

# Reduction of Interindividual–Intergroup Discontinuity: The Role of Leader Accountability and Proneness to Guilt

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Two experiments contrasted interactions between group leaders with interactions between individuals in a mixed-motive setting. Consistent with the idea that being accountable to the in-group implies normative pressure to benefit the in-group, Experiment 1 found that accountable leaders were more competitive than individuals. Consistent with the idea that being unaccountable to the in-group implies normative pressure to be cooperative and that high guilt proneness provides motivation to be moral, Experiment 2 found that when guilt proneness was high, unaccountable leaders were less competitive than accountable leaders and did not differ significantly from individuals. In other words, the robust interindividual–intergroup discontinuity effect was eliminated when groups had unaccountable leaders who were high in guilt proneness.

*Keywords:* leadership, discontinuity, accountability, guilt-proneness, norms

The group is more arrogant, hypocritical, self-centered, and more ruthless in the pursuit of its ends than the individual. An inevitable moral tension between individual and group morality is therefore created . . . This tension . . . is naturally most apparent in the conscience of the responsible statesmen, who are bound to feel the disparity between the canons of ordinary morality and the accepted habits of collective and political behavior. (Niebuhr, 1941, p. 222)

Recent geopolitical events leave little doubt that intergroup conflict remains one of the major challenges facing humankind. The program of research on interindividual–intergroup discontinuity (Insko & Schopler, 1998; Schopler & Insko, 1992; Wildschut, Insko, & Pinter, 2007; Wildschut, Pinter, Vevea, Insko, & Schopler, 2003) has approached the problem of intergroup conflict through comparisons of interindividual and intergroup interactions in the context of mixed-motive settings, like the prisoner's di-

lemma game (PDG). This research has demonstrated a descriptively large interindividual–intergroup discontinuity effect—a tendency in mixed-motive settings for intergroup interactions to be more competitive than interindividual interactions.

Research on interindividual–intergroup discontinuity has generally been guided by three interrelated questions. First, what are the mechanisms responsible for the discontinuity effect (mechanism question)? Second, how robust or general is the discontinuity effect when examined under a variety of different circumstances (generality question)? Third, how can the discontinuity effect be reduced by decreasing intergroup competitiveness (reduction question)? One purpose of the present research is to explore the reduction question by investigating whether by appointing group leaders competition between groups can be reduced to the level observed between individuals. As such the research goes beyond prior demonstrations that a focus on long-term consequences can, under conditions of decreased distrust, reduce intergroup competitiveness (Insko et al., 1998, 2001). Viewed from a different perspective, however, the research also explores the generality question by examining whether the familiar discontinuity effect occurs when intergroup interaction involves group leaders. Further, as is made clear, we discovered evidence for an additional mechanism contributing to intergroup competitiveness and thus provide an additional answer to the mechanism question.

## Four Hypotheses

Previous research has tested and supported four explanations for the discontinuity effect. The schema-based distrust, or fear, hypothesis suggests that there is greater distrust in intergroup than in

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interindividual interactions because the actual or anticipated interaction with a group activates generalized beliefs and expectations that groups are competitive, deceitful, and aggressive (Insko & Schopler, 1998; Insko et al., 1993; Insko, Schopler, Hoyle, Dardis, & Graetz, 1990; Schopler et al., 1993, 1995; Wildschut, Insko, & Pinter, 2004). The social-support-for-shared-self-interest, or greed, hypothesis suggests that, unlike single individuals, group members can provide mutual social support for a competitive choice (Insko et al., 1990; Schopler et al., 1993; Wildschut et al., 2002). The identifiability hypothesis proposes that the group context provides a shield of anonymity allowing group members to avoid personal responsibility for a competitive choice (Schopler et al., 1995). Finally, the in-group-favoring-norm hypothesis suggests that membership in a group implies normative pressure to benefit the in-group (Cohen, Montoya, & Insko, 2006; Insko, Kirchner, Pinter, Efav, & Wildschut, 2005; Wildschut & Insko, 2006; Wildschut, Insko, & Gaertner, 2002). All four hypotheses provide insight into the differences between interindividual and intergroup relations, but it is this last hypothesis that figures most prominently in the present research.

### Two Moralities

The in-group-favoring-norm stands in contrast to the norms of fairness, politeness, and reciprocity that play an important role in interindividual relations (Gouldner, 1960; Lind, 1997; Thibaut & Walker, 1975). The distinction between, on the one hand, norms of fairness, politeness, and reciprocity and, on the other hand, the in-group-favoring-norm maps directly onto the distinction between individual and group morality as drawn by Niebuhr (1941) in the opening quote.

This distinction between individual and group morality can be traced through centuries of intellectual history. In Plato's *The Republic*, for instance, Polemarchus defends the traditional maxim of Greek morality that "justice is the art which gives good to friends and evil to enemies" (Plato, 1891, p. 7). Another illustration is provided by the Italian statesman Cavour. "If," he said, "we did for ourselves what we do for our country, what rascals we would be" (cited in Niebuhr, 1941, p. 222). Early social psychological treatises of group behavior also demonstrated a keen awareness of the two moralities. LeBon (1896/1895), for instance, wrote

Taking the word "morality" to mean constant respect for certain social conventions, and the permanent repression of selfish impulses, it is quite evident that crowds are too impulsive and too mobile to be moral. If, however, we include in the term morality the transitory display of certain qualities such as self-abnegation, self-sacrifice, disinterestedness, devotion, and the need of equity, we may say, on the contrary, that crowds may at times exhibit a very lofty morality. (p. 43)

More recently, Tajfel (1970) interpreted the in-group favoritism demonstrated in the minimal group paradigm as stemming from a "generic" norm of behavior towards outgroups," which dictates that one should "act in a manner that discriminates against the outgroup and favors the ingroup" (pp. 98–99). Various versions of this basic argument have since found their way into the literature (Dustin & East-Trou, 1974; Hertel & Kerr, 2001; Horwitz & Rabbie, 1982; Kurzban & Leary, 2001; Wilder, 1986; Wildschut et al., 2002).

### Leadership and Group Morality

The knowledge that interindividual–intergroup discontinuity is due to a confluence of mechanisms does not inspire much optimism regarding the possibility of reducing the discontinuity effect by decreasing intergroup competitiveness. However, whereas previous laboratory research has compared interactions between isolated individuals to interactions between entire groups, intergroup contact in everyday life often involves interactions between leaders rather than entire groups. Perhaps, then, this earlier research has overlooked an important aspect of everyday intergroup relations.

But what is it that characterizes a leader? By a leader we mean some person who has the power to make, and the responsibility for, group decisions. In his chapter on leadership in *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, Hollander (1985) states that although leadership may be defined in various ways, "The most consistent element noted is that leadership involves a process of influence between a leader and followers to attain group, organizational, or societal goals" (p. 486; see also Levine & Moreland, 1998). Hollander's and our conception of leadership generally agree with implementations of leadership in contemporary experimental research (e.g., De Cremer & Alberts, 2004; Platow & Van Knippenberg, 2001). Despite the fact that our operational definition of leadership does not involve reference to the leader's personal characteristics, we do believe, as we explain below, that guilt proneness can play an important role in determining leader behavior.

Numerous historic examples suggest that, despite conflicts between their respective nations, relationships between leaders can be amicable and cooperative. In light of the decades of menacing conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, perhaps the most notable example is that of Yitzhak Rabin and Yasir Arafat, who set aside their personal differences to conclude the Oslo Accords, earning them a share of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1994 (with Shimon Peres). In addition to such anecdotal evidence, the above-described explanations of the discontinuity effect suggest three reasons why interactions between leaders may be cooperative. First, relevant to the fear hypothesis, when leaders interact one-on-one with other leaders, instead of with entire groups, generalized negative beliefs about other groups may not be activated or may be activated to a lesser extent, and hence, distrust may be reduced. Second, relevant to the social-support hypothesis, leaders may interact in the absence of their constituents, thus lacking direct social support for competitive behavior. Third, relevant to the identifiability hypothesis, leaders may be unable to avoid being identified as personally responsible for competitive behavior.

Still, there is also ample historical evidence of competition between leaders. Rosecrance (1963), for instance, cited the role played by the leaders of Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Russia in the genesis of World War I. More recently, the world has witnessed how feuding warlords ravaged countries like Somalia and Afghanistan. The in-group-favoring-norm hypothesis suggests one reason why interactions between leaders may be competitive. Leadership implies normative pressure to benefit the in-group or, to adopt Niebuhr's (1941) terminology, act in a manner that is consistent with group morality (Adams, 1976; Blake & Mouton, 1961; Carnevale, Pruitt, & Britton, 1979; Enzle, Harvey, & Wright, 1992). Indeed, the dictates of group morality may be particularly salient to leaders, who shoulder full decision-making

responsibility, as compared to group members, who can share such responsibility. This conclusion is in agreement with Levine and Moreland’s (1998) observation that many researchers have assumed that leaders must gain legitimacy and that “among the factors that affect this legitimacy is the leader’s conformity to group norms” (p. 444). Thus, leaders may be particularly likely to be caught on the sharp edge between individual and group morality.

