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The return of moral motivation in predicting collective action against collective disadvantage

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Abstract

The social psychology of collective action against collective disadvantage has hitherto underspecified, not to say neglected, the profound power of moral motivations. This is particularly important because moral motivations can unite disadvantaged and advantaged group members to fight for a joint cause (e.g., civil rights). After a brief review of the literature on collective action and moral motivation, we propose that moral convictions, defined as strong and absolute stances on moralised issues, represent an essential part of moral motivation. Hence, any violation of a moral conviction motivates individuals to change the situation. Because this motivation leads to identification with the relevant group, it effectively integrates moral conviction with the Social Identity Model of Collective Action (SIMCA; Van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2008). This model suggests that a relevant social identity is the psychological basis for undertaking collective action motivated by group identification, group-based anger, and group efficacy. Our approach thus explains how seemingly individualistic moral convictions can have collective consequences.

Keywords: Collective action, morality, injustice, emotion, identity, efficacy.

La reconsideración de la motivación moral para predecir la acción colectiva frente a la desventaja colectiva

Resumen

La psicología social de la acción colectiva de los grupos desfavorecidos ha prestado hasta la fecha poca atención, cuando no olvidado, el importante poder de las motivaciones morales. Esto es especialmente importante porque las motivaciones morales pueden unir a personas de grupos favorecidos y desfavorecidos para luchar por una causa común (p. ej. los derechos civiles). Tras una breve revisión de los trabajos sobre acción colectiva y motivación moral, proponemos que las convicciones morales, definidas como posiciones absolutas y firmes sobre temas morales, representan una parte esencial de la motivación moral. Por ello cualquier violación de una convicción moral motiva a los individuos a intentar cambiar esa situación. Debido a que esa motivación conduce a la identificación con el grupo relevante, integra la convicción moral con el Modelo de Identidad Social de la Acción Colectiva (SIMCA, Van Zomeren, Postmes y Spears, 2008). Este modelo sugiere que una identidad social relevante es el mecanismo psicológico para iniciar la acción colectiva motivada por la identificación con el grupo, la ira grupal y la eficacia grupal. De este modo nuestro enfoque explica cómo convicciones morales aparentemente individualistas pueden tener consecuencias colectivas.

Palabras clave: Acción colectiva, moralidad, injusticia, emoción, identidad, eficacia.

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In the first decade of the 21st century, research in the field of moral psychology has mushroomed (for reviews see Haidt, 2007; Haidt & Kesebir, 2010). This work has developed new insights into how individuals' moral motivations inform choices in moral dilemmas (e.g., Greene, Sommerville, Nystrom, Darley & Cohen, 2001), and into the "moral foundations" that individuals use to moralize particular issues (e.g., Graham, Haidt & Nosek, 2009). In line with a focus on *moral absolutism* (e.g., my opinion on capital punishment should apply everywhere, anytime) as an essential aspect of moral motivation (e.g., Turiel, 1983), theory and research has provided new insights into the value protection processes that individuals engage in to defend such "sacred values" (e.g., Tetlock, 2002; Tetlock, Kirtel, Elson, Green & Lerner, 2000), and more specifically into the psychology of individuals' *moral convictions*, defined as strong and absolute stances on moralized issues (e.g., Skitka, Bauman & Sargis, 2005; Van Zomeren, 2010). It is therefore safe to say that the topic of morality, and moral motivation and absolutism in particular, have returned to the foreground of scientific debate and research.

Because this influential line of work typically focuses on *individuals'* moral motivation (e.g., Greene et al., 2001; Haidt, Koller y Dias, 1993; Skitka et al., 2005), we move beyond this approach by focusing on how seemingly individualistic moral convictions can have *collective* consequences. That is, do individuals' moral convictions on an issue predict their willingness to engage, and their actual engagement, in *collective action against collective disadvantage*? The conceptual problem here is that whereas moral convictions are conceptualized as grounded in individuals' *personal identity* ("I") collective action is conceptualized as grounded in individuals' *social identity* ("we"). Any theoretical integration of the psychology of moral conviction and collective action thus needs to explain how seemingly individualistic moral convictions can have collective consequences.

We address this issue by proposing that there is a special link between moral convictions and social identities because the former's core aspect of moral absolutism does not allow any violation of the moral conviction, and hence any violation increases identification with its victims. For example, violated moral convictions lead the disadvantaged to identify with their own (politicized) group, while they lead the advantaged to identify with the disadvantaged group. Importantly, this novel and integrative analysis implies that moral convictions motivate collective action among the disadvantaged *as well as* among the advantaged, because both can become motivated to fight for a moral cause. In the remainder of this article, we briefly review the collective action and moral motivation literature, and propose our integrative model that marries moral conviction with the Social Identity Model of Collective Action (or SIMCA for short; Van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2008). We subsequently discuss recent research that supports our integrative model, thus explaining how seemingly individualistic moral convictions can have collective consequences. Finally, we discuss the theoretical and practical implications of our novel perspective.

