

Individuals' and Groups' Motivation to Restore Their Impaired Identity Dimensions Following Conflicts

Evidence and Implications

Ilanit SimanTov-Nachlieli, Nurit Shnabel, and Arie Nadler

Tel Aviv University, Israel

Abstract. Previous theories concerning the “Big Two” dimensions have focused on people’s perceptions and judgments of various social targets. The research presented in this article extends current theorizing by shedding light on how the targets of these judgments respond, in terms of motivational outcomes, to being perceived as high or low on agency or communion. Using the “needs-based model of reconciliation” we argue that, following transgressions, victimized or disadvantaged individuals or groups experience threats to their agency dimension of identity, whereas the perpetrating or advantaged individuals or groups experience threats to their communion identity dimension. We review empirical evidence suggesting that the experience of these threats leads to enhanced motivation to restore these impaired identity dimensions (i.e., reaffirm the agency or communion of oneself or one’s ingroup). We discuss how insights from reconciliation research can enhance our understanding of the Big Two dimensions and vice versa and point to the potential for cross fertilization.

Keywords: agency, communion, victims and perpetrators, needs-based model of reconciliation, identity threat

Converging evidence suggests that the “Big Two” – agency and communion – constitute fundamental dimensions underlying various social judgments and perceptions (Abele, Cuddy, Judd, & Yzerbyt, 2008). For instance, individuals or groups who are judged to be high on the communion dimension are likely to be perceived as “warm,” “friendly,” “trustworthy,” “moral,” etc., whereas individuals or groups who are judged as high on the agency dimension tend to be perceived as “ambitious,” “intelligent,” “competent,” etc. In recent years, researchers studying the Big Two dimensions have struggled “to integrate [their] relatively narrow approaches into broader theorizing” (Abele et al., 2008, p. 1064). The present article aims to further broaden the conceptualization of the Big Two dimensions by suggesting that the content clusters of “agency” on the one hand and “communion” on the other are reflected not only in people’s perceptions of various social targets, but also in the motivations experienced by these targets. Thus, the judgment of social targets along the agency and communion dimensions produces a “mirror image” of subsequent motivations such that targets perceived as low on agency or communion experience the need to restore these respective dimensions.

More specifically, theories and research on the Big Two have focused primarily on the *perceivers* of these dimen-

sions: on the individuals or groups who judge others’ communion or agency. These studies have explored questions such as whether perceptions along these two dimensions are positively or negatively correlated (e.g., Judd, James-Hawkins, Yzerbyt, & Kashima, 2005), processed in a different manner (e.g., Abele & Bruckmüller, 2011), or lead to particular action tendencies (e.g., Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008). By contrast, the present article focuses on the individuals or groups who are the *targets* of these judgments. We suggest that, in contexts of interpersonal or intergroup conflicts, victimized or underprivileged individuals or groups experience impairment to their agency dimension (i.e., their agency dimension of identity is threatened). Similarly, perpetrating or privileged individuals or groups experience impairment to their communion dimension (i.e., an identity threat is posed to their communion dimension). *The main claim of the present article is that both victims and perpetrators are motivated to restore the respective impaired identity dimensions (agency or communion).* These motivations are reflected in divergent behavioral tendencies. For example, victims may take revenge, and perpetrators may seek forgiveness, in an attempt to restore their agency or communion dimensions, respectively. Moreover, removing the threats posed to the identities of victims and perpetrators (i.e., reassuring the victims’ agency and the

perpetrators' communion) may promote their willingness to reconcile with each other.

Below we elaborate and provide empirical support for this claim. We first introduce the theoretical framework of the "needs-based model of reconciliation" (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008) and briefly review key findings showing that individuals or groups involved in conflicts experience threats to their Big Two identity dimensions and are consequently motivated to restore their positive identity. We then discuss the implications of these results for current theorizing on the Big Two, in particular in terms of the dimensions' content, primacy, and desirability. Finally, because our goal is not only to extend theorizing on the Big Two, but also to integrate it with other trends in social psychological research, we discuss how insights from Big Two research can contribute to a better understanding of conflicts and reconciliation processes.

The Needs-Based Model of Reconciliation

The needs-based model was developed in light of the growing realization, both within and outside of social psychology (Shnabel, Nadler, Canetti-Nisim, & Ullrich, 2008), that conflicts threaten the identities of the conflicting parties beyond the threat to realistic, tangible resources (e.g., money, property or human lives). For example, beyond the fear of actual physical threats (e.g., terror attacks) group members may feel threatened by the outgroup's negation of their ingroup's *raison d'être* (Kelman, 2008). The needs-based model further posits, however, that the identity threats experienced by victims and perpetrators are not symmetrical: After transgressions, victims generally experience feelings of powerlessness and loss of control (Herman, 1992), and a diminishing sense of competence, status, and honor (Scheff, 1994). Thus, victims typically feel a threat to their identity as powerful social actors. Perpetrators generally feel moral inferiority (Exline & Baumeister, 2000) and are concerned about being rejected by their "designated moral community," since social exclusion is the sanction imposed upon those who violate their community's moral standards (Tavuchis, 1991). Thus, perpetrators typically experience a threat to their identity as moral social actors. As a result of these divergent identity threats, victims typically experience an enhanced need for empowerment and are motivated to restore their sense of power; for example, they may want to regain their respect, sense of competence, status, and security. Perpetrators, by contrast, experience an enhanced need for social acceptance and are motivated to restore their impaired moral image; for example, they may want others to express sympathy and understanding of the circumstances that compelled their behavior.