Overview

We present two experiments. The first experiment involved a simple comparison between groups with accountable leaders (i.e., leaders who were aware that their choices were being monitored by the in-group) and individuals. Based on the idea that leadership entails normative pressure to act so as to benefit the in-group, we predicted that accountable leaders would be more competitive than individuals. This experiment, then, addressed the generality question by investigating whether the discontinuity effect occurs when intergroup interaction involves accountable leaders. We placed initial emphasis on accountable as opposed to unaccountable leaders because normative social influence should be stronger when behavior can be monitored or is public than when behavior cannot be monitored or is private. That is, only when leaders are accountable can their choices influence the way in which they are evaluated by the in-group (Carnevale, 1985; Cialdini & Trost, 1998; Deutsch & Gerard, 1955; Insko, Drenan, Solomon, Smith, & Wade, 1983; Insko, Smith, Alicke, Wade, & Taylor, 1985; Tetlock, 1992).

The second experiment had two key objectives. One objective was to address an important limitation of Experiment 1 by testing directly the idea that unaccountable leaders (and individuals) are less competitive than accountable leaders. Although there is a strong theoretical basis for this prediction, empirical evidence for a relation between leader accountability and competitiveness in bargaining contexts is inconsistent (Carnevale, Pruitt, & Seilheimer, 1981). This brings us to the second key objective of Experiment 2, which was to gain insight into when leader accountability will increase competitiveness (and when it will not). Here, we built on recent findings indicating that dispositional guilt proneness plays an important role in intergroup behavior (Cohen et al., 2006; Insko et al., 2005; Wildschut & Insko, 2006). Guilt proneness motivates conformity to moral norms dictating concern for close others (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994). We took as our point of departure the idea that such moral concern for close others can manifest itself in the form of either intergroup cooperation or competition, depending on the relative salience of individual versus group morality. Contextual factors that heighten the relative salience of individual morality (e.g., the absence of in-group accountability) should increase cooperativeness and do so in particular for high-guilt leaders. This is because guilt proneness motivates conformity to the tenets of individual morality—fairness, politeness, and reciprocity (Ketelaar & Au, 2003; Tangney, 2003; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Similarly, contextual factors that heighten the relative salience of group morality (e.g., the presence of in-group accountability) should increase competitiveness, and this too should occur in particular for high-guilt leaders. Although perhaps counterintuitive at first, the idea that high-guilt leaders are particularly sensitive to the increased salience of group morality is consistent with the established notion that intergroup

competition can be a specific manifestation of broader moral norms that dictate concern for close others (Bornstein, 2003; Campbell, 1958; Cohen et al., 2006; McDougall, 1920; Rapoport & Bornstein, 1987; Ridley, 1996; Wit & Kerr, 2002).

Experiment 1

Method

Participants and Design

Participants were 90 undergraduate students (78 women, 12 men) enrolled in an introductory psychology course at the University of North Carolina who served for partial course credit. Participants were assigned randomly to one of two conditions. In the individuals condition, PDG interactions involved 2 participants acting individually. In the leaders condition, interactions involved 2 leaders who each represented and were accountable to a 3-person group.

Procedure

The experiment was run in a large laboratory suite containing a number of smaller rooms that were connected by a central room. One small room was labeled “A,” and one room was labeled “B.” In the individuals condition 1 participant was assigned to each room, and in the leaders condition 3 participants were assigned to each room. After signing a consent form, participants were told that they would be interacting with the other person (individuals condition) or group (leaders condition) in the room across from their own. In the leaders condition, participants in each group drew cards to determine the group’s leader. Two cards were marked “Group Member,” and the remaining card was marked “Leader.” Participants were instructed that the role of the group members was to consult with the leader but not to participate actively in the decision-making process. It was emphasized that decisions would be made by the leader, not by the group as a whole.

Participants were subsequently trained to use a PDG matrix (see Figure 1). In the leaders condition, matrix values were tripled in order to equalize outcomes per participant across conditions. As part of the training, participants completed a short exercise to test their understanding of the matrix, had their exercises reviewed by the experimenter, and if necessary, received further instruction. Participants were told that there would be between 8 and 10 trials, with the actual number being determined randomly. In actuality, participants completed only 6 trials to avoid late-trial strategic responding.

		Column player	
		X	Y
Row player	X	50	60
	Y	20	30

Figure 1. A prisoner’s dilemma game matrix.

In the individuals condition, the same procedure was followed on each trial. Participants were first given 1 min to consider their decision. Next, participants met in the center room for a 1-min discussion with the person with whom they were interacting. Following this discussion period, participants were given 1 min to record a final decision. Upon completion of each trial, the experimenter recorded the decisions and distributed money accordingly. In the leaders condition, the first trial differed slightly from subsequent trials. On the first trial, leaders were given 1 min to consider their decision in consultation with the members of their group. This was followed by a 1-min discussion with the leader of the other group. Leaders then met with their group for a 1-min consultation, during which group members could offer suggestions to the leader. The purpose of this consultation was to emphasize the leader's unique role as carrying final responsibility for the decision. Leaders were then separated from their group, seated in dedicated rooms, and given 1 min to record a decision. On subsequent trials, leaders remained separated from their group. On each of the subsequent trials, leaders were given 1 min to consider their decision; 1 min to meet with the other leader; and 1 min to record a decision. The other group members remained in their homeroom but were informed of the choices of their leader and the other group's leader on each trial. The leaders knew prior to the actual interactions that the groups would receive trial-by-trial feedback on choices and earnings and that the earnings would be equally distributed at the end of the experiment.

#### *Unit of Analysis*

In the individuals condition, participants interacted with 1 other person. For this reason, the 2-person interaction was treated as the unit of analysis. In the leaders condition, participants were assigned to 3-person groups, but only 1 participant from each group (i.e., the leaders) interacted. For this reason, the interleader interaction was treated as the unit of analysis. Respective samples for the individuals and leaders conditions were 12 and 11.

#### *Results and Discussion*

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the proportion of competitive PDG choices across the six trials revealed that leaders ( $M = .18$ ) were significantly more competitive than individuals ( $M = .02$ ),  $F(1, 21) = 5.77, p < .05$ . This finding is important for at least two reasons. First, it attests to the generality of the discontinuity effect by demonstrating said effect in a situation where groups have accountable leaders. Second, it provides suggestive support for the role of group morality, or the in-group-favoring norm. The support, however, is only suggestive because there are two additional processes that could account for our findings. We consider these in turn.

First, recall that on the initial trial, but not on subsequent trials, leaders were given 1 min to consider their decision in consultation with their group and, following a 1-min conversation with the other leader, met with their group for an additional 1-min consultation. This procedure, we thought, would emphasize the leader's unique role as carrying final responsibility for the decisions. A drawback of this procedure is that it allowed leaders to receive social support for being competitive and also afforded them a degree of anonymity. That is, leaders could avoid personal responsibility for being competitive by claiming that they were following

suggestions made by in-group members during the consultation. We cannot rule out the possibility that the initial consultation contributed to the greater competitiveness of leaders relative to individuals. If, however, we can assume that the influence of social support and anonymity provided on the initial trial would have dissipated as trials progressed, then this account does suggest that the individuals versus leaders effect should vary significantly across trials. To address this issue, we included the six trials as a repeated measure in a mixed ANOVA that used individuals versus leaders as independent variable. The analysis revealed a nonsignificant Individuals Versus Leaders  $\times$  Trials interaction,  $F(5, 105) = 0.97, p < .44$ . Although this finding does not rule out the possibility that the initial in-group consultation contributed to competitiveness between leaders, it should count against this possibility. In Experiment 2, we eliminated the initial consultations between leaders and their groups.

A second possibility is that leader competitiveness was due in part to altruistic rationalization (Insko et al., 1987). According to this explanation, purely self-interested leaders may have rationalized their competitiveness as being enacted for the sake of the in-group. Concern for the in-group, in other words, may have been hypocritical rather than sincere. Previous research, however, has failed to confirm a role for altruistic rationalization. Insko et al. (1987), as part of a larger experiment, examined the role of altruistic rationalization by contrasting an individuals condition with an outcome interdependence condition. Both conditions involved interaction between two individuals, but only participants in the outcome interdependence condition were told that they were part of a 3-person set, seated in separate rooms, who would share equally their outcomes at the end of the experiment. Participants within the same 3-person set were not informed of each other's decisions and were therefore not explicitly accountable. Results revealed no significant difference between the individuals and outcome interdependence conditions. This finding is important for two reasons. First, it indicates that in the absence of explicit accountability, outcome interdependence was not sufficient to increase competitiveness. Second, it indicates that the opportunity for outcome interdependent participants to rationalize their own competitiveness as being enacted for the sake of other participants in their 3-person set was not sufficient to increase competitiveness. This renders less plausible an altruistic-rationalization explanation of leader competitiveness in Experiment 1.

These notes of reassurance notwithstanding, our discussion also points to an important limitation of Experiment 1. We assumed that the in-group-favoring norm would be more salient to accountable than unaccountable leaders but did not test this idea directly. Confirmation of the postulated role of leader accountability is important for three reasons. First, it would provide more direct and unambiguous evidence for the idea that competition between leaders derives in part from an in-group-favoring norm. Second, it would address more directly the altruistic-rationalization explanation of leader competitiveness. Note that because both accountable and unaccountable leaders can rationalize own competitiveness as being enacted for the sake of the in-group, the altruistic-rationalization hypothesis cannot readily account for a role of leader accountability. Third, and most important, it would provide an answer to the question of how interindividual-intergroup discontinuity can be reduced by decreasing intergroup competitiveness. We addressed these issues in Experiment 2.

