 1.31, z = 2.92, p = 0.004$). This effect is visualized in Figure 4.6.

This research further confirms the association of the two regulatory focus systems with the two ways of approaching morality. The perception of success or failure acted as

relevant feedback for engaging or failing to engage in moral behavior depending upon how that behavior was construed (either as duty-fulfillment or virtue-seeking). It also shows effects in line with the previous two studies using a different method of inducing regulatory focus and a different dependent measure of positive moral behavior. Importantly, this confirms that the different kinds of feedback can influence subsequent decision making dependent upon whether an individual is processing in a manner congruent with promotion predominance or prevention predominance, consistent with work on regulatory fit (Higgins, 2000; 2005a). This is of interest given the results from Study 2 in which the emotional feedback from decision making differed based on ethical choices. This research suggests that the feedback may have a different impact on subsequent decisions based upon one's predominant regulatory focus—a possibility that will be fleshed out in more detail below.

4.5 The Role of Virtue in Moral Decisions

The above research supports both hypotheses: (1) that the desire for virtue represents a motivating self-guide that is distinct from the fulfillment of duty; and (2) that when there is a regulatory fit between individuals' promotion virtue emphasis or individuals' prevention duty emphasis and aspects of the current situation, such as eager versus vigilant means of ethical becoming (eager for promotion virtue and vigilant for prevention duty) or perceiving task performance as a 'success' or 'failure' ('success' for promotion virtue and 'failure' for prevention duty), then greater moral behavior will occur.

In all three studies, whether the dependent measure was the moral behavior itself or the emotions experienced as a result of acting in accordance with the two kinds of moral standards, the results support there being two kinds of motivations for moral behavior and

decisions, and that these two systems are functionally independent of one another. This should come as no surprise for the system of moral duty, with its attendant feelings of guilt as a relevant self-regulatory emotion, but the system of ethical virtue merits additional research.

Another important result of the above research is the establishment of regulatory fit as important not only to moral judgment (Camacho, Higgins, & Luger, 2003), but also to moral behavior itself. While regulatory fit research has expanded beyond mere judgments or even intentions to the likelihood of engaging in actual behavior, this represents the first time regulatory fit has been examined in the context of moral behavior. Acknowledging the two distinct kinds of moral self-guides should serve as a foundation for future research exploring this phenomenon.

4.6 Implications for Future Research

These two regulatory self-guides have important implications for research in the fields of decision making and behavior. First, there are important implications here for the role of moral emotions in decision making and behavior. As noted above, researchers have shown that moral behavior tends to be more strongly motivated by affect rather than reasoning. Those interested in raising moral children then would want to know which emotions they ought to aim to have their children experience in order to motivate them to engage in the most frequent moral behavior. As one might expect given the above results, researchers have found that different emotions have different results. For example, showing disappointment has very different results compared to showing anger (Eisenberg, 2000). Just as different kinds of punishments will be experienced differently depending upon one's regulatory focus (Camacho, Higgins, & Luger, 2003), different kinds of emotions

(both positive and negative) will be experienced differently dependent upon one's regulatory focus.

This research has important implications for another area as well. An entire subfield of moral psychology, that examining “moral licensing”—the phenomenon that occurs when a past moral action “licenses” one to behave selfishly in a present context (Sachdeva, Ilic, & Medin, 2009)—has generally conceived of morality as unitary in structure, theorizing that individuals perceive themselves along a continuum running from immoral to moral. This is true even in research examining how moral motivation may be influenced by other non-moral psychological factors, such as construal level (Conway & Peetz, 2012).

The present research may help to better understand this phenomenon (as well as understand why, in many circumstances, moral licensing does not occur, e.g. Zhang, Cornwell, & Higgins, 2014). If, rather than having a unitary sense of moral self-hood, individuals have two ways of being moral or immoral that are orthogonal to one another, moral licensing effects in any given situation could depend critically on the structure of the situation and the type of the moral or immoral behavior recalled previously. The research on regulatory focus theory and regulatory fit, as well as the philosophical understandings of differences between duty and virtue as motivations for moral action, could potentially be very instructive here. Perhaps this conceptualization can make meaningful contributions to this nascent field of research and improve our ability to predict decision making and behavior more accurately.

One way in which the present research is limited in accounting for moral behavior generally is that it was restricted to regulatory fit in the moment. Indeed, this is also true of

virtually all research on regulatory fit. However, theoretically, the relevant self-regulatory systems associated with fit can be measured chronically as well as being situationally induced (Higgins et al, 2000; Kruglanski et al, 2000), so it stands to reason that the same would be true about their mutual support when they converge to produce fit. That is, in addition to being able to momentarily induce regulatory fit, it should be possible to measure a kind of *chronic* regulatory fit among those for whom the three different kinds of motivations work together effectively (see Higgins, 2012 or Franks & Higgins, 2012 for a discussion of this possibility). This is especially important for morality, which, as noted above, is something that unfolds across time given the importance of “becoming” in human consciousness (Higgins, 2005b). In the final experimental section, I will discuss this phenomenon through the examination of the concept of virtue in the context of moral character—the experience of “the good life.”

Chapter 5: Moral Character - Virtue as Integrity

In the previous chapter, I noted the role of the emotions and regulatory fit in bringing about moral action in particular situations. However, these examples explored in only a very limited way how fit could have downstream effects for subsequent moral actions. It stands to reason, however, that one could experience “fit” in a chronic way as well—as the sense that one’s beliefs, actions, and values all “flow” and provide one with a sense of “fit” with the environment in which one lives (see also Higgins, 2012). Thus, one is able not only to “feel right” about a particular behavior, belief, or intention, but also to “feel right” about one’s life as a whole. It is this “feeling right” that I want to argue is the experience of the “good life” in both senses: “good” in the sense of being well (well-being or “happiness”) and “good” in the sense of being good (morality). This experience represents how one can move from a moral decision or moral behavior to the more general concept of a moral character.

The issue of moral character raises a very central question: what makes a life good? Setting aside superfluous things like high birth and wealth, for example, the Buddha argued that there are two elements necessary for a noble life: wisdom and ethics (Walshe, 1995). “Wisdom” in this sense is analogous to how the ancient Greeks understood the virtue of prudence (“good sense”), or the ability to see situations as they really are, and effectively plan how to act in a particular way to get from means to end (Aristotle, trans. 2009). “Ethics,” as it was understood by thinkers from this era, involves control over oneself in order that the plan determined by prudence may be carried out effectively in the face of temptations to selfishness (countered by justice), fear (countered by courage), or desire

(countered by temperance). These four virtues, often referred to as the “cardinal” virtues, make up the means by which an individual establishes what is real (truth) and manages what happens (control); often separated into “intellectual” and “moral” virtues, respectively (Aquinas, 1981/1274). These strengths of character combine to produce a life experienced as worthwhile (value), or, in Aristotle’s (trans. 2009) parlance: *eudaimonia* (“happiness” or “flourishing”).

I will argue that a theory of the organization of motives provides a lens through which to examine this relational harmony. Active virtue, as the ancients understood it, should be synonymous with the good life (Aristotle, trans. 2009). That is, happiness, rightly understood, is not simply the acquisition of one’s desires, but the proper organization of motives with respect to the world (Porter, 1993). This section will be devoted to the development of a scale that I will argue is related to the experience of this concept of virtue within a person’s character—the experience of “the good life.”

5.1 *Review of Existing Literature*

There are two basic views of “the good life” in the psychology literature. The first is the more widespread: that “happiness” or the “goodness” of a life is bound up in the degree to which one subjectively values it. In other words, the “good life” is the one with which one has had one’s desires satisfied (Diener et al, 1985). This “subjective satisfaction” view of happiness, as noted in the introduction, has had a major influence on the study of motivation (which, until recently, has focused almost exclusively on approaching pleasure and avoiding pain) and the structuring of society (which tends to be built around this hedonic principle).

However, an alternative view has arisen in recent years to challenge the comprehensiveness of this popular approach. This view sees happiness as instantiated in the acquisition of a variety of character strengths or psychological resources, the effective application of which bring about a happy and meaningful life (Diener et al, 2009). This notion that happiness is not simply the satisfaction of one's desires, but also the condition of one's character, has a long pedigree in philosophy (e.g. Aristotle, trans. 2009; Geatch, 1977) and in popular intuitions (King & Napa, 1998; Phillips, Misenheimer, & Knobe, 2011), but has only recently been explored in the context of psychology (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). This shift was due to an embracing of what has been termed "positive" psychology—the psychology not just of desire satisfaction (i.e. the maintenance of a satisfactory state), but of human flourishing (i.e. the attainment of some ideal). The foregoing chapters can be seen as an application of this "virtue" point of view to the areas of moral judgment and moral decision making, as well as how these ethical desires influence such activities. However, this discussion of happiness requires additional fleshing out.

While this view of happiness as consisting in the acquisition of character strengths is in many ways an improvement over the idea of happiness as simply a matter of subjective satisfaction, it still does not represent the whole picture. Each of the character strengths is considered functionally independent of each of the others, which would imply that a "good character" is one in which the greatest number of strengths were amassed to their greatest intensity. Additionally, one can even imagine ways in which they may conflict with one another, which is probably why Peterson and Seligman (2004) adopt a "signature strength" approach, in which they recommend individuals focus mostly on their

greatest strength. However, if ancient and classical philosophers (see Porter, 1993), and even some psychologists (Higgins, 2012; Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006), are to be believed, the harmonious interrelationship of strengths should matter as well. Furthermore, it must not be entirely forgotten that the subjective sense of satisfaction in meeting one's goals is also an important part of what it means to have a good life given that these strengths enable the attainment of the goods of life. Thus, any comprehensive account should include both elements.

Before exploring what such a model would look like and how it builds on a synthesis of these two perspectives in line with the motivational framework laid out above, the essence of what I mean by "character" and "virtue" needs to be explicitly formulated. After all, in spite of the recent evidence that "character talk" has considerable utility for how we understand ourselves and one another (Pizarro & Tannenbaum, 2011; Goodwin, Piazza, & Rozin, 2014), as social psychologists, we consider the situation to be an important determinant of behavior and not simply a person's internal "traits," especially given the predictive limitations of a purely "trait" perspective (e.g., Harsthorne & May, 1928; Mischel, 1968).

5.2 *Situations, Persons, and Virtues*

First, it must be stated at the outset that the reason virtues have been so difficult to spot is because they don't "exist." That is, virtues don't exist in the abstract "within" a person apart from the situations in which they are enacted. Virtues, in contrast, exist only within the context of particular situations. Virtues are not the "average" amount of how much a particular individual does this or that thing across situations, but instead habits of character or patterns of activation in response to particular kinds of contexts. This is

perfectly in line with recent personality theory that sees real consistency as an expression of certain kinds of individuals' traits contextualized within situations (Shoda, Mischel, & Wright, 1994). Another way to this is that virtues are *patterns* rather than *traits*.

"Virtue" then, in this classic sense, is closer to modern notions of "self-control" or "self-possession" than it is to contemporary notions of morality per se. In order to further develop this point, it is worth working through an example that might be proposed by a contemporary Aristotelian to illustrate this idea. Suppose an individual were presented with the opportunity to use a pleasurable but addictive and illegal substance. The individual has two choices: she can either take the substance, or she can refuse to take the substance. If she decided not to take the substance, the reasoning may look something like this:

1. Illegal and addictive substances are to be avoided.
2. This is an illegal and potentially addictive substance.
3. Therefore, I will refuse to use the substance.

On the other hand, should she decide to take the substance, her reasoning may look like this:

1. Everything that is pleasurable is to be enjoyed.
2. Using this substance produces pleasure.
3. Therefore, I will use the substance.

