Texts for editing

Attached are excerpts from the General Discussion written in the dissertation. The excerpts do not form a sequence (because a large part of the General Discussion has been edited by you in the past). At the same time, every written idea is presented in fully and numbered.

1.

**Abstract**

The emotions associated with moral convictions can have profound implications for societies, as they shape people’s action tendencies in response to moral events. It has been found that attitudes founded on strong moral convictions have strong ties to emotions. Research on ties between moral conviction and emotion has thus far focused on expansive and general moral convictions (i.e., moral convictions about general topics such as abortion, same-sex marriage, gun control). However, in daily life, people do not only encounter general moral issues. They also frequently encounter concrete and focused moral events, which are more nuanced and not every daily moral experience evokes an intense emotional reaction. In this investigation, I suggest that having a strong general moral conviction, might be insufficient to amplify one’s emotions and influence subsequent action tendencies in a specific event, even when the event is related to the broader domain of the moral conviction.

**2. General Discussion**

Do attitudes that are held with great moral conviction always have strong ties to intense emotional reactions and action tendencies? Morality models have generally posited that attitudes high in moral conviction (elicit intense emotions, which shape behavioral reactions. The model presented here suggest that this assumption does not always hold true. I argue that the morality models positing untangle ties between moral conviction and emotions are based on research that have not differentiated, both conceptually and methodologically, between different moral situations. In particular, past research did not distinguished between general moral convictions concerning issues and topics versus general moral convictions when related specific events. In this investigation I show that in a political context, though people hold moral convictions regarding political issues in general, when they encounter concrete events that are related to these general issues they respond with different emotional intensities. I suggest that general moral conviction related to a specific event leads to intense emotion only when the moral violation that is most prominent in the event is relevant to the foundations that one endorses. Differences in emotional reactions to moral events may lead to mutual accusations of a lack of concern for morality and constitute a site of tension and conflict between people and groups in society. My research, drawing from theories of moral emotions (Haidt, 2001; Tangney, Stuewig & Mashek, 2007), The Integrated Theory of Moral Conviction (Skitka et al., 2008), and Moral Foundations Theory (Haidt & Graham, 2007; Haidt & Joseph, 2004), provides an explanation for the variety of intensity in emotional reactions to moral events. Using these theories, I developed a model showing that political beliefs, which are connected to fundamental moral foundations, moderate the ties between general moral conviction and emotional reaction intensities to specific moral events.

I tested the validity of the model in the context of ideological intergroup conflicts, and specifically with regard to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. I examined the ties between general moral conviction and emotional reaction among rightists and leftists, referring to typical moral events in the context of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Taken together, my results (Studies 1-3)

demonstrates that different prioritizations of moral foundations, as reflected by political ideology, shape ties between general moral conviction and emotions in reaction to concrete events of either individualizing or binding moral violations. Thus, both rightists and leftists with strong moral convictions react with emotional intensity to a moral event only when that event is relevant to the moral foundations that each political group most values. These findings shed light on the mechanisms that can explain why and how people who hold equal general moral convictions, when exposed to daily moral events, might differ in their emotional reactions. Although the investigation was conducted in the context of a political intergroup conflict, based on the theoretical model, I believe that my findings can be generalized beyond a given particular context and across samples. Also, I focused on two emotions, anger and empathy, but I believe that my findings can be generalized to other moral group-based emotions. Building on these findings, in the future, it would be important to test the generalizability of the model to other social contexts and other group-based emotions.

**Implications**

This research has both theoretical and methodological implications for research in moral and political psychology. First, my research makes a conceptual distinctions, which has not been made in the past. I distinguish between different levels of moral situations, and particularly differing between general moral convictions and specific moral convictions. In addition, I sharpen the distinction between concepts that represent individual's moral position, namely, moral conviction and moral foundation. I pose that these distinctions have implications on moral -attitude relevant emotions, and behavior.

My model offers a novel framework for conceptualizing individual's moral position. I pose that people may look and understand events in reality within different resolutions. At some point they focus on the morality of an issue or topic, in general, and at some points they focus on concrete, context dependent, and events. In other words, people exchange different "lenses of binoculars" while assessing moral events. In a multifaceted and complex reality, these lens are not necessarily coordinated. While sharpening the resolution, other moral concerns might come in to play. Possible characteristics of moral convictions, such as ties to emotions, are, therefore, proposed as testable propositions in a given context.