## Experiment 2

### *Accountability*

The objectives of Experiment 2 were twofold. Our first objective was to test directly the idea that unaccountable leaders (and individuals) are less competitive than accountable leaders. As proposed previously, the in-group-favoring norm should be more salient to accountable than to unaccountable leaders because only when leaders are accountable can their behavior influence the way in which they are evaluated by the in-group. Support for this line of reasoning comes in part from Wildschut et al.'s (2002, Experiment 3) finding that physically separated group members were more competitive when they anticipated meeting to discuss their individual decisions than when they had no such expectation and also from Foddy and Hogg's (1999) finding that leaders in a deteriorating resource dilemma who anticipated justifying their actions to a group were more competitive than leaders who had no such expectation. Still, research on the role of leader accountability in bargaining contexts is inconclusive. Carnevale et al. (1981) reviewed the results of 11 studies that manipulated accountability in the context of zero-sum bargaining. Of these studies, 8 indicated that accountability made bargainers reluctant to concede. Carnevale et al. pointed out, however, that because the zero-sum context does not afford a choice that benefits both players, reluctance to concede does not necessarily indicate competitive intent.

Investigations of the role of accountability in the context of integrative bargaining are similarly inconclusive. Pruitt et al. (1978) obtained evidence for a link between accountability and competitiveness, but their findings failed to replicate in a follow-up study. Carnevale et al. (1981) obtained evidence for a link between accountability and competitiveness when negotiators were face-to-face but not when they were talking across a barrier. Ben-Yoav and Pruitt (1984) obtained evidence for a link between accountability and competitiveness when negotiators expected no future interactions, but this pattern was reversed when negotiators expected cooperative future interactions. To complicate matters further, Enzle et al. (1992) found in a PDG context that accountable representatives were more competitive than unaccountable representatives when the opponent was cooperative but not when the opponent was competitive. The extant literature suggests, then, that the relation between leader accountability and competitiveness is highly qualified and that it would therefore be prudent on our part to identify potential moderators of this relation.

### *Guilt Proneness*

The second objective of Experiment 2 was to explore the role of dispositional guilt proneness in leader competitiveness. Relatively little research on intergroup relations has considered the role of individual differences variables. This may be due to the limited success of previous conceptual or empirical attempts to link individual difference variables to intergroup behavior or to the belief that "intergroup relations is perhaps an area where individual personality differences and processes play little role" (Baumeister, 1999, p. 369). Recent findings suggest, however, that dispositional guilt proneness may play an important role in intergroup behavior (Cohen et al., 2006; Insko et al., 2005; Wildschut & Insko, 2006).

Although there is some disagreement as to whether guilt is a more private emotion than shame (Ausubel, 1955; Smith, Webster,

Parrott, & Eyre, 2002), there appears to be a striking consensus on two points. First, guilt involves the negative evaluation of specific transgressions—often ones involving harm to others (Keltner & Buswell, 1996; Tangney, 1992)—and a concern for their rectification (Tracy & Robbins, 2005). Second, guilt, more so than shame or embarrassment, motivates moral behavior (Ferguson, Stegge, Miller, & Olsen, 1999; Ketelaar & Au, 2003; Smith, Webster, Parrott, & Eyre, 2002; Tangney, Wagner, Hill-Barlow, Marschall, & Gramzow, 1996) and can be regarded as the quintessential moral emotion (Ausubel, 1955; Smith et al., 2002; Tangney, 2003). Consistent with this general perspective, Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli (1996) found that school children who were "less troubled by anticipatory feelings of guilt" were more likely to resort to "vengeful ruminations," "irascible reactions," and "delinquent behavior" (p. 371). Other research has revealed that guilt proneness is positively associated with empathy (Tangney, 1991), constructive responses to anger and interpersonal conflict (Covert, Tangney, Maddux & Heleno, 2003; Tangney et al., 1996; ), moral behavior (Tangney & Dearing, 2002), and self-reported altruism (Johnson, Kim, & Danko, 1989). There is abundant evidence to suggest, then, that guilt proneness motivates conformity to moral norms that dictate concern for close others (Ketelaar & Au, 2003) or "communal norms of mutual concern" (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994, p. 246). In fact, the term *moral* is typically used as a modifier of norms relating to relations between or among people.

But how does such moral concern for close others manifest itself in the context of interactions between group leaders? To answer this question, it is important first to reiterate briefly the distinction individual and group morality. Individual morality refers to norms of fairness, politeness, and reciprocity that play an important role in regulating interpersonal relations (Gouldner, 1960; Lind, 1997; Thibaut & Walker, 1975). Group morality, on the other hand, refers to norms that dictate concern for the in-group, if necessary at the expense of out-groups—what Niebuhr (1941) referred to as "the accepted habits of collective and political behavior" (p. 222). Both types of morality involve concern for others, but in the case of group morality, such concern is confined to members of the in-group.

When there is some degree of incompatibility between the interests of two groups, as is the case in mixed-motive situations, it is impossible to maximize simultaneously the interests of both in-group and out-group. This creates a tension or opposition between individual and group morality. Whereas individual morality dictates intergroup cooperation, group morality dictates intergroup competition. As mentioned previously, in this setting moral concern for close others can manifest itself in the form of either intergroup cooperation or competition, depending on the relative contextual salience of individual versus group morality.

Three studies provide empirical support for this perspective on the role of guilt proneness. Although findings from these studies relate to group members rather than leaders, they do suggest that high-guilt leaders may be particularly sensitive to variations in the contextual salience of individual versus group morality. The first study (Wildschut & Insko, 2006) found that physically separated group members who anticipated meeting with in-group members to discuss each other's PDG choice were more competitive than group members who had no such expectation, but only when guilt proneness was high. In the second study, Insko et al. (2005) contrasted interindividual and intergroup interactions under two

conditions. In the same-categorization condition, participants were told that they had the same artistic preference as their opponent (both Klee or both Kandinsky). In the different-categorization condition, participants were told that they had a different artistic preference than their opponent (Klee vs. Kandinsky). Groups, but not individuals, were more competitive with same than with different categorization, but this pattern was significant only when guilt proneness was high. Subsequent mediation analyses were consistent with a number of key assumptions. First, that same categorization creates the expectation that the out-group will cooperate and is therefore vulnerable. Second, that such perceived out-group vulnerability makes salient the opportunity to maximize in-group outcomes. Third, and finally, that high (relative to low) guilt-prone group members are more likely to capitalize on this opportunity by competing. The final study by Cohen et al. (2006) used a variation of a procedure developed by Batson et al. (2003) to manipulate empathetic feeling; not as Batson et al. did for another individual, but for other members of the in-group. In the empathy condition, participants completed a thought exercise in which they imagined how the members of the in-group were likely to feel when considering their votes, or preferences, on the PDG and then wrote down those thoughts. In an objective perspective condition, the thought exercise and writing involved taking an objective perspective. The results revealed a significant interaction with guilt proneness, such that with high guilt empathy increased competitiveness, whereas with low guilt the effect was descriptively reversed.

### *Expectations and Orthogonal Contrasts*

Our basic goal was to identify the circumstances under which leaders would be less competitive and not significantly different from individuals. Toward that end, we examined two factors. The first of these was a three-level manipulation of interaction type (individuals vs. unaccountable leaders vs. accountable leaders). The second was a comparison of participants high in guilt proneness (one standard deviation above the mean) with participants low in guilt proneness (one standard deviation below the mean).

We analyzed the interaction-type main effect with two orthogonal contrasts. In order to test the general idea that accountability makes salient the in-group-favoring norm, the first contrast compared interactions between individuals and unaccountable leaders pooled with interactions between accountable leaders (other vs. accountable leaders contrast). The second contrast compared interactions between individuals with interactions between unaccountable leaders (individuals vs. unaccountable leaders contrast). If accountability alone is sufficient to explain the competitiveness of leaders, the first contrast should be significant and the second nonsignificant. As outlined above, however, inconsistent evidence for the role of accountability in bargaining contexts implies that accountability alone is not sufficient to explain the competitiveness of leaders.

Our primary expectation was that guilt proneness would interact with the first of the two above contrasts such that with high (relative to low) guilt proneness there would be a more pronounced tendency for individuals and unaccountable leaders pooled to be less competitive than accountable leaders. This prediction flows from two assumptions: The first assumption is that high guilt proneness motivates conformity to moral norms, and the second assumption is that for accountable leaders the more salient norms

relate to group morality, whereas for unaccountable leaders (and individuals) the more salient norms relate to individual morality.

We were also interested in whether guilt proneness would interact with the second contrast, the contrast between individuals and unaccountable leaders. This was an open question. As previously stated, we assume that for both individuals and unaccountable leaders the more salient norms relate to individual morality. Furthermore, both individuals and unaccountable leaders are identifiable and lack explicit social support for competitiveness. Finally, because both conditions involve interindividual interactions, individuals and unaccountable leaders should be equally unaffected by generalized negative beliefs about other groups. In light of these considerations, there is no compelling reason to expect unaccountable leaders to be more competitive than individuals—either when guilt proneness is high or when it is low.

There is, however, one point on which individuals and unaccountable leaders do differ. Unlike individuals, unaccountable leaders can rationalize competitiveness as being enacted for the sake of the in-group. Such opportunity for altruistic rationalization of competitiveness should be more important to low-guilt than to high-guilt unaccountable leaders because the former, but not the latter, are highly self-interested. Based on these considerations, we expect unaccountable leaders to be more competitive than individuals when guilt proneness is low but not when it is high. The essence of this idea is captured by the following passage from James Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (1791/1998).