Collective Action against Collective Disadvantage

Collective action against collective disadvantage is typically defined in the psychological literature as any action that is aimed at improving the group's position, and is enacted as a (psychological) representative of that group (Wright, Taylor & Moghaddam, 1990; Van Zomeren & Iyer, 2009). This means that even seemingly individual actions such as signing a petition can be considered collective action. Indeed, researchers have typically examined petitions, demonstrations, sit-ins, and strikes as actions that often are in accordance with the definition (Klandermans, 1997). Although sociological perspectives on collective action typically do not use subjective definitions (e.g., Gurr, 1970; McAdam, 1982), they nevertheless study the same actions and ask the same questions: When and how do individuals participate in such

actions? Historically, three different theoretical approaches have been influential in shaping modern understanding of collective action against collective disadvantage. Partially in response to early accounts of collective action as “irrational” (LeBon, 1895/1995), the *first* important tradition focused on individuals as rational actors that seek to maximize subjective utility (Olson, 1968; see Van Zomeren & Spears, 2009). The strong version of this perspective may be considered an unrealistic portrayal of human nature, because psychological research shows that individuals are generally unable and also quite unwilling to make the exact cost-benefit calculations to assess maximal utility (e.g., Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). However, a softer version of this “rational” approach gathered steam in the 1970s in explaining collective action against collective disadvantage (see Opp, 2009). This approach, often referred to as *resource mobilization theory*, predicts that objective factors such as the size of social movements and the quality of infra-structure within the organization (e.g., networks, leadership) are key to mobilization (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Subjective factors were considered less relevant because it was assumed that individuals obeyed the laws of individual self-interest and utility maximization. It was not until Klandermans (1984) offered a subjective version of resource mobilization theory that insights from psychology started to permeate this approach. For example, Klandermans (1984) predicted and found empirical support for the idea that individuals’ subjective cost-benefit calculations indeed explained their participation. One important aspect in these calculations was individuals’ expectations of the success of the collective action. Therefore, one valid approach to predicting collective action against collective disadvantage is to focus on individuals’ subjective calculus of costs and benefits of their participation.

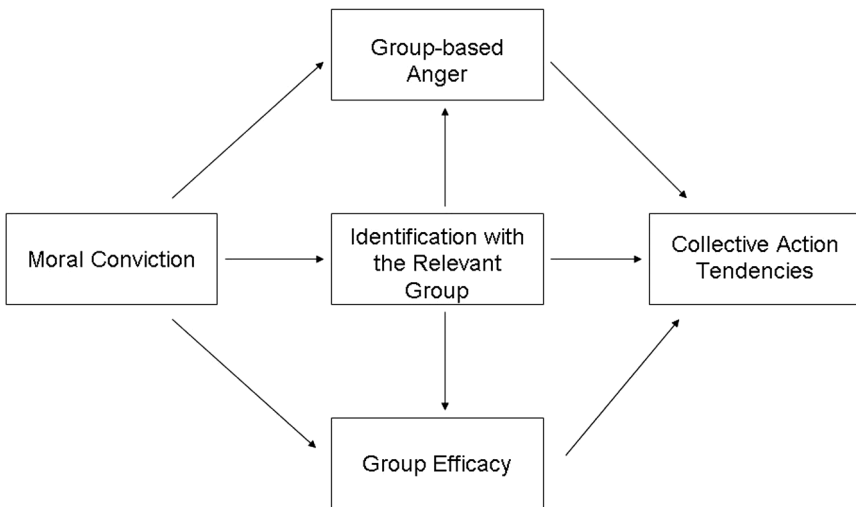
A *second* important approach collided with the resource mobilization approach because of a very different assumption about human nature. *Relative deprivation theory* assumed that individuals resemble passionate responders to injustice rather than careful subjective utility maximizers. The key difference here is that individuals were thought to be motivated to act by strong perceptions and feelings of injustice, quite independent of maximal utility (Runciman, 1966; Stouffer, Suchman, DeVinney, Star & Williams, 1949; for a review see Walker & Smith, 2002). Research in this tradition focused mainly on the conditions under which individuals experienced deprivation. The theory suggested that inter-personal comparisons are important to induce a sense of *relative* deprivation (i.e., I am worse off than you), and hence that inter-group comparisons are important to induce a sense of *group-based* relative deprivation (“we” are worse off than “they” are; termed fraternal relative deprivation by Runciman in 1966). Emotions like anger and resentment are argued to be crucial in channeling perceptions of deprivation into a powerful motivator of collective action against collective disadvantage. Recent quantitative reviews converged on the conclusions that collective action is indeed best predicted by the emotional and group-based type of relative deprivation (H. J. Smith & Ortiz, 2002; Van Zomeren et al., 2008). This implies that another valid approach to predicting collective action against collective disadvantage is to focus on individuals’ subjective and emotional sense of the relative injustice of their collective disadvantage.

