Disagreement About Moral Character Is Linked to Interpersonal Costs

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Abstract

Impressions of moral character are among the most relevant and consequential; yet, people do not always see eye to eye with others about their moral character. Is self-other disagreement about moral character associated with interpersonal costs, and are these costs uniquely associated with moral impressions? To answer these questions, judges ($N = 100$) in a community sample rated several acquaintances' (targets) moral character (e.g., compassion, honesty) and personality and indicated their liking and respect of the target ($N = 587$ judge–target pairs) while targets described their own moral character and personality. For most moral impressions, as the discrepancy between judges and targets increased, judges tended to like and respect targets less, particularly when targets enhanced their character relative to their judge. These effects were unique from personality ratings (e.g., agreeableness). Thus, failing to see eye to eye with others about one's moral character is associated with negative interpersonal outcomes.

Keywords

morality, self-other agreement, self-enhancement, response surface analysis

Of the many impressions people form of themselves and others, impressions of moral character are likely among the most relevant and consequential. People form impressions of others' moral character almost instantly (Todorov, Said, Engell, & Oosterhof, 2008; Willis & Todorov, 2006) and use these impressions to make critical decisions such as whom to affiliate with (Goodwin, Piazza, & Rozin, 2014) and whom to trust with valuable resources (e.g., money; van't Wout & Sanfey, 2008). Moral impressions also affect people's global evaluations of others and are more influential in this regard than are impressions of other traits (e.g., warmth and competence; Goodwin et al., 2014; Leach, Ellemers, & Barreto, 2007). In sum, moral impressions are at the heart of interpersonal perception and these beliefs about people's fundamental nature have meaningful interpersonal consequences.

Moral character impressions affect who people like (Goodwin et al., 2014) and trust (Delgado, Frank, & Phelps, 2005), suggesting that being seen as a moral person has positive interpersonal consequences. However, an unanswered question is whether these interpersonal outcomes are associated with the degree to which people's self-impressions of moral character align with other people's impressions of their character. A growing body of research suggests that people who see their Big Five personality traits more positively than others do tend to be liked less and lose their social status over time (Back et al., 2011; Carlson & DesJardins, 2015; Colvin, Block, & Funder, 1995; Kurt & Paulhus, 2008; Paulhus, 1998) whereas people who see themselves as others do tend to be liked more

in the long run (Human, Biesanz, Parisotto, & Dunn, 2012). As such, a similar pattern might be observed for moral impressions.

People who are seen by others and who see themselves as high in moral character are likely to experience more positive outcomes than do people who are seen by others and who see themselves as lacking moral character, but we argue that there are costs associated with failing to see eye to eye with others regardless of people's standing on character. Take the example of Jane and Tom. Jane will like Tom if she thinks he is moral (Goodwin et al., 2014; Hartley et al., 2016; Wojciszke, 2005; Wojciszke, Bazinska, & Jaworski, 1998), but Jane's positive evaluation of Tom might be attenuated if he sees himself as more moral than she sees him. Tom might appear to be arrogant if he claims to be more honest than Jane thinks he is, or their differing viewpoints might create interpersonal conflict (e.g., Jane might get annoyed by Tom's constant moral bragging). While Jane will likely see Tom in a less positive way if she

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thinks he is immoral, she might like him more if he shares her negative impression than if he sees himself more positively than she sees him. This prediction is based on a growing body of work that suggests people enjoy individuals who acknowledge their flaws more than people who do not (Ward & Brenner, 2006) and that people who are aware of having a fairly undesirable reputation are enjoyed more than are people who are less aware of their undesirable reputation (Carlson, 2016; Oltmanns, Gleason, Klonsky, & Turkheimer, 2005). In sum, we suggest that disagreement about moral impressions is maladaptive (e.g., it could attenuate the positive interpersonal outcomes associated with making a good moral impression) whereas agreement is adaptive (e.g., it could attenuate the negative interpersonal outcomes associated with making a bad moral impression). To test this general hypothesis, the current research measures the interpersonal consequences associated with seeing or failing to see eye to eye with others about one's moral character.

To our knowledge, research to date has not examined the social outcomes associated with self-other discrepancies of moral character, but there are reasons to predict that failing to see eye to eye with others about one's moral character can have negative interpersonal costs. Given that self-other disagreement seems to be linked to negative social outcomes, our first prediction, which we call the Discrepancy Hypothesis, is that self-other disagreement of moral character will be linked to negative interpersonal outcomes. Our second prediction, which we call the Enhancing Hypothesis, is that these effects will be especially pronounced for people who see themselves as more moral than others see them. We focus on two interpersonal outcomes, specifically liking and respect, which reflect one's social value and can have significant, tangible consequences such as the number and strength of social ties and access to valuable social resources (Cheng & Tracy, 2014; Cheng, Tracy, Foulsham, Kingstone, & Henrich, 2013; Coie & Cillessen, 1993; Sunnafrank & Ramirez, 2004). This approach also parallels past work identifying social consequences of self-other agreement (Colvin et al., 1995; Dufner, Rauthmann, Czarna, & Denissen, 2013; Taylor, Lerner, Sherman, Sage, & McDowell, 2003).

Unlike other personality impressions, moral character impressions reflect a fundamental evaluation of a person's goodness or badness, meaning that self-other disagreement about one's moral character represents a disagreement about one's fundamental nature (Lapsley, 2015; Strohminger & Nichols, 2014). As such, failing to see eye to eye with others about one's moral character should have a robust association with negative interpersonal outcomes, above and beyond disagreement about personality traits. To test this prediction, which we call the Potency Hypothesis, we explore whether the link between disagreement about moral impressions and social cost is distinct from disagreement about personality traits and social cost. We focus on impressions of extroversion, which is the tendency to be sociable, energetic, and confident, and agreeableness, which is the tendency to be cooperative, kind, and generous for two reasons. First, some research suggests

that moral impressions are distinct from Big Five traits (Brambilla, Rusconi, Sacchi, & Cherubini, 2011; Goodwin et al., 2014), but moral impressions are often lumped into a single warmth dimension, which includes sociability (i.e., extroversion) and agreeableness (e.g., Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008; Fiske, Xu, Cuddy, & Glick, 1999; Rosenberg, Nelson, & Vivekananthan, 1968). Thus, it is important to demonstrate that outcomes associated with disagreement about moral impressions are distinct from disagreement about warmth. Second, extroversion and agreeableness have strong links to liking and status (Anderson, John, Keltner, & Kring, 2001; Carlson & DesJardins, 2015; DesJardins, Srivastava, Kufner, & Back, 2015; Wortman & Wood, 2011), thus demonstrating that the link between disagreement about moral impressions and social value holds above and beyond any effects of extroversion and agreeableness provides a strong test of our hypothesis that the link between disagreement about moral impressions and social value is distinct and important. In sum, the Potency Hypothesis tests if the interpersonal costs associated with discrepancies about moral character are observed when controlling for extroversion and agreeableness.