Whereas the original formulation of the needs-based model used the terms "need for empowerment" and "need for

social acceptance," in the present article we argue that these needs are better conceptualized more broadly as the respective motivations to eliminate threats to one's agency or communion dimensions of identity. Our argument is based on the tenet that the Big Two dimensions represent very broad content categories that include various components and constructs. Supporting this tenet, research on person perception in which participants rated 300 trait names on criteria such as agency/communion, competence/morality, and individualism/collectivism revealed that these ratings yielded a clear two-factorial solution with one factor comprising the agency dimension and the other the communion dimension (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007, Study 1). These findings led to the conclusion that "Agency is the common core of dimensions like individualism, competence and intellectual functioning . . . Communion is the common core of dimensions like collectivism, morality and social functioning" (Abele & Wojciszke 2007, p. 755). Research on group perception similarly converges on the conclusion that, although stereotypical perceptions of groups reflect various contents, they can nevertheless be subsumed under the general, superordinate categories of "competence" and "warmth" (Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002), corresponding to the agency and communion dimensions, respectively (Cuddy et al., 2008).

Arguably, different contexts highlight different elements in the Big Two dimensions. For example, the components of the agency dimension that reflect one's motivation and assertiveness (e.g., "ambitious") are generally more relevant to the self and interpersonal perceptions than to group perceptions (i.e., stereotypes) (Abele et al., 2008). Nevertheless, as part of the endeavor to integrate the various theoretical perspectives on the Big Two dimensions, it has been suggested that these different elements can be subsumed under the two broad categories of agency and communion (Abele et al., 2008). Consistent with this suggestion, we propose that in contexts of interpersonal and intergroup conflicts the constructs within the agency and communion dimensions that become most salient are the sense of power and moral image of oneself or one's ingroup, respectively.

Of course, at first glance power and morality may not seem to correspond closely to agency and communion. For example, research on agentic women (Rudman & Glick, 2001) revealed that competence, a core component of the agency dimension, is distinguished from dominance (advancing one's interests at the expense of others), which may correspond more closely to the concept of power. Similarly, Leach, Ellemers, and Barreto (2007) showed that sociability, a core component of the communion dimension, and morality constitute separate dimensions of group identity. Nevertheless, we propose that power and morality can be conceptualized as constructs within the Big Two dimensions (i.e., they can be subsumed under agency and communion).

Our proposal is consistent with our previous definition of power, based on the logic of the interdependence theory (Rusbult & Van Lange, 1996; see also Foster & Rusbult, 1999), as the ability to control or influence the outcomes

of oneself and one's interaction partners (see Shnabel & Nadler, 2008; for a further discussion of the concept of power, see French & Raven, 1959; Turner, 2005). Our definition does not conceptualize power as the abuse of force against others, which might indeed be more remote than agency per se. Instead, it is highly consistent with the definition of agency as "practices enabling people to perform tasks, solve problems, and attain their goals" (Ybarra et al., 2008, p. 1085). Specifically, consistent with Ybarra et al.'s suggestion that agency is "not manifested in a social vacuum" (p. 1084), we propose that, in contexts of conflicts, one's agency – one's ability to perform tasks and attain goals – is determined not only by one's competence but also by one's ability to exert control and influence over the situation and its outcomes. We thus suggest that threats to victims' sense of power may be viewed as a particular case of a threat to their agency dimension.

Second, based on Baumeister, Stillwell, and Heather-ton's (1994) conceptualization of guilt as an emotion reflecting people's anxiety over social exclusion, we have previously argued (see Shnabel & Nadler, 2008) that threats to the moral image of oneself or one's ingroup can be removed by various ways besides direct moral approval. For example, the moral image of perpetrators was found to be restored through victims' expression of brotherhood and sympathy toward the perpetrators, their willingness to be in social proximity with the perpetrators, or their praise of the perpetrators' interpersonal skills (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008; Shnabel, Nadler, Ullrich, Dovidio, & Carmi, 2009). Thus, threats to a perpetrator's moral image may be viewed as a special case of threats to the communion dimension.

Finally, Ybarra et al. (2008) suggested that human beings recurrently face two core challenges in their lives: manifesting skills, competencies, and status, corresponding to the agency dimension; and becoming socially connected with and being accepted by others, corresponding to the communion dimension. We suggest that victims' motivation to restore their agency (i.e., "need for empowerment" in terms of the needs-based model) corresponds to their attempt to cope with the former challenge, whereas perpetrators' motivation to restore their communion dimension (i.e., "need for acceptance" in terms of the needs-based model) corresponds their attempt to cope with the latter.

This reformulation of the needs-based model as one that characterizes threats to the Big Two dimensions of individuals and groups instead of the narrower focus on power and morality serves two theoretical purposes. First, it makes it possible to apply the model to a wider variety of contexts such as those involving group disparity without a concrete transgression episode. As explained below, the salient Big Two components (i.e., contents) in these contexts are competence and warmth rather than power and morality. More importantly, for the purpose of the present article, this theoretical transition links the research conducted within the theoretical framework of the needs-based model to existing theories of the Big Two dimensions, thus contributing to its further extension.