A virtue theorist would not want to suggest that explicit reasoning necessarily occurs in the mind of the decider, only that both of her decisions are rationally intelligible (the reasoning may, of course, be post-hoc rationalization of behavior, but it is still *reasonable*). However, it is important to note that virtue theorists claim that decisions to behave one way or the

other in situations like this are not simply decisions between two actions, they are decisions between two entirely different *patterns* of thinking. Furthermore, they argue that repeatedly making such a decision between these ways of thinking can have lasting effects.²⁵

What are these effects? For a virtue theorist, individuals can belong to one of four ethical stages: they can be *virtuous, controlled, uncontrolled, or vicious* (Aquinas, 1274/1981). It is posited that controlled and uncontrolled individuals represent an ethical “starting point.” At this juncture, both decision paths are open to the individual, and both patterns of reasoning have an allure. Yet in the heat of the moment, certain courses of action may appear more attractive than they are otherwise. This is where the controlled versus uncontrolled distinction comes in. If the person chooses the course of action that she would have chosen while uninfluenced by experiences induced by the situational circumstances, then she is a controlled person in that situation. If she chooses the course of action that she would prefer not to take because she is influenced by some “outside” influence (including the internal passions in response to those influences like fear or desire) then she is an uncontrolled person in that situation.

The virtuous and vicious stages are a step beyond that in either direction. The virtuous person is the one who always chooses as she would if she were uninfluenced by passions induced by the situation, and is not influenced by the allure of the opposing choice (i.e., a person who consistently shows the same moral pattern of action within a given situation). The vicious person is the one who no longer even tries to overcome the passions that influence her in the situation, and so always chooses the course of action

²⁵ And this does indeed appear to be the intuition of observers who are aware of this repeated decision making across situations—see Higgins & Winter (1993).

determined by those passions. This is not to say that according to virtue theory, the virtuous person is not an emotionless robot, only that her emotions are ordered in such a way that she automatically makes the choices she would make were she given the time to reason through them without being driven off her desired course by passions induced by the immediate circumstances of the environment. This is consistent with the notion that in a virtuous person, the different aspects of one's motivation (which includes emotional experiences, as we saw in the previous chapter) work together rather than at odds with one another.

Virtue ethicists believe that the achievement of virtue comes through "practice," that is, making a particular kind of decision repeatedly in a particular kind of situation to the end that those decisions are more readily made compared to their alternatives. It is important to note that to this point, nothing has been said about the moral content of virtue theory (i.e., what are the "right" or "wrong" behaviors), only about the process of achieving virtue.

I mentioned in an earlier section that I believe contemporary psychology can be used to understand this process. A psychologist looking over the scenario outlined earlier would likely notice the similarity between the two courses of action, and the psychological notion of a *script*. Researchers (Sullivan, 1953; Berne, 1964; Shank & Abelson, 1977) have theorized the importance of scripts for the execution of human goals, planning, and behavior. A behavioral script embodies the knowledge of contingent stereotyped event sequences. These scripts guide human behavior in a number of different circumstances, and any account of human activity across time and circumstance should include them.

Another relevant psychological concept is the theory of *affordances*. This theory, proposed by Gibson (1977), suggests that when animals perceive objects, they (and we) do not simply perceive their physical characteristics. We also perceive the ways in which those objects can be meaningful to us, and, more specifically, the ways in which they can be useful to us. This allows for the streamlining our interactions with the surrounding environment by making an animal's perception preparatory of its interactions with its surroundings.

The final important psychological concept relevant to this discussion is the concept of *accessibility*. In the model proposed by Higgins (1996), the concept of accessibility refers to three things. It refers to whether a particular concept is available in stored memory, its level of excitation, and, regarding its use, its applicability to the current situation. This theory can help explain whether and how quickly a particular concept will be used by a particular person in any particular situation. For our purposes, accessibility can be understood as the strength and connectivity of various scripts to different object affordances.

These three theories can be used to construct a psychological representation of the process described by virtue theory. Individuals in an ambiguous situation retrieve information (affordances) from the elements that they perceive, which are connected to possible ways of interacting with them (scripts) that differ in the degree to which they impress themselves upon her as appropriate (accessibility). The process of becoming "virtuous" is the process of reorganizing one's internal psychological and motivational system in such a way that the "right" behavioral scripts become chronically accessible whenever the individual is exposed to particular affordances.

Put into motivational terms, a virtuous person recognizes the environment (truth), identifies the goals such an environment affords (value), and acts in accordance with those goals (control). This process becomes automatized as the different motivations begin to work together in concert. One automatically and accurately recognizes morally relevant situations (affordances; truth + value), acts in ways appropriate for bringing about those moral goals (scripts; value + control), and adjusts one's technique in accordance with the particular demands of the situation (accessibility; truth + control). Thus the virtuous person is the one who ought to have the most motivational integrity—the one for whom truth, control, and value motivations work together effectively.

5.3 *Motivational Integrity and the Virtuous Soul*

How might this concept be evaluated empirically? What precisely can be measured in order to measure “virtue” given that this understanding of virtues and character is adopted? The difficulty with understanding virtues as persons-in-situation patterns is that the inevitable conclusion is that there are at least as many virtues as there are situations. Aristotle names dozens of virtues himself (Aristotle, trans. 2009); no doubt there are others that arise in other cultural contexts, including the core 24 explored by Peterson and Seligman (2004). How then, can this experience be empirically studied?

The answer lies through returning to the discussion of happiness above, and through integrating the two dominant views of happiness with a theory of virtue. Unlike in modern parlance (particularly in the attempts to reduce all goals to taking part in a ‘happiness currency’ along the lines of John Stuart Mill, 1863/2007), in virtue theory the relationships among the various goals and the virtues enabling them cannot be expressed in terms of an additive equation. Instead, these virtues constitute the internal organization

of a person responding to the environment as an integrated whole (Aristotle, trans. 2009). The lack of *eudaimonia* (“happiness” or “flourishing”) is understood as vice—a defect in this organization. Vices in this way of thinking represent internal discord between the various elements of the soul (the “soul” in ancient and classical thought—in Latin, the *anima*—was understood to be the motivating principle of living things or how the parts of the body work together toward the achievement of a goal, rather than the rational “ghost in the machine” that controls the body’s actions of Cartesian myth-making). The soul’s internal harmony brought about by the virtues working together was considered to be what both *enabled* and *constituted* the good life (Aristotle, trans. 2009).

This particular point regarding internal integrity was made explicit almost 1500 years later in the writings of Thomas Aquinas, who put forward a strong theory of the “unity of the virtues.” Aquinas contended that in order for an action or life to be virtuous, *all* of the virtues must be working together in the production of that action or the living of that life (Aquinas, 1274/1981). While often regarded as absurd by many modern philosophers of the twentieth century (Geatch, 1977; Appiah, 2008), this doctrine has been recently resurrected by more contemporary philosophers with greater sophistication (Porter, 1993).

The reason for the initial rejection of Aquinas’ contention was largely due to others’ seeing “virtues” as additive *traits* rather than *patterns*, which, when combined, would equate to a person’s “character.” Thus a person could be, for example, be courageous while lacking compassion. However, adopting a more context-based view (Mischel & Shoda, 1995) highlights obvious situations in which a truly courageous action *necessitates* being compassionate or real compassion *necessitates* courage. A more complex view of human

beings, understood as being in continuous dynamical relation to their environments, would predict that an individual's flourishing, her *eudaimonia*, would be a function of not *only* the presence of a *particular* character strength or virtue, but also a function of how well that virtue *relates* to other virtues. Thus, the individuals with the greatest well-being would be those who not only have the various character strengths and virtues to the highest degree, but also those for whom those virtues and strengths are harmoniously integrated.

The two approaches to the experience of happiness discussed above each get part of the experience. The subjective well-being approach emphasizes the *value* that one places on one's life relative to one's desires or needs (Diener et al, 1985). The character strength approach emphasizes the way one goes about approaching life, noting the degree to which one is able to figure out the *truth* about the world, and *control* oneself in accordance with that truth (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). It is proposed here that it is in the *effective* organization of value, truth, and control that we can see the way in which virtue makes its way in the world: the effective understanding (truth) and managing actions upon the world (control) produces desired outcomes (value), triggering emotional feedback that is interpreted in such a way so as to develop habits that "fit" the environment appropriately—the experience of *eudaimonia*.

5.4 Effectiveness of Motive Organization

As noted above, virtue theorists often divide the "soul" (again, understood as the principles of animation—i.e. "motivation"—rather than a willful, conscious "ghost in the machine") into a tripartite structure, though the precise naming of that structure has varied: (1) the intellect or reason, which aims at understanding, (2) the will or desire, which aims at action and volition, and (3) the affections or passions, which aim at valued

(and away from devalued) outcomes. The good life since Plato (Plato, trans. 1992) has been identified with a well-ordered soul: “In the true or philosophic soul reason, passions, and desire work in concert” (Crombie, 1962). Similarly, Higgins (2012) theorized that there are three primary forms of motivation—value (wanting to have good results), truth (wanting to establish what is real), and control (wanting to manage what happens). Each of these motives represents the possibility of fulfillment or success—each represents a way of being *effective*—but the key to the good life is the effective *organization* of these motives (Higgins, 2012).

Value motivation, or the desire to have good results (Higgins 2012; Franks & Higgins, 2012), is well-established in the well-being literature. This is most prevalent in the research on outcomes described above. The other two forms of effectiveness—associated with truth and control motivations—have been subject to less scientific exploration, but some important research has been done. Truth motivation, or the desire to establish what is real (Higgins, 2012; Franks & Higgins, 2012), has been linked to motivation quite apart from positive outcomes. For example, people are motivated to attain accurate knowledge of the world and themselves, even if this knowledge is referring to undesirable traits or personal attributes (Swann, 1990). Similarly, control motivation, or wanting to manage what happens, is also independent of having valued outcomes (Higgins, 2012; Franks & Higgins, 2012). For example, research on affect regulation has shown that people do not simply want to maximize their positive emotions, but instead regulate them so that they are consistent with the demands of particular situations (Koole & Kuhle, 2007; see also the self-determination motive of Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Speaking to the fundamental nature of these motives, Franks and Higgins (2012) provide a review suggesting that all three are evident across the animal kingdom and that, moreover, their successful organization is critical for well-being in humans and other animals. This harmony of goals or motivational integrity represents a unique approach to understanding happiness in the psychology literature. Though not explicitly recognized as such, it has been indicated in various empirical studies that show both that greater motivational interrelatedness or integrity leads to greater happiness, and that when any of the motivations becomes too primary over the others, reductions in well-being result. For example, the research on self-affirmation, a technique by which people affirm positive aspects of their personality in order to create a sense of a well-integrated self, shows that this attainment of self-integrity leads to greater well-being (Sherman & Cohen, 2006). On the negative side, if truth motivation is too prevalent over value and control motivations, too many psychological resources will be spent continually thinking about and reevaluating distressing elements of one's personality or life—a process known as rumination (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2000). Thus, success in each of the motivational domains is not all that is necessary for *eudaimonia*: true flourishing is also dependent upon the interrelatedness of these fundamental motivations, including not only one motivation supporting another but also constraining another (Higgins, 2012).

It is worth noting that this theoretical approach is not limited to the deep thinkers in the philosophical tradition, but exists within our everyday parlance when one considers the meaning of the words “integrity” and “integration.” With respect to the latter, a key definition of “integration” is the “incorporation as equals” of members of disparate categories or groups, linked to our understanding of not allowing any of the motivations to

dominate (Meriam-Webster, 2014). It is also worth noting that this idea of “integration” has a history in psychology, serving as the aim of psychotherapy (e.g. Dorcas & Shaffer, 1945). “Integrity,” which is another related concept, contains both of the definitions of ‘the good life’ alluded to throughout this dissertation. It is defined both as an “unimpaired condition” or “the quality or state of being complete,” *and* “the firm adherence to a code...of values” (Merriam-Webster, 2014). Thus we see that above and beyond the philosophical conceptualizations presented, our basic usage of the notion of integrity points to the convergence of the two senses of the good life linked in virtue—doing well and doing good.