Research Overview

In an ecologically valid study of interpersonal perceptions, we test our three hypotheses in a community sample of close acquaintances by measuring self- and other impressions of moral character, personality, and social value. Moral character impressions included broad moral character as well as four core virtues, specifically compassion (i.e., one's tendency to care for and help others), honesty (i.e., the tendency to tell the truth), loyalty (i.e., the tendency to stick up for your group), and fairness (i.e., the tendency to treat people equally). While people likely incorporate impressions of specific moral traits (e.g., honesty) into their broad moral character impressions, disagreement about specific aspects of moral character might be more strongly tied to liking or respect. For example, overestimating compassion or honesty might be especially detrimental to liking whereas overestimating loyalty and fairness might be especially detrimental to respect.

To index the link between disagreement and social value, we employ response surface analysis (RSA), an approach based on polynomial regression that models the ways in which all possible combinations of self- and other impressions predict social value. We believe this approach is superior to other methods for three reasons. First, unlike difference scores, which can have problems with discriminant validity (Furr, 2011) and which impose potentially unwarranted constraints on parameters (Edwards, 1994), RSA retains information about the main effects of self- and other impressions when modeling how discrepancies predict social value (Edwards, 1994, 2001; Cafri, van den Berg, & Brannick, 2010). Second, unlike other more conventional approaches (e.g., residual scores, moderated multiple regression), RSA provides a visualization of these effects in three-dimensional space. That is, rather than relying on point estimates to visualize the data (e.g., ± 1 SD in

moderated multiple regression), RSA reveals the full spectrum of how combinations of self- and other impressions of moral character predict social value. Third and perhaps most importantly, RSA provides statistical tests that directly evaluate the effect of disagreement (i.e., our Discrepancy Hypothesis) and the direction of that disagreement (i.e., our Enhancement Hypothesis) in one statistical model. In sum, RSA concisely evaluates our hypotheses and provides a more powerful and informative visualization of effects than do other approaches.

Method

Participants

A total of 100 "judges" (60% female) were recruited via advertisements on popular websites, in local newspapers, and flyers. Judges providing the names and e-mail addresses of up to six "targets" (47.5% friends, 24.9% family, 11.0% coworkers, 6.6% partners, 2.4% acquaintances, 7.7% other or unknown) they knew well ($M = 11.94$ years, $SD = 11.84$ years). Judges were eligible to participate if at least five of their nominated targets participated and recruitment continued until a sample of 100 judges was collected. As part of a larger online study, judges received up to US\$80 in Amazon.com gift cards and responding targets ($N = 587$; 55.7% female; $M_{age} = 34$ years, $SD = 13.5$ years) received up to US\$25 in Amazon.com gift cards for their participation.

Materials and Procedure

Judges rated each of their targets' broad moral character, moral character traits, and their extroversion and agreeableness, and targets described themselves using the same measures reworded as self-reports.[1] Self- and other impressions of broad moral character included the following 3 items rated a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) scale: "I am (person X is) a person of strong moral character," "I would say that I am (person X is) a good person," and "I (person X) usually do (does) the right thing, even if it's hard" (other impressions: $M = 4.14$, $SD = .70$, $\alpha = .81$; self-impressions: $M = 4.10$, $SD = .57$, $\alpha = .70$). Self- and other impressions of each of the four moral character traits (i.e., compassion, honesty, loyalty, fairness) were measured with 3 items on 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) scale. Example items included "I am (person X) a compassionate person" (compassion: other impressions: $M = 4.11$, $SD = .74$, $\alpha = .86$; self-impressions $M = 4.19$, $SD = .67$, $\alpha = .79$), "I (person X) always tell the truth" (honesty: other impressions: $M = 3.86$, $SD = .78$, $\alpha = .86$; self-impressions: $M = 3.88$, $SD = .74$, $\alpha = .81$), "I do (person X) not shift my (his/her) loyalties easily," (loyalty: other impressions: $M = 4.14$, $SD = .66$, $\alpha = .80$; self-impressions: $M = 4.06$, $SD = .62$, $\alpha = .63$), and "I treat (person X treats) people fairly" (fairness: other impressions: $M = 4.10$, $SD = .64$, $\alpha = .79$; self-impressions: $M = 4.14$, $SD = .57$, $\alpha = .60$). Self- and other impressions of extroversion and agreeableness were measured using 4-item scales, with an item from each of the four facets of the extraversion (X) and agreeableness (A) factors of the Honesty-Humility (H) Emotional
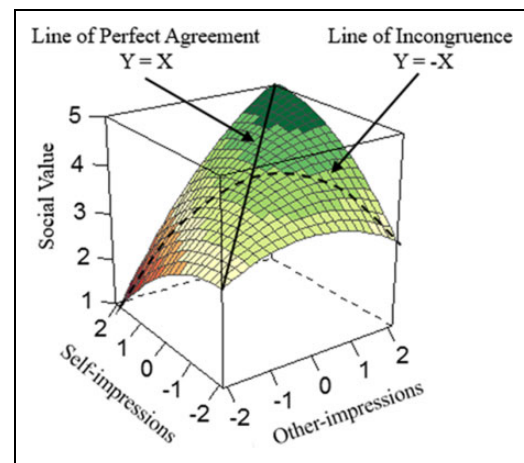

Figure 1. The shape of response surfaces we should observe if our predictions about the Enhancement and Discrepancy Hypotheses are supported. The solid line is the line of perfect agreement along the $Y = X$-axis and has a positive linear slope (positive a_1 coefficient) with no curvature (a_2 coefficient). The dashed line is the line of incongruence along the $Y = -X$-axis and has concave curvature (a negative a_4 coefficient) and an overall positive linear slope (positive a_3 coefficient).

stability (E) Extraversion (X) Agreeableness (A) Conscientiousness (C) Openness to Experience (O; HEXACO) scale (Lee & Ashton, 2004) and rated on 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) scale.[2] Example items were "In social situations, I'm (person X is) usually the one who makes the first move" (extroversion: other impressions: $M = 3.50$, $SD = .71$, $\alpha = .62$; self-impressions: $M = 3.41$, $SD = .74$, $\alpha = .65$) and "I (person X) generally accept(s) people's faults without complaining about them" (agreeableness other impressions: $M = 3.12$, $SD = .83$, $\alpha = .74$; self-impressions: $M = 3.00$, $SD = .71$, $\alpha = .57$).

