

Group Virtue: The Importance of Morality (vs. Competence and Sociability) in the Positive Evaluation of In-Groups

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Although previous research has focused on competence and sociability as the characteristics most important to positive group evaluation, the authors suggest that morality is more important. Studies with preexisting and experimentally created in-groups showed that a set of positive traits constituted distinct factors of morality, competence, and sociability. When asked directly, Study 1 participants reported that their in-group's morality was more important than its competence or sociability. An unobtrusive factor analytic method also showed morality to be a more important explanation of positive in-group evaluation than competence or sociability. Experimental manipulations of morality and competence (Study 4) and morality and sociability (Study 5) showed that only in-group morality affected aspects of the group-level self-concept related to positive evaluation (i.e., pride in, or distancing from, the in-group). Consistent with this finding, identification with experimentally created (Study 2b) and preexisting (Studies 4 and 5) in-groups predicted the ascription of morality, but not competence or sociability, to the in-group.

Keywords: morality, warmth, competence, stereotypes, group identity

Both Western and Eastern metaphysics specify the characteristics that constitute people's greatest virtues and vices (for discussions, see MacIntyre, 1984; Nietzsche, 1887/1967; Shweder, Much, Mahapatra, & Park, 1997). For example, Aristotle listed 14 human virtues in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, including "righteous indignation," "the just," "sincerity," "wisdom," and "friendliness" (as cited by Robinson, 1989). According to Aristotle, people who display these characteristics should be evaluated positively, as good and virtuous people. Contemporary research on the characteristics used to positively evaluate groups has tended to focus on two of the virtues mentioned by Aristotle—competence (i.e., wisdom) and sociability (i.e., friendliness). This emphasis on competence and sociability has meant that little attention has been given to the characteristic that Aristotle and most other metaphysicists consider most important to the evaluation of human virtue—morality (see MacIntyre, 1984; Nietzsche, 1887/1967).

Metaphysics is not the only branch of thought that considers morality the most important of virtues. De Waal's (1996) comparative studies of primates led him to argue that the complex social interaction required for survival within the highly interdependent groups in which humans (as well as chimpanzees and bonobos) live requires that individual behavior be guided by a sense of

morality. In quite different work, Schwartz (1992) has shown that people across the world consider moral values to be among the most important guiding principles in their lives. Thus, in this article, we extended previous work on the role of competence and sociability in individuals' positive evaluation of in-groups by also examining the role of morality. In five studies, we used different methods to compare the importance of morality, competence, and sociability in the positive evaluation of preexisting (Studies 1, 3, 4 and 5) and experimentally created (Studies 2a and 2b) in-groups.

The Basis of Positive Evaluation

A wide variety of research has shown that the single traits people ascribe to themselves and others (e.g., intelligent, skilled, competent) tend to cluster together to describe a specific human characteristic (i.e., competence; Anderson & Sedikides, 1991; Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum, 1957; White, 1980; Williams & Best, 1982). In turn, these characteristics (e.g., competence, sociability, morality, strength, prestige) tend to fall along two, more general dimensions of positive evaluation: power (i.e., agency, dominance, dynamism) and benevolence (i.e., communion, nurturance, favorability; for reviews, see Leach, 2006; Osgood, 1971; White, 1980; Williams & Best, 1982).¹ For example, Rosenberg, Nelson, and Vivekananthan (1968) showed that the single person-

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¹ Leach (2006) recently reviewed work on the evaluation of groups in the stereotyping, prejudice, attitude, and group bias literatures. He built on the work of Osgood et al. (1957) and Rosenberg et al. (1968) to suggest an integrative two-dimensional framework. He conceptualized the characteristics of competence, strength, prestige, and activity as falling along a more general dimension of power, whereas the characteristics of sociability, morality, cooperation, and compatibility fall along a more general dimension of benevolence. That morality and sociability both fall along the more general dimension of benevolence suggests the reason that these two characteristics have often been treated as one in work at both the individual (e.g., Wojciszke, 1994) and group (e.g., Fiske et al., 2002; Phalet & Poppe, 1997) levels.

ality traits ascribed to individuals tended to coalesce into specific clusters indicating the more abstract human characteristics of competence (i.e., skillful, industrious, intelligent), sociability (i.e., good-natured, happy, warm, sociable), and morality (i.e., honest, sincere) among others. The competence cluster fell along one, more general dimension described as *intellectual goodness*, whereas the sociability and morality clusters fell along a second, more general dimension described as *social goodness*.

Competence and Sociability

Although a wide variety of human characteristics may be used to evaluate groups (Brewer & Campbell, 1976; Osgood et al., 1957; Williams & Best, 1982; for a review, see Leach, 2006), most contemporary research tends to examine only competence and sociability. For example, a wide variety of research shows that groups that are more successful than others tend to be ascribed high competence (e.g., Conway, Pizzamiglio, & Mount, 1996; Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Judd, James-Hawkins, Yzerbyt, & Kashima, 2005; Poppe & Linssen, 1999; Ridgeway, Boyle, Kuipers, & Robinson, 1998). In contrast, groups that are less successful tend to be ascribed moderate sociability. Theories of social role (Eagly & Steffen, 1984), status expectation (Ridgeway et al., 1998), interdependence (e.g., Alexander, Brewer, & Herrmann, 1999), social dominance (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), and system justification (Kay & Jost, 2003) all suggest that this differential ascription of characteristics serves to legitimate differential success by providing each group a distinct basis of positive evaluation (see also Fiske et al., 2002). More specifically, the functionalist perspective at the heart of these theories suggests that competence and sociability enable more and less successful groups to evaluate themselves positively if they characterize themselves in a way that legitimates their level of success. It is argued that a more successful in-group can feel good about itself because of its competence, whereas a less successful in-group can feel good about itself because of its sociability.

Despite the popularity of the functionalist perspective, there have been few studies in which people have been directly asked how important competence and sociability are for their in-groups (as we did in Study 1). More critically, little work has empirically examined the importance of competence and sociability in individuals' positive evaluation of their in-groups. It has simply been presumed that those characteristics that individuals most ascribe to their in-group are most important to individuals' positive evaluation of the in-group and to their (group-level) self-concept. However, the degree to which traits are ascribed to an in-group may be influenced by a number of contextual concerns that have little to do with the psychological importance that these traits have for in-group membership (e.g., Judd et al., 2005; van Knippenberg, 1978). For example, success at a task may lead individuals to ascribe more competence to their in-group without necessarily making competence more important to the positive evaluation of the in-group (for a discussion, see Spears, Jetten, & Doosje, 2001). Thus, rather than assuming that the degree to which characteristics are ascribed to an in-group is an indication of their importance, we used both direct and unobtrusive methods to actually assess the importance of competence and sociability in individuals' positive evaluation of their in-group.

Because the vast majority of research on the ascription of characteristics to groups has not examined morality, we know very

little about its importance to positive evaluation. In addition, the importance of morality is unclear because in the few studies that aimed to address morality, it was conflated with other characteristics, such as dominance (Phalet & Poppe, 1997) or sociability (Fiske et al., 2002; Jost & Kay, 2005; see also Wojciszke, 1994).² However, a group may be moral (i.e., honest and trustworthy) without necessarily being sociable (i.e., warm and friendly), and vice versa. For example, a moral in-group may be honest about an out-group's failings, even when this means that they are being less warm and friendly toward the out-group. And a sociable in-group may be warm and friendly in a disingenuous (and thus immoral) attempt to win friends and influence people. Although morality and sociability can be seen as falling along the same general dimension of evaluation (i.e., benevolence), they are conceptually distinct characteristics. Indeed, research at the individual level shows people treat personality traits related to morality as distinct from traits related to sociability (e.g., Anderson & Sedikides, 1991; Rosenberg et al., 1968; White, 1980). There is no reason this should not also be the case at the group level. Thus, in several studies, we established the validity of distinct, trait-based measures of in-group morality, competence, and sociability. If morality is a distinct in-group characteristic, it should play a distinct role in the positive evaluation of in-groups.

The Importance of Morality

The social identity tradition assumes that any characteristic ascribed to an in-group can provide a basis for positive evaluation (see Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Thus, at a theoretical level, the social identity tradition allows morality to be the most important characteristic in the positive evaluation of in-groups. However, most empirical work within the social identity tradition has examined competence as the basis of positive in-group evaluation (for reviews, see Bettencourt, Dorr, Charlton, & Hume, 2001; Ellemers, 1993; Spears et al., 2001). Thus, research in the social identity tradition tends to share the functionalist approach in other work on competence and sociability in group evaluation. More specifically, in the social identity tradition, the sense of competence thought to follow from an in-group's intellectual or economic success is presumed to enable both the positive evaluation of the in-group (i.e., *in-group favoritism*) and the negative evaluation of a less successful out-group (i.e., *out-group derogation*). As such, in-group competence is widely considered "status defining"—the basis of a status distinction that favors the in-group over an out-group (for reviews, see Bettencourt et al., 2001; Spears et al., 2001).

² A similar problem can be found in research examining person perception. Wojciszke (1994) argued that morality is more important to individuals' evaluation of other people than it is to evaluation of the self because other people's morality suggests whether they will enable, or thwart, one's goals. In apparent support of this reasoning, Wojciszke et al. (1998, Study 1) reported that participants identified more "morality-related" attributes (e.g., sincere, honest, fair, but also good-natured, helpful, and understanding) than "competence-related" attributes (e.g., competent, intelligent, knowledgeable, efficient) as among those most important for other people to possess. However, interpretation is muddled by the fact that the measure of morality conflates moral traits (i.e., sincere, honest, fair) with sociable traits (i.e., good-natured, helpful, understanding).

