



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

International Journal of Intercultural Relations

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/ijintrel

Moral foundations of positive and negative intergroup behavior: Moral exclusion fills the gap

Márton Hadarics^{a,*}, Anna Kende^b^a Political Psychology Research Lab, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary^b Social Groups and Media Research Lab, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Moral foundations
Moral exclusion
Intergroup relations
Intergroup behavior

ABSTRACT

Personal criteria about the morally appropriate forms of behavior can be crucial when coming into contact with members of culturally different outgroups. In our study, we investigated whether moral exclusion mediates the relationship between moral foundations and positive and negative behavioral intentions toward Muslim people. Our aim was to identify the psychological mechanism that explains why particular people intend to harm (or not harm), and help (or not help) members of particular outgroups. Using survey data from an online questionnaire, structural equation modeling and mediation analysis showed that individualizing moral foundations had a negative relationship with negative behavioral intentions and a positive relationship with positive intentions towards Muslim people. Binding moral foundations showed the opposite connection with behavioral intentions. The relationship between moral foundations and intergroup behavioral intentions was mediated by moral exclusion. These results imply that moral intuitions form the basis of behavioral intentions toward a culturally different outgroup both directly and by influencing whether or not the outgroup is worthy of moral concern.

Introduction

History books will most likely mention the post-2015 period in Europe as the time after “The Big Migration Crisis”. In 2015 and 2016 about 2.6 million refugees applied for asylum after reaching the territory of EU-member countries. Most refugees came from Muslim countries escaping from Middle Eastern and North African conflict zones (Eurostat, 2017). This meant an enormous challenge and source of tension in most European countries, not only in those countries that actually accepted refugees, but also in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). These countries had practically no previous experience with immigration, especially immigration from Muslim countries, while the general level of xenophobia is higher in these countries than in Western Europe. The appropriate way to respond to the crisis became a highly controversial issue in CEE countries. The question was framed mainly as a moral dilemma between the responsibility to defend the country from mass-immigration and the responsibility to help people in need. Considering the moral nature of this dilemma, the current research aims to reveal how people’s concepts about right and wrong predict specific forms of behavior towards a culturally different outgroup.

Social psychological research on intergroup relations and behavior has described at least two important factors regarding morality that influence behavioral preferences towards outgroups. Firstly, people behave on the basis of their personal *moral intuitions* toward another person: what they feel to be morally right or morally wrong towards the members of that particular group in that particular situation. (e.g. Graham et al., 2013; Janoff-Bulman & Carnes, 2013). Secondly, behavior toward another person can also depend on

* Corresponding author at: Department of Social Psychology, Eötvös Loránd University, 1064, Budapest, Izabella utca 46, Hungary.
E-mail address: marton.hadarics@ppk.elte.hu (M. Hadarics).

the definition of one's moral community, that is, the demarcation of the boundaries within which personal moral values and rules apply. People outside these boundaries are not regarded as worthy of moral considerations (e.g. Crimston, Bain, Hornsey, & Bastian, 2016; Opatow, 1990, 2012; Passini & Morselli, 2017).

By linking these two factors, our aim is to supplement existing research about the moral aspects of intergroup behavior. Building upon *moral foundations theory* (Graham et al., 2013; Haidt & Graham, 2007, 2009) and research on *moral exclusion* (e.g. Opatow, 1990, 2012; Passini & Morselli, 2017), we suggest that moral intuitions and the exclusion of a culturally different outgroup do not affect intergroup behavioral intentions independently from each other. Instead, we suggest that certain moral intuitions are related to the expansiveness of one's moral community, and either expose or defend culturally different outgroups from the risk of moral exclusion. We suggest that this kind of moral exclusion mediates the effect of one's moral intuitions on intergroup behavioral intentions.