Next, prior work on moralization has often used concepts of moral convictions, and moral foundations (as well as moral mandates, moral beliefs, and moral intuitions) as intertwined concepts, and has not adequately distinguished between them (Haidt, 2001; Graham et al., 2009; Skitka, Hanson, & Wisneski, 2017; Skitka, Wisneski, & Brandt, 2017). These moral processes were described as having similar traits, such as (a) personal and intuitive evaluations (e.g., Haidt, 2001; Skitka et al., 2005), (b) influenced by context (e.g., Skitka, Bauman, Aramovich, & Morgan, 2006), (c) tightly connected to emotions (Skitka, Bauman, & Sargis, 2005), and (d) motivational force leading to correspondent behavioral reactions (Graham et al., 2009). Only lately, in their review, Skitka et.al (2020) emphasize the differences between theories that pose that morality is an inherent property of some issues or attitudes, such as the MFT (Graham et al., 2009), and the moral conviction theoretical approach asking people whether they see a given issues as a reflection of their personal moral beliefs and convictions.

The model presented here suggests that moral conviction, and moral foundations are simply different segments of the moral judgment system, signaling related but distinct paths to moral judgments. Each path has a unique origin and endpoint; the top- down approach to morality of the moral foundations unequivocally defines what would be considered a moral violation, leading to a ‘dogmatic’ judgment of moral,” or “immoral”. Different from that the moral conviction 'bottom-up' approach to morality, takes an empirical approach to understanding moral violation and treats what distinguishes moral from nonmoral event or issue as a subjective-empirical question, hence it is a matter of degree and magnitude. These differences impose different operationalization, measurement and implications.

I am aware of different theoretical approaches to morality (universalist moral theories such as neo-Kantianism) indicating that morality, both moral foundation and moral conviction, proceeds “top-down”. From this perspective, we expect that abstract moral principles that are applied to specific cases, meaning that when people deeply value moral foundation (e.g. harm/care), they reactively implement their commitment to the foundation by morally convicting issues and events (e.g., morally opposing nuclear armament). Some research suggests that “top-down” moral theories are generic and too abstract and cannot extend to all concrete daily details of an individual’s moral life (Gilligan, 1982; Tronto, 1995). As Tronto says, ‘‘in these theories, moral standards are largely governed by universalized rules, such as the principle of fairness. The danger of such theories, as many commentators have noticed, is that these formal criteria may ignore and not provide any account of the concrete details of the moral and political life of individuals’’ (Tronto, 1995, p. 143). Therefore, I suggest that it is not that one path 'leads' to the other, rather that both paths may be contributing in judgments about a specific event and together may stimulate emotional reaction. This leaves open several questions on the nature of the relationship between moral conviction and moral foundations, and future research is required in order to further understand this relationship.

3.

4.

These situations and the potential ties between moral conviction and emotions are presented in the following matrix (Table 1):

Table 1: Moral conviction situations and research conditions

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Moral situation | |  | | | |
| B | A |
| Specific event:  (e.g., an event of a specific woman who chooses to have an abortion because of the gender of the fetus) | General topic:  abortion) (e.g., |
| Few studies, such as Hofmann , Brandt, Wisneski ,& Skitka (2018), indicate strong relationship between moral convictions and emotions | Irrelevant | Specific measure:  (e.g., my attitude about the event  is deeply connected to my beliefs about fundamental right and wrong) | 1 | MC measure |
| The current research, (and few other studies, such as Mullen and Nadler, 2007), suggesting the moderated-mediation model for predicting relationship between moral convictions and emotions | Most past research using a general moral conviction design, indicate strong relationship between moral convictions and emotions | General measure:  (e.g., my attitude about legalized abortion/ anti-abortion legislation is deeply connected to my beliefs about fundamental right and wrong) | 2 |

In this investigation my focus is on general moral convictions related to specific events (category B2 in Table 1).

5.

For example, suppose a person holds pro-life moral conviction on abortion. In a case of a woman who chooses to have an abortion because she prefers a boy rather than a girl, we might expect intense anger towards the moral violator (the woman) whether the person's most relevant foundation is 'harm' foundation (concerns about the fetus' rights) or 'binding' foundation (concerns of group interests such as obeying authority). However, if in that event the woman's community-leader approves, for some reason, that specific abortion, and one's most relevant moral foundation is obeying authority, then in this case, holding strong pro-life moral conviction on abortion may not be sufficient to predict anger towards the woman. But, if one's most relevant moral foundation is harm, we would still expect intense emotional reaction (and behavioral consequences) to that specific abortion. Meaning, when exposed to moral related issue or event, people prioritize moral considerations and react emotionally intensely only when the source of emotion, (i.e., a prominent aspect of the event), is especially relevant to a person's endorsed moral mandates. In other words, it is only when an event both morally related (connected to one's strong moral conviction) and morally relevant (there is a match between the prominent moral violation in the event and one's endorsed moral foundation) that general moral conviction will intensify emotion.