Given that competence is presumed to be the most important basis of positive in-group evaluation, the social identity tradition suggests that in-groups lacking in competence must use alternative characteristics to evaluate themselves (Lemaine, 1974). For example, Tajfel and Turner (1979) argued that low-status in-groups may evaluate themselves positively by emphasizing their artistry, rather than their (low) competence. In this way, low-status groups are expected to exercise social creativity to replace competence as a basis of their collective virtue. Thus, some studies in the social identity tradition have interpreted unsuccessful groups' ascribing of relatively high morality to their in-group as the use of morality as an alternative basis of positive evaluation (e.g., Blanz, Mummeny, & Otten, 1995; Ellemers & van Rijswijk, 1997). However, participants in these studies were not directly asked how much importance they attached to their in-group's morality, competence, or sociability. Neither did these studies actually examine the importance of in-group morality, competence, and sociability in the positive evaluation of the in-group. Thus, there is little evidence that competence is especially important to the positive evaluation of in-groups or that morality is an alternative characteristic that only becomes important when it is difficult to positively evaluate the in-group on the basis of its competence. Despite the theoretical possibility in the social identity tradition that morality can be most important to positive in-group evaluation, most research is based on the presumption that competence is most important.

Although we undertook the present studies because there has been little examination of the importance of in-group morality, some work is broadly consistent with the notion that morality is of special importance to people. For example, at the individual level, Rodriguez Mosquera, Manstead, and Fischer (2002) found university students in Spain and The Netherlands both showed a very strong belief that being dishonest and untrustworthy would make them feel bad about themselves. Consistent with this finding, numerous cross-national studies showed that individuals considered moral values among the most important guiding principle in their lives (for a review, see Schwartz, 1992). Even the most success-oriented sample, university students in the United States, rated values related to morality as more important than values related to competence (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001).

At the group level, De Waal's (1996) comparative studies of primate behavior led him to argue that a sense of morality is essential to the group life of primates such as humans. Without a sense of morality in the group, he argued, it would be difficult for members to coordinate their behavior in ways that maximize benefits for themselves and the group as a whole. Consistent with this, recent models of procedural justice suggest that the perceived trustworthiness of an in-group is a major determinant of individuals' positive evaluation of the group and their willingness to cooperate with other members (for reviews, see Skitka, 2003; Tyler & Blader, 2003). This may be the reason that Campbell and colleagues' large-scale, multimethod studies of ethnocentrism throughout the world found morality (i.e., honesty, trustworthiness) to be central to how individuals evaluated their ethnic in-group relative to out-groups (Brewer & Campbell, 1976; Levine & Campbell, 1972). Thus, there appears to be good reason to expect that morality is of central importance to the positive evaluation of in-groups and to the group-level self-concept.

Although morality has been given little place in contemporary Western psychology, the broader tradition of Western thought has

long viewed morality as the most important of human virtues (for discussions, see MacIntyre, 1984; Nietzsche, 1887/1967; Shweder et al., 1997). The classical view, perhaps best represented by Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, sees morality as the most important basis on which people should evaluate themselves, and others, positively (MacIntyre, 1984). Indeed, Aristotle argued that all other virtues were, to some degree, dependent on morality. According to Aristotle, competence and sociability are only virtues if they are expressed through a moral character that makes them sincere and trustworthy (MacIntyre, 1984). This suggests that morality is most important to positive self-evaluation because it determines the meaning of every other human characteristic (see Osgood et al., 1957). For example, a political party that is competent in administration or sociable in campaigning is most assured of its goodness if it is also trustworthy. Competence or sociability in an immoral party gives little basis for positive self-evaluation. Indeed, immoral competence is dangerous, and immoral sociability is disingenuous (Osgood et al., 1957; Wojciszke, 1994).

Overview

No prior research of which we are aware has examined the importance of morality to individuals' positive evaluation of their in-group. Although a great deal of work has examined the mean-level ascription of competence and sociability to groups, this work has tended to either exclude morality or to assume that the importance of a characteristic is indicated by the degree to which it is ascribed to a group. Rarely has the actual importance of morality, competence, and sociability to the positive evaluation of in-groups been examined.

In an important first step, we used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in Studies 1 and 2 to validate trait measures of morality, sociability, and competence as distinct in-group characteristics. In Study 1, we directly asked individuals to explicitly indicate whether morality, competence, or sociability was the characteristic most important for their in-group to possess. To complement this approach, we used exploratory factor analysis (EFA) in Studies 1–3 to unobtrusively examine the importance of morality, competence, and sociability in participants' positive evaluation of their in-groups. EFA shows which of the three characteristics explained the most variance common to the positive traits ascribed to the in-group. In Study 3, we also examined relative group success as a potential moderator of the importance of morality, competence, and sociability to in-group evaluation. If morality is most important, it should remain so irrespective of the in-group's success relative to an out-group. In addition, morality should not be most important to the positive evaluation of an out-group. Thus, we also examined the importance of morality, competence, and sociability to out-group evaluation.

Studies 4 and 5 take an experimental approach. Here we manipulated the morality, competence, and sociability of a preexisting in-group to examine effects on two aspects of the group-level self-concept related to positive evaluation: group pride and perceived group variability. If morality is most important to individuals' positive evaluation of their in-group, then high morality should lead to greater group pride. Conversely, low morality should lead individuals to distance themselves from the in-group. Study 4 compared the effects of in-group morality and competence, whereas Study 5 compared the effects of in-group morality and sociability.

To offer yet another approach of examining the importance of in-group morality, competence, and sociability, we assessed in Studies 2b, 4, and 5 participants' identification with their in-group. If morality is central to the group-level self-concept, then in-group identification should lead individuals to ascribe morality to their in-group. In contrast, in-group identification should be less predictive of ascriptions of competence or sociability to the in-group.

Study 1

We used this study to offer evidence of the construct validity of trait measures of in-group morality, competence, and sociability. First, we used CFA to examine the latent structure of the positive traits designed to indicate these three group characteristics. Second, we included a number of traits to indicate the general positive valence (virtue, value, worth) of the in-group. By correlating this measure of valence to the three in-group characteristics, we aimed to establish that morality, competence, and sociability are equally positive characteristics. Third, we correlated each of the three group characteristics to a set of closely related traits. By showing that in-group morality, competence, and sociability are only correlated to those traits that are conceptually similar, we aimed to show the convergent and divergent validity of the three group characteristics. Because we conceptualized in-group morality as an in-group's collective correctness, we expected morality to be most associated with the evaluation of the in-group as good and right, rather than as bad and wrong (see Osgood et al., 1957). As suggested by Eagly and Steffen (1984), Conway et al. (1996), and Poppe and Linnsen (1999), we expected in-group competence to be most associated with achievement (e.g., successful, prestigious). And on the basis of the findings of Rosenberg et al. (1968) and Osgood et al. (1957), we expected in-group sociability to be most associated with communality (e.g., kind, helpful).

In this study, we used both a direct and an unobtrusive method to assess the importance of in-group morality, competence, and sociability. In a direct method, we asked participants to explicitly indicate how important it was for their in-group to possess traits indicating morality, competence, and sociability. If morality is as important as we suggest, then individuals should recognize it as such. We also used the unobtrusive method of EFA to assess the importance given morality, competence, and sociability in the positive evaluation of the in-group. EFA is based on the common factor model (for discussions, see Fabrigar, Wegener, MacAllum, & Strahan, 1999; Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). As such, EFA is used to examine the variance that the positive in-group traits have in common with each other in search of factors that account for the covariance between these traits. Each factor explains a proportion of the common variance in the positive traits (see Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). Thus, we used EFA to examine to what degree morality, competence, and sociability actually explained the common variance of participants' positive evaluation of their in-group. Famously, Osgood et al. (1957) used a similar approach to show that favorability tended to be a more important factor than strength and activity in the evaluation of people and other entities. Here, we expected that morality would explain more of the common variance in positive in-group evaluation than competence or sociability. EFA served as an unobtrusive method of examining the importance of morality, competence, and sociability in positive in-group evaluation because (a) it did not rely on the mean level at which traits are ascribed to the in-group, and (b) it did not require

us to directly ask individuals to explicitly state the importance they gave to in-group traits.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Eighty-four male and female students ($M_{\text{age}} = 21.0$ years, $SD = 4.29$) at Leiden University in The Netherlands received partial course credit for their participation in the study. Participants were brought into a laboratory to complete a multipart questionnaire. In the first part of the questionnaire, we asked participants to indicate how important it was for the groups to which they belonged to possess a list of traits.

Measures

Drawing on the literature summarized above and the more extensive review by Leach (2006), we provided participants with nine traits designed to indicate group morality, competence, and sociability. These traits were interspersed with the other traits described below. Responses were given on a 7-point scale, anchored by 1 (*not very important*) and 7 (*very important*). In an improvement on previous research at the group level, we assessed morality ($\alpha = .80$) using the adjectives "honest," "sincere," and "trustworthy" (see also Anderson & Sedikides, 1991; Osgood et al., 1957; Rosenberg et al., 1968). As in a good deal of stereotype research, sociability was assessed with the traits "likeable," "warm," and "friendly" ($\alpha = .69$), whereas competence was assessed with the traits "competent," "intelligent," and "skilled" ($\alpha = .86$).