This theoretical approach provided a foundation for the creation of a measure that could determine the degree to which an individual had achieved this kind of motivational harmony, by focusing primarily on the interrelations among value, truth, and control effectiveness and the experience of chronic regulatory fit. One of the items in our measure, for example, is “My life is going in the right direction.” Going in the right direction entails the effective relationship between managing to go (control) and ensuring that the direction of movement is correct (truth) given the goal (value), where truth, control, and value all support and constrain one another (see Higgins, 2012). Another is “I ‘feel right’ about my life,” which is consistent with previous research on regulatory fit (Higgins, 2000; 2005a).

Such a measure, representing as it does the internal harmony of fundamental ways of being effective, would also necessarily relate to existing constructs measuring life outcomes and well-being, since having positive life outcomes and achieving a sense of self-efficacy and integrity are all associated with this internal harmony of motives. Since the measure would represent the emergent property described above as the “unity of the virtues,” it would also be related to those character strengths and abilities that enable those

positive life outcomes. Most importantly, as the embodiment of the experience of virtue, it should serve as a measure of moral character—predicting higher levels of moral behavior in the past, present, and future. In the following studies, we describe the creation and validation of the Effectiveness of Motive Organization (EMO) scale—a measure of this motivational integrity and relational harmony.

Study 1: Effectiveness of Motive Organization

This study will make the first direct connection to the virtues as outlined by Peterson and Seligman (2004). It will show that not only is EMO predicted by greater overall character strength, but that it predicts less variability among the virtues given that they work together in harmony (Aquinas, 1981/1274; Porter, 1993). This study will show that EMO is an expression of not simply the strength of effectiveness of different kinds of motivations (Franks & Higgins, 2012), but their organizational relationship to one another. This study will show that EMO is predicted by truth effectiveness, control effectiveness, and value effectiveness, and that higher EMO is associated not only with higher mean values of effectiveness, but lower levels of variability between the different kinds of effectiveness. All of these results will serve to conceptually validate EMO as a construct prior to subsequent studies that test EMO as a measure of happiness and morality—a measure of a virtuous moral character.

Methods

Participants

Three hundred eighty-nine participants were drawn from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) pool and paid the sum of \$2.00. Participants consisted of 155 males, 224 females, and 9 unspecified. Since participants needed to change websites in order to take

the VIA Inventory of Strengths Survey as noted below, the number who completed that portion of the study was smaller, consisting of 95 males, 159 females, and 3 unspecified (257 total). There were no differences according to sex on any of the measures reported below. Because it was essential that respondents have full comprehension of the items in our EMO questionnaire, the MTurk samples discussed in this paper were limited to the United States to maximize English proficiency.

Procedure

Participants filled out the Effectiveness of Motive Organization scale (EMO; see Appendix for full scale) followed by the Effectiveness Questionnaire (Franks, 2012). The Effectiveness Questionnaire is an assessment of the degree to which an individual has experienced success in the domains of value (e.g. “I think I have all that I desire.”), truth (e.g. “I am exceptional at figuring things out.”), and control (e.g. “Organizing has proven to be one of my strengths.”). The scale consists of 17 questions answered on 7-point scales ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Some items are measures of ineffectiveness in these domains and are reverse-scored. The average of the scale items in each domain produces three subscales which will be analyzed below: value effectiveness, truth effectiveness, and control effectiveness.

These questions were followed by a series of demographic questions including sex, age, and household income, and a link to the VIA-Character website, where participants filled out the VIA Inventory of Strengths Survey (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). The survey consists of 240 items assessing the presence or absence of 24 different virtues. Since we also expected the EMO to correlate with self-reported happiness (which, as mentioned above, has an inescapably ethical element, see King & Napa, 1998 or Phillips, Misenheimer,

& Knobe, 2011), we included three items to measure how happy participants felt their lives were: “Compared to others, my life is happy,” “I have a happy life,” and “My life is full of happiness.” Each of these was rated on a 6-point scale from 1-strongly disagree to 6-strongly agree. The items on this “happiness” scale had high internal reliability ($\alpha = 0.88$).

Results and Discussion

Scale Reliability. A factor analysis on the 12 items in the EMO was performed using Kaiser normalization, showing only one factor with an eigenvalue above one. The factor loadings for each item as well as the questionnaire itself are available in the Appendix. We note that all of the items have a factor loading in excess of 0.4, well above the needed loadings for a sample of this size (Hair et al, 1998). The EMO scale overall also had high internal reliability ($\alpha = 0.90$). Having established the reliability of the scale, we moved to analyzing its theoretical validity.

Theoretical Validity. As mentioned above, we expected EMO to positively correlate with effectiveness in the domains of value, truth, and control. The data supported this prediction. EMO was significantly positively correlated with effectiveness in value ($r = 0.66, p < 0.001$), truth ($r = 0.46, p < 0.001$), and control ($r = 0.58, p < 0.001$). Furthermore, these relations were independent of one another, since each of these relations remained significant when controlling for each of the others in a multiple regression (value: $\beta = 0.48, t(385) = 11.22, p < 0.001$; truth: $\beta = 0.16, t(385) = 3.62, p < 0.001$; control: $\beta = 0.21, t(385) = 4.32, p < 0.001$).

Importantly, our hypotheses were not limited to the prediction that EMO would be associated with higher means of each kind of effectiveness, but that it would also be associated with greater concordance and harmony among the types of effectiveness, as

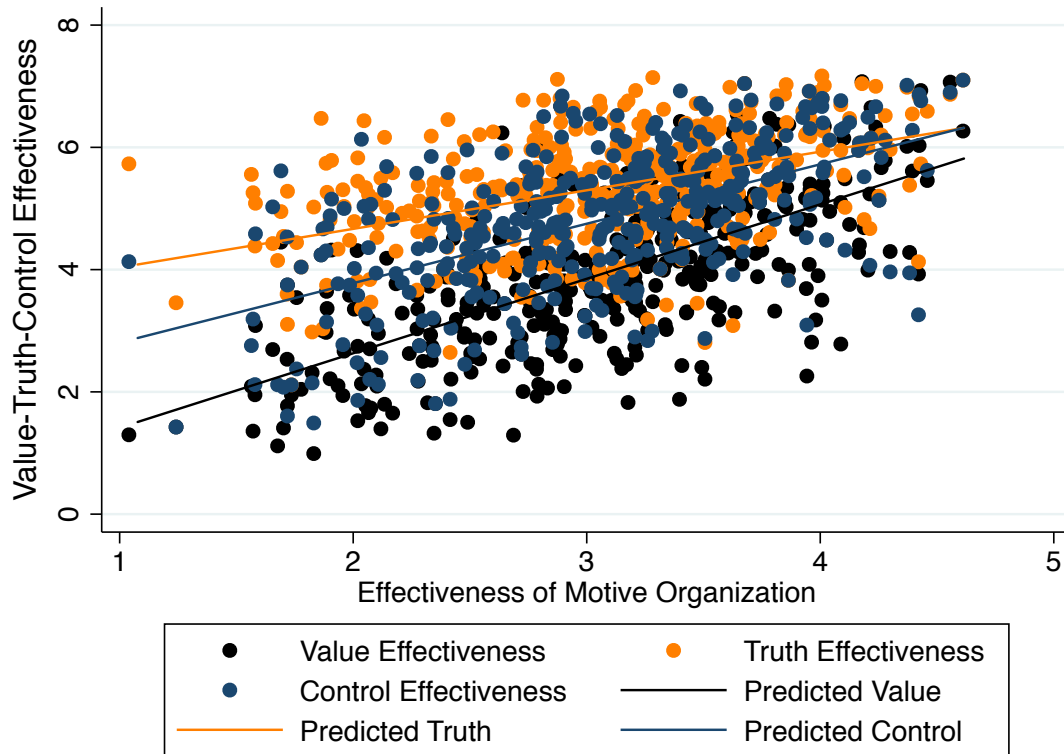


Figure 5.1: Value, truth, and control effectiveness as a function of effectiveness of motive organization scale scores (observations have been ‘jittered’ to prevent stacking). This figure particularly highlights the positive overall mean relationship between these scales and the EMO, and also suggests the reduction in variability as scores on the EMO increase, a feature more prominently displayed in Figure 5.2.

expressed in lower variance among them. To measure this variability, we computed the variance among the three constructs (value, truth, and control) for each individual. Lower ratings on this score indicated a greater concordance between the three constructs. To show that the effectiveness of motive organization was associated with lower variability over and above the mean level relationship (given that variance significantly decreases as the overall mean level of averaging the value, truth, and control scores increases, $\beta = -0.25$, $t(387) = -5.01$, $p < 0.001$), we controlled for the mean level of this average in our model. As

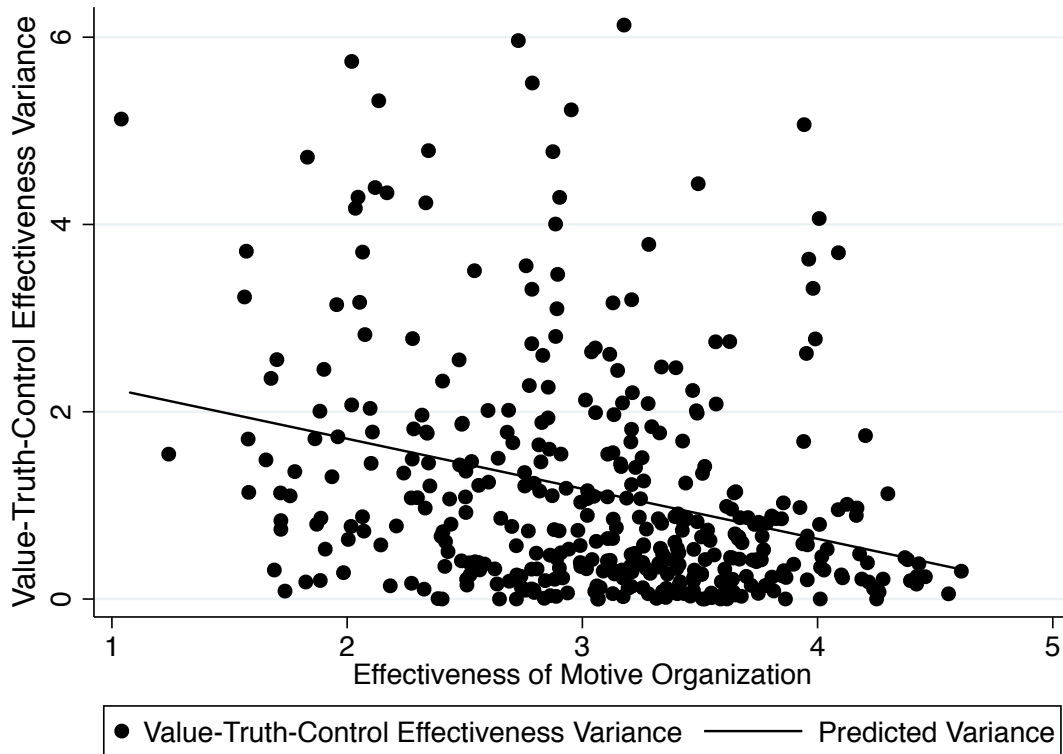


Figure 5.2: Value, truth, and control effectiveness variance as a function of the effectiveness of motive organization (observations have been ‘jittered’ to prevent stacking).

predicted, higher EMO scores were associated with significantly lower variability among value, truth, and control effectiveness ($\beta = -0.25$, $t(386) = -3.73$, $p < 0.001$).

To provide an illustrative example, we examined four participants who had identical overall mean level of value, truth, and control effectiveness. These three individuals, although they had equal overall means (all averaged a 5.64 on their combined value, truth, and control effectiveness), had different variances between the three constructs: 1.86, 1.17, and 1.06, and 0.83 (to provide context, the range of variances ran from 0.25 to 2.26, so these three variances were relatively average) which corresponded to four different scores on the EMO: 3.77, 3.31, 3.15, and 2.92, respectively (which, in turn represent z-scores of 0.24, 0.35, and 0.77). Thus, as predicted, the individual with the lowest variance between

value, truth and control effectiveness had the most effective motive organization, and the individual with the highest variance had the least effective motive organization. This specific example illustrates the general point that even when overall effectiveness is held constant, more effective motive organization is associated with greater harmony among the three different motivations. Thus, the EMO is not only a useful measure of overall effectiveness in the value, truth, and control domains, but a measure of their convergent organization as well. Both of these effects (the mean effect in particular, but also the variance effect) can be seen in Figure 5.1. The variance effect is featured more prominently in Figure 5.2.