Once power and morality are conceptualized as components of the Big Two, the empirical evidence collected within the research framework of the needs-based model can serve to support the claim that conflicts threaten the Big Two identity dimensions and result in increased motivation to remove these threats. First, a series of studies (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008) using various methodologies and types of interpersonal transgressions revealed that, subsequent to transgressions, victims experienced threats to their sense of power and perpetrators experienced threats to their moral image, resulting in enhanced motivation to restore these identity dimensions. In one of these studies, the social role (i.e., victim or perpetrator) was experimentally induced in the lab. Participants were randomly assigned to the roles of "writers" (victims) who had to compose marketing slogans for a list of commercial products, or "judges" (perpetrators) who evaluated these slogans but were advised to be harsh in their judgment for the sake of their own success in this ostensible "creativity test." As expected, after learning that they failed the test due to the judges' harsh evaluations, writers reported lower levels of sense of power (e.g., "during the interaction with my partner, I felt relatively weak" or "I did not have much influence on the interaction with my partner") and greater need for power (e.g., "I would like to have more say during our joint work"). Judges who passed the test, on the other hand, reported lower levels of moral image (e.g., "My partner perceives me as not being completely moral") and a greater need for acceptance (e.g., "I would like my partner to know that I am not a harsh person").

A control condition consisting of "writers" who failed the test and "judges" who passed it in the absence of a direct transgression confirmed that the impairment to the victims' sense of power and the perpetrators' moral image as well as their subsequent motivations was due not merely to their failure or success on the "creativity test," but rather stemmed from their social role in the victim-perpetrator dyad. Thus, even though "writers" generally reported a lower sense of power and a greater need for empowerment and "judges" generally reported a less positive moral image and a greater need for acceptance, these effects were particularly pronounced in the victim-perpetrator dyad (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008, Study 1). These findings suggest that, whereas people's agency and communion dimensions may be impaired due to various circumstances (e.g., failure on a test may threaten people's sense of competence), their involvement in a conflict seems to pose a particularly severe threat to these two dimensions. Therefore, conflicts may be an ideal context to examine the effects of such identity threats on the Big Two dimensions.

In a subsequent study (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008, Study 2), following the transgression writers and judges were randomly assigned to three experimental conditions: Participants assigned to the *empowerment condition* received messages from their interaction partners that reaffirmed their agency (i.e., feedback suggesting that their partner viewed them as highly talented, intelligent, and creative,

albeit mediocre on agreeableness); participants assigned to the *acceptance condition* received messages from their interaction partners that reaffirmed their communion (i.e., feedback suggesting that their partner viewed them as highly agreeable, kind and having good social skills, albeit mediocre on competence); participants assigned to the *control condition* received messages suggesting that their partners viewed them as mediocre on both the agency and communion dimensions. Writers were found to express greater willingness to reconcile (e.g., readiness to make efforts to ensure smooth future joint interactions) with their judges after receiving a message from the judges that reassured their agency, compared to communion reassuring or control messages. In contrast, judges expressed greater willingness to reconcile with the writers whose slogans they evaluated after receiving a message from the writers that reassured their communion compared to agency reassuring or control messages. Similar patterns of results were obtained in studies that used role-playing scenarios or recollections of real-life transgressions such as unrequited love, criticizing a relationship partner (e.g., romantic partners, friends, family members or colleagues), preferring one's self-interests over those of one's partner's interests, or lack of sensitivity to the partner's needs and opinions.

A related line of research found similar results at the intergroup level. When relating to the context of the Kefar Kassem massacre, in which Arab civilians were victimized by an Israeli border patrol, Arabs reported lower levels of sense of power, whereas Jews reported lower levels of positive moral image (Shnabel et al., 2009, Study 1). Although this study did not directly measure the participants' motivations, it did find that Arabs responded more favorably to empowering (compared to accepting) messages from Jews (i.e., a message reaffirming Arabs' right to pride and self-determination), whereas Jews responded more favorably to accepting (compared to empowering) messages from Arabs (i.e., a message expressing sympathy and brotherhood toward the Jews). This suggests the existence of divergent motivations (i.e., Arabs were motivated to restore their agency dimension, whereas Jews were motivated to restore their communion dimension). In a subsequent study (Shnabel et al., 2009, Study 2) related to the context of the Second World War, Germans reported lower levels of positive moral image, whereas Jews reported lower levels of sense of power. Also, Germans responded more favorably to an accepting message from the Jews, whereas Jews responded more favorably to an empowering message from the Germans. The fact that members of the same group (i.e., Jews) experienced a threat to their communion dimension in one context (i.e., the Kefar Kassem massacre) and to their agency dimension in another context (i.e., the Holocaust) suggests that threats to the agency or communion dimensions are not inherently embedded in a group's identities. Rather, they are determined by the social context. We return to this issue in our discussion of Big Two dimension desirability.