Following the example of Leach (2006), we used 16 other traits to assess valence ("virtuous," "valuable," "constructive," "worthless" [reversed]; $\alpha = .57$) as well as correctness ("good," "right," "bad" [reversed], "wrong" [reversed]; $\alpha = .66$); communality ("benevolent," "kind," "helpful," "safe"; $\alpha = .69$); and achievement ("superior," "successful," "prestigious," "ambitious"; $\alpha = .79$). These characteristics were used to validate our measures of in-group morality, competence, and sociability.

Results

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

As a first step, we examined our suggestion that morality, competence, and sociability are distinct in-group characteristics. Thus, we submitted the nine items assessing participants' explicit statements of the importance of these in-group characteristics to a CFA using maximum likelihood estimation. Each item was specified to indicate only its hypothesized factor, and no errors were allowed to correlate. However, the three hypothesized latent factors of morality, competence, and sociability were allowed to correlate with each other.

The hypothesized three-factor measurement model fit the data well (for a review of the indices used below, see Hu & Bentler, 1999). The model adequately reproduced the observed covariance matrix, because the chi-square statistic was small and nonreliable, $\chi^2(24, N = 84) = 28.59, p = .24$. However, this is not surprising given the small sample size. More telling is that the χ^2/df ratio ($= 1.19$) fell below 2.50. Good model fit was also suggested by a wide variety of fit (nonnormed fit index [NNFI] = .975; comparative fit

index [CFI] = .983; incremental fit index [IFI] = .984; goodness of fit index [GFI] = .940) and residual (standardized root-mean-square residual [SRMR] = .064; root-mean-square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .048) indices. In addition, the factor loadings for morality (.51–.90), competence (.76–.93), and sociability (.60–.77) were all sizeable and statistically reliable (all $p < .05$). The intercorrelations between factors were low (i.e., .02, .29, and .30).

Further analysis showed the hypothesized three-factor measurement model to fit better than more parsimonious alternatives. Thus, a two-factor model that specified a competence factor and a combined morality–sociability factor fit less well than the three-factor model, $\Delta\chi^2(2, N = 84) = 32.89, p < .005$. This two-factor model also fit poorly in an absolute sense: NNFI = .821; CFI = .871; IFI = .875; GFI = .873; SRMR = .107; RMSEA = .127. In addition, a two-factor model that specified a morality factor and a combined competence–sociability factor fit less well than the three-factor model, $\Delta\chi^2(2, N = 84) = 113.49, p < .005$. This model also fit poorly in an absolute sense: NNFI = .414; CFI = .577; IFI = .592; GFI = .739; SRMR = .169; RMSEA = .231. A one-factor model of general positive in-group evaluation fit less well than the hypothesized three-factor model, $\Delta\chi^2(3, N = 84) = 146.65, p < .005$. This one-factor model also fit poorly in an absolute sense: NNFI = .279; CFI = .459; IFI = .477; GFI = .695; SRMR = .189; RMSEA = .256.

Construct Validity

To further examine the construct validity of our measures of in-group morality, competence, and sociability, we computed (zero-order and partial) correlations between these characteristics and the four others we included. Results are shown in Table 1. Consistent with our conceptualization of morality, competence,

and sociability as equally positive characteristics, the characteristics were similarly correlated to the individual items as well as to the composite scale of valence. As expected, in-group morality was uniquely correlated with correctness, whereas in-group competence was uniquely correlated with achievement. Also as expected, in-group sociability was uniquely correlated with communality.

The Importance of Morality, Competence, and Sociability

We examined the importance of morality, competence, and sociability with two different methods. To unobtrusively examine the importance of the morality, competence, and sociability factors, we submitted the nine traits to a principal axis factor analysis (with maximum likelihood estimation and oblimin rotation). Because oblique rotation tends to equalize the common variance explained by each factor, we have reported the percentage of variance that each factor explained on initial extraction (see Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). Examination of the common variance that each factor explained on initial extraction showed morality to be most important (i.e., 32.98%). Competence explained 15.64% of the common variance, whereas sociability explained 6.95%. This three-factor solution fit the data well, $\chi^2(12, N = 84) = 6.13, p = .91, \chi^2/df = .511$, and accounted for a majority (55.57%) of the common variance in the items.

We also used a direct method to examine the importance that participants explicitly attached to the morality, competence, and sociability of their in-groups. We asked participants to indicate the importance of each group trait in an absolute fashion. Paired samples *t* tests showed that participants viewed the traits constituting morality ($M = 6.39, SD = .65$) as more important for their in-group than traits constituting competence ($M = 5.10, SD = .99$), $t(84) = 11.28, p < .001, d = 1.22$, or sociability ($M = 6.11, SD = .69$), $t(84) = 3.19, p = .002, d = 0.35$. In addition, in-group competence was deemed less important than sociability, $t(84) = 7.86, p < .001, d = 0.85$.

Table 1
Correlations Between Importance Given In-Group Morality, Sociability, and Competence and Closely Related Traits, Study 1

Traits	Morality	Sociability	Competence
Valence	.38^{a*}	.33^{a*}	.41^{a*}
Virtuous	.29*	.26*	.24*
Valuable	.42*	.24*	.35*
Constructive	.31*	.21*	.38*
Worthless	-.27*	-.27*	-.15
Correctness	.39^{a*}	.20 ^a	.10 ^a
Good	.42*	.31*	.25*
Right	.40*	.20	.24*
Bad	-.29*	-.15	-.05
Wrong	-.23*	-.21	-.01
Communality	.08 ^a	.52^{a*}	.10 ^a
Benevolent	-.12	.31*	-.12
Kind	.16	.59*	-.01
Helpful	.35*	.41*	.29*
Safe	.27*	.32*	.15
Achievement	-.16 ^a	-.10 ^a	.44^{a*}
Superior	-.20	-.21	.27*
Successful	.06	-.07	.37*
Prestigious	-.07	-.07	.36*
Ambitious	.01	-.01	.30*

Note. Bold type indicates hypothesized interscale correlations.
^a Interscale correlations with the other two characteristics partialled.
^{*} $p < .05$.

Discussion

This study offered initial support for our suggestion that morality, competence, and sociability are distinct in-group characteristics. We used CFA to show that morality, competence, and sociability factors accounted well for the associations between a set of positive traits designed to indicate these characteristics. More parsimonious alternatives did not account for the latent structure in the in-group traits as well as these three distinct factors, which were only modestly correlated. The validity of these morality, competence, and sociability factors was further suggested by their correlations with other in-group traits. Morality was uniquely associated with correctness, competence was uniquely associated with achievement, and sociability was uniquely associated with communality. However, in-group morality, competence, and sociability were equally positive in valence.

In this study, two different approaches showed that in-group morality is more important to individuals than is competence or sociability. When individuals were directly asked about the importance of traits indicating morality, competence, and sociability, they reported that morality traits were the most important for their in-groups to possess. In contrast to what is suggested by previous theories, competence was deemed the least important characteristic

for participants' in-groups to possess. This direct method of asking participants to report the importance of morality, competence, and sociability was complemented by an unobtrusive approach. EFA showed the morality factor explained twice the common variance that is explained by competence and more than four times the common variance that is explained by sociability. Thus, morality was the characteristic most important to the participants' positive evaluation of their in-groups.

Although a promising first step, Study 1 did not force participants to focus on one specific in-group. Indeed, participants were likely to have thought of quite different in-groups when indicating the importance of morality, competence, and sociability. Thus, in Studies 2a and 2b, we sought to corroborate and extend the present results by assigning participants to an experimentally created in-group with which participants had no prior experience. This allowed us a greater degree of methodological control by having participants judge a single in-group that we represented in the same way to all participants. In addition, we sought to extend Study 1 by having participants ascribe traits indicating morality, competence, and sociability to the experimentally created in-group. Because this kind of trait ascription is typical of previous studies of group competence and sociability, we sought to make Studies 2a and 2b more comparable to previous work. However, unlike previous work, our study actually gauged the importance of morality, competence, and sociability in the positive evaluation of experimentally-created in-groups. As in Study 1, we used the unobtrusive method of EFA to accomplish this goal.

Study 2

Two highly similar studies were designed to pursue three main aims. First, we used CFA to show that the nine traits we designed to indicate group morality, sociability, and competence constituted three distinct factors. Unlike participants in Study 1, participants in these studies were asked to ascribe positive traits to an experimentally created in-group with which they had no prior experience. Second, we used the unobtrusive method of EFA to examine the actual importance of the morality, sociability, and competence factors in explaining the variance common to the positive traits ascribed to the in-group. As in Study 1, we expected morality to be more important than competence or sociability to the positive evaluation of the in-group.

The third aim of Study 2 was to provide yet another method for assessing the importance of morality, competence, and sociability to in-group membership. Thus, we assessed the degree to which identification with an in-group predicted the degree to which individuals ascribed morality, competence, and sociability to this in-group. Because group identification is strongly associated with the positive evaluation of the in-group and with the incorporation of the in-group into the self-concept (e.g., Leach et al., 2006; for reviews, see Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999), we expected in-group identification to be an especially good predictor of participants' ascription of morality to their in-group. In-group identification should be less predictive of the ascription of competence or sociability to the in-group, because these characteristics should be less important to positive in-group evaluation and the group-level self-concept. With Study 2b, we also aimed to further corroborate the results of Studies 1 and 2a by working in a different national context.