Judges rated how much they liked (e.g., "I like person X," $M = 4.47$, $SD = .66$, $\alpha = .84$) and respected (e.g., "I respect person X," $M = 4.19$, $SD = .81$, $\alpha = .81$) each target using 2-item, 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) scales.

Analyses

RSA effects were modeled in R with the RSA package (version 0.9.8; Schönbrodt, 2015). RSA uses coefficients from polynomial regression to plot how all possible combinations of impressions predict social value in three-dimensional space and provides four coefficients (a_1–a_4) that statistically test how these combinations predict social value. Rather than directly interpreting the five polynomial slopes (described in Supplemental Online Materials), we focus our attention on the four RSA coefficients to better understand if and how self-other disagreement about morality is associated with social value.

As shown in Figure 1, the a_1 coefficient tests the linear slope along the line of perfect agreement ($Y = X$-axis) and reveals if matching self- and other impressions at higher versus lower levels of moral character is associated with higher or lower social value. Given that moral character impressions are

socially desirable (Goodwin et al., 2014; Helzer et al., 2014), the a_1 should be positive, suggesting that social value is higher when self- and other impressions match at higher levels of moral character and lower when matched at lower levels of moral character. The a_2 coefficient tests the curvature of the line of perfect agreement and reveals if matches at low or high moral character (i.e., matches at extremes) are different than matches at moderate levels of moral character. However, we do not anticipate significant a_2 coefficients.

Our main focus is on the a_3 and a_4 coefficients, which test effects along the line of incongruence ($Y = -X$ axis). The a_4 coefficient tests the curvature of the line of incongruence such that the direction (positive or negative) and significance of the a_4 indicates whether the magnitude of discrepancy between self- and other impressions predicts liking or respect. Evidence for the Discrepancy Hypothesis will be observed by a negative a_4 coefficient (i.e., concave curvature), suggesting that as the magnitude of discrepancy between self- and other impressions of moral character increases, social value decreases. In contrast to our hypothesis, a positive a_4 coefficient would suggest a convex curvature, meaning that as the magnitude of discrepancy increases, social value increases. The a_3 coefficient tests the slope of the line of incongruence. The direction and significance of the a_3 indicates whether the direction of disagreement predicts liking and respect. Evidence for the Enhancing Hypothesis will be observed by a positive a_3 coefficient, suggesting that people who see themselves as more moral than their close other sees them are liked or respected less than people who see themselves as less moral than their close other sees them. In contrast to our hypothesis, a negative a_3 coefficient would suggest that people who see themselves as more moral than their close other sees them are liked or respected more than people who see themselves as less moral than their close other sees them. Figure 1 illustrates the shape of the response surface we should observe if each of our predictions are supported.

We test the Potency Hypothesis by controlling for extroversion and agreeableness, specifically by simultaneously entering the same five polynomial coefficients that yield an RSA plot for both extroversion and agreeableness. That is, we control for the five polynomial effects that generate an RSA plot for both traits (i.e., 10 coefficients) rather than the main effects of extroversion and agreeableness. Evidence for the Potency Hypothesis will be observed if the same pattern of a_4 and a_3 coefficients for moral impressions persists when controlling for extroversion and agreeableness.

Results

Our sample included judge–target pairs that varied in the magnitude and direction of discrepancies. As suggested by Fleenor, McCauley, and Brutus (1996) and Shanock, Baran, Gentry, Pattison, and Heggestad (2010), we approximated agreement and discrepancy by considering judge–target pairs whose self- and other impressions were within half a standard deviation of each other after standardization as roughly in agreement and outside of that as discrepant. About 50% of targets agreed with

their judge (broad moral character 49.9%; compassion 46.7%; honesty 46.2%; loyalty 46.3%; fairness 50.1%), whereas 25% of targets saw themselves as having more moral character such that self-impressions were higher than other impressions (broad moral character 23.7%; compassion 29.5%; honesty 27.7%; loyalty 23.7%; fairness 26.1%), whereas 25% saw themselves as having less moral character than their judge saw them as having such that self-impressions were less than other impressions (broad moral character 26.4%; compassion 23.8%; honesty 26.1%; loyalty 30.0%; fairness 23.8%). Thus, our sample contains information about the various combinations of self- of and other impressions of morality necessary to test our hypotheses.

As shown in Table 1 and Figure 2, social value was higher when self- and other impressions of broad moral character matched at high levels of moral character than when matched at lower levels of moral character (liking: $a_1 = .76$, $p < .001$; respect: $a_1 = .55$, $p < .001$). Results for moral trait impressions paralleled those for broad moral character (see Table 2). Social value was higher when self- and other impressions of moral traits (compassion, honesty, loyalty, fairness) matched at high levels of the given trait than when matched at lower levels.

Discrepancy Hypothesis

Was disagreement about moral character associated with less social value? As predicted, results for broad moral character showed a response surface with significant negative (i.e., concave) curvature for respect ($a_4 = -.24$, $p = .002$; see Table 1 and Figure 2), suggesting that judges respected targets less as the magnitude of discrepancy between their impressions of the target and the target's self-impression of broad moral character increased. In contrast to predictions, the magnitude of discrepancy did not predict judges' liking of targets ($a_4 = -.01$, $p = .841$).