Further evidence for our claim regarding divergent motivations in response to divergent identity threat comes

from contexts of group disparity. The stereotype content model (Fiske et al., 2002) suggests that low-status groups are often stereotypically perceived of as warm but incompetent, whereas high-status groups are often stereotypically perceived of as competent but cold and immoral. These complementary stereotypes justify the status quo of inequality because they legitimize the disadvantaged or advantaged position of groups in the social hierarchy (Fiske et al., 2002; Kay & Jost, 2003). Thus, in contexts where system-justifying ideologies are strongly endorsed, the status quo of inequality is likely to be perceived as fair. Hence, low- and high-status groups are not expected to experience heightened psychological motivations for restoration of their agency or communion dimensions. However, when group disparity becomes salient and possibly implies the existence of unjust structural violence (i.e., permanent social arrangements that privilege some groups while depriving others, Galtung, 1969), low- and high-status groups may experience a threat to their competence or warmth resulting in increased motivation to restore these identity dimensions.

In line with this suggestion, Siem and colleagues (Siem, von Oettingen, Mummendey, & Nadler, 2012) found that when the differential status of a group was perceived as illegitimate (but not when it was perceived as legitimate), members belonging to low-status groups showed an increased need for empowerment, whereas members of high-status groups showed an increased need for social acceptance. These findings were obtained when group status was either experimentally induced (Study 1) or made salient in a naturalistic intergroup setting (i.e., in the context of relations between psychologists and physicians or social workers, Study 2). Consistent with these findings of the divergent motivations in groups, Bergsieker, Shelton, and Richeson (2010) showed that, within interracial or interethnic interactions, Afro- and Latino-Americans were primarily motivated to earn respect, whereas White-Americans were motivated to be liked, corresponding to the respective elimination of threats to the competence (agency) and warmth (communion) dimensions of their identities. In fact, when the divergent motivations of low- and high-status groups were addressed by exchanging competence- or warmth-reassuring messages, they revealed more positive outgroup attitudes as well as a willingness to act to change the status quo toward equality (Shnabel, Ullrich, Nadler, Dovidio, & Ewers, 2012).

While the research reviewed so far examined the motivational consequences of threats posed to *either* the agency *or* the communion dimensions of the identities of individuals or groups, some conflicts threaten both identity dimensions at the same time. This is the case, for example, in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in which both sides are victims in certain situations and perpetrators in other situations. For instance, Israeli-Jews were found to experience threat to their agency dimension when referring to the 1954 Ma'ale Akrabim massacre in which Israeli civilians were victimized by Palestinian terrorists; and to their communion di-

mension when referring to the 1956 Kfar Kassem massacre in which Arab civilians were victimized by a Jewish-Israeli border patrol (Harth, & Shnabel, 2012). The experience of threats and resulting motivations to maintain positive identity on both the agency and the communion dimensions is nicely reflected in one of the famous statements made by David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, who said that "The fate of Israel depends on its strength and its righteousness." This quote perceptively captures the Big Two fundamental dimensions of groups' identities: strength, corresponding to the agency dimension, and righteousness, corresponding to the communion, or moral-social dimension. The final study in this review focuses on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and examined the hypothesis that, in the presence of threats posed to both the agency and the communion dimensions, the motivation to restore the agency dimension has primacy over the motivation to restore the communion dimension.

Before we describe this research, it is important to explain our conceptualization of the agency dimension in the particular context of *intractable conflicts* such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Intractable intergroup conflicts are defined as violent and protracted; they demand extensive investment, play a central role in the lives of the parties involved, and are perceived as total, irresolvable, and zero-sum in nature (Bar-Tal, 2007; Kriesberg, 1993). As mentioned earlier, different components of the agency dimension (e.g., competence vs. ambitiousness) become salient in different contexts (Abele et al., 2008). To the best of our knowledge, however, research on the agency dimension has never focused on contexts of intractable conflict, so that the meaning of "agency" in this particular context has never been truly explored. We suggest that the most salient components in the ingroup's agency identity dimension in such contexts relate to its sense of safety and security, namely, its perceived ability to defend itself against existential threats. For instance, consistent with Ybarra and colleagues' (2008) claim that the need for protection is an agency-related concern, members of groups that are involved in intractable conflicts may want their ingroup to have a strong army to protect itself from military occupation, terror attacks, or other severe violations of their basic human rights by their adversarial outgroup.

Arguably, people's sense of safety and security has traditionally been viewed as related to one's sense of belonging, that is, to the communion identity dimension. For example, attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969) suggests that babies' need for a "secure base" (i.e., a sense of safety and security) should be satisfied by their "attachment figures" – their primary caregivers. Similarly, belonging to a community has been argued to enhance one's sense of safety in a world perceived as insecure (Bauman, 2001). Nevertheless, we argue that, in contexts of violent intergroup conflicts, as opposed to interpersonal or intragroup relations, security and safety are related to the ingroup's sense of agency because they reflect the ingroup's ability to maintain its self-determination and the respect of its members'

inalienable rights (i.e., the group's "categorical respect," Janoff-Bulman & Werther, 2008). Consistent with our argument, the Shnabel et al. (2009) studies reviewed above showed that groups subjected to extremely violent transgressions (i.e., Arabs relating to the Kfar Kassem massacre, Jews relating to the Holocaust) responded more positively to the perpetrators' acknowledgment of their right to self-determination than to expressions of brotherhood, suggesting that they were preoccupied with agency-related rather than communion-related concerns.