Method

Participants

Study 2a. Participants were 105 (72 women, 33 men) psychology students ($M_{\text{age}} = 21.0$ years, $SD = 4.29$) at the University of Amsterdam in The Netherlands. They participated for course credit.

Study 2b. Participants were 158 (119 women, 39 men) students ($M_{\text{age}} = 21.0$ years, $SD = 4.49$) at the University of Sussex in England. They participated for course credit or payment (£5.00).

Procedure

Both studies were embedded within experiments focused on social comparison within an experimentally created in-group (e.g., Vliek, Leach, & Spears, 2006). Participants were brought to a classroom and seated in separate cubicles for a computer-administered study. Instructions on the computer screen described the study as an "exploration into different kinds of perception." Participants were told that research had revealed that people could be characterized as having one of two perceptual styles: global or detailed. The ostensible goal of the experiment was to discover whether these styles of visual perception mattered for performance on the kind of perception-based tasks often used to measure intelligence. Admittedly, this often-used cover story is more relevant to in-group competence than to morality or sociability. Nevertheless, we still expected morality to be most important to participants' positive evaluation of the in-group.

Participants were asked to complete several trials of two different tasks to determine their perceptual style: a dot-estimation task and a dice-recognition task. When the participants had completed the tasks, the computer ostensibly calculated their score. Presumably on the basis of this score, the computer categorized each participant as a "detailed perceiver." Participants were then presented with a list of positive traits and asked to indicate to what degree each characterized detailed perceivers. Responses were given on a 7-point scale, anchored by 1 (*not at all*) and 7 (*very much*). The traits, including the nine designed to indicate morality, competence, and sociability, were presented in a random order. In Study 2b, participants' group identification was measured immediately after in-group categorization.

Measures

In Study 2a, the scales of morality ($\alpha = .79$; $M = 4.85$, $SD = .89$), sociability ($\alpha = .76$; $M = 4.57$, $SD = .89$), and competence ($\alpha = .72$; $M = 5.35$, $SD = .72$) used in Study 1 all proved reliable. The scales of in-group morality ($\alpha = .90$; $M = 4.81$, $SD = .96$), competence ($\alpha = .88$; $M = 5.15$, $SD = .91$), and sociability ($\alpha = .85$; $M = 4.57$, $SD = .86$) also proved reliable in Study 2b.

Using a 7-point Likert-type response scale, Study 2b participants were asked to what degree they identified as a detailed perceiver with four items ($\alpha = .75$) from the scale developed by Ellemers et al. (1999). Thus, we asked participants to what degree they identified with detailed perceivers, whether they were "glad to be categorized" as detailed perceivers, whether they felt "strong ties" with detailed perceivers, and whether they saw themselves as detailed perceivers.

Results

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The nine traits designed to indicate in-group morality, competence, and sociability were submitted to a CFA with maximum likelihood estimation parallel to that of Study 1. Because Studies 2a and 2b were highly similar in method, we examined the combined data in a multigroup analysis. In essence, this approach estimated one measurement model that constrained each item's loading on its hypothesized factor to be equal across the two studies. As in Study 1, items were specified as loading on only one factor, and no errors were allowed to correlate. However, the three latent factors corresponding to morality, competence, and sociability were allowed to correlate.

The three-factor model fit the data well, $\chi^2(54, N = 263) = 110.88, p < .001, \chi^2/df = 2.05$. This was also shown in a variety of fit (NNFI = .963, CFI = .972, IFI = .972, GFI = .919) and residual (SRMR = .042, RMSEA = .064) indices. A model specifying a combined morality–sociability factor and a competence factor fit less well than the hypothesized model, $\Delta\chi^2(4, N = 263) = 176.76, p < .001$. This alternative model also fit poorly in an absolute sense, as shown in a variety of fit (NNFI = .860, CFI = .887, IFI = .888, GFI = .789) and residual (SRMR = .072, RMSEA = .123) indices.

The Importance of Morality, Competence, and Sociability

As in Study 1, we used an EFA to unobtrusively examine the importance of morality, competence, and sociability in the positive traits ascribed to participants' in-group. In Study 2a, the three-factor solution fit the data well, $\chi^2(12, N = 105) = 19.79, p = .07, \chi^2/df = 1.65$, and accounted for a majority (58%) of the common variance. As expected, morality was the first factor extracted before rotation. Thus, group morality explained the greatest amount (33%) of the common variance in the positive traits that participants ascribed to their in-group. Sociability was the second factor extracted (explaining 15% of the common variance), and competence was the third factor extracted (explaining 10% of the common variance).

In Study 2b, the three-factor solution fit the data satisfactorily, $\chi^2(12, N = 158) = 28.74, p = .004, \chi^2/df = 2.40$, and accounted for a majority (72%) of the common variance. Morality was the first factor extracted before rotation and thus explained the greatest amount (55%) of the common variance. Competence (9%) and sociability (9%) explained near equal amounts of variance.

In-Group Identification

In Study 2b, we performed a multivariate analysis of variance, with in-group identification as a continuous predictor of participants' ascription of morality, competence, and sociability to their in-group. We also included gender as a categorical predictor. Because gender had no main or interaction effects (both $p > .93$, both partial $\eta^2 < .003$), it is not discussed further.

In-group identification had a multivariate effect on the ascription of the three characteristics to the in-group, $F(3, 152) = 8.98, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .15$. At the univariate level, in-group identification predicted the ascription of competence, $F(1, 158) = 15.64, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .09$, as well as sociability, $F(1, 158) = 17.19, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .10$. However, as predicted,

in-group identification had the largest effect on participants' ascription of morality to their in-group, $F(1, 158) = 23.02, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .13$. Analysis of partial correlations, accounting for all three group characteristics, showed that in-group identification uniquely predicted in-group morality (partial $r = .19, p = .02$). However, partial correlations revealed that in-group identification did not uniquely predict in-group sociability ($r = .12, p = .15$) or competence ($r = .06, p = .43$).

Discussion

In Studies 2a and 2b, we categorized participants as members of a quasi-minimal in-group. We then asked them to indicate to what degree a list of positive traits characterized this in-group. Because participants had no preconceived notion of this in-group or its characteristics, they were free to imbue the in-group with whichever traits they preferred. A CFA showed these traits to constitute distinct factors of morality, sociability, and competence. We used the unobtrusive method of EFA to show that the morality factor explained much more of the common variance in these positive traits than did competence or sociability. In these two ways, Studies 2a and 2b corroborate Study 1. That morality is the most important factor in the positive evaluation of the in-groups in these two studies is all the more impressive given that in-group membership was defined in terms of a perceptual style presumably linked to intelligence. Clearly, the competence-oriented context of this study and participants' status as students made morality fairly irrelevant to the in-group membership examined. Thus, Study 2 may be considered a conservative test of our hypotheses.

Additionally, Study 2b showed that the more individuals identified with the in-group to which they were assigned, the more they ascribed morality to this in-group. Indeed, in-group identification uniquely predicted participants' ascription of in-group morality; in-group identification did not uniquely predict ascription of in-group competence or sociability. Thus, identification with an experimentally created in-group determined positive evaluation of this in-group only in terms of its morality. Despite these encouraging results, we thought it important to show that our hypotheses also apply to the ascription of traits to a real, preexisting in-group. And because much previous work suggests that relative group success affects the importance given to morality, competence, and sociability in the positive evaluation of in-groups, we thought it important to manipulate relative group success. These concerns guided the design of Study 3.

Study 3

As outlined in the introduction, a functionalist perspective suggests that competence should be the characteristic most important to the positive evaluation of an in-group that is more successful than an out-group. In addition, a functionalist perspective suggests that either sociability or morality should be the characteristic most important to the positive evaluation of a less successful in-group, because competence is presumed unavailable as a basis of positive evaluation. However, as stated in the introduction, little previous work has examined the actual importance of morality, competence, and sociability in the positive evaluation of more or less successful in-groups. Thus, as shown in Studies 1 and 2, we expected that when in-group morality was examined as a characteristic distinct from competence and sociability, morality would be most impor-

tant to the positive evaluation of an in-group. In contrast to work that presumes that morality is an alternative way of positively evaluating a less successful in-group, we expected that morality would be most important to the positive evaluation of the in-group irrespective of the in-group's success relative to an out-group.

In Study 3, we also aimed to extend the previous two studies by having individuals ascribe positive traits to an out-group (relative to which the in-group was more or less successful). If morality is most important to the positive evaluation of in-groups because morality is central to the group-level self-concept, then morality must necessarily be less important in the positive evaluation of out-groups (because they are not part of the self). Thus, we suggested that competence and sociability should be more important than morality in the positive evaluation of out-groups. Our reasoning is consistent with what is implied in some research on group stereotypes. Studies that have used measures of sociability free of morality have suggested that sociability is most important to the positive evaluation of less successful out-groups (e.g., Conway et al., 1996; Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Judd et al., 2005). When an out-group is more successful than the in-group, competence appears to be more central to the positive evaluation of the out-group (e.g., Conway et al., 1996; Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Fiske et al., 2002; Poppe & Linnsen, 1999; Ridgeway et al., 1998). However, these studies did not examine the actual importance of competence or sociability in the positive evaluation of more or less successful out-groups as we did in the present study.

Method

Participants

One hundred and twenty male and female students at Leiden University in The Netherlands received partial course credit for their participation.