The *third* important theory in this domain is *social identity theory* (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This theory, and the self-categorization theory that developed from it (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987), suggests that individuals are motivated to achieve or maintain a positive social identity, which is that part of one’s identity that derives from the group(s) one belongs to or feels a member of. This approach postulates that the self can be subjectively and contextually defined in terms of the individual’s personal identity (which makes him or her different from anyone else, or his or her social identity (which makes him or her similar to fellow group members and different from out-group members; Turner et al., 1987). Because individuals are motivated to achieve or maintain a positive social identity, social

identity theory suggests that individuals will cling to their social identity and fight collectively against the disadvantage bestowed upon them. More specifically, research has supported the idea that individuals mobilize on the basis of their social identity when they believe that there is hope and scope for social change (e.g., Drury & Reicher, 2009; Ellemers, 1993; Mummendey, Kessler, Klink & Mielke, 1999). Moreover, when identities become politicized (Simon & Klandermans, 2001), such as when individuals join an organization that fights for the group's interest, identification with this more specific group is even more predictive of collective action (for a meta-analysis see Van Zomeren et al., 2008). Therefore, a third valid approach to predicting collective action against collective disadvantage is to focus on individuals' identification with the disadvantaged group (see also Sabucedo, Durán & Alzate, 2010).

Recently, these approaches have been integrated into the Social Identity Model of Collective Action (or SIMCA for short; Van Zomeren *et al.*, 2008; Van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, *in press-a*; Van Zomeren, Postmes, Spears & Bettache, *in press-b*). SIMCA proposes that all three theories are important but each focus, in isolation, on only one part of the puzzle. In the model (see Figure 1), we represent core aspects of social identity theory through the concepts of social identity / group identification, core aspects of relative deprivation theory through the concepts of group-based injustice / anger, and core aspects of the subjective version of resource mobilization theory through the concept of group efficacy beliefs (which represent individuals' belief that the group is able to achieve its goals through joint effort; an important part of individuals' cost-benefit calculus; Bandura, 2000)¹. Thus, in SIMCA, all three explanations uniquely predict collective action (thus all are valid and important).

FIGURE 1
Broad integrative model



However, paraphrasing George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, although all three explanations are equal, one might be somewhat more equal than the others. Specifically, a sense of social identity is at the very core of predictive collective action because it reflects the psychological basis for collective action. SIMCA therefore predicts that a stronger sense of social identity (i.e., social identity salience, or group identification; Turner et al., 1987) increases perceived group-based injustice and thus group-based anger (cf. intergroup emotion theory; E.R. Smith, 1993), and increases beliefs about that group's efficacy to achieve social change. SIMCA thus points to the

direct influence of all three psychological variables on collective action, but also to the *indirect* influence of social identity on the other two important motivations for collective action. As such SIMCA integrates a number of important insights: First, collective action requires a relevant social identity on which collective action is based. This can be a non-politicized but also a politicized social identity, with the latter being more predictive of collective action. Second, both group-based anger and group efficacy are important motivations for collective action. And third, a stronger sense of social identity or group identification facilitates these motivations.

However, neither SIMCA nor the three main explanations of collective action specify where and how exactly moral motivation fits the picture. Although some research has touched upon the subject of morality (using terminology such as values, ideology, inner obligation, and deprivation relative to an ideal standard; see, respectively Van Stekelenburg, Klandermans & Van Dijk, 2011; Stürmer & Simon, 2004; Folger, 1986, 1987), none of these approaches specifies the underlying psychological mechanism that allows a qualification of these variables as “moral”. Moreover, it remains unclear how such constructs relate to the study of moral psychology, and the important development in this literature in the last decade. This is exactly why Van Zomeren and Spears (2009) called for a focus on morality in the collective action literature. Unlike other work, our current analysis is very explicit about what “moral” means while also taking advantage of recent developments in moral psychology: We propose that *moral absolutism* is an important “hallmark” of moral motivation because it tolerates no violations and thus motivates a change of the current situation.

Moral Absolutism

The first decade of the 21st century has witnessed an enormous spark of academic interest in the topic of morality (see Haidt, 2007). This work focused on individuals' dichotomous choices in moral dilemmas (e.g., do you sacrifice one life to save five; Greene et al., 2001), on their responses to violations of taboos and “sacred values” (e.g., for how much money would you sell your baby; Tetlock et al., 2000), and on underlying values that may vary across cultures (e.g., Haidt et al., 1993; see also Graham et al., 2009). For example, Haidt et al. (1993) focused on individuals' responses to moral violations that included clear signs of psychological harm (e.g., a child kicking another child to get access to the swings), but also on their responses to moral violations that did not include such harm (e.g., someone using the national flag to clean the bathroom). Interestingly, they found large between- and within-culture variation in the type of issue that individuals moralized (see also Graham et al., 2009). Moralization was indicated by, among a few other factors, a sense of moral absolutism that this violation was wrong *independent* of the context (i.e., it would be wrong anywhere, anytime).