Patriotism having become one of our topicks, Johnson suddenly uttered, in a strong determined tone, an apophthegm, at which many will start: "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel." But let it be considered, that he did not mean real and generous love of our country, but that pretended patriotism which so many, in all ages and countries, have made a cloak for self-interest. (p. 615)

### *A Folk-Wisdom Perspective*

Our essential idea regarding the reduction of the discontinuity effect is that such reduction may occur if the groups have leaders, but only if the leaders are both unaccountable and high in guilt proneness. The idea flows from the assumption that unaccountability produces a relative shift from group to individual morality and high guilt proneness motivates behavior consistent with whatever morality is salient. One reason that we found this idea plausible is that it fits with a possible interpretation of the folk-wisdom that "It takes strong leaders to make peace." We acknowledge that the interpretation requires a somewhat unconventional conception of strength, but folk wisdom might be seen as suggesting that being relatively free of social influence increases strength, as does also being highly moral and principled.

### *Method*

#### *Participants*

Participants were 128 female undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory psychology course at the University of North Carolina who served for partial course credit.

#### *Independent Variables*

The design included two independent variables: interaction type and guilt proneness. The first variable was manipulated and the

second was measured. The interaction type manipulation consisted of three conditions: individuals, unaccountable leaders, and accountable leaders. The individuals condition was identical to the individuals condition in Experiment 1. The two remaining conditions were designed to vary leader accountability. Unaccountable leaders were instructed that in-group members would not be aware of the leader's influence on their outcomes. Unaccountable leaders further learned that the money received by in-group members would be described as bonus money for participating. It was emphasized that "in this way, the group members will never know your decisions had anything to do with the money they receive." In contrast, accountable leaders were instructed that in-group members would be aware of the leader's influence on their outcomes. Leaders further learned that in-group members would receive feedback about the leader's decisions on each trial. It was emphasized that "in this way, the group members will know your decisions were responsible for the money they receive." In neither condition were participants given a rationale or goal for making PDG decisions.

Guilt proneness was assessed by means of the Dimensions of Conscience Questionnaire (DCQ; Johnson et al., 1987, 1989) at the beginning of each session. The scale items call for 5-point ratings of how bad it would feel to commit certain acts. Johnson et al. (1987) conducted a factor analysis of an initial 27-item version of the scale that revealed two important factors: "(1) shame; embarrassment (basically making a fool of oneself), and (2) guilt; violations of interpersonal confidence and trust" (p. 358). We used a slightly lengthened 30-item version of the scale, developed by Johnson et al. (1989). The Shame subscale includes items such as "Strongly defending a point of view in a discussion to learn later you were incorrect," and the Guilt subscale includes items such as "Failing to help someone you know who is in trouble when you could have been of help."<sup>1</sup>

### Procedure

The experiment was conducted in a laboratory containing two sets of three adjoining rooms located on opposite sides of a central corridor. Each session involved 6 participants who were seated in separate rooms within the laboratory. After signing a consent form, participants were asked to complete a short questionnaire for what was described as an unrelated study. The questionnaire included the DCQ as well as various filler items. After participants completed the questionnaire, the experimenter described the interactions that would take place and trained participants on a PDG matrix. Next, participants in the two leaders conditions received additional written instructions regarding their roles during the experiment. All participants in the leaders conditions were led to believe that they alone had been selected to represent the group of 3 persons seated on their side of the laboratory suite. Specifically, participants were told, "During the social interaction trials today you will serve as the group leader of your three-person group. Your other two group members will serve as group associates." This cover story was developed to increase the number of independent observations in each session from one to three.

Within sessions, participants were randomly assigned to unaccountable and accountable leaders conditions. Participants who had been randomly assigned to the individuals condition were run in separate sessions. The additional instructions given in the leaders conditions emphasized that (a) the participant was the sole

leader of her group and the other group members would only be simulating the "real" interactions; (b) the participant would interact with the other group's real leader; (c) the interactions between leaders would actually involve money, whereas the simulated interactions between group members would involve points; and (d) the money earned by the leader would be divided equally among the 3 group members at the end of the experiment. Additionally, accountable leaders were led to believe that in-group members knew that there was a group leader whose decisions would determine their monetary outcomes. Unaccountable leaders, on the other hand, were led to expect that in-group members would not know the true basis of their outcomes. Participants in the leaders conditions then completed a short exercise to check their understanding of the additional instructions. The experimenter reviewed the written answers and corrected participants on the few occasions for which this was necessary.

Next, the experimenter described the trial sequence. Each trial was divided into three 1-min phases. Participants first considered their decisions privately, then met with the participant in the room directly across from them, and finally, returned to their rooms to make a final decision. Note that, in contrast to Experiment 1, leaders never interacted or consulted with in-group members. On each trial, the experimenter recorded the decisions and returned the decision records to the participants, informing them of the opponent's decision in the process. Participants expected that they would complete 10–12 trials and then be dismissed separately. In actuality, the experimenter conducted 6 out of the anticipated 10–12 trials and then administered a postexperimental questionnaire. After participants completed this questionnaire they were awarded the money they had earned and debriefed.

### Dependent Variables

*Competition and choice reasons.* The main dependent variable was the PDG choice, *X* or *Y*, over trials. We focus on the proportion of competitive, or noncooperative, *Y* choices across the six trials. Because each PDG choice can be selected for a number of reasons (e.g., the cooperative choice may reflect a concern for joint outcomes or a concern for equal outcomes), we also assessed participants' reasons for choosing *X* or *Y* in a postexperimental questionnaire. Reasons for choice were assessed with 10 items that were rated on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*). There were 2 items to assess each of five reasons: concern for maximizing own relative outcomes (max rel; e.g., "to earn more than the other person [group]"); concern for maximizing own absolute outcomes (max own; e.g., "to maximize my [my group's] earnings"); concern for maximizing the joint outcomes of both sides (max joint; e.g., "to maximize the joint outcomes of both persons [groups]"); concern for minimizing the difference between the outcomes of both sides (min dif; e.g., "to earn an equal amount"); and concern for distrust (e.g., "did not trust the other person [group]"). Spearman-Brown-corrected correlations for the

<sup>1</sup> Insko et al. (2005) also measured guilt proneness with the DCQ, but Wildschut and Insko (2006) and Cohen et al. (2006) measured guilt proneness with the Test of Self-Conscious Affect (Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tangney, Wagner, & Gramzow, 1989). We find it encouraging that these different measures produced conceptually convergent evidence for the role of guilt proneness in intergroup interactions.

5 item-pairs were .87 for max rel, .63 for max own, .96 for max joint, .68 for min dif, and .63 for distrust.

*In-group expectations.* Included in the postexperimental questionnaire were two items designed to assess participants' perceptions of in-group preferences. Participants in the leaders conditions rated the following items on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*): "Do you think your group members would have liked you to have picked mostly *X* during the interactions?" (*X*-choice preference) and "Do you think your group members would have liked you to have picked mostly *Y* during the interactions?" (*Y*-choice preference).

*Manipulation checks.* Initial manipulation checks were collected during the training phase of the experiment. Leaders responded to the following three questions using a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*): "The group associates know they have a leader of their group" "The group associates will know the actual basis of the money they receive" "The group associates will know the leader decisions after each trial." These items were combined into a single index ( $\alpha = .98$ ). As intended, unaccountable leaders ( $M = 1.99$ ) disagreed strongly and accountable leaders ( $M = 6.39$ ) agreed strongly with the statements,  $F(1, 40) = 236.86, p < .001$ . Further manipulation checks were collected in the postexperimental questionnaire. Participants in the leaders conditions rated the following items on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*): "To what extent did you feel that you would be held personally accountable for your group's decisions by members of your group?" and "To what extent did you feel your decisions could be linked to you personally by members of your group?" These items were averaged to create a composite measure of perceived accountability. The Spearman-Brown-corrected reliability for this composite was .95. As expected, accountable leaders ( $M = 5.36$ ) felt more accountable to the in-group than did unaccountable leaders ( $M = 2.58$ ),  $F(1, 40) = 68.77, p < .001$ . There were no significant effects involving guilt proneness for either this or the initial manipulation check.

### Unit of Analysis

Within each session, participants interacted with only 1 other person. For this reason, the 2-person interaction was treated as the unit of analysis. With 6 participants in each session, three observations were gathered on each occasion. Respective samples for the individuals, unaccountable leaders, and accountable leaders conditions were 20, 22, and 22, respectively.

### Results

As in previous research (e.g., Tangney et al., 1996), shame and guilt proneness were significantly correlated ( $r = .55, p < .001$ ). Following recommendations by Paulhus, Robins, Trzesniewski, and Tracy (2004) and Tangney and Dearing (2002), all analyses initially included a shame main effect and an Interaction Type  $\times$  Shame interaction to control for collinearity between guilt and shame proneness. We retained in the model significant effects involving shame and report these in footnotes. We dropped from the model nonsignificant effects involving shame, but only if this did not alter existing findings. Denominator degrees of freedom vary accordingly.