Western societies – including Hungary – have treated Muslim immigrants and refugees both by unimaginable hostility (Dearden & McIntyre, 2017), and by offering help in the form of donations, volunteer helping, and political advocacy (Frayer, 2015). Positive and negative intergroup behavior are associated with common, but antagonistic psychological mechanism, and associated with different intergroup stereotypes and attitudes (as suggested by e.g. the stereotype content model, Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007). However, engagement in pro-social behavior, such as volunteerism or social change oriented collective action, cannot be explained simply by the reversed mechanisms of intergroup hostility (for the motivations of collective action engagement see van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008, for an overview of volunteer motivations, see Penner, 2002; Snyder & Omoto, 2008). Therefore, we aim to supplement previous research by focusing on the psychological mechanisms of both negative and positive intergroup behavior in the context of moral decisions.

Moral foundations and intergroup relations

In the recent years, several attempts have been made to map and integrate the values and motives of moral judgments and intuitions (e.g. Graham et al., 2011; Grey, Young, & Waytz, 2012; Janoff-Bulman & Carnes, 2013; Rai & Fiske, 2011). One of the most fruitful branches of this undertaking is undoubtedly the moral foundations theory (Graham et al., 2011, 2013; Haidt & Graham, 2007, 2009).

According to moral foundations theory, moral intuitions are primarily determined by personal moral foundations. These are innate, modular foundations of moral reasoning with evolutionary roots but also shaped by the social and cultural environment. The theory maps five moral foundations that are related to five different domains of morality: care, fairness, loyalty, authority, and sanctity. Care and fairness are often mentioned as *individualizing foundations*, and loyalty, authority, and sanctity constitute the category of *binding foundations* (Graham et al., 2009; Graham et al., 2011; Nilsson, Erlandsson, & Västfjäll, 2016).

The main evolutionary function of both forms of foundations is to protect the community from individual selfishness. However, they serve this function by essentially different mechanisms. Individualizing foundations achieve this by direct disapproval and prohibition of doing harm to others, and by making people respect the rights of others. In contrast, binding foundations protect communities by binding people to cohesive groups and institutions, and by creating well-defined roles within these groups and their institutional systems (for a review see Graham et al., 2013).

It follows from the characteristics of moral foundations that individualizing foundations make people take others' well-being into consideration regardless of their group membership, and binding foundations make them consider the interests and intactness of the ingroup first. This has important consequences for intergroup attitudes and behavior. Individualizing moral foundations foster helping intentions towards outgroups in need, while binding foundations are negatively related to prosocial intentions if the beneficiaries are outgroup members (Nilsson et al., 2016; Smith, Aquino, Koleva, & Graham, 2014). Individualizing foundations are negatively, and binding foundations are positively associated with intergroup prejudice (Hadarics & Kende, 2017b; Kugler, Jost, & Noorbaloochi, 2014; Low & Wui, 2016; Van de Vyver, Houston, Abrams, & Vasiljevic, 2016). Furthermore, people with strong binding and weak individualizing foundations tend to perceive culturally different outgroups as more threatening (Hadarics & Kende, 2017a), they are more willing to display discriminatory behavior towards them (Kugler et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2014), and prefer more aggressive and less cooperative conflict resolution strategies in international conflicts (Kertzer, Powers, Rathbun, & Iyer, 2014).

Moral exclusion and intergroup relations

Although it is clear that the two overarching dimensions of moral foundations have a consistent relationship with intergroup attitudes towards culturally different outgroups, the underlying mechanism of this relationship is less clear. For specific intergroup behavioral intentions, a decision is made about the moral status of the target group. This decision about moral exclusion or inclusion determines whether a particular form of behavior towards the target group is perceived as morally appropriate or not. In other words, moral exclusion creates a link between moral intuitions and intergroup behavior.

The concept of *moral exclusion* suggests that our moral standards, values, and considerations only apply to those within our moral community (Opatow, 1990). People do not feel the same moral responsibility towards everyone. Most importantly, they define the group of people who belong to their moral community, and therefore they are within their personal *scope of justice* (Deutsch, 1973; Opatow, 1990). Members of one's moral community deserve the treatment based on basic moral principles and rules of justice. Members of one's moral community have the right for fair treatment and their entitlement for support is acknowledged and respected. In contrast, the morally excluded can be treated immorally as they are outside the moral community, and therefore they are excluded from this personal scope of justice (e.g. Deutsch, 1973; Opatow, 1990, 1993, 1995, 2012; Staub, 1989). For this reason,

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7323624>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7323624>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)