Based on this conceptualization of safety and security in contexts of intractable conflicts as related to the agency dimension, and consistent with classical models of human motivation and core psychological needs (Maslow, 1943; Murphy, 1958), we have suggested elsewhere (SimanTov-Nachlieli & Shnabel, 2013) that motivations to restore the ingroup's agency and communion identity dimensions may be organized hierarchically: People first seek to satisfy their needs for safety and security, and only then do they authorize themselves to seek the satisfaction of higher-order needs including maintaining a positive moral image and social relatedness with others. In line with this supposition, recent research indicated that threatening conditions activate the need for safety and security (e.g., Carroll, Arkin, Seidel, & Morris, 2009) and may undermine the motivation to connect with others (Gable & Strachman, 2008).

In line with the above reasoning, SimanTov-Nachlieli and Shnabel hypothesized that, in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is characterized by duality of social roles (i.e., each side serves as victim in certain situations and as perpetrator in others), the experience of victimization and resulting motivation to restore the agency dimension should have a stronger impact on the attitudes and behavior of Israeli-Jews than the experience of perpetration and resulting motivation to restore the communion dimension. Moreover, the motivation for restoration of the communion dimension (e.g., the wish to regain positive moral image) should come into play and exert its influence only after the motivation to restore agency is satisfied. For instance, Israeli-Jews are likely to be more concerned about threats of social exclusion (e.g., in the form of academic boycotts) during times of ceasefire than in times of war which pose an immediate threat to Israel's safety and security (i.e., the agency dimension).

Consistent with the above theorizing, SimanTov-Nachlieli and Shnabel (Study 1) found that the motivations of Israeli-Jews for a "strong Israel" (e.g., "Israel must be stronger than its neighbors") had a negative effect on their behavioral tendencies toward the Palestinians such that higher motivation was associated with more aggressiveness and less helpfulness toward the Palestinians. However, no such parallel effects were observed for the motivations of Israeli-Jews for a "moral Israel" (e.g., "a positive moral image is of great importance to Israel"), that is, higher motivation was not associated with less aggressiveness or more helpfulness toward the Palestinians. Thus, the motivation for restoring and maintaining the agency dimen-

sion was more dominant in determining the anti- or prosocial tendencies of Israeli-Jews than the motivation for restoration and maintenance of the communion dimension. Nevertheless, in a subsequent study SimanTov-Nachlieli and Shnabel (2013, Study 2) found that once Israel's agency dimension was reaffirmed, the motivation to restore its communion dimension did increase Israeli-Jews' prosocial tendencies toward the Palestinians. Specifically, consistent with Study 1, threats to Israel's moral image had no effect on participants' anti- or prosocial tendencies toward the Palestinians. However, when these moral threats were accompanied by the reassurance of Israel's strength and resilience, Israeli-Jews showed reduced aggressiveness and increased helpfulness toward the Palestinians. These prosocial tendencies could be traced back to Israeli-Jews' higher willingness to relinquish some power for the sake of morality (SimanTov-Nachlieli & Shnabel, 2013). Thus, it would seem that the more basic motivation for restoration of agency has to be addressed before group members attempt to restore their impaired communion dimension (i.e., through increased prosocial, moral behavior). We discuss the theoretical implications of these findings to theorizing on the Big Two, and in particular to the issue of the dimensions primacy and desirability, in the next section.

Implications of Our Research for Current Big Two Theorizing

The research reviewed above can contribute to existing theorizing on the Big Two dimensions in three main ways: First, as explained earlier, it may extend the focus of current theory, which has primarily examined perceptions and judgments of social targets, to also include the study of resulting motivational states among these social targets. Second, because our research focuses on contexts that have not been traditionally examined within the study of the Big Two dimensions (e.g., intractable conflicts), it may shed light on additional contents of these dimensions which may have been overlooked (e.g., power and security as components of the agency dimension). Third, our research may shed light on the issue of dimension primacy and relative desirability. Because the first two contributions were discussed in full in earlier sections, we limit the discussion below to the third contribution.

Previous research in the person-perceptions domain contended that "communion is the most important dimension because close and secure relationships that include friendliness, trust, empathy, and helpfulness are indispensable for survival" (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007, p. 753). Numerous studies revealed that a target's communal traits receive greater weight in forming an overall impression of that person, have greater influence on the attitudes toward that person, and were rated as more important compared to their agentic traits (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007; Asch, 1946;

Cislak & Wojciszke, 2008; De Bruin & Van Lange, 1999, 2000; Wojciszke, Bazinska, & Jaworski, 1998). In addition, communal trait-words were recognized faster in a lexical decision task than agentic trait-words (Ybarra, Chan, & Park, 2001) and communal information was processed preferentially in processes of person perception compared to agentic information (Abele & Bruckmüller, 2011).

With regard to the motivations associated with the Big Two dimensions, however, the recent findings by SimanTov-Nachlieli and Shnabel (2013) reviewed above suggest that, when both identity dimensions are threatened at the same time, the motivation to restore one's agency takes precedence over the motivation to restore one's communion. Nevertheless, these findings were obtained in the context of an intractable conflict, where the salient elements of the agency dimension were safety and security. In such contexts the ingroup's lack of agency represents an acute danger to the ingroup's physical survival. In other contexts that pose threats to both identity dimensions, but where the threat to the agency dimension carries a different meaning (e.g., where one's status or competence rather than physical survival is put under risk), the motivation to restore the communion dimension may take precedence over the motivation to restore the agency dimension. Similarly, in conflicts occurring within social contexts that highlight the communion dimension (e.g., communal rather than exchange relationships, Clark & Mills, 1979), the motivation to restore communion may also take precedence.