Other work further demonstrates that moral absolutism implies zero tolerance for any violation thereof. Tetlock et al. (2000) proposed in their sacred value protection model (see also Van Zomeren & Lodewijckx, 2005, 2009) that individuals respond to violations of “sacred values” with moral outrage (that includes anger and a desire to vilify the violator), and / or moral cleansing (which includes the desire to reaffirm the violated value). Both types of responses are motivated by individuals' need to protect their “sacred” (i.e., morally absolute) values. Indeed, sacred values reflect “any value that a moral community implicitly or explicitly treats as possessing infinite or transcendental significance that precludes comparisons, trade-offs, or indeed any other mingling with bounded or secular values” (Tetlock et al., 2000, p. 853). For instance, in one study, devout Christians who believed in the literary truth of the Bible responded with strong moral outrage to questionnaire instructions to generate counterfactuals to a number of events in the life of Jesus Christ (Tetlock et al., 2000).

The key point here is that moral absolutism does not allow violations of one's stance (e.g., the Bible, abortion) – in fact, it powerfully motivates individuals to defend it.

Skitka and colleagues (e.g., Skitka et al., 2005) expanded on this line of thought by suggesting that *moral convictions* are “special” attitudes because once one comes to hold them, they are viewed as morally absolute and thus defended like a sacred value. Typically, moral convictions are measured with the item “My opinion on X is a strong reflection of my core values”, but they are assumed and found to be experienced as subjectively absolute and thus universal (Skitka et al., 2005). As a consequence, moral convictions are experienced as facts (not opinions), and their violation goes hand in hand with strong feelings of anger (which is an aspect of moral outrage in Tetlock's work). This motivation to protect one's convictions also legitimizes action (Skitka et al., 2005). Skitka and Bauman (2008), for instance, found that moral convictions predicted (self-reported) voting behavior in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections in the United States.

In the current paper, we define moral convictions as strong and absolute stances on moralized issues. The violation of moral convictions is strongly linked with anger and action, and explains these by a moral motivation (i.e., to protect one's sacred values). We therefore believe that the psychology of (violated) moral convictions can add something to explaining collective action against collective disadvantage. However, any integrative analysis in this respect needs to explain how seemingly *individualistic* moral convictions can have *collective* consequences. Indeed, the strong emphasis on either personal or social identity is one of the reasons why these literatures have not yet been connected (Van Zomeren & Spears, 2009). Below we offer such an analysis that effectively integrates the psychology of moral conviction in SIMCA.

Integrating Moral Conviction with SIMCA

Theoretical integration

We integrate the psychology of moral conviction with SIMCA through linking the violation of a moral conviction to increased identification with the relevant group. It is important to note that moral convictions are thought to be an important part of individuals' personal identity. Although we do not doubt that this may be the case, we believe that group norms are often the basis for the *development* of moral convictions. Yet, once people come to hold moral convictions, their morally absolutist perception breaches the group boundaries where they originated from. That is, their violation overrides any “lower-order” concerns or motivations: Moral convictions indeed demand adherence *irrespective* of the actor or subject that concerns them (cf. Baray, Postmes & Jetten, 2009). Thus, the paradox here is that whereas moral judgments are constructed much like other norms, they carry the seeds of social change by virtue of being placed on a higher level of importance than personal identity, social identities, and any other relational process that may account for social order (Van Zomeren et al., in press-a, in press-b).

We propose further that by virtue of their moral absolutism (Turiel, 1983), moral convictions profoundly fuel individuals' motivation to engage in collective action against collective disadvantage. Because moral convictions do not tolerate any violation, their violation motivates individuals to change the situation. In the context of collective disadvantage, this means that violated moral convictions increase identification with the victims of the violation (e.g., the disadvantaged). For the disadvantaged, this refers to their in-group identity. However, according to SIMCA politicized identities (e.g., specific activist organizations that fight for the disadvantaged group's interests) are stronger predictors of collective action than non-politicized identities because the former have clearer norms about the unfairness of the group's disadvantage and about undertaking collective action. Thus, for the disadvantaged, there should be a “special link” between moral convictions, identification with the politicized group, and undertaking collective action². This

identification effectively integrates the psychology of moral conviction with SIMCA, because a stronger sense of identity also fuels individuals' sense of group-based anger and group efficacy, which motivate individuals to engage in collective action even more.