Procedure

As researchers in numerous studies of in-group bias have done, we manipulated relative in-group success by providing participants with false feedback about students at their university. The cover page of the questionnaire reported—ostensibly on the basis of the reports from employers—that students at the participants' university (i.e., Leiden University) had better (or worse) general ability, social skills, international orientation, and communication skills than students at a relevant nearby university (i.e., the University of Amsterdam). This manipulation was designed to provide feedback about the in-group's general success by referring to a number of behavioral domains relevant to students' future career prospects. We included information regarding these different domains so that the in-group's relative success would be seen in general terms, rather than in the more specific terms of morality, competence, or sociability. However, these domains of group performance appear more relevant to competence and sociability than to morality, implying a stringent test for our contention that morality is most important in the positive evaluation of the in-group, regardless of its relative success.

Immediately after the manipulation of relative group success, participants were asked to indicate to what degree a list of traits characterized students at their university. Responses were given on a 7-point scale, anchored by 1 (*not at all*) and 7 (*very much*). The

nine items used in the preceding studies were included here to measure in-group morality ($\alpha = .86$; $M = 4.76$, $SD = .92$), competence ($\alpha = .79$; $M = 5.36$, $SD = .76$), and sociability ($\alpha = .77$; $M = 4.91$, $SD = .83$). Participants were then asked to ascribe these same traits to the out-group: morality ($\alpha = .80$; $M = 4.60$, $SD = .73$), competence ($\alpha = .82$; $M = 5.10$, $SD = .78$), and sociability ($\alpha = .66$; $M = 4.69$, $SD = .70$).

Results

A series of analyses of variance (ANOVAs) with Target Group (in- vs. out-group) as a within-participant factor and Relative Group Success as a between-participants factor showed Target Group to have main effects on morality, competence, and sociability. Thus, participants showed a consistent pattern of in-group favoritism on all three characteristics.³ However, these results have little bearing on our examination of the importance of morality, competence, and sociability in the positive evaluation of in-group and out-group.

In-Group

The nine traits designed to indicate in-group morality, competence, and sociability were analyzed with EFA, as described in the preceding studies. The three-factor solution fit the data well, $\chi^2(12, N = 120) = 16.82$, $p = .16$, $\chi^2/df = 1.40$, and accounted for a majority (63%) of the common variance when the in-group was more successful than the out-group. This was also the case when the in-group was less successful, $\chi^2(12, N = 120) = 17.56$, $p = .13$, $\chi^2/df = 1.46$ (and 65% common variance explained). The factor loadings for both conditions are shown in the top half of Table 2. It is worth noting that the cross-loadings on factors other than those that the items were designed to indicate tended to be low ($< .300$). This is further evidence that morality, competence, and sociability are distinct in-group characteristics.

As we expected, morality was the first factor initially extracted, whether the in-group was more or less successful than the out-group. Thus, morality explained 41.46% of the common variance when the in-group was more successful. Sociability explained the second most common variance (i.e., 12%) and competence explained the least (i.e., 9%) when the in-group was more successful. Morality also was the first factor initially extracted when the in-group was less successful, explaining 30% of the common variance. Competence explained slightly less variance (i.e., 28%) and sociability accounted for the least variance (i.e., 6%) when the in-group was less successful than the out-group. However, it is worth noting that the importance of competence in the positive evaluation of the less successful in-group appeared to be exaggerated. As shown in Table 2, the items "friendly" and "sincere" both had moderate loadings on the competence factor. Thus, compe-

³ We performed three parallel ANOVAs with Target Group (in- vs. out-group) as a within-participant factor and Relative Group Success as a between-participants factor. In-group morality, competence, and sociability were affected only by a main effect of Target Group. Participants ascribed more of all three characteristics to their in-group than to the out-group: morality, $F(1, 118) = 6.96$, $p = .009$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$; competence, $F(1, 118) = 19.54$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .14$; sociability, $F(1, 118) = 10.79$, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$.

Table 2
Item Loadings From Principal Axis Factor Analyses With Oblimin Rotation, Study 3

Group/trait	Morality		Sociability		Competence	
	In >	In <	In >	In <	In >	In <
In-group						
Honest	.885	.973	-.084	.227	-.119	-.187
Sincere	.676	.490	-.251	-.228	.107	.502
Trustworthy	.938	.546	.095	.110	.032	.265
Likeable	.234	.099	-.630	.613	.186	.262
Friendly	.338	.048	-.450	.428	.247	.502
Warm	.001	.114	-.771	.608	-.088	.008
Intelligent	-.049	-.066	-.009	.072	.667	.900
Competent	-.068	.001	-.138	.172	.697	.598
Skilled	.218	.025	.274	-.024	.650	.797
Variance (%)	41.46	30.05	12.36	6.48	9.33	28.42
Out-group						
Honest	-.717	-.548	.046	.585	-.006	-.088
Sincere	-.820	-.713	.003	.037	-.115	.414
Trustworthy	-.711	-.046	.068	.894	.096	-.094
Likeable	.157	-.104	.793	.458	-.249	.223
Friendly	-.265	-.036	.648	.516	<.001	.111
Warm	-.116	.084	.629	.251	.008	.084
Intelligent	.066	-.023	.147	.080	-.723	.825
Competent	.031	-.206	.222	-.017	-.620	.653
Skilled	-.217	.131	-.316	.133	-.790	.806
Variance (%)	14.74	7.87	29.59	6.28	13.88	44.80

Note. Bold type indicates item loadings/variance hypothesized to be highest. In >: In-group more successful than out-group. In <: In-group less successful than out-group.

tence is nearly as important as morality partly because competence in this case involved some morality and sociability.

Out-Group

For the positive traits ascribed to the less successful out-group, the three-factor solution fit the data satisfactorily, $\chi^2(12, N = 120) = 21.74, p = .04, \chi^2/df = 1.81$, and accounted for a majority (58%) of the common variance. Sociability was the first factor extracted before rotation, and thus it explained the most common variance (i.e., 30%). Morality explained the second most common variance (i.e., 15%), and competence explained the least common variance (i.e., 14%). For the positive traits ascribed to the more successful out-group, the three-factor solution fit the data extremely well, $\chi^2(12, N = 120) = 8.72, p = .73, \chi^2/df = 0.727$, and accounted for a majority (i.e., 59%) of the common variance. Competence was the first factor extracted before rotation, and it explained much more (i.e., 45%) of the common variance than the two other factors (i.e., 8% and 6% respectively).

The factor loadings for both conditions are shown in the bottom half of Table 2. It is worth noting that the cross-loadings on factors other than those that the items were designed to indicate tended to be low ($< .300$). This is further evidence that morality, competence, and sociability are distinct in-group characteristics. However, it is also clear that morality and sociability were less distinct when ascribed to the more successful out-group. In fact, this is the only case in this study, or in the preceding studies, in which morality and sociability had a moderate to high correlation ($r = .61, p < .001$).

Discussion

Regardless of whether the participants' in-group was more or less successful than a relevant out-group, the positive traits ascribed to the in-group fell into distinct factors of morality, competence, and sociability. In this way, the less specified measurement model examined in the EFAs reported here corroborated the better specified model examined in the CFAs reported in Studies 1 and 2. In further corroboration of the preceding studies, morality was again the characteristic that was most important to the positive evaluation of the in-group. Morality explained the most variance in the positive traits ascribed to the in-group regardless of the in-group's success relative to an out-group. That morality is the most important factor in the positive evaluation of the in-groups in this study is all the more impressive given that we examined the students' university in-group and manipulated relative group success in a context largely irrelevant to morality. Indeed, the manipulation—the group's reputation among employers regarding their general ability and communication skills—appears much more relevant to the in-group's competence and sociability. Thus, Study 3 constituted a conservative test of our hypotheses.

In Study 3, we also extended the preceding studies by having individuals ascribe positive traits to a relevant out-group that was either more or less successful than the in-group. As predicted, the morality ascribed to this out-group was not most important to its positive evaluation, irrespective of relative group success. In fact, competence was most important to the positive evaluation of the more successful out-group, and sociability was most important to the positive evaluation of the less successful out-group. Given that

the functionalist perspective has been most often applied to the ascription of traits to out-groups of varying success, it is perhaps not surprising that this is where our findings are most consistent with the functionalist view. This confirmation of the functionalist view of competence and sociability in out-group evaluation makes all the more compelling our consistent finding that morality was judged most important to the positive evaluation of in-groups.

Study 4

Together, the first three studies offer consistent support for our suggestion that morality (not competence or sociability) is the most important factor in individuals' positive evaluation of in-groups. Nevertheless, in all three studies we measured in-group morality, competence, and sociability in one way or another. Thus, we focused on the degree to which individuals' positive evaluation of their in-group is imbued with traits corresponding to morality, competence, and sociability. Although this kind of evidence is useful, it may be important to complement it with evidence that in-group morality has causal effects on individuals' positive evaluation of their in-group. Thus, in Studies 4 and 5, we experimentally manipulated the characteristics of a preexisting in-group. This enabled us to cross different levels of in-group morality with competence (in Study 4) and sociability (in Study 5) in order to systematically compare how these characteristics causally affected individuals' positive evaluation of their in-group.