We applied this same approach to the VIA Inventory of Strengths Survey. First, with the exceptions of Fairness and Humility, we found that EMO scores were significantly associated with each of the character strengths and virtues (3 at $p < 0.01$ and 19 at $p < 0.001$). The results for each individual strength and virtue are available in Table 5.1. Higher scores on the EMO were significantly predictive of a higher overall mean level of strength and virtue ($\beta = 0.47, t(255) = 8.44, p < 0.001$), derived from averaging participant scores across strengths and virtues ($\alpha = 0.95$). Furthermore, higher EMO scores—even when controlling for overall mean strength/virtue, since there was again a significant negative relation between mean strength/virtue and strength/virtue variance ($\beta = -0.27, t(255) = -4.54, p < 0.001$)—predicted a lower overall level of variance among the strengths and virtues ($\beta = -0.19, t(254) = -2.82, p = 0.005$). This result demonstrates that not only is EMO a predictor of different fundamental strengths and virtues, but that it also predicts convergence among these strengths and virtues. In line with ancient and classical understandings of the virtues, we find that the more a person has attained the good

Character Strength or Virtue	Effectiveness of Motive Organization
Appreciation of Beauty	0.20**
Bravery	0.35***
Love	0.36***
Prudence	0.24***
Teamwork	0.22***
Creativity	0.28***
Curiosity	0.51***
Fairness	0.06
Forgiveness	0.22***
Gratitude	0.38***
Honesty	0.30***
Hope	0.57***
Humor	0.37***
Perseverance	0.48***
Judgment	0.22***
Kindness	0.21**
Leadership	0.18**
Love of Learning	0.26***
Humility	-0.01
Perspective	0.41***
Self-Regulation	0.36***
Social Intelligence	0.33***
Spirituality	0.37***
Zest	0.65***

• = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$; *** = $p < 0.001$

Table 5.1: Relationship between EMO and 24 fundamental character strengths and virtues.

effective life, the more his or her strengths and virtues work together in unity (Porter, 1993).

Interestingly, we found these same patterns of results for the happiness construct in this study. Those who reported having a happier life showed lower variance between the measures of effectiveness in the value, truth, control domains over and above overall effectiveness ($\beta = -0.25$, $t(386) = -4.14$, $p < 0.001$), and a similar pattern for the virtues as well ($\beta = -0.23$, $t(254) = -3.47$, $p = 0.001$). However, happiness was *not* predicted independently by all three kinds of effectiveness. It was significantly predicted by value

effectiveness ($\beta = 0.51, t(385) = 10.96, p < 0.001$) and control effectiveness ($\beta = 0.15, t(385) = 2.82, p = 0.005$), but *not* by truth effectiveness ($\beta = 0.08, t(385) = 1.61, p = 0.10$). This suggests two things. First, the subjective notion of happiness means more psychologically than just a maximization of pleasure. Second, the EMO measure is associated with more ways of being effective than just subjective happiness per se—it contributes to truth effectiveness as well, which will see when we study both life happiness and life meaningfulness in Study 2.

We know that the EMO measure is not simply a measure of happiness because the EMO positively predicts truth effectiveness and happiness does not. But to further differentiate the EMO and happiness, we examined the relation between happiness, EMO, and income. As expected, we found that higher EMO scores were associated with significantly higher levels of happiness ($\beta = 0.70, t(387) = 19.09, p < 0.001$) and higher EMO scores were also associated with higher incomes ($\beta = 0.23, t(375) = 4.60, p < 0.001$). It is possible that these results stem from the positive relation between income and happiness (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002), which we replicated here ($\beta = 0.21, t(375) = 4.11, p < 0.001$). The positive relationship between income and happiness is generally posited as resulting from money leading to better outcomes, which, in turn, leads to greater levels of happiness (Easterlin, 1974). However, an organization of motives model may provide an alternative interpretation.

It is possible that people with a more effective motive organization 1) have higher incomes because they are generally more effective in the workplace, which leads to better jobs and higher salaries and 2) are happier. From this perspective, the connection between income and happiness is an artifact of the effectiveness-income and effectiveness-

happiness relationships. Our data are consistent with this perspective. When controlling for EMO, the relation between happiness and income is no longer significant ($\beta = 0.05$, $t(374) = 1.31$, $p = 0.19$), only the relation between EMO and happiness remained significant ($\beta = 0.68$, $t(372) = 17.94$, $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, the opposite was *not* true. That is, the relation between EMO and income remained significant even when controlling for happiness ($\beta = 0.09$, $t(374) = 2.50$, $p = 0.01$). It is possible, then, that the relation between income and happiness is actually due to each of them being positively related to the effectiveness of motive organization. This further differentiates the EMO construct from subjective feelings of happiness, showing that EMO captures more than a subjective feeling. This will be further differentiated in the subsequent studies in this chapter.

The results of Study 1 show that our ‘effectiveness of motive organization’ construct is associated with the integration of the various character strengths and virtues, as well as the predicted integrity and relational harmony among value, truth, and control motives. The results also show that EMO is not only measuring having ‘a life of happiness’ as reflected in the items “Compared to others, my life is happy,” “I have a happy life,” and “My life is full of happiness” because it reveals significant relationships that the ‘happiness’ scale does not, including truth effectiveness and an independent relation to income. Having shown this, we move next to establishing that the ‘effectiveness of motive organization’ construct as measured by the EMO accounts for a broader understanding of ‘the good life’ beyond existing ‘happiness’-related constructs.

Study 2: Distinguishing EMO and Existing Happiness-Related Constructs

This study will examine the relationships between EMO and ‘happiness’-related constructs, as well as distinguish it from other important well-being constructs in the

happiness literature: satisfaction with life (Diener et al, 1985), vitality (Ryan & Frederick, 1997), self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965), life orientation (Scheier et al, 1994), and flourishing (Diener et al, 2009). This will show that the EMO's relationship to 'happiness' (or, more generally, 'the good life') is unique among well-being constructs.

Methods

Participants

Two hundred fifty-two participants (125 males; 127 females) were recruited from MTurk for the sum of \$1.50. Since there were significant sex differences for some of the measures (for example, females scored significantly higher on the Flourishing Scale compared to males: $t(250) = -3.04, p = 0.003$), sex differences were controlled for in each of the analyses below.

Procedure

Participants first filled out the EMO and then answered the same questions related to happiness as in Study 1. In addition to happiness, we also measured meaningfulness since it has been shown to have a distinct relation to well-being (Baumeister et al, in press), which is particularly important given the lack of an independent relationship between the happiness construct and truth effectiveness. The meaningfulness questions were identical to the happiness questions except that they substituted the word "meaning" for "happy." These questions were followed by the Flourishing Scale (Diener et al, 2009), the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al, 1985), the General Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995), the Need for Cognition Scale (Cacioppo et al, 1994), the Life Orientation Test (Scheier et al, 1994), the Locus of Control Scale (Rotter, 1989), the Subjective Vitality Scale (Ryan & Frederick, 1997), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

(Rosenberg, 1965), the Implicit Theory of Intelligence Scale (Abd-El-Fatah & Yates, 2006), the Ruminative Responses Scale (Treyner et al, 2003), the 10-item Big Five Inventory (Rammstedt & John, 2007), and an Agency Scale (Wegner, Sparrow, & Winerman, 2004). We also took demographic measures of age, sex, income, and employment status.

Results and Discussion

Convergent Validity. As in the previous study, the EMO had high internal reliability ($\alpha = 0.92$). As expected, it also had significant positive correlations with measures related to value (the Flourishing Scale, Satisfaction with Life Scale, Life Orientation Test, and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale), truth (the Need for Cognition Scale, an incremental Theory of Intelligence, Openness to Experience), and control (the General Self-Efficacy Scale, internal Locus of Control, and the Agency Scale). It also was negatively correlated with the Ruminative Responses Scale, which may be indicative of having low control and value effectiveness (an inability to stop engaging in counterfactual thinking even when it is disruptive and producing anxiety) and possibly low truth effectiveness as well (not being able to figure out what really happened). The correlations between the EMO and each of these scales are shown in Table 5.2.

Consistent with the results from Study 1, we found higher scores on the EMO to be significantly associated with greater happiness, controlling for meaningfulness ($\beta = 0.37$, $t(248) = 7.47$, $p < 0.001$). Complementing our earlier results, we also found that higher EMO scores were associated with greater meaningfulness, controlling for happiness ($\beta = 0.31$, $t(248) = 5.87$, $p < 0.001$). These relationships are also shown in Table 5.3.

Discriminant Validity. Because the correlations between EMO and a number of other constructs were quite high and because we have outlined conceptual connections as

Construct	Correlation with EMO
Flourishing Scale	0.79***
General Self-Efficacy Scale	0.64***
Need for Cognition Scale	0.33***
Satisfaction with Life Scale	0.81***
Life Orientation Test	0.77***
Locus of Control Scale (Internal)	0.46***
Subjective Vitality Scale	0.74***
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	0.75***
Implicit Theory of Intelligence Scale (Incremental)	0.32***
Ruminative Responses Scale	-0.57***
Agency Scale	0.19**
Big 5 – Extraversion	0.43***
Big 5 – Openness to Experience	0.22***
Big 5 – Conscientiousness	0.48***
Big 5 – Agreeableness	0.37***
Big 5 – Neuroticism	-0.51***
Happiness (controlling for Meaningfulness)	0.37***
Meaningfulness (controlling for Happiness)	0.31***

* = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$; *** = $p < 0.001$

Table 5.2: Relationship between the effectiveness of motive organization and other constructs (multiple regression betas controlling for sex).

well, it was necessary also to distinguish EMO from these constructs in order to demonstrate that EMO adds additional value as a construct (i.e., discriminant validity). To this end, for each of the constructs that correlated with EMO above 0.70, we included it with EMO in two different multiple regressions: 1) predicting happiness controlling for meaningfulness and 2) predicting meaningfulness controlling for happiness.

Demonstrating its divergent validity, in all of these models, EMO accounted for a significant portion of the variance in happiness (p 's < 0.001) and a significant portion of the variance in meaningfulness (p 's < 0.001). Moreover, our analyses showed that including EMO in a multiple regression reduced the relation to non-significance between meaningfulness and the Subjective Vitality Scale, Life Orientation Test, and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (the

Scale	Happiness	Meaningfulness
Flourishing Scale	0.37*** (0.28***)	0.36*** (0.29***)
Satisfaction with Life Scale	0.37*** (0.27***)	0.20*** (0.10†)
Subjective Vitality Scale	0.23*** (0.13**)	0.05 (-0.04)
Life Orientation Test	0.28*** (0.19***)	0.10* (0.00)
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	0.21*** (0.12**)	0.15** (0.07)

* = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$; *** = $p < 0.001$

Table 5.3: Multiple regressions for each scale predicting happiness and predicting meaningfulness (each controlling for the other, and both controlling for sex differences). In each regression, the beta for a scale's relationship to happiness or meaningfulness when the effectiveness of motive organization is also controlled for is and is given in parentheses.

multiple regression betas are available in Table 5.3 and the effect of EMO controlling for the alternative scales is in Table 5.4).