But the power of moral convictions to motivate collective action is not restricted to the disadvantaged. Our integrative analysis implies that violated moral convictions increase identification with the disadvantaged even among the *advantaged*. This is because moral convictions breach existing group boundaries, which means that unleashing their moral motivation overrides any "lower-order" motivations. For instance, the advantaged are often viewed as being motivated to generally maintain the status quo (e.g., Jost & Major, 2001; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), and hence increased identification with their group should lead to less willingness to undertake collective action on behalf of the disadvantaged. By contrast, we predict that violated moral convictions motivate collective action on the basis of identification with the disadvantaged. Following SIMCA, it should also be this identification that increases group-based anger and group efficacy, which in turn predict collective action.

In sum, for both the advantaged and the disadvantaged, our integrative analysis predicts that seemingly individualistic moral convictions can have collective consequences because their violation increases identification with the disadvantaged group. This line of thought has at least two important theoretical and practical implications. First, we wed two lines of thought that were previously believed to be based in fundamentally different aspects of the self (i.e., personal versus social identity), and moreover we expand theorizing about moral motivation from the individual to the group realm. Second, our line of thought implies that moral convictions, at least when violated, unleash the motivation to fight social inequality among the disadvantaged, but also among the advantaged. This is because moral convictions reflect moral motivations that override other relevant motivations.

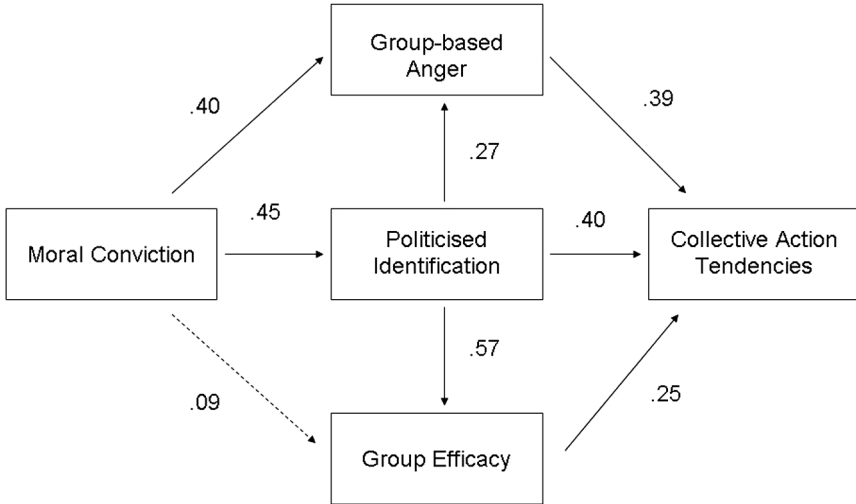
Empirical evidence

We tested our theoretical integration of the psychology of moral conviction and SIMCA in two different lines of research (Van Zomeren et al., in press-a, in press-b). In the first set of studies, we tested our integrative model among disadvantaged groups in the Netherlands and Italy. In the second set of studies, we tested the model among advantaged groups in the Netherlands and Hong Kong. These different samples enabled a test of the external validity of our model. Van Zomeren et al. (in press-a) reported two studies that focused on Dutch students' response to increased tuition fees (Study 1), and Italian consumers' response to European legislation that would harm their "right to know" in terms of clear labels for food that incorporates genetically-modified ingredients (Study 2). Study 1 focused on students' moral convictions against increased tuition fees, their identification with students, their identification with the student union (i.e., the politicized identity in this context), their group-based anger, their group efficacy beliefs, and their willingness to undertake collective action. Study 2 focused on the same variables but also included a behavioral measure (i.e., signing a Greenpeace petition).

The results of Study 1 showed first support for our integrative model. As can be seen in figure 2a, moral conviction predicted politicized identification, which predicted group-based anger, group efficacy, and collective action tendencies. Importantly, the triad of moral conviction, politicized identification, and collective action tendencies had stronger links between them than the same triad involving non-politicized identification. Thus, moral convictions against increased tuition fees in the Netherlands energized students' willingness to engage in collective action through