Alternatively, empirical evidence suggests that the experience of victimization is generally more intense and more pronounced psychologically than the experience of perpetration (Baumeister, 1996; see also Noor, Shnabel, Halabi & Nadler, in press). This might therefore suggest that, within transgression contexts in general, the impairment to the agency dimension poses a more pressing, acute threat to people's identities than impairment to the communion dimension. Thus, future research should examine the question of motivation primacy in various contexts of conflicts or transgressions other than in cases of intractable ones.

Another potential contribution has to do with dimension desirability. Research in the person perceptions domain has revealed that the agency dimension is more desirable, profitable, and important in the *self*-perspective than in the *other*-perspective (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007). Specifically, communal traits tend to be other-profitable because they inform observers about the target's attributes that typically have specific consequences for interaction, whereas agentic traits tend to be self-profitable because they have critical consequences for actors and their pursuit of motivations and goals. Consistent with this idea, the evaluation of others was found to be more strongly tied to their communion, whereas people's self-evaluations were more strongly linked to their agency (Wojciszke, Baryla, Parzuchowski, Szymkow, & Abele, 2011). A similar pattern was found at the intergroup level, where the perceived desirability of outgroup attributes was mostly morality-based, while the

perceived desirability of ingroup attributes was primarily competence-based (Phalet & Poppe, 1997).

The research reviewed above (Bergsieker et al., 2010; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008, 2009, 2012) suggests that the desirability of one's attributes (i.e., attributes that reflect high agency vs. high communion) is also dependent on one's social role in a given context. When one or one's ingroup is in the social role of the victim, agency becomes more desirable, as is evident, for example, in the positive response of the victims or disadvantaged groups to feedback that praised their agentic traits (e.g., "your group is highly competent," Shnabel et al., 2012). In contrast, when one or one's ingroup is in the social role of the perpetrator, communion becomes more desirable, as is evident in the positive response of the perpetrators or advantaged groups to feedback that praised their communal traits (e.g., "your group is very nice and warm," Shnabel et al., 2012). Thus, beyond the influence of self- vs. other-perspective, another factor that determines dimension desirability is likely to be the threat posed to one's identity and whether one adopts the *victim-* or the *perpetrator-perspective*.

Implications of Current Big Two Theorizing for the Study of Conflict and Reconciliation

Beyond the contribution of reconciliation research to theories on the Big Two, we suggest that insights from studying the Big Two dimensions can contribute to the theory and practice of reconciliation. Theoretically, general frameworks for understanding intergroup relations and conflicts such as social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), group position theory (Blumer, 1958), and realistic group conflict theory (LeVine & Campbell, 1972) have traditionally stressed group competition over status as well as power and control over valued resources, which correspond to the agency dimension of their identities. However, consistent with Leach and colleagues' (2007) claim regarding the importance of morality in group members' positive ingroup identity, the needs-based model findings suggest that, beyond their group's power and status, group members indeed care about their image as warm and moral. For example, in the context of structural violence, advantaged group members were generously willing to give up power and privilege in response to reassurance of their threatened warmth dimension by their disadvantaged outgroup (Shnabel et al., 2012). Thus, without denying the importance of the agency dimension, theories on intergroup relations should pay more attention to the role of the communion dimension as well, particularly when considering processes of social change in which advantaged or perpetrating group relinquish power for the sake of intergroup equality and harmony.

Practically speaking, interventions aimed at healing the relations between adversarial groups have traditionally highlighted the importance of mutual intergroup acceptance and empathy, which are related to restoration of the communion dimension (Nadler & Shnabel, 2011). For example, interventions based on the "contact hypothesis" often focus on increasing mutual liking between the groups (Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2005), which may leave low-status group members' prime motivation of acquiring respect unsatisfied (Bergsieker et al., 2010). This may explain why such interventions are generally less effective in improving outgroup attitudes among members of low-status than high-status groups (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). If so, interventions intended to improve intergroup relations should also address agency-related issues, such as direct confrontation of negative stereotypes about the low-status group's incompetence (see Sonnenschein, 2008).

In summary, investigating the effects of the Big Two identity dimensions on the dynamics between conflicted parties may help integrate insights from the perceptual and motivational domains with those from the intergroup relations and conflict resolution domains. Moreover, this may contribute to the realization that it is imperative to attend to differential psychological motivations of conflicted parties. Thus, identifying the role of the Big Two within conflicts may facilitate the planning of successful interventions and the exchange of reciprocal messages that open adversarial parties to reconciliation.

Conclusion

The current paper presents a novel perspective on the Big Two dimensions. Complementing the numerous studies that have examined social perceptions and judgments related to these dimensions, this overview examined the motivational consequences for the targets of these perceptions, that is, individuals or groups who are judged to be low on agency or communion. We suggested that contexts of transgressions are particularly useful testing grounds for the study of these motivations as they significantly threaten two fundamental identity dimensions of victims and perpetrators. Furthermore, we pointed out how research on the Big Two on the one hand and on reconciliation processes on the other can be mutually informing and stimulating. We hope that this article will set the stage for future research that integrates these two research trends.