These results provide strong initial evidence discriminating EMO from Subjective Vitality, Life Orientation, and Self-Esteem, and some initial evidence discriminating EMO from Flourishing Scale and Satisfaction with Life Scale, which were also the constructs most highly correlated with EMO. How then, might EMO differ from the Flourishing Scale and Satisfaction with Life Scale? Happiness and meaningfulness, on their own, do not necessarily capture value, truth, and control all *working together*. Is there an example of a construct that would reflect this relational aspect that could distinguish our model from flourishing and satisfaction with life? One possibility is employment status. Why employment status? Successful or effective employment involves correctly (truth) managing (control) activities directed toward attaining particular goals (value). Thus, we thought that employment status (employed vs. unemployed) might be a good indicator of value, truth, and control working together. If so, then employment (controlling for income) would be more strongly related to the EMO than the other constructs.

Scale	Happiness	Meaningfulness
Flourishing Scale	0.28***	0.22***
Satisfaction with Life Scale	0.24***	0.26***
Subjective Vitality Scale	0.28***	0.33***
Life Orientation Test	0.26***	0.31***
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	0.30***	0.28***

* = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$; *** = $p < 0.001$

Table 5.4: Multiple regressions for the association between the effectiveness of motive organization, happiness, and meaningfulness (each controlling for the other, and both controlling for sex differences) over and above each alternative scale.

In order to create a dichotomous variable for employment, we compared those who stated that they were currently employed (N = 189) or stay-at-home moms or dads (N = 21) to those who stated that they were currently seeking employment (N = 20) or disabled or unable to work (N = 5). We excluded students and retirees from the analysis (N = 20). Again, since income is related to happiness, we controlled for happiness in each of our analyses. We did find that employment (controlling for income, sex, and happiness) was associated with higher levels of EMO ($\beta = 0.10$, $t(224) = 2.81$, $p = 0.005$). In contrast, employment did not have a significant association with either the Flourishing Scale ($t < 1$) or the Satisfaction with Life Scale ($\beta = 0.06$, $t(224) = 1.65$, $p = 0.10$).²⁶ This was encouraging because it illustrates how examining an objective outcome related to well-being like employment can reveal the added value of the organization of motives model as measured by EMO.

The results of Study 2 show that there is a unique relation between EMO and the happiness and meaningfulness that is part of ‘the good life.’ However, what about the other

²⁶ Employment status was also unrelated to the other constructed examined above: the Life Orientation Test ($t < 1$), Subjective Vitality Scale ($t(245) = 1.44$, $p = 0.15$), or Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale ($t(245) = 1.09$, $p = 0.28$).

half of ‘the good life’—moral character? Is EMO empirically predictive of moral values and behavior? The following four studies examine this question. In addition, Study 6 will further distinguish EMO as a unique construct relative to ‘flourishing’ and ‘satisfaction with life’ with which it is especially highly correlated.

Study 3: EMO and Values

This study will show that EMO is uniquely associated with self-transcendent values in the Schwartz Value Inventory (specifically, benevolence; Schwartz, 1992), and is unrelated to values associated with achievement, despite being predictive of well-being and financial success.

Methods

Participants

One hundred twenty participants (48 males and 72 females) were recruited from Amazon’s MTurk participant pool for the sum of \$1.50. Since there were significant differences in reported Benevolence according to sex, with females reporting higher Benevolence values compared to males ($t(118) = -2.38, p = 0.02$), we controlled for sex differences in each of the following analyses.

Procedure

The procedure for this study was comparatively brief. Participants filled out the EMO followed by the 56-item Schwartz Value Inventory (Schwartz, 1992). This latter questionnaire measures an individual’s endorsement of a number of different values, which are then combined into a variety of subscales. For the purpose of the present research, we were most interested in the values associated with Benevolence: “Helpful,” “Honest,” “Forgiving,” “Loyal,” “Responsible,” “A spiritual life,” “Mature love,” and “Meaning in life.”

Other subscales include Hedonism, Achievement, Power, Universalism, Conformity, Security, Tradition, Self-Direction, and Stimulation. Scale scoring also dictates controlling for individual differences in overall endorsement. What this means, importantly, is that for each of the regressions below for each separate value, the mean level of value endorsement across all values is controlled for (Schwartz, 2009). Thus, the specific relation between EMO and a particular value could be significantly positive by itself, but it would not count as a significant relation if it is no longer significant after the mean level of value endorsement across all values is controlled for. In this way, EMO is only considered to have a significant relation to a value if the endorsement of that particular value by participants with high EMO stands out above their general endorsement of all values (i.e., it is a unique relation).

Results and Discussion

As in previous studies, the EMO showed high internal reliability ($\alpha = 0.89$). As expected, the EMO was significantly (i.e., uniquely) predictive of values related to Benevolence, with those scoring higher on EMO more strongly endorsing the Benevolence value subscale ($\beta = 0.10$, $t(116) = 2.00$, $p = 0.05$).²⁷ There were no other significant (unique) relationships between EMO and any other value subscale. The relationships between EMO and each of the value subscales are shown in Table 5.5.

These results suggest that when one experiences integrity of motivations, it relates to one placing an emphasis on benevolence values over and above other values. For the case of the self-enhancing values (power, achievement, hedonism), this is perhaps unsurprising given EMO's expected emphasis on moral virtue in 'the good life.' But what

²⁷ This relationship was even stronger when sex differences were not controlled for ($\beta = 0.12$, $t(117) = 2.50$, $p = 0.01$). The relationships to the other subscales remained non-significant.

Value Subscale	Effectiveness of Motive Organization
Hedonism	-0.01
Achievement	0.02
Power	-0.10
Benevolence	0.10*
Universalism	-0.05
Conformity	-0.04
Security	0.01
Tradition	0.01
Self-Direction	0.08
Stimulation	-0.06

* = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$; *** = $p < 0.001$

Table 5.5: Relations between the effectiveness of motive organization and relative value emphasis.

about the non-relationship with universalism? Consistent with the results in Study 1, it appears that those who rate themselves as high on EMO, while concerned with the well-being of others, do not seem especially concerned with an abstract or general equality; note the non-relationship with fairness or humility in Study 1, both of which theoretically relate to the universalism value category. This non-relationship will be discussed further at the end of this section.

The results of Study 3 suggest that there is, as hypothesized, a convergence through virtue between the two senses of the “good life”—“good” in the sense of happy and meaningful and “good” in the sense of moral. The fact that there is a special association between EMO and benevolence is consistent with our hypothesis. Beyond values, does EMO also predict higher rates of moral behavior?

Study 4: EMO and Past Altruism

Given the above connections to the virtues and benevolence values—and how those values, when coupled with a high reported sense of responsibility, produce altruistic

behavior (Schwartz, 1973; Schwartz & Howard, 1980)—those who score higher on the EMO scale should also report higher rates of altruism because they had higher self-reported agency (i.e., a high sense of responsibility) in Study 1 (Wegner, Sparrow, & Winerman, 2004). This study will investigate that connection using the Self-Report Altruism Scale (SRA; Rushton, Chrisjohn, & Fekken, 1981). Specifically, we wished to see whether, consistent with our association of EMO with the experience of virtuous character, those reporting higher levels of EMO also reported higher frequencies of altruistic activity.

Methods

Participants

Two hundred thirty-nine participants were recruited from the Columbia Behavioral Research Lab's participant pool. Those participants only completing the surveys listed below were compensated \$5.00 for their participation. Other participants (randomly selected) were invited to continue onto an unrelated economic game task. No demographic data was collected for this study.

Procedure

Participants completed all of the surveys on a computer. The surveys were presented in random order and consisted of the Effectiveness of Motive Organization scale (EMO; Cornwell, Franks, & Higgins, 2014), the Self-Report Altruism Scale (SRA; Rushton, Chrisjohn, & Fekken, 1981), the Mode Effectiveness Survey (MES; Cornwell et al, 2014), the Regulatory Focus Questionnaire (RFQ; Higgins et al, 2001), the Regulatory Mode Questionnaire (RMQ; Kruglanski et al, 2001), the Schwartz Value Inventory (Schwartz, 1992), and the Social Value Orientation slider task (SVO; Murphy, Ackermann, & Handgraaf, 2011). For the purposes of this study, only the EMO and SRA scales will be analyzed below.

Results and Discussion

Replicating Study 2, we found a strong positive relationship between Benevolence values and EMO controlling for overall value endorsement ($\beta = 0.09$, $t(237) = 2.89$, $p = 0.004$). Unlike the previous study that had a smaller sample, we also found a significant positive relation between EMO and conformity ($\beta = 0.09$, $t(237) = 2.24$, $p = 0.03$) and a significant negative relation with stimulation ($\beta = -0.11$, $t(237) = -2.08$, $p = 0.04$).²⁸ No other values had significant relations with EMO. Since the relation between EMO and benevolence is substantially stronger than the other two, these results are generally consistent with Study 3.

The frequencies across altruistic behaviors were relatively reliable, such that high frequency of altruism in each category of behavior was well predicted by high frequency in each of the other categories of behavior ($\alpha = 0.90$). Therefore, for our basic analysis, we collapsed across the different behaviors to see whether higher scores on the EMO scale correlated with higher frequencies of engaging in each of the forms of altruism in the SRA scale. As expected, we found a significant positive association between the EMO scale and the SRA scale ($\beta = 0.29$, $t(237) = 4.66$, $p < 0.001$). We also note that there is the possibility of a social desirability bias involved in this scale, so we also analyzed this relationship while controlling for the “Lie” scale contained in the RMQ (Kruglanski et al, 2001). Even when controlling for this social desirability bias construct, the relationship between EMO and the SRA was still significantly positive ($\beta = 0.26$, $t(236) = 4.37$, $p < 0.001$). The

²⁸ Though the inconsistency of results regarding these two value categories across studies precludes the ability to make hard and fast conclusions about them, it is worth noting that they are consistent with the theoretical structure of EMO. EMO leads to a “fit” with the environment, which would be consistent with Conformity values. Furthermore, Stimulation is generally associated with the pursuance of hedonic pleasure to the possible detriment of other values, so it would make sense that EMO would have a negative relation to it.

Altruistic Behavior	Effectiveness of Motive Organization
Helped push a stranger's car from the snow.	0.08
Gave directions to a stranger.	0.27***
Made change for a stranger.	0.22***
Gave money to a charity.	0.26***
Gave money to a stranger who needed it.	0.13*
Donated goods or clothes to charity.	0.24***
Done volunteer work for a charity.	0.18**
Donated blood.	0.13*
Helped carry a stranger's belongings.	0.18**
Delayed an elevator and held door for a stranger.	0.24***
Allowed someone to cut in line.	0.20**
Given a stranger a lift in his/her car.	0.07
Pointed out a clerk's error in undercharging for an item.	0.24***
Allowed a neighbor to borrow something of value.	0.18**
Bought "charity" Christmas cards for a good cause.	0.03
Helped a classmate not known well with an assignment or homework.	0.24***
Voluntarily looked after a neighbor's pets without being asked for free.	0.07
Offered to help an elderly or handicapped person cross the street.	0.14*
Offered his/her seat to someone standing on a bus or train.	0.24***
Helped an acquaintance move households.	0.11†

† = $p < 0.10$; * = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$; *** = $p < 0.001$

Table 5.6: Correlations between the effectiveness of motive organization and frequency of engaging in particular altruistic behaviors.

correlations between EMO and each of the particular altruistic behaviors is included in Table 5.6. Also as predicted, Benevolence values (controlling for overall value emphasis) were also positively associated with self-reported altruism ($\beta = 0.31$, $t(236) = 2.51$, $p = 0.01$).

Given these associations, we next ran a mediation analysis to determine whether the relation between Benevolence values and self-reported altruism was explained by EMO. We ran a bootstrapped (10,000 repetitions) mediation analysis including benevolence as the independent variable, EMO as the predicted mediator, and overall value emphasis as a covariate. As predicted, including EMO in a multiple regression with Benevolence values and overall value emphasis reduced the relation between altruism and Benevolence to marginal significance ($\beta = 0.23$, $t(235) = 1.91$, $p = 0.06$). This effect resulted in a significant mediation of the relationship between Benevolence values and self-reported altruism by EMO scores (bootstrapped bias-corrected 95% CI: [0.012, 0.105]).