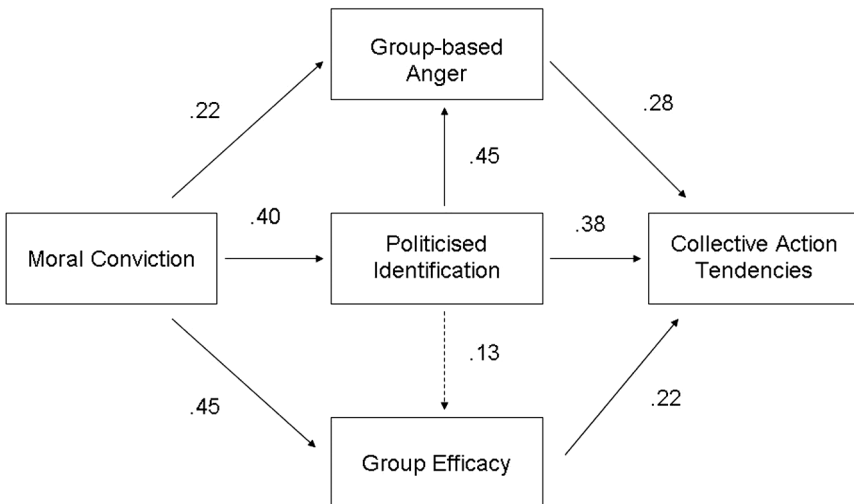
identification with the student union, and the group-based anger and efficacy perceived and felt, respectively.

FIGURE 2A
Predictive model, Van Zomeren et al. (in press-a), Study 1



The Study 2 results largely replicated the Study 1 results, but importantly extended them to actual behavior (i.e., signing a Greenpeace petition). As can be seen in figure 2b, moral conviction again predicted politicized identification, which predicted group-based anger, group efficacy, and collective action tendencies. In line with SIMCA, collective action tendencies predicted signing the petition. Importantly, the triad of moral conviction, politicized identification, and collective action tendencies again had stronger links between them than the same triad involving non-politicized identification. Thus, moral convictions about the “right to know” in Italy energized consumers’ willingness to engage, and actual participation in, collective action through identification with Greenpeace, and the group-based anger and efficacy perceived and felt, respectively.

FIGURE 2B
Predictive model, Van Zomeren et al. (in press-a), Study 2

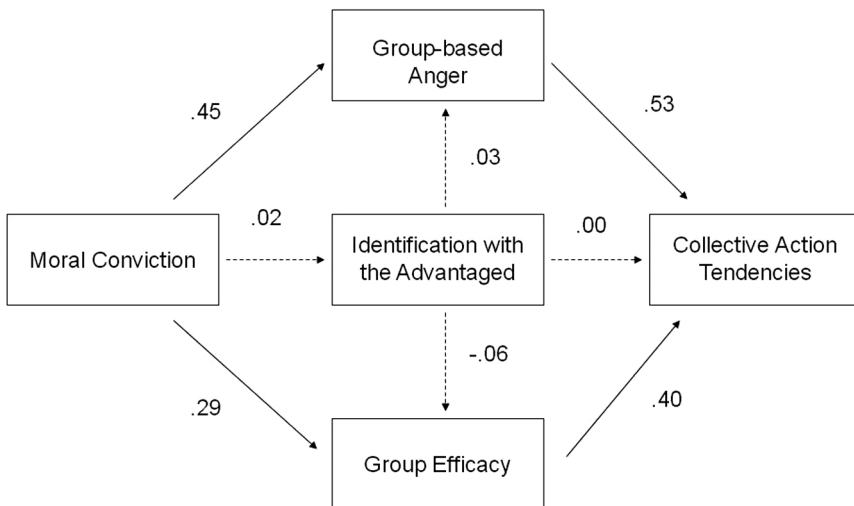


Taken together, these results provide support for our integrative analysis as applied to the disadvantaged. Collective action is based in a relevant social identity, and in line with our integrative analysis we found that moral convictions make the politicized identity more relevant, both for the Dutch students and the Italian consumers. The violation of a moral conviction thus powerfully motivates collective action through the SIMCA predictors of collective action against collective disadvantage. As a consequence, seemingly individualistic moral convictions can have collective consequences among the disadvantaged.

The second set of studies (Van Zomeren et al., in press-b) tested whether moral convictions can also unleash collective action against collective disadvantage among the advantaged. Van Zomeren et al. (in press-b) reported two studies that focused on the non-Muslim Dutch in the Netherlands who responded to the discrimination of the Muslim Dutch (Study 1), and on the Hong Kong Chinese in Hong Kong who responded to the discrimination of the Mainland Chinese (Study 2). Because Study 1 preceded, in a temporal sense, most of our thinking about moral convictions and collective action, we unfortunately did not include a measure of out-group identification in this study at that time. Study 2, however, did include this measure.

As can be seen in figure 3a, and in line with expectations, in Study 1 moral conviction predicted group-based anger, group efficacy, and collective action tendencies. Moral conviction did not, however, predict identification with the advantaged group. This supports the idea that identification with the advantaged group is not what links moral conviction to collective action among the advantaged – indeed, we expected this to be identification with the *disadvantaged* group.