Acknowledgments

The research leading to these results received funding from the European Union Seventh Framework Program (FP7/2007–2013) under grant agreement no. 2934602 [PCIG09-GA-2011-293602].

References

- Abele, A. E., & Bruckmüller, S. (2011). The bigger one of the “Big Two”? Preferential processing of communal information. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 47*, 935–948.
- Abele, A. E., Cuddy, A. J. C., Judd, C. M., & Yzerbyt, V. Y. (2008). Fundamental dimensions of social judgment. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 38*, 1063–1065.
- Abele, A. E., & Wojciszke, B. (2007). Agency and communion from the perspective of self versus others. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 93*, 751–763.
- Asch, S. E. (1946). Forming impressions of personality. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 41*, 258–290.
- Bar-Tal, D. (2007). Sociopsychological foundations of intractable conflicts. *American Behavioral Scientist, 50*, 1430–1453.
- Bauman, Z. (2001). *Community: Seeking safety in an insecure world*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Baumeister, R. F. (1996). *Evil: Inside human cruelty and violence*. New York: Henry Hold.
- Baumeister, R. F., Stillwell, A. M., & Heatherton, T. F. (1994). Guilt: An interpersonal approach. *Psychological Bulletin, 115*, 243–267.
- Bergsieker, H. B., Shelton, J. N., & Richeson, J. A. (2010). To be liked versus respected: Divergent goals in interracial interactions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 99*, 248–264.
- Blumer, H. (1958). Race prejudice as a sense of group position. *Pacific Sociological Review, 1*, 3–7.
- Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment and loss, Vol. 1: Attachment*. New York: Basic Books.
- Carroll, P. J., Arkin, R. M., Seidel, S. D., & Morris, J. (2009). The relative importance of needs among traumatized and nontraumatized samples. *Motivation and Emotion, 33*, 373–386.
- Cislak, A., & Wojciszke, B. (2008). Agency and communion are inferred from actions serving interests of self or others. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 38*, 1103–1110.
- Clark, M. S., & Mills, J. (1979). Interpersonal attraction in exchange and communal relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 37*, 12–24.
- Cuddy, A. J. C., Fiske, S. T., & Glick, P. (2008). Warmth and competence as universal dimensions of social perception: The Stereotype Content Model and the BIAS Map. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 40, pp. 61–149). New York: Academic Press.
- De Bruin, E., & Van Lange, P. (1999). Impression formation and cooperative behavior. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 29*, 305–328.
- De Bruin, E., & Van Lange, P. (2000). What people look for in others: Inferences of the perceiver and the perceived on information selection. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 26*, 206–219.
- Dixon, J. A., Durrheim, K., & Tredoux, C. (2005). Beyond the optimal strategy: A “reality check” for the contact hypothesis. *American Psychologist, 60*, 697–711.
- Exline, J. J., & Baumeister, R. F. (2000). Expressing forgiveness and repentance: Benefits and barriers. In M. E. McCullough, K. I. Pargament, & C. E. Thoresen (Eds.), *Forgiveness: Theory, research and practice* (pp. 133–155). New York: Guilford.
- Fiske, S. T., Cuddy, A. J. C., & Glick, P. (2007). Universal dimensions of social cognition: Warmth and competence. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 11*, 77–83.
- Fiske, S. T., Cuddy, A. J. C., Glick, P., & Xu, J. (2002). A model of (often mixed) stereotype content: Competence and warmth respectively follow from perceived status and competition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 82*, 878–902.
- Foster, C. A., & Rusbult, C. E. (1999). Injustice and powerseeking. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 25*, 834–849.
- French, J. R. P., & Raven, B. H. (1959). The bases of social power. In D. Cartwright (Ed.), *Studies in social power* (pp. 150–167). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Gable, S. L., & Strachman, A. (2008). Approaching social rewards and avoiding social punishments: Appetitive and aversive social motivation. In J. Y. Shah & W. L. Gardner (Eds.), *Handbook of motivation science* (pp. 561–575). New York: Guilford.
- Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, peace and peace research. *Journal of Peace Research, 3*, 176–191.
- Harth, N., & Shnabel, N. (2012). *Third-party intervention in intergroup reconciliation: Examining the role of neutrality and common identity with the other conflict-party*. Unpublished manuscript, Friedrich Schiller University, Jena, Germany.
- Herman, J. L. (1992). *Trauma and recovery*. New York: Basic Books.
- Janoff-Bulman, R., & Werther, A. (2008). The social psychology of respect: Implications for delegitimization and reconciliation. In A. Nadler, T. Malloy, & J. D. Fisher (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup reconciliation* (pp. 145–171). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Judd, C. M., James-Hawkins, L., Yzerbyt, V., & Kashima, Y. (2005). Fundamental dimensions of social judgment: Understanding the relations between judgments of competence and warmth. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 89*, 899–913.
- Kay, A. C., & Jost, J. T. (2003). Complementary justice: Effects of “poor but happy” and “poor but honest” stereotype exemplars on system justification and implicit activation of the justice motive. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 85*, 823–837.
- Kelman, H. C. (2008). Reconciliation from a social-psychological perspective. In A. Nadler, T. Malloy, & J. D. Fisher (Eds.), *Social psychology of intergroup reconciliation* (pp. 15–32). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kriesberg, L. (1993). Intractable conflict. *Peace Review, 5*, 417–421.
- Leach, C. W., Ellemers, N., & Barreto, M. (2007). Group virtue: The importance of morality (vs. competence and sociability) in the positive evaluation of in-groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 93*, 234–249.
- LeVine, R. A., & Campbell, D. T. (1972). *Ethnocentrism: Theories of conflict, ethnic attitudes and group behavior*. New York: Wiley.
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review, 50*, 370–396.
- Murphy, G. (1958). *Human potentialities*. New York: Basic Books.
- Nadler, A., & Shnabel, N. (2008). Intergroup reconciliation: The instrumental and socioemotional paths and the need-based model of socioemotional reconciliation. In A. Nadler, T. Malloy, & J. D. Fisher (Eds.), *Social psychology of intergroup reconciliation* (pp. 37–56). New York: Oxford University Press.