Results for moral trait impressions paralleled those for broad moral character (see Table 1 and Figure 3). As predicted, judges liked and respected targets less as the magnitude of discrepancy between their impressions of the target and target self-impressions increased for compassion (liking: $a_4 = -.139$, $p = .017$; respect: $a_4 = -.178$, $p = .010$) and honesty (liking: $a_4 = -.147$, $p = .009$; respect: $a_4 = -.235$, $p < .001$). Judges liked targets less as the magnitude of discrepancy between their impressions of the target and target self-impressions of loyalty increased (liking: $a_4 = -.185$, $p = .007$), but there was no effect for respect (respect: $a_4 = -.067$, $p = .415$). However, liking and respect were not related to the magnitude of discrepancy for impressions of fairness (liking: $a_4 = .036$, $p = .624$; respect: $a_4 = -0.006$, $p = .946$).

Enhancement Hypothesis

Was enhancement associated with lower social value than was humility? As predicted, results for broad moral character showed a significant, positive slope of the line of incongruence for both liking and respect (see Table 1 and Figure 2). Thus,

Table 1. MLM Polynomial Slopes and Response Surface Coefficients [95% CI].

Impression	Outcome	MLM Slopes						RSA Coefficients			
		β_0	β_{Judge}	β_{Target}	β_{Judge}^2	$\beta_{Interaction}$	β_{Target}^2	a_1	a_2	a_3	a_4
Broad moral character	Liking	**3.81*** [3.65, 3.96]**	**0.65*** [0.50, 0.80]**	0.11 [-0.08, 0.29]	-0.05 [-0.11, 0.01]	-0.05 [-0.16, 0.05]	-0.02 [-0.10, 0.07]	**0.76*** [0.50, 1.02]**	**-0.12† [-0.25, 0.01]**	**0.54*** [0.33, 0.75]**	-0.01 [-0.15, 0.12]
	Respect	**3.54*** [3.37, 3.72]**	**0.75*** [0.58, 0.91]**	**-0.20† [-0.40, 0.00]**	**-0.09* [-0.16, -0.02]**	**0.15* [0.03, 0.23]**	-0.01 [-0.10, 0.09]	**0.55*** [0.26, 0.83]**	0.05 [-0.09, 0.18]	**0.95*** [0.71, 1.18]**	**-0.24** [-0.39, -0.09]**
Compassion	Liking	**4.03*** [3.88, 4.19]**	**0.52*** [0.39, 0.65]**	-0.03 [-0.17, 0.12]	**-0.06* [-0.12, -0.01]**	0.04 [-0.03, 0.12]	-0.03 [-0.09, 0.02]	**0.496*** [0.26, 0.73]**	-0.049 [-0.16, 0.06]	**0.548*** [0.40, 0.69]**	**-0.139* [-0.25, -0.03]**
	Respect	**3.69*** [3.50, 3.87]**	**0.63*** [0.48, 0.79]**	-0.10 [-0.27, 0.07]	**-0.07† [-0.13, -0.01]**	0.08 [-0.02, 0.17]	-0.03 [-0.09, 0.04]	**0.530*** [0.25, 0.81]**	-0.02 [-0.15, 0.11]	**0.734*** [0.56, 0.91]**	**-0.178* [-0.31, -0.04]**
Honesty	Liking	**4.25*** [4.13, 4.36]**	**0.35*** [0.26, 0.45]**	-0.06 [-0.16, 0.04]	-0.04 [-0.10, 0.01]	**0.08* [0.00, 0.15]**	-0.03 [-0.08, 0.03]	**0.29*** [0.15, 0.44]**	0.01 [-0.09, 0.09]	**0.41*** [0.28, 0.55]**	**-0.15** [-0.25, -0.04]**
	Respect	**3.85*** [3.73, 3.97]**	**0.59*** [0.48, 0.69]**	**-0.14* [-0.25, -0.02]**	**-0.10*** [-0.16, -0.04]**	**0.13** [0.04, 0.21]**	-0.00 [-0.07, 0.06]	**0.45*** [0.29, 0.61]**	0.02 [-0.08, 0.12]	**0.73*** [0.58, 0.87]**	**-0.24*** [-0.36, -0.11]**
Loyalty	Liking	**4.01*** [3.85, 4.17]**	**0.50*** [0.34, 0.66]**	-0.04 [-0.22, 0.14]	-0.05 [-0.12, 0.02]	**0.08† [-0.01, 0.17]**	-0.05 [-0.14, 0.03]	**0.46*** [0.21, 0.72]**	-0.02 [-0.14, 0.10]	**0.54*** [0.31, 0.76]**	**-0.19** [-0.32, -0.05]**
	Respect	**3.59*** [3.40, 3.79]**	**0.61*** [0.42, 0.79]**	-0.15 [-0.36, 0.07]	-0.02 [-0.10, 0.06]	0.07 [-0.05, 0.18]	0.02 [-0.08, 0.12]	**0.46** [0.16, 0.76]**	0.06 [-0.08, 0.21]	**0.75*** [0.48, 1.02]**	-0.07 [-0.23, 0.09]
Fairness	Liking	**3.74*** [3.53, 3.94]**	**0.69*** [0.51, 0.87]**	0.12 [-0.10, 0.34]	-0.05 [-0.11, 0.01]	-0.08 [-0.18, 0.03]	0.01 [-0.07, 0.09]	**0.81*** [0.47, 1.15]**	-0.12 [-0.27, 0.04]	**0.57*** [0.36, 0.78]**	0.04 [-0.11, 0.18]
	Respect	**3.42*** [3.18, 3.66]**	**0.72*** [0.51, 0.94]**	-0.02 [-0.28, 0.25]	-0.04 [-0.11, 0.04]	0.01 [-0.12, 0.13]	0.03 [-0.07, 0.13]	**0.71*** [0.30, 1.11]**	0.00 [-0.18, 0.19]	**0.74*** [0.49, 1.00]**	-0.01 [-0.18, 0.17]
Extroversion	Liking	**4.37*** [4.27, 4.47]**	**0.15*** [0.07, 0.24]**	-0.04 [-0.12, 0.04]	0.05 [-0.02, 0.13]	-0.01 [-0.10, 0.09]	0.02 [-0.05, 0.09]	**0.11* [0.02, 0.21]**	0.07 [-0.02, 0.15]	**0.20** [0.06, 0.34]**	0.08 [-0.06, 0.22]
	Respect	**4.05*** [3.93, 4.17]**	**0.24*** [0.13, 0.34]**	**-0.11* [-0.21, -0.02]**	**0.08† [-0.01, 0.16]**	0.06 [-0.06, 0.17]	0.00 [-0.08, 0.08]	**0.13* [0.01, 0.24]**	**0.13* [0.03, 0.23]**	**0.35*** [0.19, 0.52]**	0.02 [-0.14, 0.19]
Agreeableness	Liking	**4.51*** [4.41, 4.60]**	**0.20*** [0.15, 0.26]**	0.00 [-0.06, 0.07]	-0.05 [-0.10, 0.01]	-0.01 [-0.09, 0.07]	-0.04 [-0.11, 0.03]	**0.21*** [0.13, 0.29]**	**-0.09† [-0.20, 0.01]**	**0.20*** [0.11, 0.29]**	-0.08 [-0.19, 0.04]
	Respect	**4.25*** [4.14, 4.37]**	**0.33*** [0.27, 0.39]**	-0.04 [-0.12, 0.03]	**-0.06† [-0.13, 0.01]**	0.02 [-0.07, 0.11]	**-0.09* [-0.17, -0.01]**	**0.29*** [0.19, 0.38]**	**-0.13* [-0.26, -0.01]**	**0.38*** [0.27, 0.48]**	**-0.17* [-0.30, -0.03]**