### Competition

Participants completed six PDG trials in one of three conditions: individuals, unaccountable leaders, and accountable leaders. An Interaction Type  $\times$  Guilt ANOVA with competition as the dependent variable revealed a significant main effect for interaction type,  $F(2, 55) = 7.17, p < .01$ , and a significant Interaction Type  $\times$  Guilt interaction,  $F(2, 55) = 4.91, p < .05$ .<sup>2</sup> Predicted mean proportions of competition across trials as a function of interaction type and guilt proneness are presented in Table 1. We partitioned, first, the interaction type main effect. The first planned contrast revealed that individuals and unaccountable leaders pooled were less competitive than accountable leaders,  $F(1, 55) = 9.85, p < .01$ . The second planned contrast revealed that individuals were less competitive than unaccountable leaders,  $F(1, 55) = 4.47, p < .05$ . The fact that both contrasts were significant raises a legitimate question about whether accountable leaders were significantly more competitive than unaccountable leaders. Because the additional contrast between these two conditions is not orthogonal to the planned contrasts, it was evaluated using a Bonferroni-corrected alpha of .017 (.05/3). The contrast comparing accountable with unaccountable leaders was not significant,  $F(1, 55) = 2.64, p < .11$ . Considering the inconsistent accountability effects reported in the bargaining literature, this latter finding was not completely surprising.

More important was the significant Interaction Type  $\times$  Guilt interaction. We partitioned this interaction by testing whether the two planned contrasts on the interaction type variable interacted with guilt proneness. There was a significant Other Versus Accountable Leaders Contrast  $\times$  Guilt interaction,  $F(1, 55) = 4.34, p < .05$ . Tests of simple effects across columns revealed that when guilt proneness was high (top row in Table 1), individuals and unaccountable leaders pooled were less competitive than accountable leaders,  $F(1, 55) = 12.85, p < .01$ . When guilt proneness was low (bottom row in Table 1), individuals and unaccountable leaders pooled did not differ significantly from accountable leaders,  $F(1, 55) = 0.03, p < .86$ . These results provide support for two key assumptions. First, that high guilt proneness motivates conformity to moral norms and, second, that for accountable leaders the more salient norms relate to group morality, whereas for unaccountable leaders (and individuals) the more salient norms relate to individual morality.

There was also a significant Individuals Versus Unaccountable Leaders Contrast  $\times$  Guilt interaction,  $F(1, 55) = 4.60, p < .05$ . Tests of simple effects across columns revealed that when guilt proneness was high, unaccountable leaders did not differ significantly from individuals,  $F(1, 55) = 0.04, p < .85$ . When guilt proneness was low, however, unaccountable leaders were more competitive than individuals,  $F(1, 55) = 8.59, p < .01$ . These results provide support for two further assumptions: First, that unaccountable leaders, but not individuals, have the opportunity to rationalize competitiveness as being enacted for the sake of the

<sup>2</sup> There was a significant positive association between shame proneness and competitiveness,  $\beta = .35, F(1, 55) = 8.02, p < .01$ , and a significant Individuals Versus Unaccountable Leaders Contrast  $\times$  Shame interaction,  $F(1, 55) = 4.33, p < .05$ . The interaction indicated that the association of shame proneness with increased competitiveness was stronger in the unaccountable leaders condition,  $\beta = .64, F(1, 55) = 7.99, p < .05$ , than in the individuals condition,  $\beta = .00, F(1, 55) = 0.00, p < .99$ .



Table 1  
*Mean Proportion Competition as a Function of Interaction Type and Guilt Proneness, Follow-Up Experiment 1*

Guilt	Individuals	Unaccountable leaders	Accountable leaders
High guilt	.04	.02	.37
Low guilt	.06	.36	.23

Note. Entries are predicted means conditioned at 1 standard deviation above (high guilt) and below (low guilt) the mean of guilt proneness.

in-group and, second, that such opportunity is more important to low- than to high-guilt unaccountable leaders because only the former are highly self-interested.<sup>3</sup> The important take-home message is that the discontinuity effect can be eliminated when groups have leaders, but only if these leaders are both unaccountable and high in guilt proneness.

### Reasons for Choice

Participant completed 10 items designed to assess five different reasons for choice.<sup>4</sup> Interaction Type  $\times$  Guilt ANOVAs revealed significant interaction type main effects for three reasons: max rel,  $F(2, 57) = 17.93, p < .01$ ; distrust,  $F(2, 55) = 9.00, p < .01$ ; and max joint,  $F(2, 58) = 5.23, p < .01$ . The ANOVAs further revealed significant Interaction Type  $\times$  Guilt interactions for three reasons: max rel,  $F(2, 57) = 4.78, p < .05$ ; distrust,  $F(2, 55) = 5.17, p < .05$ ; and max joint,  $F(2, 58) = 6.59, p < .01$ .<sup>5</sup>

Predicted means for choice reasons as a function of interaction type and guilt proneness are presented in Table 2. We partitioned the interaction type main effects for max rel, distrust, and max joint into the two planned contrasts. The first planned contrast revealed that unaccountable leaders and individual pooled scored significantly lower than accountable leaders on max rel,  $F(1, 57) = 17.59, p < .01$ , and distrust,  $F(1, 55) = 13.78, p < .01$ , whereas they scored higher on max joint,  $F(1, 58) = 8.77, p < .01$ . The second planned contrast revealed that individuals scored significantly lower than unaccountable leaders on max rel,  $F(1, 57) = 18.33, p < .05$ , and distrust,  $F(1, 55) = 4.20, p < .05$ , but did not differ significantly from unaccountable leaders on max joint,  $F(1, 58) = 1.87, p < .18$ . Because both contrasts were significant for max rel and distrust, the question arises whether unaccountable leaders differed significantly from accountable leaders. An additional contrast ( $\alpha = .017$ ) revealed no significant difference between the two conditions for either reason. This pattern of findings is compatible with results for competition.

Next, we partitioned the Interaction Type  $\times$  Guilt interactions for max rel, distrust, and max joint. For max rel (see first row in Table 2), there was a significant Other Versus Accountable Leaders Contrast  $\times$  Guilt interaction,  $F(1, 57) = 8.05, p < .01$ . Tests of simple effects revealed that when guilt proneness was high (see Columns 4–6), individuals and unaccountable leaders pooled reported less max rel than accountable leaders,  $F(1, 57) = 26.21, p < .01$ . When guilt proneness was low (see Columns 1–3), individuals and unaccountable leaders pooled did not differ significantly from accountable leaders,  $F(1, 57) = 0.40, p < .54$ . The Individuals Versus Unaccountable Leaders  $\times$  Guilt interaction was not significant,  $F(1, 57) = 0.55, p < .47$ .

For distrust (see third row in Table 2) there was a significant Other Versus Accountable Leaders Contrast  $\times$  Guilt interaction,  $F(1, 55) = 5.36, p < .05$ . Tests of simple effects revealed that when guilt proneness was high (see Columns 4–6), individuals and unaccountable leaders pooled reported less distrust than accountable leaders,  $F(1, 55) = 9.72, p < .01$ . When guilt proneness was low (see Columns 1–3), individuals and unaccountable leaders pooled did not differ significantly from accountable leaders,  $F(1, 55) = 0.40, p < .53$ . The Individuals Versus Unaccountable Leaders Contrast  $\times$  Guilt interaction was also significant,  $F(1, 55) = 4.07, p < .05$ . Tests of simple effects revealed that when guilt proneness was high (see Columns 4–5), unaccountable leaders did not differ significantly from individuals,  $F(1, 55) = 0.99, p < .33$ . When guilt proneness was low (see Columns 1–2), however, unaccountable leaders reported more distrust than did individuals,  $F(1, 55) = 15.01, p < .01$ .

For max joint (see fourth row in Table 2), there was a significant Other Versus Accountable Leaders Contrast  $\times$  Guilt interaction,  $F(1, 58) = 10.04, p < .01$ . Tests of simple effects revealed that

<sup>3</sup> Relevant to the significant Other Versus Accountable Leaders Contrast  $\times$  Guilt interaction, tests of simple effects across rows revealed that for individuals and unaccountable leaders pooled (first and second columns of Table 1), guilt proneness was negatively associated with competition,  $\beta = -.34, F(1, 55) = 5.72, p < .05$ . For accountable leaders (third column of Table 1), the association between guilt proneness and competition was nonsignificantly reversed,  $\beta = .27, F(1, 55) = 1.10, p < .30$ . Relevant to the significant Individuals Versus Unaccountable Leaders Contrast  $\times$  Guilt interaction, tests of simple effects across rows revealed that whereas guilt proneness was negatively associated with competition for both unaccountable leaders and individuals, this association was stronger for unaccountable leaders,  $\beta = -.65, F(1, 55) = 12.59, p < .01$ , than for individuals,  $\beta = -.04, F(1, 55) = 0.03, p < .88$ . One possible reason for the comparatively weak negative association between guilt proneness and competitiveness in the individuals condition is that competition in this condition was more restricted because, unlike low-guilt unaccountable leaders, low-guilt individuals did not have the opportunity to escape the appearance of self-interestedness by rationalizing their competitiveness as being enacted for the sake of the in-group.

<sup>4</sup> Correlations among choice reasons ( $N = 128$ ) were max rel–max own ( $r = .19$ ); max rel–distrust ( $r = .73$ ); max rel–max joint ( $r = -.65$ ); max rel–min dif ( $r = -.57$ ); max own–distrust ( $r = .22$ ); max own–max joint ( $r = -.04$ ); max own–min dif ( $r = .06$ ); distrust–max joint ( $r = -.48$ ); distrust–min dif ( $r = -.41$ ); and max joint–min dif ( $r = .74$ ). All  $r$ s  $\geq 1.191$  are significant ( $p < .05$ ). As expected, max rel, max own, and distrust were all positively correlated, as were max joint and min dif. Furthermore, max rel and distrust were both negatively correlated with max joint and min dif. The relatively low correlations for max own are most likely due to restriction of range. Across conditions, participants scored near the high end of the max own measure.