- Nadler, A., & Shnabel, N. (2011). Promoting intergroup reconciliation in conflicts involving direct and structural violence: Implications of the needs-based model. In L. R. Tropp & R. Mallett (Eds.), *Moving beyond prejudice reduction: Pathways to positive intergroup relations* (pp. 201–219). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Noor, M., Shnabel, N., Halabi, S., & Nadler, A. (in press). When suffering begets suffering: The psychology of competitive victimhood between adversarial groups in violent conflicts. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*.
- Phalet, K., & Poppe, E. (1997). Competence and morality dimensions in national and ethnic stereotypes: A study in six eastern-European countries. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 27, 703–723.
- Rudman, L. A., & Glick, P. (2001). Prescriptive gender stereotypes and backlash toward agentic women. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57, 743–762.
- Rusbult, C. E., & Van Lange, P. A. M. (1996). Interdependence processes. In E. T. Higgins & A. W. Kruglanski (Eds.), *Social psychology: Handbook of basic principles* (pp. 564–596). New York: Guilford.
- Scheff, T. J. (1994). *Bloody revenge: Emotions, nationalism and war*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Shnabel, N., & Nadler, A. (2008). A needs-based model of reconciliation: Satisfying the differential emotional needs of victim and perpetrator as a key to promoting reconciliation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 94, 116–132.
- Shnabel, N., Nadler, A., Canetti-Nisim, D., & Ullrich, J. (2008). The role of acceptance and empowerment from the perspective of the needs-based model. *Social Issues and Policy Review*, 2, 159–186.
- Shnabel, N., Nadler, A., Ullrich, J., Dovidio, J. F., & Carmi, D. (2009). Promoting reconciliation through the satisfaction of the emotional needs of victimized and perpetrating group members: The needs-based model of reconciliation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 35, 1021–1030.
- Shnabel, N., Ullrich, J., Nadler, A., Dovidio, J. F., & Ewers, A. L. (2012). *Reassurance of ingroup's warmth and competence by the outgroup differentially affects high- and low-status group members' intergroup attitudes*. Manuscript submitted for publication.
- Sidanius, J., & Pratto, F. (1999). *Social dominance: An intergroup theory of social hierarchy and oppression*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Siem, B., von Oettingen, M., Mummendey, A., & Nadler, A. (2012). *Divergent motives of high- and low-status group members: The moderating role of perceived legitimacy of status differences*. Manuscript submitted for publication.
- SimanTov-Nachlieli, I., & Shnabel, N. (2013). *Affirmation of groups' agency promotes prosocial tendencies: Applying the needs-based model to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict*. Manuscript in preparation.
- Sonnenschein, N. (2008). *An identity challenging dialogue*. Haifa: Pardes.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33–48). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Tavuchis, N. (1991). *Mea culpa: A sociology of apology and reconciliation*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Tropp, L. R., & Pettigrew, T. F. (2005). Relationship between intergroup contact and prejudice among minority and majority status groups. *Psychological Science*, 16, 951–957.
- Turner, J. C. (2005). Explaining the nature of power: A three-process theory. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 35, 1–22.
- Wojciszke, B., Baryla, W., Parzuchowski, M., Szymkow, A., & Abele, A. E. (2011). Self-esteem is dominated by agentic over communal information. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 41, 617–627.
- Wojciszke, B., Bazinska, R., & Jaworski, M. (1998). On the dominance of moral categories in impression formation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 24, 1245–1257.
- Ybarra, O., Chan, E., & Park, D. (2001). Young and old adults' concerns about morality and competence. *Motivation and Emotions*, 25, 85–100.
- Ybarra, O., Chan, E., Park, H., Burnstein, E., Monin, B., & Stanik, C. (2008). Life's recurring challenges and the fundamental dimensions: An integration and its implications for cultural differences and similarities. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 38, 1083–1092.

Ilanit SimanTov-Nachlieli

Department of Psychology
Tel-Aviv University
9 Haim Levanon street
Ramat-Aviv
Tel-Aviv 69978
Israel
E-mail ilanits@post.tau.ac.il