If morality is most important to the positive evaluation of in-groups, then the in-group's level of morality should most affect aspects of the group-level self-concept that are related to positive evaluation. Thus, in this study, we compared the effects that (high or low) in-group morality and competence had on group pride and perceived group variability. Individuals generally take more pride in in-groups that they evaluate positively (e.g., Leach et al., 2006; for a review, see Ashmore et al., 2004). Therefore, individuals who belong to an in-group high in morality should take more pride in it than individuals who belong to an in-group low in morality. Additionally, members of an in-group high in morality should perceive their in-group as less variable than those who belong to an in-group low in morality. Perceiving a highly moral in-group as less variable allows an individual member to apply this characteristic, and the positive evaluation it implies, to all group members, including themselves (for a review, see Doosje, Spears, Ellemers, & Koomen, 1999). Conversely, when an in-group is low in morality, individuals should perceive the in-group as more variable, in an effort to avoid having to apply this negative characteristic to themselves. Perceiving the in-group as more variable when it is low in morality may thus allow individuals to protect their personal virtue by distancing themselves from an in-group that possesses a negative characteristic (e.g., Leach et al., 2006; for a discussion, see Doosje et al., 1999).

Because competence should not be as important as morality in positive in-group evaluation, the in-group's competence should have less of an impact on group pride and perceived group variability when the in-group's morality is also known. Although prior research has shown that informing individuals about their in-group's competence alone can affect a range of outcomes, we expected that when information about both competence and morality was provided, morality would be more important than competence to in-group membership. To examine these hypotheses, we orthogonally manipulated the competence and morality of a pre-

existing in-group and examined its effect on individuals' pride in, and perceived variability of, this in-group.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were 62 female and 34 male students ($M_{age} = 20.0$ years, $SD = 2.77$) at Leiden University who took part in the study in exchange for 2 euros (approximately \$3). The experiment took approximately 10 min to complete and was part of a longer session that included a number of different studies.

At the beginning of the study, we assessed identification with the preexisting in-group with four items (similar to the items used in Study 4, e.g., "I identify with [this university]"; $\alpha = .75$; adapted from Ellemers et al., 1999). Identification with the in-group has been shown to correlate with pride in (for a review, see Ashmore et al., 2004), and the perceived variability of, the in-group (for a review, Doosje et al., 1999). Thus, we wanted to account for the effect of group identification to show that the experimental manipulations in this study had independent effects on the dependent measures. In addition, we sought to corroborate Study 2b by showing that identification with a preexisting in-group predicted the morality, but not the competence and sociability, ascribed to the in-group.

In a 2×2 factorial design, we orthogonally manipulated the competence (high or low) and morality (high or low) of students at the participants' university. Thus, we told participants that a recent investigation conducted by The Netherlands Ministry of Education had revealed some striking differences among students at Dutch universities in terms of their academic results and their moral behavior. More specifically, participants were told that students from their university had better (or worse) course grades and submitted higher (or lower) quality papers and theses than students at other universities. This constituted a manipulation of the in-group's competence as high (or low). We manipulated the in-group's morality by telling participants that the ministry's investigation had revealed that more (or fewer) cases of fraud were committed and that the incidence of plagiarism was higher (or lower) among students at the participants' university than at others. After these manipulations, checks and dependent measures were assessed. Except when indicated otherwise, all items were presented with 7-point response scales that ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*).

Measures

Manipulation checks. Perceived credibility of the experimental manipulation was assessed with three separate items: "I think it is not so easy to interpret the results of this study correctly," "The Ministry of Education has little knowledge about the performance of students," and "This investigation of the Ministry of Education has yielded a number of important facts about students."

Two questions assessed whether our manipulations had the intended effects. To check the manipulation of in-group competence, participants were asked to estimate the academic competence of students at their university. To check the manipulation of in-group morality, we asked the participants to estimate the moral attitude of students at their university. For these two questions, responses were given on a scale that ranged from 1 (*very negative*) to 7 (*very positive*).

Dependent measures. After the manipulation checks, we used dependent measures to assess the consequences of in-group morality and competence on the positive evaluation of the in-group. Group pride was assessed with two items ($\alpha = .68$). Students were asked to indicate whether they thought that students at their university had “much to be proud of” and whether they were “proud to be a student at” their university ($M = 4.57$, $SD = 1.17$). Next, perceived in-group variability was assessed with a single item for which participants indicated the extent to which they thought students at their university “differ[ed] from each other” ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 1.44$).

Results

All dependent variables were analyzed using a 2 (competence: high or low) \times 2 (morality: high or low) analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), in which preexisting identification with the in-group was included as a covariate. Preliminary analyses confirmed that in-group identification did not moderate the effects of our experimental manipulations on any of the checks or dependent measures.

Manipulation Checks

The perceived credibility of the ostensible ministry report was not affected by in-group identification or the manipulations of in-group morality or competence. The absence of main or interaction effects (all F s < 1.00 , p s $> .10$) showed that the manipulations were considered equally credible in all conditions (“not easy to interpret”: $M = 5.43$, $SD = 1.14$; “little knowledge”: $M = 5.26$, $SD = 1.28$; and “important facts”: $M = 4.02$, $SD = 1.31$).

In-group identification did not affect participants’ estimate of in-group competence ($F < 1.00$, $p > .10$). As intended, however, there was a sizable main effect of the competence manipulation on estimated in-group competence, $F(1, 91) = 61.97$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .41$. Participants in the high competence condition estimated in-group competence as higher ($M = 5.21$, $SD = .95$) than did participants in the low competence condition ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 1.03$). As intended, the manipulation of in-group competence had no effect on estimated in-group morality ($F < 1.00$, $p > .10$).

In-group identification predicted estimated in-group morality, $F(1, 91) = 5.52$, $p = .021$, partial $\eta^2 = .057$. Additionally, there was a sizable main effect of manipulated in-group morality on estimated in-group morality, $F(1, 91) = 102.62$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .53$. Participants in the high morality condition ($M = 5.32$, $SD = 1.09$) estimated their in-group’s morality as higher than did participants in the low morality condition ($M = 3.23$, $SD = .95$). As intended, the manipulation of in-group morality did not have a reliable effect on estimated in-group competence, $F(1, 91) = 1.99$, $p = .16$.

In sum, the manipulation checks revealed that (a) the manipulations were equally credible in both experimental conditions, (b) the manipulations affected estimates of the in-group’s competence and morality in the intended way, (c) both the competence and morality manipulations yielded comparable mean values and effect sizes, and (d) identification with the in-group predicted participants’ subsequent estimate of their in-group’s morality but not of its competence.

Group Pride

After accounting for the effect of in-group identification, $F(1, 91) = 31.59$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .26$, we found that the analysis yielded a main effect only of the manipulation of in-group morality, $F(1, 91) = 3.97$, $p = .049$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$. Participants reported more pride in their in-group when students at their university were high ($M = 4.76$, $SD = 1.18$), rather than low ($M = 4.39$, $SD = 1.15$) in morality. No main effect of in-group competence was obtained, nor was there an interaction between the manipulations of in-group morality and competence, $F(1, 91) < 1$, $p > .10$.

Perceived In-Group Variability

The analysis of in-group variability showed only a main effect of in-group morality, $F(1, 91) = 5.34$, $p = .012$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$. Participants perceived their in-group as more variable when it was low ($M = 4.52$, $SD = 1.49$) rather than high ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 1.29$) in morality. Neither in-group identification, $F(1, 91) < 1.00$, $p > .10$, nor in-group competence, $F(1, 91) = 1.49$, $p = .23$, had main effects on perceived in-group variability. In addition, in-group competence did not interact with in-group morality to affect perceived in-group variability, $F < 1.00$, $p > .10$. Thus, in-group competence had no effect on the perceived variability of the in-group.

Discussion

As predicted, Study 4 showed that participants’ pride in their in-group was affected by the in-group’s morality rather than by its competence. Although we were able to show that the manipulations of in-group competence and morality were both considered equally credible and had comparable effects on manipulation checks, only the in-group’s morality affected pride in the in-group. Thus, only high in-group morality led participants to evaluate themselves, and their group as a whole, more positively.

The same pattern emerged for the perceived variability of the in-group. When the in-group was high in morality, participants perceived the group as less variable in an apparent attempt to share in this positive group characteristic. However, when the in-group was low in morality, participants appeared to distance themselves from their in-group’s negative characteristic. In this context, the in-group’s competence did not appear to be important enough to participants’ group-level self-concept to have any effects on the perceived variability of the group.

In further support of our argument, we found identification with the in-group to predict subsequent estimates of the in-group’s morality but not of its competence. This corroborates and extends the findings of Study 2b with a different in-group and a different measure of in-group morality. Thus, in Study 4, we used a different methodological approach than those used in the preceding studies to corroborate the view that an in-group’s morality was more important to its positive evaluation than was its competence. As in the preceding studies, in-group morality proved more important than competence despite the fact that the in-group and the context examined appear more relevant to competence than to morality.

Study 5

Whereas in Study 4 we compared the effects of in-group morality and competence, in Study 5 we compared the effects of

in-group morality and sociability by orthogonally manipulating these two characteristics. Although Study 5 again focused on group pride and perceived in-group variability as dependent measures, we improved these by increasing the number of items used to measure each construct. We also made several other improvements to our dependent measures.

Instead of solely relying on the global assessment of group pride that we used in Study 4, in Study 5 we also asked participants to indicate the extent to which they were proud of the in-group's morality and sociability. In addition, we expanded our measure of pride to include items that indicated its opposite—the negative self-evaluation of shame. We predicted that participants would report greater pride in their group when the group was judged high in morality. In contrast, we expected the sociability of the in-group to have little effect on group-based pride.