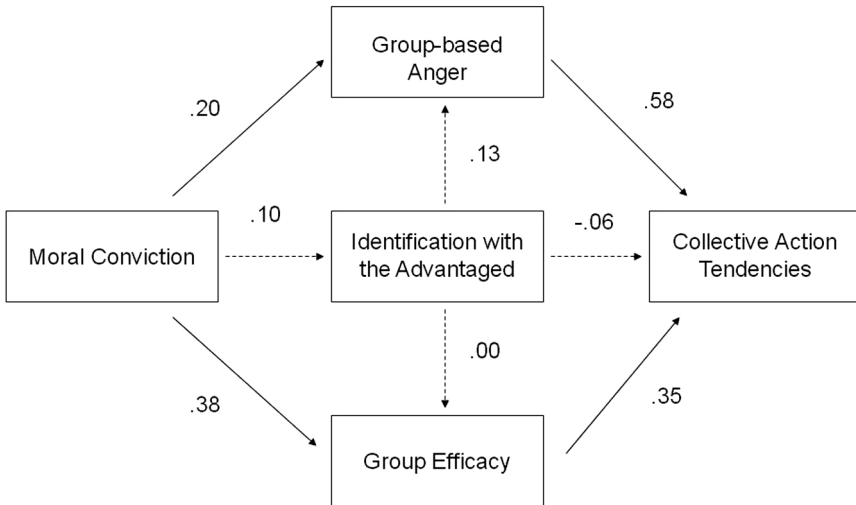
FIGURE 3A
 Non-fitting model, Van Zomeren et al. (in press-b), Study 1



The results of Study 2 showed more direct support for our expectations. Whereas identification with the advantaged group was again unrelated to any of the SIMCA variables (see Figure 3b), moral conviction indeed predicted identification with the disadvantaged group, which in turn predicted group-based anger and collective action tendencies (see Figure 3c). Although this identification did not predict group efficacy beliefs, moral conviction had a direct effect on this variable, and thus contributed to

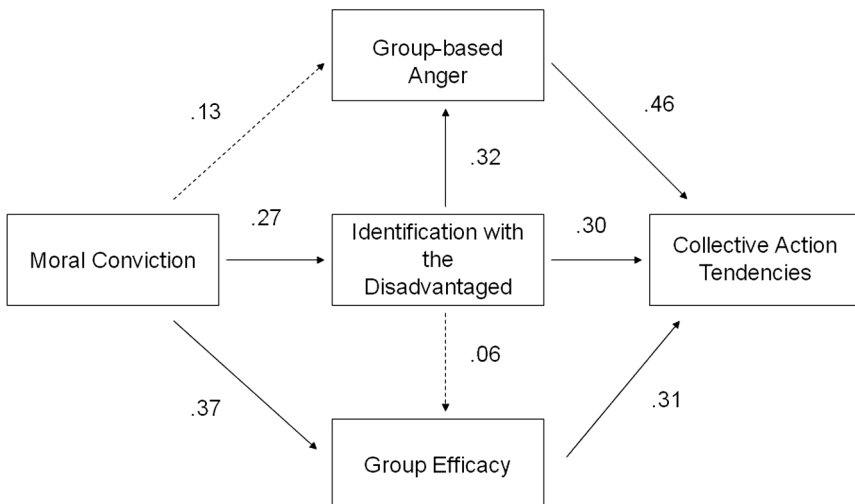
explaining collective action tendencies directly as well as indirectly through group efficacy.

FIGURE 3B
Non-fitting model, Van Zomeren et al. (in press-b), Study 2



In sum, these two series of studies tested our theoretical integration of the psychology of moral conviction with SIMCA. The results are in line with our argument that, among the disadvantaged as well as among the advantaged, violated moral convictions increase identification with the relevant group, which enables and facilitates group-based anger, group efficacy, and collective action (tendencies). As such these studies uncover an important and hitherto neglected side of individuals' motivation to challenge social inequality, which is their moral motivation. Our integrative analysis uniquely points to the violation of moral absolutism, as reflected by violated moral convictions, as a profound psychological marker of individuals' moral motivation to undertake collective action against collective disadvantage.

FIGURE 3C
Predictive model, Van Zomeren et al. (in press-b), Study 2



Theoretical and Practical Implications

Our integrative analysis features a number of important advances over previous work. It is theoretically integrative because it links moral convictions with (predictors of) collective action; it expands the domain of SIMCA to include the disadvantaged and the advantaged; and it makes clear what is so special about individuals' moral motivation to undertake collective action against collective disadvantage (i.e., moral absolutism). Moreover, two series of empirical studies that employed diverse samples supported our integrative model.