<sup>5</sup> There were significant shame main effects for three reasons: max rel,  $\beta = .30, F(1, 57) = 6.79, p < .05$ ; max own,  $\beta = .32, F(1, 57) = 4.32, p < .05$ ; and distrust,  $\beta = .29, F(1, 55) = 4.68, p < .05$ . Shame proneness was associated with greater concern for maximizing relative outcomes, greater concern for maximizing absolute outcomes, and greater distrust of the opponent. There was also a significant Other Versus Accountable Leaders Contrast  $\times$  Shame interaction for min dif,  $F(1, 55) = 5.81, p < .05$ . The interaction indicated a negative association of shame proneness with min dif in the accountable leaders condition,  $\beta = -.60, F(1, 55) = 6.02, p < .05$ , which was nonsignificantly reversed in the individuals and unaccountable leaders conditions pooled,  $\beta = .13, F(1, 55) = 0.51, p < .48$ .

Table 2  
Mean Choice Reasons as a Function of Interaction Type and Guilt Proneness, Follow-Up Experiment 1

Reason	Low guilt			High guilt		
	Individuals	Unaccountable leaders	Accountable leaders	Individuals	Unaccountable leaders	Accountable leaders
Max rel	1.27	3.10	2.52	1.13	2.42	4.56
Max own	6.16	6.28	6.59	5.80	6.00	6.25
Distrust	1.51	3.56	2.22	1.53	2.04	3.30
Max joint	6.82	5.91	6.55	6.60	6.55	4.59
Min dif	5.76	5.05	5.30	5.51	5.30	4.64

Note. Entries are predicted means conditioned at 1 standard deviation above (high guilt) and below (low guilt) the mean of guilt proneness. Max rel = maximizing own relative outcomes; Max own = maximizing own absolute outcomes; Max joint = maximizing the joint outcomes of both sides; Min dif = minimizing the difference between the outcomes of both sides.

when guilt proneness was high (see Columns 4–6), individuals and unaccountable leaders pooled reported more max joint than did accountable leaders,  $F(1, 58) = 20.84, p < .01$ . When guilt proneness was low (see Columns 1–3), individuals and unaccountable leaders pooled did not differ significantly from accountable leaders,  $F(1, 58) = 0.16, p < .70$ . The Individuals versus Unaccountable Leaders Contrast  $\times$  Guilt interaction was not significant,  $F(1, 58) = 1.52, p < .23$ .<sup>6</sup>

Max rel, distrust, and max joint all tracked the tendency for unaccountable leaders and individuals pooled to be less competitive than accountable leaders when guilt proneness was high but not when it was low. Distrust also tracked the tendency for unaccountable leaders to be more competitive than individuals when guilt proneness was low but not when it was high. These findings cast light on the reasons underlying participants' choice behavior.

### Perceived In-Group Preferences

Participants in the leader conditions completed two items that assessed perceived in-group preference for *X* and *Y* choices, respectively ("Do you think your group members would have liked you to pick mostly *X* [*Y*] during the interactions?"). There was a strong negative correlation between these items,  $r(44) = -.82, p < .001$ . Each item was entered separately into an ANOVA that included a contrast between accountable and unaccountable leaders (accountability contrast) and guilt proneness as independent variables.<sup>7</sup> Relevant means as a function of accountability and guilt proneness are presented in Table 3. For *X*-choice preference,

Table 3  
Mean Perceived In-Group Preference for *X* and *Y* Choices as a Function of Interaction Type and Guilt Proneness, Experiment 2

Preference	Low guilt		High guilt	
	Unaccountable leaders	Accountable leaders	Unaccountable leaders	Accountable leaders
<i>X</i>	4.30	5.46	6.50	3.98
<i>Y</i>	3.43	3.30	2.05	4.66

Note. Entries are predicted means conditioned at 1 standard deviation above (high guilt) and below (low guilt) the mean of guilt proneness.

there was a significant Accountability Contrast  $\times$  Guilt interaction,  $F(1, 39) = 14.26, p < .01$ . Tests of simple effects indicated that unaccountable leaders perceived significantly stronger *X*-choice preference than did accountable leaders when guilt proneness was high,  $F(1, 39) = 13.33, p < .01$ , but not when it was low,  $F(1, 39) = 2.89, p < .10$ . As might be expected, results for *Y*-choice preference mirrored those for *X*-choice preference. For *Y*-choice preference, there was a significant accountability contrast, indicating that unaccountable leaders perceived a weaker *Y*-choice preference than accountable leaders,  $F(1, 39) = 8.28, p < .01$ . This main effect was qualified by a significant Accountability Contrast  $\times$  Guilt interaction,  $F(1, 39) = 9.74, p < .01$ . Tests of simple effects indicated that the tendency for unaccountable leaders to perceive a weaker *Y*-choice preference than accountable leaders was significant when guilt proneness was high,

<sup>6</sup> Relevant to the significant Other Versus Accountable Leaders Contrast  $\times$  Guilt interaction on max rel, tests of simple effects showed that for individuals and unaccountable leaders pooled there was a significant negative association between guilt proneness and max rel,  $\beta = -.27, F(1, 57) = 4.37, p < .05$ . For accountable leaders, there was a near significant positive association between guilt proneness and max rel,  $\beta = .37, F(1, 57) = 3.20, p < .08$ . Relevant to the significant Other Versus Accountable Leaders Contrast  $\times$  Guilt interaction on distrust, tests of simple effects showed that for individuals and unaccountable leaders pooled there was a marginal negative association between guilt proneness and distrust,  $\beta = -.30, F(1, 55) = 3.82, p < .06$ . For accountable leaders this association was descriptively reversed,  $\beta = .42, F(1, 55) = 2.42, p < .13$ . Relevant to the significant Individuals Versus Unaccountable Leaders Contrast  $\times$  Guilt interaction on distrust, tests of simple effects revealed that for unaccountable leaders there was a strong negative association between guilt proneness and distrust,  $\beta = -.60, F(1, 55) = 9.66, p < .01$ , whereas for individuals, guilt proneness was not associated with distrust,  $\beta = .01, F(1, 55) = 0.00, p < .97$ . Finally, relevant to the significant Other Versus Accountable Leaders Contrast  $\times$  Guilt interaction on max joint, tests of simple effects showed that for unaccountable leaders and individuals pooled there was a nonsignificant positive association between guilt proneness and max joint,  $\beta = .08, F(1, 58) = 0.34, p < .57$ . For accountable leaders, there was a significant negative association between guilt proneness and max joint,  $\beta = -.75, F(1, 58) = 11.14, p < .01$ .

<sup>7</sup> There was a significant negative association of shame proneness with perceived *X*-choice preferences,  $\beta = -.41, F(1, 39) = 6.46, p < .05$ , and a significant positive association of shame proneness with perceived *Y*-choice preferences,  $\beta = .44, F(1, 39) = 8.62, p < .01$ .

$F(1, 39) = 17.76, p < .01$ , but not when it was low,  $F(1, 39) = 0.04, p < .85$ .<sup>8</sup>

Unaccountable leaders perceived stronger in-group preference for *X* choices and weaker in-group preference for *Y* choices than did accountable leaders, but only when guilt proneness was high. These findings provide further corroborating evidence for the assumption that the accountability manipulation creates variation in the relative salience of individual versus group morality and that high-guilt leaders are particularly sensitive to such variation.

### *Mediation Analyses: The Contrasts × Guilt Interaction Effects on Competition*

*Other Versus Accountable Leaders Contrast × Guilt interaction.* The key Other Versus Accountable Leaders Contrast × Guilt interaction on competition was tracked by three choice reasons—max rel, distrust, and max joint. An appropriate next step, therefore, was to conduct mediation analyses. We first tested whether the assumption of homogeneous regression slopes was met. The homogeneity assumption was not supported in the case of distrust, as results revealed a marginal Other Versus Accountable Leaders Contrast × Guilt × Distrust interaction effect on competition,  $F(1, 52) = 3.33, p < .08$ . We therefore included just max rel and max joint as covariates in an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) that also included the factorial combination of interaction type and guilt proneness as independent variables. The dependent variable was competition. The ANCOVA revealed a significant positive association with competition for max rel,  $\beta = .60, F(1, 53) = 24.37, p < .01$ , and a significant negative association with competition for max joint,  $\beta = -.25, F(1, 53) = 5.52, p < .05$ . The Other Versus Accountable Leaders Contrast × Guilt interaction was no longer significant,  $F(1, 53) = 0.48, p < .50$ . As a final step in the mediation analysis, we calculated a *z*-prime statistic to test the significance of indirect effects. The critical value ( $p < .05$ ) for this statistic is 0.97 (MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West, & Sheets, 2002). There were significant indirect Other Versus Accountable Leaders Contrast × Guilt interaction effects on competition through max rel,  $z' = 2.46, p < .01$ , and through max joint,  $z' = 1.89, p < .01$ . This suggests that the tendency for high- but not low-guilt unaccountable leaders and individuals to be less competitive than accountable leaders was mediated both by reduced concern for maximizing relative outcomes and by increased concern for maximizing joint outcomes.