These results suggest that the impact of an effective motive organization is not limited to differences in value emphasis, but also in behavior itself (as reported). This is true across a number of behaviors, not simply those typically studied by psychologists (e.g. charitable giving). However, this task recalled only past altruistic behaviors. It remains to be seen whether the EMO scale can predict future altruistic behaviors or whether it can predict altruistic behaviors “in the moment.” To test these possibilities, we designed the following two studies.

Study 5: EMO and Future Giving

This study will demonstrate EMO’s test-retest reliability and show that EMO measured at time point 1 is predictive of reported charitable giving at time point 2 (four weeks later). This will establish whether EMO as a construct is predictive of future behavior. In this case, if we are correct in associating EMO with the experience of a virtuous character, higher levels of EMO reported at time point 1 should be associated with a higher likelihood of self-reported charitable giving at time point 2.

Methods

Participants

Seventy-three participants were recruited from the Columbia Business School's Behavioral Research Lab (BRL) to take part in this two-part study. For part one, participants received \$1.00. For part two, which took place between four and six weeks after part one, participants received an additional \$5.00. Of the original 73, a total of 48 participated in part two of the study. There were no differences found between those who returned for round two and those who did not on levels of EMO ($t < 1$), income ($t < 1$), employment status ($t < 1$), or reported charitable giving ($t < 1$). Any analyses relating to variables from round one are using the full sample, and any pertaining to round two use the smaller sample of those who returned for the second round. The round one sample consisted of 30 males and 43 females, and the round two sample consisted of 18 males and 30 females. There were no significant sex differences for any of the variables analyzed in this study.

Procedure

Participants completed the study in the lab on a computer. They first filled out the EMO scale, then responded to a number of demographic and general life questions. The demographic questions included age, sex, household income, and ethnic background. The general life questions included employment status (either employed or unemployed) and a dichotomous variable indicating whether or not the participant had given money to charity at some point in the previous four weeks ("Have you given money to charity in the past four weeks?"). Round two of the study included identical questions. In this way, we were

able to make predictions about how EMO measured during round one would predict behavior over the course of the following four weeks.

Results and Discussion

As in previous studies, the EMO showed high internal reliability both in round one ($\alpha = 0.88$) and in round two ($\alpha = 0.89$). It also showed high test-retest reliability ($r = 0.80$, $p < 0.0001$). In order to test whether the measured variables had any predictive impact on whether or not participants gave to charity in the previous four weeks, we used a multiple logistic regression on that dichotomous variable. Since many of the participants in this study were students, and because having disposable income can lead to higher rates of charitable giving, we controlled for household income and employment status in our models.

Within the time-one study, as expected, controlling for income and employment status, those with higher measured EMO were more likely to report at round one having given money to charity in the previous four weeks ($OR = 2.92$, $z = 2.16$, $p = 0.03$).²⁹ Also in line with our predictions, those with a higher level of EMO measured at round one were more likely to report at round two having given money to charity in the four weeks following the study ($OR = 6.40$, $z = 2.41$, $p = 0.02$).³⁰ This effect is illustrated in Figure 5.3.

This result suggests that EMO as a construct does not simply create the impression that one has engaged in frequent altruistic behavior in the past, but is predictive of engaging in altruistic behavior (i.e. charitable giving) in the four weeks following measurement. This evidence is consistent with our prediction that EMO represents the

²⁹ This effect is also present when not controlling for income or employment status ($OR = 2.38$, $z = 2.01$, $p = 0.04$).

³⁰ This effect remains significant even when employment and income are not controlled for ($OR = 3.29$, $z = 2.00$, $p = 0.05$).

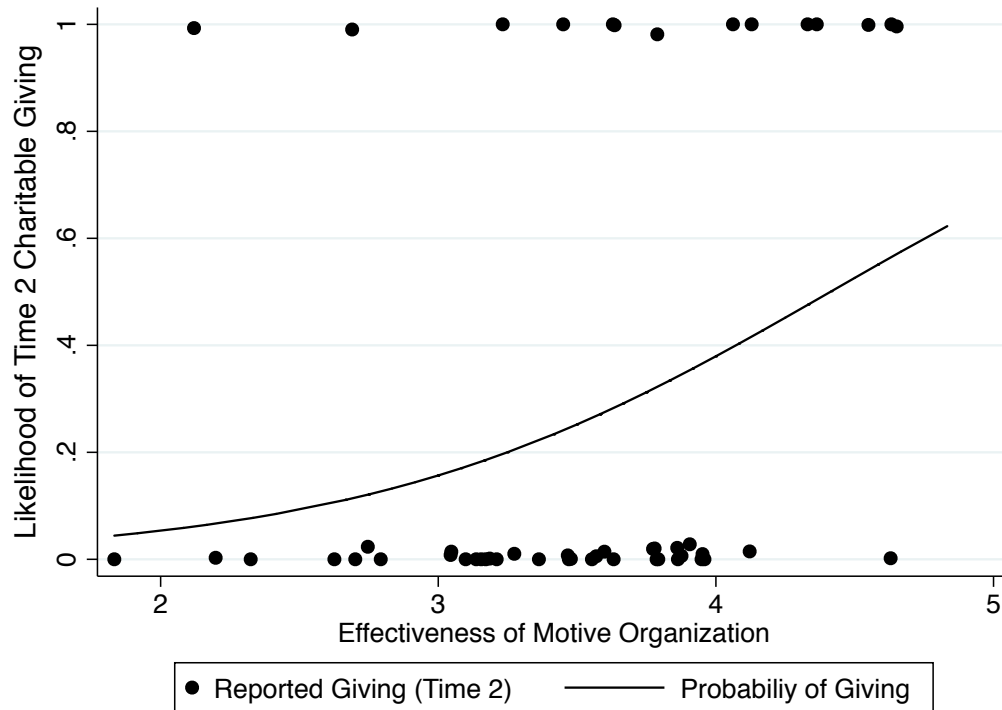


Figure 5.3: Predicted likelihood of giving to charity (0 = No; 1 = Yes) in the past four weeks at round two, predicted by the effectiveness of motive organization at round one (observations have been 'jittered' to prevent stacking).

experience of virtue in moral character—character measured at time point 1 predicts behavior consistent with that character at time point 2.

However, both this and the previous study relied on self-report. Though the self-report in this case occurred long after the administration of the EMO scale, and this relation remains significant even when controlling for the second EMO administration is controlled for, it is possible that EMO is associated with overestimating the degree to which one is charitable and altruistic. In order to account for this possibility, we designed a study in which the moral behavior could be directly observed.

Another issue with the previous two studies is that it does not do enough to differentiate EMO from other constructs. We know that those who score higher on EMO

also report greater happiness, and there is evidence in the literature that a good mood can increase altruistic behavior (Isen, 1987). In addition, perhaps one of the other scales with which EMO is highly correlated, such as the flourishing or satisfaction with life scale, would be equally predictive of these behaviors and values. Therefore, we included measures of each of these alternative explanatory variables in our final study.

Study 6: EMO and Present Helping

Given that a major obstacle to moral character described in the helping literature is the power of the situation in determining helping behavior, strong support for EMO's predictive power would be to demonstrate that EMO as a personality construct can predict helping behavior in a variation of the famous Darley and Batson (1973) helping experiment. In this study, we also included measures of the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al, 1985) and the Flourishing Scale (Diener et al, 2009) in order to show that the effectiveness of motive organization uniquely predicts ethical behavior independent of traditional measures of well-being with which it is correlated.

Methods

Participants

Sixty-one participants were recruited from the Behavioral Research Lab at the Columbia Business School. Participants consisted of 24 males and 37 females and there were no significant sex differences for any of the variables in this study. All participants were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions below, with the exception of two participants assigned to an "intermediate hurry" condition, before that condition was abandoned. Those two participants' data will be retained for the analyses of personality variables, but excluded for the analysis of the situational variables. Six participants (2

males and 4 females) rushed past the confederate before he had the opportunity to drop his papers and paperclips (i.e. before help was needed), and so were excluded from the analysis (4 of these participants were assigned to the “low hurry” condition and 2 were assigned to the “high hurry” condition). Four participants (2 females and 2 males) correctly identified the individual needing help as a confederate and so were also excluded from the analysis. This left a sample of 51 participants.

Procedure

The general structure of the study followed closely the classic study by Darley and Batson (1973). However, since there were some substantial differences as well, the methodology will be laid out in more detail. Participants first entered the lab and completed a series of questionnaires on a computer. These included the EMO scale, the Flourishing Scale (Diener et al, 2009), the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al, 1985), the Mode Effectiveness Questionnaire (Cornwell et al, 2014), and the Regulatory Focus Questionnaire (Kruglanski et al, 2001). Participants were then presented with a short paragraph drawn from Lustig, May, and Hasher (2001), which they were told to try their best to memorize as they would be asked to recall it later.

This was followed by a brief anagram task, in which participants were presented with five sets of five scrambled words (identical to Studies 1-3 in the previous chapter, except that they received no direct feedback about their performance in this case). Participants were told that between two and five of the presented “words” actually represented real anagrams, and a random number were non-words, which ought to be left blank. This was to ensure that participants were unaware of how well they did on the task. Following this task, they were prompted with a set of follow-up questions, including a

question about how happy the participants felt at that moment (on a scale from 1 – “not at all” to 7 – “very much”) in order to control for possible happy mood effects on our dependent measure. After the completion of this set of questions, participants were asked to recall the paragraph they saw prior to the anagram task.

The computer then directed the participant to get the attention of the experimenter, who informed him or her that the folder containing the final questionnaire and the cash payment for participating in the study was with another researcher in a room on the other side of the building. The experimenter then drew a map of the building showing the participant where to go to receive his or her payment. The participant was then told that this other researcher was either running participants on a related experiment all day, and so the participant might as well head over now (low-hurry condition), or that the other experimenter is probably finishing the study right now, so the participant should hurry in order that he or she not miss this researcher (high-hurry condition).

Along the hallway connecting the two rooms was another hallway that perpendicularly intersected with it. As the participant made his or her way between the two rooms, a confederate carrying papers and a box of paperclips emerged from that hallway, tripped, and dropped all of his papers and paperclips on the ground around him. He then proceeded to pick up the items he dropped. The dependent variable was whether the participant stopped to help the confederate to pick up the papers and paperclips or, instead, walked around the confederate without helping him in order to get to the other room.

There were a few differences between this experiment and the original Darley and Batson (1973) study. First, participants were only assigned to high- and low-hurry

conditions, omitting the intermediate-hurry condition of the original study.³¹ Second, this study involved a milder type of helping incident that a student would be more likely to encounter than the original study's face-down moaning individual. The third crucial difference lies in what was the reason for rushing. In the original Darley and Batson (1973) study, participants were volunteers from the local seminary who were completing two portions of an interview in two different buildings. In rushing to get to the second portion of the interview, participants were rushing to *help* another interviewer. Thus, their situation was one of choosing between helping the experimenters and helping the supposedly injured confederate. In our study, we made the primary purpose of the reaching the second experimenter a selfish one—participants needed to reach the second experimenter in time in order to get paid. Thus, in our study there was more clearly an element of selfishness in the hurrying than in the original Darley and Batson (1973) study.

Results and Discussion

As in previous studies, the EMO scale was highly internally reliable ($\alpha = 0.83$). As in Study 2, higher ratings on the EMO scale were significantly positively correlated with higher ratings on both the Flourishing ($r = 0.66, p < 0.001$) and the Satisfaction with Life Scale ($r = 0.72, p < 0.001$) scales. The EMO scale was not, however, correlated with happy mood ($r = 0.10, p = 0.38$); but even so, since it could theoretically be related to willingness to help, we controlled for it in the analysis. Because of these scale interrelationships, we conducted a multiple logistic regression predicting helping behavior to determine the EMO scale's independent predictive power when controlling for Flourishing, Satisfaction with Life, happy mood, and experimental condition (degree of "hurry"). The logistic regression

³¹ However, as noted above, two participants were placed in an "intermediate hurry" condition, which was later abandoned in favor of a simple comparison of "high" versus "low" hurry.