Our line of thought has at least three important theoretical implications. First, SIMCA predicts that collective action is based in a *relevant* social identity. For the disadvantaged, this might be the in-group identity, but politicized identities seem a better basis for predicting collective action among the disadvantaged (for a meta-analysis see Van Zomeren et al., 2008). Importantly, the current analysis implies that moral convictions increase individuals' identification with the politicized group because there is a special link between the moral absolutism of moral convictions and the group norms about collective disadvantage and collective action associated that represent the content of politicized identities. For the advantaged, the story is slightly different. The relevant group for the advantaged is the disadvantaged, because they identify with them and their plight on the basis of their violated moral conviction. In this sense, the apparent difference between the advantaged and disadvantaged is overpowered by a strong commonality: For members of both groups, collective action against social inequality is predicted by their identification with the *disadvantaged* group. Thus, the word "relevant group identity" in figure 1 is not trivial – in fact, it elevates SIMCA to a general model of collective action among the disadvantaged *and* the advantaged.

Second, our focus on moral conviction should not prevent us from observing that the current studies add to accumulating evidence for SIMCA as a general psychological model of collective action. As important as we believe moral convictions can be as reflecting moral motivation (Van Zomeren & Spears, 2009), our model predicts that moral convictions *fuel* or *energize* three other motivations to undertake collective action. However, they do not explain unique variance once these SIMCA variables are taken into account. This suggests that SIMCA represents the more proximal psychological variables that predict collective action against collective disadvantage, which concurs with the idea that collective action is based in social identity, and with the meta-analytic findings on which SIMCA was originally based (Van Zomeren et al., 2008). Our current line of thought thus adds support for while also extending SIMCA.

Third, a key question that arises from our theoretical analysis is where moral convictions come from. Although we have no empirical data to back up this point, we believe that moral convictions tend to be extrapolated from the normative systems and codes of conduct within groups – they may arise out of, or are imbued with social meaning within, a process of consensualisation (e.g., Haslam et al., 1998; Turner et al., 1987). But the *subject* of these moral concerns is special: They may develop within specific groups, but as soon as they acquire the status of moral convictions, almost by definition, they transcend group boundaries. The tendency to accept moral judgments as absolute is undoubtedly subject to the same processes of social construction. However, once a person has acquired a set of moral concerns and holds them as convictions, they override any "lower-order" concerns: Moral convictions demand adherence *irrespective* of the actor or subject that concerns them (cf. Baray et al., 2009). Indeed, this is what makes them so special, and what allows an integration of these seemingly individualistic moral convictions with a group-based analysis of collective action against collective disadvantage.

Our integrative analysis has also a number of important implications for the practice of collective action. For one, SIMCA identifies the key psychological predictors of collective action that practitioners need to target in their social influence attempts to effectively mobilize individuals for collective action. When practitioners succeed in raising individuals' identification with the relevant group, their group-based anger about collective disadvantage, and their group efficacy beliefs to reduce it, their willingness to undertake collective action will be higher and hence their participation becomes more likely. Moreover, practitioners should also focus on unleashing individuals' moral motivation, for example by framing collective disadvantage as a violation of something absolute (or sacred, in Tetlock's [2002] terms). Recent research from our lab indeed suggests that the activation of a morally absolutist mindset increases identification with the relevant group (Van Zomeren, Postmes & Turner, 2010). Finally, our perspective suggests that practitioners should target the disadvantaged as well as the advantaged. Although some might argue that these groups have different objective interests (i.e., a general motivation to either challenge or protect the status quo; e.g., Jost & Major, 2001; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), our model and results suggest that moral motivations, at least among the advantaged, seem to override other potential concerns and motivations. This once more suggests that moral motivations have a unique power in setting into motion the fundamental psychological processes that lead to collective action against collective disadvantage.

Conclusion

In this article we integrated insights from moral psychology with SIMCA, which is an integrative model of collective action against collective disadvantage. This novel synthesis leads to a model that explains how seemingly individualistic moral convictions can have collective consequences. Moreover, through this synthesis the same model can predict collective action among the disadvantaged as well as among the advantaged. We hope that this article makes clear that moral motivations are profound and powerful, and that they should be properly specified and examined in relation to more established motivations in the psychology of collective action and social change. Our integrative model, together with the results of the studies we reviewed, seems to suggest that this is a fruitful scientific enterprise.

Notes

- 1 Theory and research has suggested that this calculus can be represented by a value by expectancy approach (e.g., when I value X and expect collective action to achieve X to be successful, I will participate in it; Klandermans, 1984; Simon, et al., 1998). Although group efficacy beliefs reflect the expectancy part of this approach, one can wonder "where the value is" in SIMCA. We believe that "value" is reflected in SIMCA in the social identity and group-based injustice variables (and now also in moral conviction), but these variables reflect more specific motivations for collective action as well as more complex motivations than simple "value". SIMCA thus moves beyond the need to include "value" in its analysis of collective action.
- 2 In self-categorization language, this special link exists because there is a strong *normative fit* (Turner et al., 1987) between the moral conviction in question and the normative content of the politicized identity. This fit makes this social identity more relevant than others, and thus acts as the psychological basis of collective action. For example, a moral conviction against social inequality might provide a strong normative fit with a social identity that represents fighting a particular social inequality.

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