Note. MLM = multilevel modeling; CI = confidence interval; RSA = response surface analysis. Statistically significant effects are in boldface.
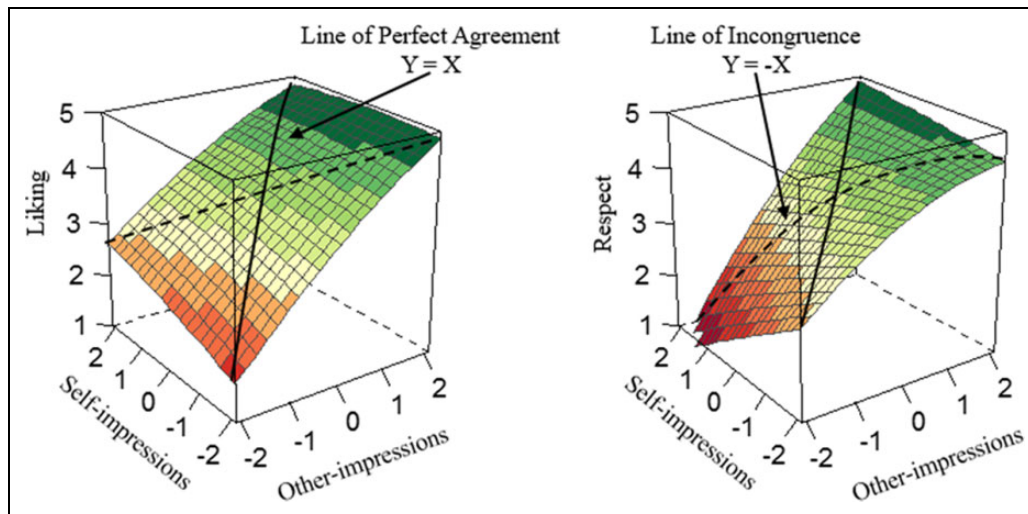†p < .10. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Figure 2. Observed response surfaces predicting liking and respect from self- and other impressions of broad moral character. Lines of perfect agreement ($Y = X$-axis) are illustrated as solid lines, and lines of incongruence ($Y = -X$-axis) are illustrated as dashed lines. For liking and respect, the lines of perfect agreement have positive linear slopes (significant positive a_1 coefficients) along the $Y = X$-axis, with no curvature (nonsignificant a_2 coefficients). For liking, the line of incongruence has no curvature (nonsignificant a_4 coefficient), but has a positive linear slope (significant positive a_3 coefficient). For respect, the line of incongruence has concave curvature (significant negative a_4 coefficient) and has an overall positive linear slope (significant positive a_3 coefficient).

judges liked ($a_3 = .54$, $p < .001$) and respected ($a_3 = .95$, $p < .001$) targets more when targets' self-impressions were less positive than were their judge's impression of their moral character. Put another way, people who saw themselves more positively than their judge saw them were liked and respected less than were people whose self-perceptions were more humble relative to their judge's impression.

Providing further support for the Enhancing Hypothesis, results for moral trait impressions showed significant positive slope of the line of incongruence for both liking and respect (see Table 1 and Figure 3). When targets' self-impressions were less positive than were their judges' impressions, they were liked (compassion $a_3 = .55$, $p < .001$; honesty $a_3 = .41$, $p < .001$; loyalty $a_3 = .54$, $p < .001$; fairness $a_3 = .57$, $p < .001$) and respected (compassion $a_3 = .73$, $p < .001$; honesty $a_3 = .73$, $p < .001$; loyalty $a_3 = .75$, $p < .001$; fairness $a_3 = .74$, $p < .001$) more than targets whose self-impressions were more positive.

Potency Hypothesis

Was the link between disagreement about moral character and social value observed when controlling for disagreement about extroversion and agreeableness? In support of the Potency Hypothesis, the a_4 and a_3 coefficients for moral impressions remained significant when controlling for RSA effects for extroversion and agreeableness (see Table 2 and Figure 4). That is, when controlling for the response surface of extroversion and agreeableness, the response surfaces for impressions of moral character maintained their shape, which supported the Discrepancy and Enhancement Hypotheses.

Independently of moral impressions, we tested the Discrepancy and Enhancement Hypothesis for both extroversion and agreeableness. For agreeableness, results supported the Discrepancy Hypothesis, such that as the magnitude of discrepancy between self-impressions and judge impressions of agreeableness increased, judges had less respect for targets ($a_4 = -.166$, $p = .018$), although liking was not linked to this discrepancy ($a_4 = -.076$, $p = .205$). Results also supported the Enhancement Hypothesis such that when targets' self-impressions were less positive than were their judges' impressions they were liked ($a_3 = .200$, $p < .001$) and respected ($a_3 = .351$, $p < .001$) more than were targets whose self-impressions were more positive. For extroversion, results did not support the Discrepancy Hypothesis, but in support of the Enhancement Hypothesis, when targets' self-impressions were less positive than were their judges' impressions they were liked ($a_3 = .198$, $p = .006$) and respected ($a_3 = .376$, $p < .001$) more than targets whose self-impressions were more positive. However, when controlling for moral impressions, effects for the a_4 and a_3 coefficients diminished to near zero and were no longer statistically significant; see Table 2 and Figure 5). Taken together with the results from our test of the Potency Hypothesis, this pattern suggests that the association between disagreement about moral character and social value is unique.