In Study 4, we measured perceived in-group variability to assess the degree to which individuals perceived themselves and other in-group members as close or distant from their in-group. However, this measure was a quite indirect way of getting at this process and did not explicitly refer to the participants themselves. In the present study, we wanted to more directly assess the degree to which participants perceived themselves to be part of an in-group high or low in morality (or sociability). Thus, we included items for which individuals indicated the degree to which they perceived themselves as being similar to their in-group as a whole. When the in-group is high in morality, individuals should perceive themselves as more similar to the group in an effort to gain a positive self-evaluation from sharing this positive group characteristic (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). When the in-group is low in morality, individuals should perceive themselves as less similar to the in-group in an attempt to distance themselves from a negative characteristic that threatens their self-evaluation (see Doosje et al., 1999). Because we expected the in-group's morality to be most important to positive self-evaluation at the group level, perceived similarity to the in-group should be more affected by our manipulation of in-group morality than sociability.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were 27 female and 60 male students ($M_{age} = 22.0$ years, $SD = 2.83$) at Leiden University who took part in the study in exchange for 2 euros (approximately \$3). The experiment took about 10 min to complete and was part of a longer session that included a number of different studies.

At the beginning of the study, we assessed participants' identification with the in-group using the same four items used in Study 4 ($\alpha = .88$). As in Study 4, we controlled for in-group identification when examining the effects of our experimental manipulations on the dependent variables and tested whether in-group identification affected participants' estimates of the group's morality and sociability.

In a 2×2 experimental design, we manipulated the sociability (high or low) and morality (high or low) of participants' university in-group. As in Study 4, participants were told that a recent investigation conducted by The Netherlands Ministry of Education had revealed some striking differences among students at Dutch universities. In the present study, participants were told that the investigation revealed differences in students' social behavior and

their moral behavior. To manipulate in-group sociability, we told participants that students from their university were more (or less) friendly than students at other universities and that their interactions with others were more (or less) warm than those of students at other universities (cf. Judd et al., 2005). The in-group's morality was manipulated with the same instructions that we used in Study 4. After these manipulations, the checks and dependent measures were assessed.

Measures

Manipulation checks. Perceived credibility of the experimental manipulations was assessed with the same three items used in Study 4. Also, as in Study 4, two questions assessed whether our experimental manipulations had the intended effect on participants' estimates of their in-group's morality and sociability. To check the manipulation of in-group sociability, we asked participants to estimate the social behavior of students at their university. The estimated morality of the in-group was assessed with the same item used in Study 4.

Dependent measures. After completion of the manipulation checks, we used dependent measures to assess the consequences of in-group morality and sociability for positive evaluation of the in-group. This time, group pride was assessed with six items ($\alpha = .68$; $M = 4.94$, $SD = .86$). Two items asked students to indicate the extent to which they were generally proud or ashamed (reversed) to be a student "at [this university]." Two more specific items asked participants how much pride or shame (reversed) they felt about the social behavior of students at their university. Two additional items asked participants how much pride or shame (reversed) they felt about the moral behavior of students at their university.

The degree to which participants perceived themselves as being similar to their in-group was assessed with three items adapted from Doosje et al. (1999) and Ellemers et al. (1999): "I am similar to other students at [this university]," "I am like other students at [this university]," and "I see myself as a student at [this university]" ($\alpha = .86$; $M = 4.10$, $SD = 1.42$). All three items focused on the individual self and the similarity of the self to the in-group, rather than on the variability within the group as a whole.

Results

All dependent variables were analyzed with a 2 (sociability: high or low) \times 2 (morality: high or low) ANCOVA, with preexisting in-group identification treated as a covariate. Preliminary analyses confirmed that in-group identification did not moderate the effects of our experimental manipulations on any of the checks or dependent measures.

Manipulation Checks

As in Study 4, perceived credibility of the ostensible ministry report designed to manipulate the in-group's characteristics was not affected by identification with the in-group or the manipulations of in-group morality or sociability. The total absence of reliable main or interaction effects, all F s < 1.00 , p s $> .10$, showed that the experimental manipulations were considered equally credible in all conditions ("not easy to interpret": $M =$

5.38, $SD = 1.06$; “little knowledge”: $M = 4.55$, $SD = 1.40$; and “important facts”: $M = 3.63$, $SD = 1.19$).

Identification with the in-group did not affect estimates of the in-group’s sociability, $F < 1.00$, $p > .10$. However, there was a sizable, and statistically reliable, main effect of the sociability manipulation on estimated in-group sociability, $F(1, 81) = 32.17$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .28$. Participants in the high sociability condition estimated the in-group to be more sociable ($M = 5.67$, $SD = .81$) than participants in the low sociability condition ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 1.34$). As intended, the manipulation of in-group sociability did not affect estimated in-group morality, $F < 1.00$, $p > .10$.

Identification with the in-group marginally predicted the estimated morality of the in-group, $F(1, 81) = 3.38$, $p = .07$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$. Additionally, there was a sizable main effect of in-group morality on participants’ estimate of their in-group’s morality, $F(1, 81) = 37.43$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .32$. Participants in the high morality condition estimated their in-group as being more moral ($M = 5.45$, $SD = 1.19$) than did participants in the low morality condition ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 1.37$). As intended, the manipulation of in-group morality had no effect on estimated in-group sociability, $F < 1.00$, $p > .10$.

Thus, parallel to the results of Study 4, the manipulation checks revealed that (a) the manipulations were equally credible in all experimental conditions, (b) the manipulations affected estimated in-group sociability and morality in the intended way, (c) both the competence manipulation and the morality manipulation yielded comparable mean values and effect sizes, and (d) identification with the in-group predicted subsequent estimates of the in-group’s morality but not of its sociability.

Group Pride

After accounting for the effect of in-group identification, $F(1, 82) = 38.86$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .32$, we found that only the manipulation of in-group morality yielded a main effect on group pride, $F(1, 82) = 7.21$, $p = .009$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$. Participants reported greater pride when their in-group was high ($M = 5.16$, $SD = .80$), rather than low ($M = 4.73$, $SD = .86$), in morality. No main effect of in-group sociability was obtained, nor was there an interaction between in-group morality and sociability, $F < 1.00$, $p > .10$.

Perceived Similarity to the In-Group

After accounting for the effect of in-group identification, $F(1, 83) = 289.13$, $p < .0001$, partial $\eta^2 = .77$, we found that only the manipulation of in-group morality yielded a main effect on perceived similarity to the in-group, $F(1, 83) = 6.66$, $p = .012$, partial $\eta^2 = .07$. As predicted, participants perceived themselves as more similar to the in-group when it was high ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 1.37$), rather than low ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 1.44$), in morality. In-group sociability had no main effect on perceived similarity to the in-group ($F < 1.00$, $p > .10$), and the interaction between in-group sociability and in-group morality was not statistically reliable, $F(1, 83) = 2.53$, $p = .12$.

Discussion

With a methodology parallel to that used to compare the effects of in-group morality and competence in Study 4, Study 5 com-

pared the effects of in-group morality and sociability. As predicted, Study 5 showed that participants’ pride in, and perceived similarity to, their in-group was affected by a manipulation of the in-group’s morality but not of its sociability. Although we were able to show that the manipulations of in-group sociability and morality were equally credible and had comparable effects on manipulation checks, only the in-group’s morality had effects on participants’ group-level self-concept. Thus, when information regarding the in-group’s morality was presented, the in-group’s sociability had no effect on participants’ pride in, or perceived similarity to, their in-group. In contrast, in-group morality increased participants’ pride and perceived similarity. Further support for the central importance of morality was shown in the effects of participants’ identification with their in-group. In line with the results of Studies 2b and 4, Study 5 showed in-group identification uniquely predicted participants’ subsequent estimate of their in-group’s morality. However, in-group identification did not predict estimates of the in-group’s sociability.

General Discussion

Précis

Although a great deal of work on stereotypes has examined the degree to which individuals ascribe the characteristics of competence and sociability to groups, no previous work of which we are aware had examined these characteristics in conjunction with morality. Studies in which the perception of individual (Wojciszke, Bazinska, & Jaworski, 1998) or group (e.g., Fiske et al., 2002; Kay & Jost, 2003; Phalet & Poppe, 1997) morality had been examined had conflated traits that indicate morality (i.e., honest, sincere, trustworthy) with those indicating sociability (i.e., friendly, warm, likeable, kind) or other characteristics. This meant that it was important for us to first show that traits designed to indicate morality, competence, and sociability constituted distinct group characteristics. In three studies, we found consistent evidence for this. These measures enabled us to examine the empirical importance of morality, competence, and sociability in individuals’ positive evaluation of their in-groups.

We showed that morality is more important to individuals’ positive evaluation of their in-group than is competence or sociability in five different ways. First, Study 1 showed that when asked directly, individuals explicitly stated that their in-group’s morality was more important than its competence or sociability. This direct method was complemented by an unobtrusive method.

Thus, in a second approach, we used the common factor model of EFA in three different studies to show that morality was the factor that explained the most variance in positive in-group traits. Whether the in-group was preexisting (Studies 1 and 3) or experimentally created (Studies 2a and 2b), morality was most important. Study 3 also showed that morality was the most important factor in the positive evaluation of the in-group, irrespective of whether the in-group was more or less successful than a relevant out-group. Of note, the EFAs in the first three studies were used to assess the empirical importance of morality, competence, and sociability. Thus, unlike previous research on competence, sociability, and morality, our study design did not infer the importance of these characteristics from the degree to which individuals ascribed them to groups. Because the ascription of traits to a group may be affected by a number of contextual concerns (e.g., Judd et

al., 2005; for a discussion, see Spears et al., 2001), we thought it better to use EFA to actually assess the importance of morality, competence, and sociability in positive evaluation. The EFA approach had the advantage of being an unobtrusive assessment of the importance of the group characteristics. When participants were asked to ascribe (Studies 2 and 3) or to indicate the importance of (Study 1) positive traits to their in-group, they could not have anticipated our analysis of common variance in their responses.