*Individuals Versus Unaccountable Leaders Contrast × Guilt interaction.* The Individuals Versus Unaccountable Leaders Contrast × Guilt interaction on competition was tracked by distrust. The assumption of homogeneous regression slopes was met, as results revealed a nonsignificant and descriptively small Individuals Versus Unaccountable Leaders Contrast × Guilt × Distrust interaction on competition,  $F(1, 52) = 0.23, p < .64$ . To test for mediation, we included distrust as a covariate in an ANCOVA that also included the factorial combination of interaction type and guilt proneness as independent variables. The ANCOVA revealed a significant positive association with competition for distrust,  $\beta = .36, F(1, 54) = 9.08, p < .01$ . The Individuals Versus Unaccountable Leaders Contrast × Guilt interaction on competition was no longer significant,  $F(1, 54) = 2.03, p < .16$ . There was a significant indirect Unaccountable Leaders Contrast × Guilt interaction effect on competition through distrust,  $z' = 1.68, p < .01$ . These findings suggest that the tendency for low- but not high-guilt

unaccountable leaders to be more competitive than individuals was mediated by increased distrust.

### *Mediation of the Accountability Contrast × Guilt Interaction on Competition by Perceived In-Group Preferences*

We administered two items to assess perceived in-group preferences for *X* and *Y* choices, respectively. There was a strong negative correlation between the two items, and both tracked the tendency for high- but not for low-guilt unaccountable leaders to be less competitive than accountable leaders. We report here the results of a mediation analysis involving perceived *X*-choice preference, but we obtained conceptually identical results when perceived *Y*-choice preference was treated as mediator.

We first analyzed competition for participants in the leaders conditions only. This analysis revealed a significant Accountability Contrast × Guilt interaction,  $F(1, 39) = 7.30, p < .01$ .<sup>9</sup> An ANCOVA that included perceived *X*-choice preference as a covariate revealed a significant negative association between *X*-choice preference and competition,  $\beta = -.76, F(1, 38) = 42.78, p < .01$ . The Accountability Contrast × Guilt interaction was no longer significant,  $F(1, 38) = 0.00, p < .96$ . The indirect Accountability Contrast × Guilt interaction effect on competition through perceived *X*-choice preference was significant,  $z' = 3.27, p < .001$ . These results suggest that the tendency for high- but not for low-guilt unaccountable leaders to be less competitive than accountable leaders was mediated by the increased salience of individual morality (relative to group morality).

### *Discussion*

We approached the three experimental conditions in Experiment 2 from the perspective of two planned contrasts. The first contrast compared individuals and unaccountable leaders pooled with accountable leaders. The second contrast compared individuals with unaccountable leaders. We discuss the results for each contrast in turn.

#### *First Contrast: Evidence for Group Morality*

Our primary expectation was that guilt proneness would interact with the accountability manipulation such that, with high (relative to low) guilt proneness, there would be a more pronounced tendency for individuals and unaccountable leaders pooled to be less

<sup>8</sup> Relevant to the significant Accountability Contrast × Guilt interaction for *X*-choice preference, tests of simple effects showed that the descriptive pattern among accountable leaders was for guilt proneness to be negatively associated with perceived *X*-choice preference,  $\beta = -.41, F(1, 39) = 2.73, p < .11$ . Among unaccountable leaders, guilt proneness was positively associated with perceived *X*-choice preference,  $\beta = .60, F(1, 39) = 12.17, p < .01$ . Relevant to the significant Accountability Contrast × Guilt interaction for *Y*-choice preference, the descriptive pattern among accountable leaders was for guilt proneness to be positively associated with perceived *Y*-choice preference,  $\beta = .38, F(1, 39) = 2.80, p < .11$ . Among unaccountable leaders, on the other hand, guilt proneness was negatively associated with perceived *Y*-choice preference,  $\beta = -.39, F(1, 39) = 5.98, p < .05$ .

<sup>9</sup> In this analysis too, there was a significant positive association of shame proneness with competition,  $\beta = .49, F(1, 39) = 8.58, p < .01$ .

competitive than accountable leaders. This prediction flowed from two assumptions. The first assumption was that high guilt proneness motivates conformity to moral norms, and the second assumption was that for accountable leaders the more salient norms relate to group morality, whereas for unaccountable leaders (and individuals) the more salient norms relate to individual morality. Consistent with this perspective, results for the Other Versus Accountable Leaders Contrast  $\times$  Guilt interaction indicated that individuals and unaccountable leaders pooled were less competitive than accountable leaders, but only when guilt proneness was high.

Mediation analyses were consistent with the possibility that the tendency for individuals and unaccountable leaders pooled to be less competitive than accountable leaders when guilt proneness was high flowed from reduced concern for maximizing relative outcomes and increased concern for maximizing joint outcomes. Assuming that the former concern is a hallmark of group morality and the latter a hallmark of individual morality, these findings provide further corroborating evidence that high guilt proneness motivates conformity to moral norms and that for accountable leaders, the more salient norms relate to group morality, whereas for unaccountable leaders and individuals the more salient norms relate to individual morality.

Paradoxically, then, findings for the first contrast point to the conclusion that those who adhere closest to the tenets of individual morality are likely to depart from these tenets when group morality becomes salient. On this basis, one might infer, as Ridley (1996) did, that “when Joshua killed twelve thousand heathen in a day and gave thanks to the Lord afterwards by carving the ten commandments in stone, including the phrase ‘Thou shalt not kill,’ he was not being hypocritical.” (p. 192)

We have two final observations relevant to the first contrast. First, a review of the relevant literature indicates that the effect of leader accountability is elusive, and indeed, our findings are no exception to this rule. Although the descriptive pattern was for unaccountable leaders to be less competitive than accountable leaders, this difference was not significant. It was only by identifying guilt proneness as a key moderator that we were able to capture the accountability effect. Second, the particular significance of a distinction between individual and group morality is highlighted by findings for perceived in-group preferences. Those results showed that the tendency for high-guilt, but not low-guilt, unaccountable leaders to be less competitive than accountable leaders was mediated by an increase in perceived in-group preference for cooperation (relative to competition). Unaccountable leaders who were high in guilt proneness expected that the other members of their group would overwhelmingly prefer cooperation to competition. This pattern was descriptively reversed for accountable leaders who were high in guilt proneness. In sum, this pattern of results is consistent with the possibility that alternation between the individual morality associated with unaccountable leaders and the group morality associated with accountable leaders was magnified when guilt proneness was high.

### *Second Contrast: Evidence for Altruistic Rationalization*

The second contrast compared interactions between individuals to interactions between unaccountable leaders. We entertained two possible outcomes. On the one hand, existing explanations of the discontinuity effect did not provide a compelling basis for expect-

ing unaccountable leaders to be more competitive than individuals—either when guilt proneness is high or when it is low. Relevant to the in-group-favoring-norm explanation, we assumed that for both individuals and unaccountable leaders, the more salient norms relate to individual morality. Relevant to the identifiability and social support explanations, we assumed that both individuals and unaccountable leaders are identifiable and lack explicit social support for competitiveness. Relevant to the fear explanation, we assumed that because both conditions involve interindividual interactions, individuals and unaccountable leaders should be equally unaffected by generalized negative beliefs about other groups. On the other hand, we considered one point on which individuals and unaccountable leaders do differ. Unlike individuals, unaccountable leaders can rationalize competitiveness as being enacted for the sake of the in-group. We assumed that such opportunity for altruistic rationalization of competitiveness would be more important to low-guilt than to high-guilt unaccountable leaders because the former, but not the latter, are highly self-interested. This implied the possibility that unaccountable leaders would be more competitive than individuals when guilt proneness is low but not when it is high. Results were consistent with this second possibility. A significant Individuals Versus Unaccountable Leaders Contrast  $\times$  Guilt interaction revealed that unaccountable leaders were more competitive than individuals, but only when guilt proneness was low.

Mediation analyses were consistent with the possibility that the tendency for low- but not high-guilt unaccountable leaders to be more competitive than individuals was mediated by increased distrust. At first sight, this finding might suggest a role for generalized negative beliefs and expectation of other groups, as put forward in the fear explanation. It is not immediately clear, however, why such negative beliefs would play a more important role for low- as opposed to high-guilt unaccountable leaders. A more plausible interpretation, we think, is that low-guilt unaccountable leaders rationalized their self-interested behavior in terms of fear-based assertions. Historical evidence for fear-based altruistic rationalization of self-interest abounds. Consider, for instance, Hermann Goering’s account of how the Nazis were able to muster popular support for their war effort. “All you have to do,” Goering told Gustave Gilbert, a German-speaking intelligence officer who was granted free access to all prisoners held in the Nuremberg jail, “is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same way in any country.” (Gilbert, 1947, p. 279). This maxim of totalitarianism was also familiar to Stalin, who at the Yalta Conference, based his demand that Poland should fall within the Soviet sphere-of-influence on the following argument: “It is also a matter of security, because Poland presents the gravest strategic problem for the Soviet Union. Throughout history, Poland has served as a corridor for enemies coming to attack Russia” (cited in Beavor, 2002, p. 81).