Discussion

The results of this study largely supported our three hypotheses. In support of the Discrepancy Hypothesis, people whose self-impressions of moral character were more discrepant from how they were seen by a close other were liked and respected less by that individual. In support of the Enhancement

Table 2. MLM Polynomial Slopes and Response Surface Coefficients of Moral Impressions Controlling for Extroversion and Agreeableness [95% CI].

Impression	Outcome	MLM Slopes						RSA Coefficients			
		β_0	β_{Judge}	β_{Target}	β_{Judge}^2	$\beta_{Interaction}$	β_{Target}^2	a_1	a_2	a_3	a_4
Broad moral character	Liking	**3.81*** [3.64, 3.99]**	**0.61*** [0.46, 0.77]**	0.12 [−0.07, 0.32]	−0.04 [−0.11, 0.03]	−0.06 [−0.16, 0.05]	−0.03 [−0.12, 0.05]	**0.74*** [0.47, 1.00]**	−0.13† [−0.25, 0.00]	**0.49*** [0.27, 0.71]**	−0.02 [−0.16, 0.13]
	Respect	**3.58*** [3.40, 3.77]**	**0.67*** [0.50, 0.83]**	−0.19† [−0.39, 0.02]	**−0.08* [−0.15, −0.00]**	**0.14* [0.02, 0.25]**	−0.01 [−0.10, 0.09]	**0.48*** [0.19, 0.76]**	0.06 [−0.08, 0.19]	**0.85*** [0.61, 1.09]**	**−0.22** [−0.37, −0.07]**
Compassion	Liking	**4.05*** [3.88, 4.22]**	**0.50*** [0.36, 0.64]**	−0.04 [−0.19, 0.11]	**−0.07* [−0.12, −0.01]**	0.06 [−0.03, 0.14]	−0.03 [−0.09, 0.02]	**0.45*** [0.21, 0.70]**	−0.04 [−0.15, 0.07]	**0.54*** [0.39, 0.70]**	**−0.16* [−0.27, −0.04]**
	Respect	**3.76*** [3.56, 3.96]**	**0.52*** [0.36, 0.69]**	−0.11 [−0.27, 0.07]	**−0.07* [−0.13, −0.00]**	0.09† [−0.01, 0.18]	−0.02 [−0.09, 0.05]	**0.42** [0.13, 0.70]**	0.00 [−0.13, 0.13]	**0.63*** [0.45, 0.81]**	**−0.17* [−0.31, −0.03]**
Honesty	Liking	**4.25*** [4.12, 4.38]**	**0.29*** [0.19, 0.39]**	−0.07 [−0.18, 0.04]	−0.03 [−0.09, 0.03]	0.07† [−0.01, 0.15]	−0.02 [−0.08, 0.04]	**0.22** [0.07, 0.37]**	0.01 [−0.08, 0.11]	**0.36*** [0.22, 0.50]**	**−0.13* [−0.24, −0.01]**
	Respect	**3.86*** [3.72, 4.00]**	**0.47*** [0.37, 0.58]**	**−0.13* [−0.25, −0.02]**	**−0.08** [−0.15, −0.02]**	**0.11* [0.02, 0.19]**	0.01 [−0.05, 0.08]	**0.34*** [0.18, 0.50]**	0.04 [−0.06, 0.14]	**0.61*** [0.45, 0.76]**	**−0.18** [−0.30, −0.06]**
Loyalty	Liking	**4.04*** [3.87, 4.21]**	**0.44*** [0.28, 0.60]**	−0.03 [−0.21, 0.16]	−0.05 [−0.12, 0.02]	0.08† [−0.01, 0.18]	−0.06 [−0.14, 0.03]	**0.41*** [0.15, 0.67]**	−0.02 [−0.15, 0.10]	**0.47*** [0.24, 0.70]**	**−0.18** [−0.32, −0.05]**
	Respect	**3.68*** [3.48, 3.87]**	**0.51*** [0.32, 0.69]**	−0.13 [−0.34, 0.08]	−0.03 [−0.11, 0.05]	0.06 [−0.04, 0.17]	0.03 [−0.07, 0.12]	**0.38* [0.08, 0.68]**	0.05 [−0.09, 0.20]	**0.64*** [0.37, 0.90]**	−0.07 [−0.23, 0.08]
Fairness	Liking	**3.75*** [3.54, 3.97]**	**0.64*** [0.46, 0.83]**	0.12 [−0.10, 0.35]	−0.05 [−0.12, 0.01]	−0.07 [−0.18, 0.03]	0.01 [−0.08, 0.09]	**0.76*** [0.42, 1.11]**	−0.12 [−0.28, 0.04]	**0.52*** [0.30, 0.74]**	0.03 [−0.12, 0.17]
	Respect	**3.49*** [3.24, 3.74]**	**0.58*** [0.36, 0.79]**	0.00 [−0.26, 0.26]	−0.02 [−0.09, 0.06]	−0.01 [−0.13, 0.11]	0.04 [−0.06, 0.13]	**0.58** [0.18, 0.98]**	0.01 [−0.17, 0.19]	**0.57*** [0.32, 0.83]**	0.03 [−0.14, 0.20]
Extroversion	Liking	**3.81*** [3.64, 3.99]**	−0.00 [−0.08, 0.08]	−0.00 [−0.08, 0.07]	0.04 [−0.03, 0.10]	0.02 [−0.06, 0.10]	0.03 [−0.03, 0.08]	−0.01 [−0.09, 0.08]	**0.08* [0.01, 0.15]**	0.00 [−0.12, 0.13]	0.04 [−0.08, 0.16]
	Respect	**3.58*** [3.40, 3.77]**	0.03 [−0.06, 0.11]	−0.03 [−0.11, 0.05]	0.04 [−0.03, 0.11]	**0.09* [0.00, 0.17]**	0.01 [−0.06, 0.07]	−0.00 [−0.09, 0.09]	**0.13** [0.05, 0.21]**	0.06 [−0.08, 0.19]	−0.04 [−0.17, 0.08]
Agreeableness	Liking	**3.81*** [3.64, 3.99]**	0.02 [−0.04, 0.08]	0.02 [−0.11, 0.05]	−0.03 [−0.09, 0.02]	−0.04 [−0.11, 0.03]	−0.01 [−0.07, 0.05]	0.04 [−0.04, 0.11]	−0.08† [−0.18, 0.01]	0.00 [−0.09, 0.09]	−0.003 [−0.11, 0.10]
	Respect	**3.58*** [3.40, 3.77]**	**0.06* [0.00, 0.12]**	−0.01 [−0.08, 0.05]	−0.03 [−0.09, 0.03]	−0.06† [−0.13, 0.01]	−0.05 [−0.12, 0.01]	0.05 [−0.03, 0.13]	**−0.14** [−0.24, −0.04]**	0.08 [−0.02, 0.17]	−0.02 [−0.13, 0.09]