Third, we manipulated the characteristics of participants' in-group to gauge their effects on aspects of the group-level self-concept related to positive evaluation. Because we manipulated group morality, competence, and sociability, Studies 4 and 5 complemented Studies 1–3, in which these characteristics were measured. Despite this different methodology, both Studies 4 and 5 supported the same general conclusion of the first three studies. Whether measured or manipulated, in-group morality proved most important to the positive self-evaluation of the in-group. When manipulations of in-group morality were pitted against competence (Study 4) or sociability (Study 5), only in-group morality affected participants' pride in their in-group or their distancing from it.

In a fourth approach, we used participants' preexisting identification with their in-groups as a predictor of in-group morality, competence, and sociability. Identification with the in-group led participants to ascribe morality to the in-group (Study 2b) or to estimate the in-group as acting more morally (Studies 4 and 5) than the out-group. This pattern was observed whether the in-group was experimentally created (Study 2b) or was preexisting (Study 4 and 5). Identification with the in-group was not a strong predictor of ascribed competence or sociability.

In a fifth approach, we asked Study 3 participants to ascribe positive traits to a relevant out-group as well as to their in-group. Irrespective of relative group success, the morality ascribed to this out-group was never of central importance to its positive evaluation. Consistent with a functionalist perspective, competence was most important to the positive evaluation of a more successful out-group, whereas sociability was most important to the positive evaluation of a less successful out-group. Thus, the functionalist thinking that has predominated in work on competence and sociability appears to apply better to the evaluation of out-groups than to evaluation of in-groups.

It is important to note that the participants we used, the group memberships we examined, and the contexts of the studies themselves were unlikely to make morality important. Indeed, there is good reason to expect that university students are among the least concerned with morality (e.g., Schwartz & Bardi, 2001), especially in contexts in which their university in-group or academic competence is made salient. Thus, in all five of the studies reported here, morality was less relevant to group membership than competence or sociability. With participants less concerned with competence and sociability and in contexts more relevant to morality, there is good reason to expect that morality would be even more important to group membership than was shown here. In any case, our consistent finding that morality was of greater importance than competence or sociability in the positive evaluation of in-groups raises a number of implications for existing social psychological approaches to in-group identity and group evaluation.

Implications

Competence

Social identity theory posits that individuals compare their in-group to relevant out-groups in status-defining domains in an attempt to evaluate themselves positively (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Although the presumption is rarely made explicit, most work within this tradition appears to presume that status-defining domains are those related to competence. Thus, it is argued that positive evaluation is best achieved through an intergroup comparison that establishes an in-group as being more successful than an out-group in economic, academic, or other domains suggestive of competence (for reviews, see Bettencourt et al., 2001; Ellemers et al., 1999; Spears et al., 2001). A functionalist view of stereotypes suggests something similar. It suggests that groups who are economically or otherwise successful use this as a basis on which they can ascribe competence to themselves (e.g., Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Fiske et al., 2002). This ascribed competence presumably serves to legitimate the in-group's success and solidifies its positive evaluation of itself. Thus, most previous work on group characteristics has suggested that individuals can identify with, and positively evaluate, an in-group–ascribed competence with little regard for the morality or sociability of the in-group (e.g., Blanz et al., 1995; Kay & Jost, 2003).

As described above, most previous research has presumed that the simple ascription of competence to an in-group indicates its psychological importance. Thus, the ascription of competence to economically successful national, ethnic, and gender in-groups, or intellectually successful experimentally-created in-groups, has been taken as evidence of the psychological importance of competence to group identity and positive evaluation. Rather than presuming that the ascription of traits indicates their importance, we chose to actually examine this issue. Although all of our studies were done with university students, who highly value competence (e.g., Schwartz & Bardi, 2001), competence was never most important to positive evaluation of their in-groups. In fact, in cases in which the in-group was more successful than a relevant out-group (in Study 3), competence was much less important in the positive evaluation of the in-group than was morality. And when we used a manipulation to establish the in-group as highly competent (in Study 4), this did not increase in-group pride (in the presence of information regarding in-group morality).

Although competence may be status-defining for in-groups, it does not appear to define group virtue. Indeed, as suggested by Study 3, successful in-groups that ascribe competence to themselves may treat their morality as especially important to their positive evaluation. Because success-based competence may be seen as antithetical to morality (e.g., Judd et al., 2005) or as dangerous in the absence of morality (e.g., Alexander et al., 1999; Osgood et al., 1957), successful, highly competent in-groups seem especially likely to treat morality as most important to their positive evaluation of themselves. In this way, attention to morality leads to an important qualification of the functionalist view of success-based competence as most important to group membership.

Sociability

As suggested by a functionalist perspective, the results of Study 3 showed sociability to be the most important factor in in-group members' positive evaluation of a less successful out-group. This

is broadly consistent with the view that individuals may use the ascription of sociability to legitimate an out-group's lack of success. However, in contrast to a functionalist perspective on in-group evaluation, sociability was least important to the positive evaluation of a less successful in-group in Study 3. This contrasts with the functionalist presumption that less successful in-groups emphasize their sociability to achieve positive evaluation through characteristics other than competence (e.g., Judd et al., 2005; Kay & Jost, 2003). Indeed, our consistent finding that sociability was more important than competence in the positive evaluation of in-groups provides evidence against interpreting the ascription of sociability to an in-group as a creative strategy designed to combat the negative effects of lesser success. A wide variety of research with preexisting national, gender, and ethnic in-groups shows that individuals tend to ascribe both competence and sociability to their in-groups (e.g., Brewer & Campbell, 1976; Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Fiske et al., 2002). It is indeed a virtue to be nice.

Morality

Although individuals did not always ascribe greater morality than competence or sociability to their in-group, morality was always most important to the positive evaluation of the in-group. In addition, individuals' identification with their in-group was most predictive of ascribing morality, rather than competence or sociability, to the in-group. This consistent pattern of results is at odds with the notion that individuals evaluate their in-group positively on the basis of its morality only as a creative attempt to achieve positive evaluation through success in "alternative" domains (i.e., other than competence; see Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The present pattern of results also suggests that it is problematic to interpret less successful group's ascription of morality to themselves as an acknowledgment of a "negative" group identity or a legitimization of their lesser success (e.g., Blanz et al., 1995; Kay & Jost, 2003; Phalet & Poppe, 1997). Even when an in-group was more successful (as in Study 3) or high in competence (as in Study 4), in-group morality was most important to positive in-group evaluation. As Aristotle and most metaphysicists argued, morality is the most important virtue.

Morality appears to be less important to the positive evaluation of out-groups. This finding contrasts with previous thinking. Social identity theory and other functionalist perspectives on stereotypes suggest that more successful in-groups evaluate less successful out-groups as moral as a form of noblesse oblige.⁴ It is argued that by evaluating a less successful out-group as moral, the in-group can evaluate the out-group positively in a domain other than competence (e.g., Blanz et al., 1995; Judd et al., 2005; Kay & Jost, 2003; Phalet & Poppe, 1999). As such, evaluating a less successful out-group as moral is believed to legitimate the in-group's relative success in a status-defining domain suggestive of competence. However, the present studies suggest that morality is most important to in-group evaluation; therefore, it seems unlikely that ascribing high morality to a less successful out-group functions to legitimate unequal success. Indeed, in Study 3, morality was relatively unimportant to individuals' positive evaluation of a relevant out-group, irrespective of the out-group's level of success relative to the in-group. Given how important morality is to the positive evaluation of in-groups, it is not surprising that it is less important to the evaluation of out-groups. Regardless of how much morality is ascribed to an out-group, it should have relatively little

importance in the positive evaluation of this out-group if morality is indeed central to in-group membership.

Because group morality appears most important to positive evaluation, groups may compete for moral status more than they compete for material status. This is suggested by Campbell and colleagues' (Brewer & Campbell, 1976; Levine & Campbell, 1972) large-scale cross-cultural studies of ethnocentrism. From the Arctic Circle to the Amazon, East Africa, and the South Pacific, morality was the only characteristic that in-groups consistently ascribed to themselves more than to out-groups. Although some in-groups viewed themselves as less competent, sociable, strong, or prestigious than neighboring out-groups, morality was the characteristic that appeared most important to in-group favoritism. Recognizing the importance of morality to in-group membership may be an important first step toward understanding its importance in intergroup relations.

⁴ A functionalist perspective has been used to argue that morality is the characteristic most important to individuals' positive evaluation of other people (see Wojciszke, 1994). For example, Phalet and Poppe (1997) argued that in-group members' perceptions of out-group morality is essential to trust in the out-group's benevolence in interactions. However, previous research has tended to conflate out-group morality with sociability (e.g., Fiske et al., 2002; Wojciszke, 1994) or dominance (Phalet & Poppe, 1997). Thus, the role of morality is unclear. It is the case, however, that studies in which sociability has been assessed free of morality have shown it to be very important to the positive evaluation of out-groups (e.g., Conway et al., 1996; Eagly & Steffen, 1984).

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