We have one final observation relevant to the second contrast. As previously stated, the altruistic-rationalization hypothesis was advanced, but then rejected, by Insko et al. (1987). The hypothesis was rejected because of evidence indicating that participants who shared outcomes within a 3-person set, and were therefore able to rationalize competitive behavior as being enacted for the sake of 2 other persons, were not more competitive than participants who did not share outcomes within a 3-person set. Perhaps, however, when decision-making responsibility is centralized in 1 person, as

it was with the unaccountable leaders in the present experiment, altruistic rationalization becomes a more salient possibility. Also note that the Insko et al. (1987) experiment did not include an assessment of guilt proneness, and thus, it is possible that even without centralized decision-making, low-guilt group members may engage in altruistic rationalization.

Whether the competitive behavior of low-guilt unaccountable leaders was due to altruistic rationalization or to something else, we do find the lesser competitiveness of high-guilt unaccountable leaders plausible at least partially because it is consistent with an interpretation of the folk-wisdom saying that "It takes strong leaders to make peace." From this perspective, being morally "strong" and being able to avoid close monitoring by the in-group enables leaders to pursue a peaceful orientation toward out-groups.

## General Discussion

### *Three Questions*

We took as our point of departure three questions that have guided research on interindividual–intergroup discontinuity. The first question concerns the mechanisms responsible for the discontinuity effect. The second question concerns the generality of the discontinuity effect across a variety of different circumstances. The third question concerns the possibility of reducing the discontinuity effect by decreasing intergroup competitiveness. It is this latter question that was most central to the present research.

Existing explanations of the discontinuity effect suggest three reasons why intergroup competitiveness may be reduced when interaction involves leaders. Relevant to the fear hypothesis, distrust rooted in generalized negative beliefs and expectations about other groups may be reduced when interaction involves leaders rather than entire groups. Relevant to the social-support hypothesis, leaders may not always have access to direct social support from the in-group for competitive behavior. Finally, relevant to the identifiability hypothesis, leaders may be unable to avoid personal responsibility for competitive behavior. Still, the in-group-favoring-norm hypothesis suggested one remaining basis for predicting that accountable leaders would be more competitive than individuals: Leadership implies normative pressure to act so as to benefit the group. Experiment 1 confirmed this prediction and, by so doing, provided further evidence for the generality of the discontinuity effect. The decision in Experiment 1 to focus on accountable rather than unaccountable leaders was based on the idea that normative influence to act so as to benefit the in-group should be stronger for accountable than for unaccountable leaders. This idea implies that intergroup competitiveness can be reduced when interaction involves unaccountable rather than accountable leaders, and it thus suggests a possible answer to the reduction question.

Experiment 2 confirmed the postulated role of leader accountability, but as expected, only when guilt proneness was high. When guilt proneness was high, individuals and unaccountable leaders pooled were less competitive than accountable leaders. Relevant to the reduction question, when guilt proneness was high, the contrast between unaccountable leaders and individuals revealed a nonsignificant and descriptively reversed discontinuity effect (see Table 1). When guilt proneness was low, however, both unaccountable and accountable leaders were more competitive than individuals. This finding is consistent with the possibility that low-guilt leaders

rationalized self-interested competition as being enacted for the sake of the in-group, and it thus lends support to the altruistic-rationalization hypothesis. Thus, Experiment 2 also provided an additional answer to the mechanism question.

### *The Paradox of Individual and Group Morality*

Although the evidence for the altruistic-rationalization hypothesis is important, such evidence should not distract from what we regard as the key result of the present research. When guilt proneness was high, accountable but not unaccountable leaders were significantly more competitive than individuals. Because competition seems more immoral than moral, the competitiveness of high-guilt accountable leaders may appear surprising. It is, however, consistent with the assumption that high-guilt prone people are particularly responsive to accountability-induced salience of group morality (Cohen et al., 2006; Insko et al., 2005; Wildschut & Insko, 2006). Hobbes (1660/1983) captured the essence of this idea in a few simple words. "Force and fraud" he wrote, "are in war the two cardinal virtues." In more flamboyant style, Machiavelli (1515/1952) addressed a similar message to aspiring leaders:

And yet he must not mind incurring the scandal of those vices, without which it would be difficult to save the state, for if one considers well, it will be found that some things which seem virtues would, if followed, lead to one's ruin, and some others which appear vices result in one's greater security and well-being. (p. 93)

Viewed from this perspective, morality is a double-edged sword—what is moral in interindividual relations may not appear moral in intergroup relations, and vice versa. It is not without reason that Bertrand Russell (1957/1996) defined World War I as a time "when the nice people in all countries were securely in control, and in the name of the highest morality induced the young to slaughter one another" (p. 91).

The notion of group morality is also consistent with findings in the area of social dilemmas, which indicate that intergroup competition can be understood in part as a specific manifestation of a broader concern for the welfare of close others (Bornstein, 2003; Rapoport & Bornstein, 1987; Wit & Kerr, 2002). Wit and Kerr (2002), for instance, examined how variations in self-definition (individual, subgroup, or collective) influence group members' behavior in the context of a nested social dilemma. Consistent with the idea that shifting concerns from group morality to individual morality reduces competition, they found that compared with participants for whom subgroup categorization was made salient, participants for whom individual categorization was made salient allocated more money to a collective account and less money to their subgroup account. Our findings advance this particular literature by identifying proneness to guilt, a quintessential moral emotion, as a potentially important moderating variable.

More broadly, the notion of group morality offers insight into why responsible, well-adjusted persons, and not just prejudiced bigots, participate in intergroup conflict; that is, why intergroup conflict can become widespread and protracted. This, of course, is an issue of central importance to social psychology.

### *Limitations and Future Directions*

The present research focused on appointed leaders and not on elected leaders. There is, in fact, a fairly extensive literature

contrasting appointed with elected leaders (see Hollander, 1985, pp. 507–509, for a review). Furthermore, some of this research (Boyd, 1972; Carnevale et al., 1979, 1981; Clark & Sechrest, 1976) suggests that this contrast moderates the effect of accountability. Boyd (1972), for example, obtained evidence that election conferred status on a leader, and such status allowed for more latitude without compromising group loyalty. On the other hand, Hollander and Julian (1970, 1978) found that elected leaders were more vulnerable to rejection when decisions went wrong. All of which indicates that the moderating effect of appointed versus elected leadership on accountability may be complex. Suffice it to say that the present experiments did not include elected leaders and thus have the obvious limitation of not relating to an important variable. An interesting direction for future research would be to explore the difference between elected and appointed leaders in the context of social dilemmas.

A further limitation of the present evidence relates to the fact that in Experiment 2, but not in Experiment 1, there was no interaction between leader and group members. Furthermore, in the unaccountable leaders condition of Experiment 2, the group members were assumed to not know the source of the money earned. In large groups or organizations in which leaders have markedly higher status than subordinates, there may be little interaction between the executive officers and employees, and the executive officers may make many decisions about which employees know little if anything. Still, we acknowledge that conditions like that rarely, if ever, exist in small groups. So why, in Experiment 2, did we create such an extremely low level of accountability, with no interaction between leader and followers? We did so for two reasons. First, since our main concern was a purely theoretical interest in the impact of accountability, and only accountability, on competitiveness, we wanted to make sure that we eliminated any confounding circumstances that had a somewhat uncertain relation to accountability. As indicated above, if there had been interaction between leader and followers, competitiveness could have been due to social influence of the group or to the leader's rationalization of competitiveness as due to group influence. Thus in order to more cleanly test the effect of accountability on competitiveness, we eliminated interaction between leader and group. From a purely theoretical perspective, whether interaction between leader and group does or does not occur in typical groups and organizations is not directly relevant. Second, following the failure to reduce competitiveness between accountable leaders to the level observed between individuals in Experiment 1, we wanted to make sure that we had a strong manipulation of the accountability variable. The limitation of this approach, and indeed any approach that manipulates a dichotomous variable contrasting extreme levels, is that we have no evidence regarding more intermediate levels. Alternatively stated, we have no evidence regarding the shape of the accountability function.

These considerations point to two further directions for future research. One direction would be to manipulate whether leaders and group members did or did not meet, and the other would be to manipulate whether group leaders assumed that group members did or did not know the source of their earned money. Both of these contrasts should impact the degree of accountability.

One final limitation concerns inference in the context of a measured variable. Because guilt proneness was measured rather than manipulated, we should be cautious in interpreting our findings. Although we controlled for the overlap between guilt and

shame proneness, it is possible that other, unmeasured, variables could account for the role of guilt. Future research could pursue two possible approaches to this issue. This first approach calls for the assessment of a wide range of known correlates of trait-level guilt. The second approach calls for the exploration of experimental manipulations of state-level guilt.

### *Conclusions: From Paradox to Progress*

Research by Insko et al. (1998, 2001) suggests that one solution to the paradox of individual and group morality is for accountable leaders to realize that in the long run, the in-group may derive greater benefit from intergroup cooperation than from intergroup competition, that is, by behaving consistently with individual morality rather than with group morality (Insko et al., 2005). With this possibility in mind, the previously cited study by Ben-Yoav and Pruitt (1984) acquires particular significance. These researchers found that relative to unaccountable leaders, accountable leaders were more competitive when there was no anticipation of future interaction, but more cooperative when there was an anticipation of cooperative future interactions. Even accountable leaders, so it would seem, are capable of acting consistently with individual morality when they anticipate that this offers lasting benefit to the in-group. The following quote from Niebuhr (1939/1957) underscores this point: "Nations," he wrote, "can and do support higher values than their own if there is a coincidence between the higher values and the impulse of survival" (p. 79).

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