Note. MLM = multilevel modeling; CI = confidence interval; RSA = response surface analysis. When estimating extroversion and agreeableness coefficients, we used our measure of broad moral character to control for moral impressions. Statistically significant effects are in boldface.
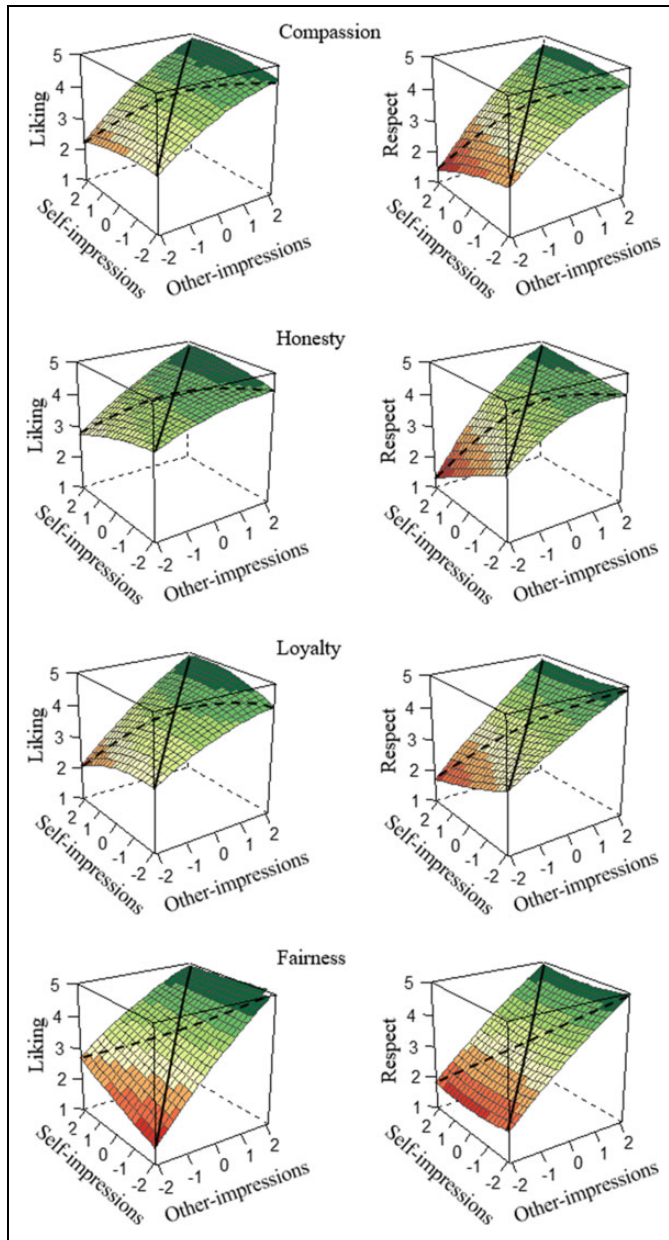†p < .10. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Figure 3. Observed response surfaces for moral trait impressions. Lines of perfect agreement ($Y = X$-axis) are illustrated as solid lines, and lines of incongruence ($Y = -X$-axis) are illustrated as dashed lines.