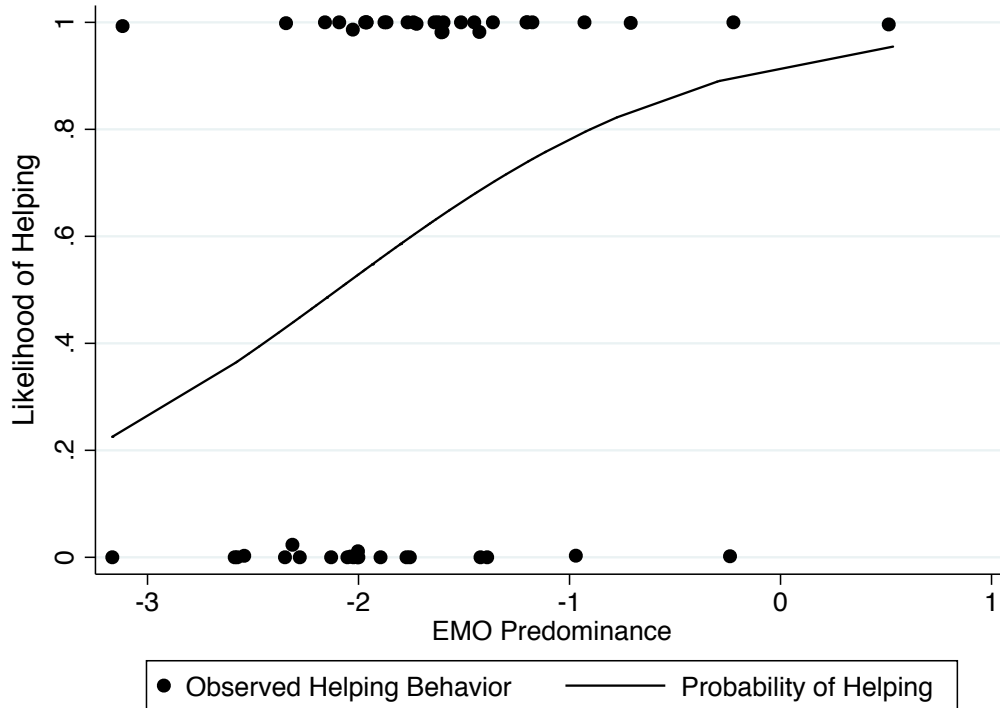


Figure 5.4: Likelihood of helping (0 = No help; 1 = Help) associated with the effectiveness of motive organization over and above flourishing and satisfaction with life (“EMO Predominance;” observations have been ‘jittered’ to prevent stacking).

revealed a significant effect only for the EMO scale, with those scoring higher on the scale being more likely to help than those scoring lower on the scale ($OR = 9.60, z = 2.15, p = 0.03$).

Importantly, none of the other scales was significantly related to helping behavior with the exception of Satisfaction with Life, which was *negatively* associated with helping ($OR = 0.30, z = -2.32, p = 0.02$). Interestingly, this effect only emerges when the EMO and the Satisfaction with Life Scale are regressed together, suggesting that the elements of EMO associated with moral behavior are those that distinguish it from the conceptualization of happiness as desire-satisfaction (which, according to our theoretical model, would be moral character). This result suggests that elements that set the EMO construct apart from

the Flourishing and Satisfaction with Life constructs, as noted above, are responsible for EMO's positive relation to ethical behavior. The results also show that the greater ethical behavior of individuals higher in EMO does not depend on their being in a happier mood. For visualization purposes, the effect of EMO over and above Satisfaction with Life and Flourishing is available in Figure 5.4.

Finally, it should be noted that there were no differences in helping behavior according to high versus low hurry condition ($z < 1$), which could be due to the differences in this study from the original Darley and Batson study (1973), as noted earlier. Nevertheless, the upshot of this study is contrary to a well-established bias in social psychology: that the situation always rules personality differences when it comes to helping others. In the effectiveness of motive organization construct, it appears that we have a personality variable that is significantly associated with altruistic and helping behaviors in the past, predictive of charity in the future, and predictive of helping in the present over and above situational influences.

5.5 *The Role of Virtue in Moral Character*

The forgoing research suggests that there is a concordance between well-being ('the good life' of good feeling) and morality ('the good life' of good behavior) insofar as each is related to an effectiveness of motive organization—harmony and integrity—as measured by the EMO scale. This is consistent with a theory of virtue in the development of moral character. In Studies 1 and 2, we saw the various ways that EMO is positively related to different kinds of 'happiness' or well-being, including having a meaningful life that is not simply a life of feeling happy. Studies 3, 4, 5, and 6 showed how the same 'effectiveness of

motive organization' construct is also associated with emphasis on benevolence values and higher levels of altruistic and pro-social moral behavior.

Taken together, these findings are consistent with the concept of virtue. The life lived in accordance with virtue is "good" both in the sense of doing well and of doing good. Thus we see preliminary empirical evidence that the experience of moral character can be measured in terms of the effectiveness of motive organization. This conceptualization of the good life as the convergence of well-being and good-doing could provide important insights into recent research on the study of character and the impact of the virtues (Keyes & Haidt, 2003; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006; Haidt, 2006).

5.6 Implications for Future Research

One major drawback of most of the above-mentioned research is that it is primarily correlational. With the exceptions of the examination of EMO's relationship to helping behavior and giving to charity in the future, the direction of the relations is unclear. For example, it is possible that not only does an effective motive organization, i.e., integrity, strengthen individuals' emphasis on benevolence values, but also strong emphasis on benevolence could improve the effectiveness of motive organization. In order to determine better how each of these directions plays out, it would be useful to conduct a longitudinal study. An intriguing possibility is that both directions are true and this interrelationship could constitute a "virtuous cycle" of sorts. Another possibility worthy of further study is that this effectiveness of motive organization construct may "scale up" from the individual level to the institutional or group level. After all, when discussing the various aspects of the soul, Plato did so analogously with the various institutional structures and categories within society as a whole (Plato, trans. 1992). The implication is that, just as the person

with the virtuous or well-integrated soul experiences the best life, a society with the most harmoniously interrelated institutions would be the best society in the attainment of the common good and the preservation of the social peace. Clearly different individuals have different roles associated with different tasks—whether they be related to effective truth (e.g., clergy or academics), control (e.g., military or police personnel), or value (e.g., business or political leaders)—and perhaps their harmonious and well-integrated interrelationships produce better overall performance of the group (see Higgins, 2012).

One final implication needs to be fleshed out as well, which could be called the potential “dark side” of the effectiveness of motive organization. It may not be always the case (and certainly shouldn’t be the case from the perspective of a non-consequentialist) that the ultimate goal should be the maximization of each person’s effectiveness of motive organization. It is important to note that EMO was not associated with emphasizing character strengths like fairness and humility, and values associated with universalism. The implication is that those who rate themselves highly on EMO, though more likely to engage in pro-social behavior on an individual level, may also be satisfied with the structure of society as it actually exists, and be less sensitive to systemic injustice. A related danger may be that insofar as one feels as though one’s life is a good fit with the world, one may also feel as though the world is a good fit with one’s life. Regulatory fit (and, by extension in this case, the chronic fit of EMO) has been associated with providing biased judgments that have been insufficiently verified (Vaughn et al, 2006). One need look no farther than Aristotle who famously justified slavery and the subjugation of women (trans. 2009), and even Aquinas who held views relatively more progressive than Aristotle

(such as respecting the equality of the sexes) still argued for the execution of heretics on the grounds that it was for their own good as well as the good of others (1274/1981).

It is important to remember that even though non-virtue-based views of morality, such as the 'prevention focus-morality of the Right' form of ethics, insufficiently account for human flourishing, they may in many ways be better at protecting the basic rights of those who do not feel a strong fit with their environment or society. Even if we expand the study of moral psychology to adequately deal with virtue, as our studies attempted to do with the integrity and harmony associated with an effective motive organization (EMO) and with virtue related to ideal standards, we should still maintain the importance of alternative approaches to morality to address these other concerns.

Chapter 6: Implications and Conclusions

The major aim of the above programs of research was to establish the importance of virtue as a construct in our approach to moral psychology. I did so in the areas of moral judgment, moral decisions, and moral character through the application of the tools afforded us by contemporary psychology to important philosophical and theological concepts. The overall goal was to push for an expansion of moral concepts in our cognitive and behavioral models of morality to include motivations associated with the achievement of virtue in relation to ideal standards as distinct from those associated with the maintenance of our duties and obligations (ought standards), and to include the harmony and integrity associated with the effectiveness of motive organization.

I hoped to generate interest in a new approach to the intersection of happiness and well-being— again consistent with a theory of virtue as moral excellence and personal flourishing—which has been given more attention in the past decade, rooted in both ancient wisdom and modern science. The constructs outlined above will hopefully show an important link between morality understood as the achievement of virtue and happiness understood as “the good life,” leading to a reintegration of morality and happiness. Such a reintegration has a number of implications for a variety of fields of study, two of which I will highlight below.

6.1 *Reconceptualizing Morality*

One of the upshots of this research is that a full conceptualization of morality will require considering each of the basic motivations of truth, control, and value. Such consideration will not only account for the most recent advances in motivation science, but

will also help modern approaches to morality grapple more effectively with ancient and classical theories of the person, many of which rely on a view of humanity driven by these three motives (though they take on different names throughout history).

Implications for Moral Philosophy

This research also has important implications for moral philosophy. As stated in the previous chapters, philosophical approaches to morality tend to fall into three schools: consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics. In the preceding chapters I have leaned most heavily on virtue ethics and perhaps been most dismissive of consequentialism, though this is likely driven by what I see as an unfair prominence given to the latter at the expense of the former by a host of social scientists (e.g. Greene, 2013; Pinker, 2002). Even so, each of these schools (including virtue ethics) tends to overemphasize one of the three types of motivation, with a nod to a second motivation, often excluding the third in its entirety.

Consequentialism's flaws should be most apparent at this point. Consequentialism prioritizes *value* as the ultimate standard for moral judgment and behavior. If the valuation of the consequences of behavior provides the only standard by which an action can be judged right or wrong, then questions of *truth* and *control* take a "back seat." This pattern of emphasis may be particularly problematic, given evidence that truth and control may actually represent equally fundamental motivations compared to value (Cornwell, Franks, & Higgins, 2014b). Consequentialism leaves some room for truth motives. Though it tends to treat ultimate questions as already answered—the "good" is the "greatest total happiness"—but leaves questions of means open to problem-solving: since we can assume that we're all agreed on what the good is, what ways can society be structured to deliver on

it (Mill, 1863/2007)? What this philosophy leaves aside, however, are control motives. Restructuring society appropriately (making moral philosophy “wonky” in the phrase of one psychologist, see Greene, 2013) means that people won’t necessarily have to make contributions to their own happiness. Their happiness may simply be provided for them rather than their being in charge of managing to make it happen (control). However, many individuals find their sense of meaning and life effectiveness from engaging in activities that are themselves unpleasant (e.g., many child-rearing activities), and the “poor little rich kid” is poor in life effectiveness precisely because all his or her needs are being met by the actions of others. This is not to diminish the importance of the notion of happiness-maximization as *a* factor in our ethical discourse, but it does throw consequentialists back upon the original question originally treated as settled: what is ‘the good’ for human beings? Focusing on valued outcomes in isolation will not get us there.

Deontology has its own difficulties as well. Deontologists tend to prioritize *truth*, with a subsidiary emphasis on *control*. What deontologists set aside, in the mirror image of consequentialism, is *value*. Kant bases moral precepts upon a principle of internal consistency—that which can be treated as a universal maxim is to be done (Kant, 1785/1993). Thus, morality becomes almost entirely an enterprise of truth motives in action—the constant assessment and discovery of permissible or obligatory action through the application of this principle. This approach involves control as well, because, as Kant notes, this approach to morality brings about perfect autonomy (Kant, 1785/1993). Such autonomy is possible through always behaving consistently with what reason demands through the application of this principle of consistency. However, this approach almost purposefully leaves aside questions of value motives. These principles of action are

intended to apply regardless of the consequences they bring about, or the degree to which they fit with a person's abilities or environment (indeed, all of these factors are explicitly called out as necessarily irrelevant to morality by Kant, 1785/1993).

Finally, virtue ethics, though I rely on many of its assumptions for an exploration of the different kinds of value in this dissertation, also has its motivational shortcomings. Virtue ethics prioritizes *control*, since it focuses on the habits which are to be acquired so that one may live in accordance with human nature and achieve perfect happiness. It also focuses on controlling one's actions to match one's ideal standards. That is, questions of *value* enter into this approach as well, since flourishing is constituted by living in accordance with human nature as it actually is, which necessitates being able to rise to the challenges of life and one's environment, and ideal standards are desired end-states. Unfortunately, this approach leaves aside the question of truth, particularly universal or metaphysical questions of truth, much in the same way that consequentialism assumes the question of truth as already settled. Virtue ethics can push and motivate the acquisition of certain kinds of virtues to deal with situations as they are found, but it has difficulty going beyond the local context in making pronouncements about human nature as a whole or how we are to live together globally (see the discussion of this drawback by Greene, 2013). Indeed, many contemporary defenders of virtue ethics have been criticized for what is perceived as their cultural relativism (though virtue ethicists have been attempting to counter this charge; see Nussbaum, 1988). It is perhaps its inability to grapple with this universal level of engagement that led philosophers to the schools of deontology and consequentialism with the advent of the Enlightenment in the first place.

Discussions within moral philosophy are at a unique juncture in human history. Never before have all three schools been seriously considered one with another within the academy (virtue ethics reigned unopposed for centuries, and went into remission during the modern era until the past few decades). This conversation is taking place in an increasingly global context, one that is beginning to recognize the complex nature of “happiness,” so the number of perspectives being set aside is shrinking. It is quite conceivable that a theory of ethics that has a role for each of the different fundamental motives (value, truth, and control) may eventually be settled upon, no doubt resting on the hard work already done by philosophers in each of the three major schools.

6.2 Reconceptualizing Happiness

‘Happiness’ also needs to be further developed as well. The research contained in this dissertation only constitutes a very small contribution in this respect, given the increased interest by a number of researchers across different fields of psychology, particularly positive psychology (see, e.g., Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2005). As noted in the previous chapter, in response to a number of criticisms that measures of happiness may be overly simplistic, researchers have begun studying the concept of meaningfulness in contrast to happiness per se (Baumeister et al, in press). This is important both because of the high correlation between a sense of having a happy life and a meaningful life (Oishi & Diener, 2014), and because the idea of life having meaning seems to be such an integral part in lay views of what it means to live a happy life. It certainly plays a major role in the thinking of philosophers.

Experimental philosophers have also noted the inescapably moral element to judgments of other peoples’ happiness as well. Specifically, individuals are less willing to

judge a person as “happy” if the way she is achieving her happy emotions involves behaviors that many see as hedonistic at best or self-destructive at worst compared to other ways of life judged as more noble (Phillips, Misenheimer, & Knobe, 2011). The upshot of this research is that there is much more to judgments of the happiness of one’s own and others’ lives than simple subjective or hedonic experience. This has in many ways driven the veritable explosion of research on moral character among psychology researchers who see an important link between character, moral action, and personal happiness (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Haidt, 2006)—a foundation with which the above research on the effectiveness of motive organization is entirely consistent. What EMO adds to this research is the integration across these two views of happiness. EMO, by recognizing the contributions of both notions of happiness—subjective well-being on the one hand (value) and character strengths and psychological resources on the other (truth and control)—integrates this research while recognizing the important contributions of each.

The major take-away point of this discussion is that happiness is a very slippery concept that often means much more than only those things measured in any particular psychology study. Therefore, any attempt to simply maximize any of these measures of happiness could very likely overlook other important aspects of what it means to flourish. We have made tremendous advances in what we know about human flourishing, but the existing literature, including the present studies, represent only the beginning of such advances.

Implications for Positive Psychology

Researchers in the field of positive psychology have contributed disproportionately to these many advances, but the present research, and especially the research on EMO, has

important implications for how to advance further. First, the research in positive psychology often occurs on an individual level. As stated in the conclusions of the previous chapter, there appears to be at least a theoretical foundation for believing that the kind of well-being associated with the harmonious interrelation of motivations on an individual level could be scaled up to the harmonious interrelation of roles on a group or institutional level. Elements of positive psychology may be similarly scaled up as well in an analogous way. Indeed, institutional implications of positive psychology research have begun to receive attention (e.g. Park & Peterson, 2008).

Second, the upshot of the research on character strengths and virtues was that individuals should “play to their strengths.” That is, those who have a particular virtue over and above other virtues ought to spend the most amount of resources in cultivation of that virtue (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). However, our research on the effectiveness of motive organization suggests something different (see also Higgins, 2012; Franks & Higgins, 2012; Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006). We found that higher levels of EMO were associated with lower variability among the character strengths and virtues, controlling for their overall mean. The implication is that strengthening a particular virtue over the others may actually increase variability and decrease EMO, which in turn could decrease well-being given the positive association between EMO and measures of well-being (although, as noted in the previous chapter, this needs to be tested longitudinally). Perhaps a “unity of the virtues” model may be a more appropriate approach to how character strengths and virtues relate to each other and produce life effectiveness and well-being.

The final implication is the relationship between morality and happiness. The entire concept of a “virtue” among philosophers constitutes the convergence of the two concepts

within any given individual: those experiencing the most virtues are both the happiest people and the most moral. There is also the important question of whether happiness may make people more moral or morality may make people more happy—a “virtuous cycle.” Such relationships are important for any research taking place at the intersection of moral and positive psychology.

6.3 *Convergence of the Two Meanings of the Good Life*

The purpose of this dissertation was to establish the importance of the concept of virtue—the point of convergence of the two meanings of a good life: morality and happiness—for three critical areas of study by moral psychologists: moral judgment, moral decision making and behavior, and the nascent field of moral character. In the third chapter, consistent with recent work in moral psychology, I argued that understanding individual differences in moral judgment as related to differences in the moral reference points used in making those judgments (ideals vs. oughts) could help to explain why some people persist in a view of certain harmless actions as wrong. These two reference points, corresponding to two distinct approaches in making judgments, appear to be processed in two different motivational systems (promotion vs. prevention) with different kinds of goals. This research has a number of implications for the field of moral judgment.

These two kinds of goals correspond to two different types of self-guides that are used as personal reference points when making a decision. When one’s way of going about making a moral decision “fits” with the type of goal being pursued, the regulatory fit effect intensifies evaluative reactions to what one is doing. Furthermore, the experience of moral emotions acts as feedback to indicate how one’s decision relates to these two types of goals. This research has important implications for decision theory, as well as for research on

moral emotions. It can also help to make predictions about how these different moral self-guides influence moral and immoral behavior across time.

Shifting to moral character, the motivational approach instantiated the convergence of happiness and morality in the form of the good life. An examination of the philosophical literature surrounding theories of virtue provided the theoretical grounding for the notion of moral character, and showed the possibility for its measurement in ancient and classical theories of the “good soul.” These theories ground moral character in ideal organization of motives that corresponds to the harmonious integrity of truth, value, and control motivations. Such integrity is, in a sense, chronic regulatory fit—from “feeling right” about a behavior, intention, or belief to “feeling right” about one’s life in general. The effectiveness of motive organization showed important unique relations to both well-being and ethical behavior, suggesting that it represents such a virtuous convergence of happiness and morality. These results have important implications for the study of happiness, the study of moral character, and their relations with one another.

None of the empirical predictions in this paper would have been intelligible, or indeed possible, without the concept of virtue. Virtue provides an alternative way of looking at morality—as providing the framework for the eager progressive achievement of true happiness rather than simply amounting to the vigilantly maintained rules providing for social peace and basic human welfare. Such a formulation presents a number of difficulties and challenges to anyone looking to advance the common good (especially those who would like to be able to have questions of what constitutes ‘the good’ settled and attend instead to its maximization), but I believe it provides a more descriptively accurate understanding of how morality works in the day-to-day lives of everyday people.

It also gives “morality” a broader definition, allowing its influence to creep into activities and situations that many people had heretofore walled off from moral consideration. Such moral considerations up to this point have been fended off by the fact that they often, when their foundational principles are systematically applied, lead to policies with negative effects (such as public ownership of all property). However, if morality is approached in a more associative way, with exemplars as its reference point rather than deductively rigorous rules, this need to take things to their logical conclusion is obviated. The exemplar itself serves as the conclusion. Thus people can be inspired to be better than they currently are without the fear that these calls to virtuous activity will be accompanied by logically rigorous legal prosecution (or persecution).

These results also suggest a fuller notion of what happiness is, and its intrinsic connection to morality. That is, happiness is not simply doing or believing the right things (control and truth) or a subjective feeling of satisfaction (value), but something that considers all of these three aspects and represents their harmonious integration. These broader investigations of happiness have been underway in the last decade, and this represents a contribution to that effort. They can help to resolve seemingly contradictory ideas, such as the fact that satisfying most needs associated with evolutionary survival are accompanied by positive feelings, whereas the centrally important need (in terms of evolutionary fitness) of having children appears to reduce happiness (Kenrick et al, 2010). By considering a fuller notion of happiness (e.g., having and rearing children as giving meaning to one’s life, as “going in the right direction”), not only can we achieve a virtue-like convergence between morality and well-being, there can be a more productive relation

between the happiness literatures and those considering our evolutionary origins (or even, relatedly, non-human animal behavior literatures, e.g. Franks & Higgins, 2012).

The concept of virtue has laid the groundwork for a fresh investigation into the phenomena of moral and positive psychology. This dissertation represents an attempt to use this concept as a way for these two fields to communicate more effectively with one another. Each way in which virtue improves our thinking with respect to moral judgment, moral decision making and behavior, and moral character provides new avenues by which we can understand this important phenomenon that in many ways defines how we live together and relate to one another. The implication is that by investigating these phenomena from this new perspective, we can begin to understand the real meaning of ‘the good life’—the principal aim of ‘the pursuit of happiness.’

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Appendix: Effectiveness of Motive Organization Scale

1. My life is going in the right direction. [0.77]

1	2	3	4	5
not at all like me	somewhat like me		very much like me	
2. I find that the challenges in my life are suited to my abilities. [0.59]

1	2	3	4	5
not at all like me	somewhat like me		very much like me	
3. I don't want to do most of the things I have to do. [-0.52]

1	2	3	4	5
not at all like me	somewhat like me		very much like me	
4. I feel effective. [0.75]

1	2	3	4	5
not at all like me	somewhat like me		very much like me	
5. I have a lot of difficulty getting what I 'really' want. [-0.57]

1	2	3	4	5
not at all like me	somewhat like me		very much like me	
6. My ideas, thoughts, and actions just 'flow.' [0.50]

1	2	3	4	5
not at all like me	somewhat like me		very much like me	
7. I feel in life that I'm exactly where I need to be. [0.76]

1	2	3	4	5
not at all like me	somewhat like me		very much like me	
8. My actions have an effect on the world. [0.56]

1	2	3	4	5
not at all like me	somewhat like me		very much like me	
9. I feel "right" about my life. [0.80]

1	2	3	4	5
not at all like me	somewhat like me		very much like me	
10. I rarely feel as though I'm thriving. [-0.68]

1	2	3	4	5
not at all like me	somewhat like me		very much like me	
11. I find that I am always learning new things. [0.45]

1	2	3	4	5
not at all like me	somewhat like me		very much like me	
12. I feel like I am doing what I'm meant to be doing. [0.74]

1	2	3	4	5
not at all like me	somewhat like me		very much like me	