Hypothesis, people who saw themselves as more moral than their close other saw them were liked or respected less than people who saw themselves as less moral than their close other saw them. Thus, people held less social value when they did not see eye to eye with a close other about their moral character, and this was especially true when people enhanced their moral character relative to their close other's impression. In keeping with the Potency Hypothesis, results for the Discrepancy and Enhancement hypotheses were unique to impressions of moral character. Specifically, the link between
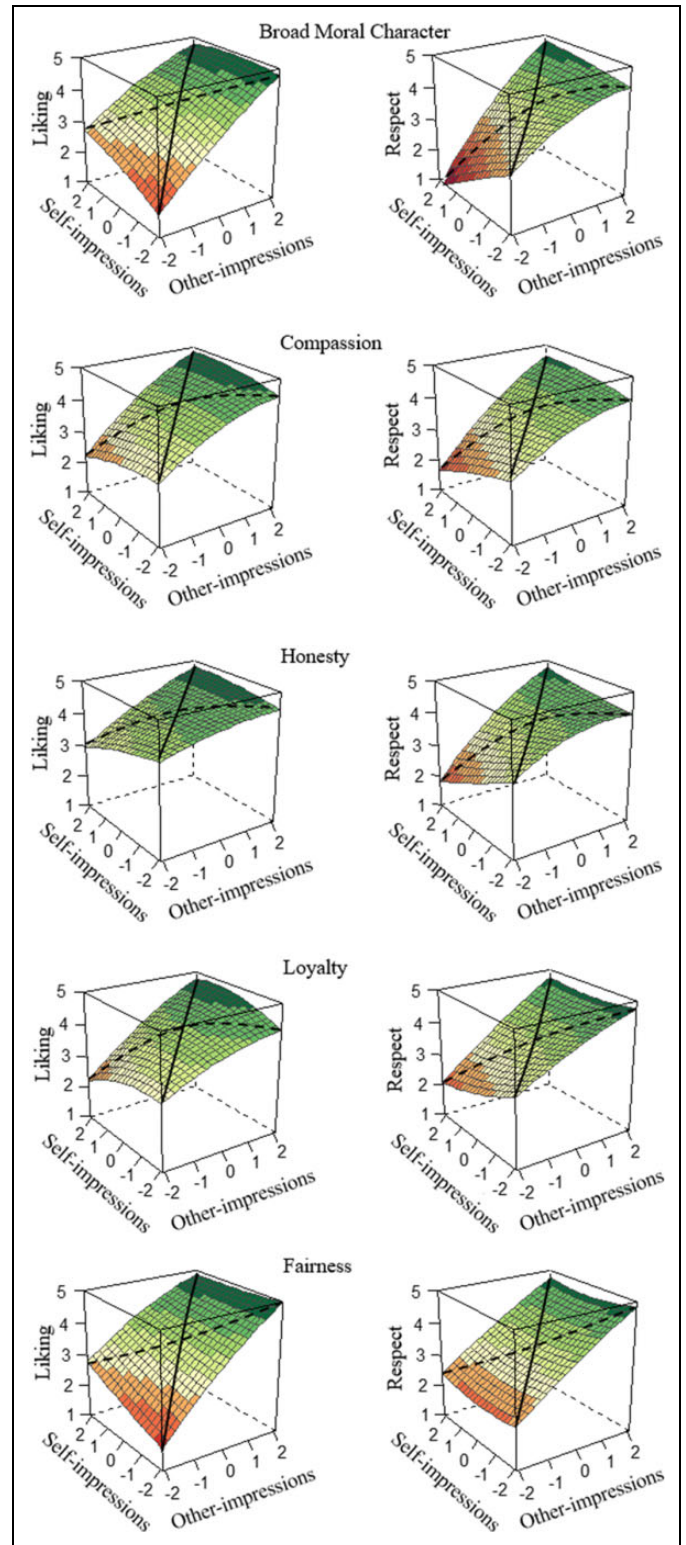
Figure 4. Response surfaces of moral impressions controlling for extroversion and agreeableness. Lines of perfect agreement ($Y = X$-axis) are illustrated as solid lines and lines of incongruence ($Y = -X$-axis) are illustrated as dashed lines.
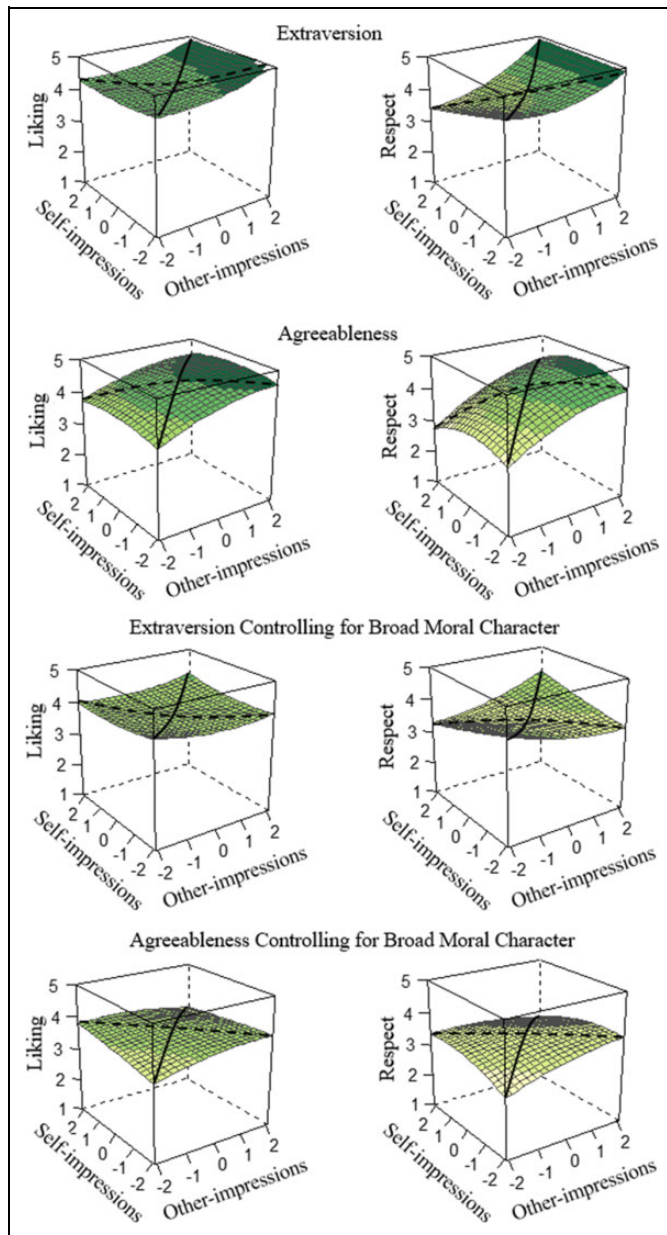
Figure 5. Response surfaces for extroversion and agreeableness impressions before and after controlling for broad moral character. Lines of perfect agreement ($Y = X$-axis) are illustrated as solid lines, and lines of incongruence ($Y = -X$-axis) are illustrated as dashed lines.

self-other discrepancies about moral impressions and social value remained when controlling for discrepancies about extroversion and agreeableness. While findings generally supported our three hypotheses, results for the four core virtues were nuanced.[3] Self-other disagreement about compassion and honesty predicted being less liked and respected, but effects for loyalty were limited to being less liked whereas disagreement about fairness was not linked to social value. This pattern highlights the importance of disentangling components of moral character as well as measuring more than one index of social value.

Our findings add to the growing literature that self-enhancement in the eyes of others has social costs (Carlson & DesJardins, 2015; Colvin et al., 1995; Kurt & Paulhus, 2008; Paulhus, 1998). That said, we did not measure self-enhancement relative to an objective measure of moral character and self-enhancement of moral character might be adaptive for the target in other ways. For example, people who hold positive illusions about their personality tend to experience greater well-being and report greater psychological adjustment (Church et al., 2006; Taylor & Brown, 1988; Taylor et al., 2003), suggesting that while self-enhancement can have interpersonal costs, it can also have intrapersonal gains (Kurt & Paulhus, 2008; Paulhus, 1998). Thus, future work might explore effects for self-enhancement relative to an objective criterion as well as if there are similar asymmetries in the costs and benefits of self-enhancement of moral character.

The current work also demonstrates the strengths of employing RSA rather than conventional approaches, such as difference scores or moderated regression. Indeed, difference scores often have problems with discriminant validity (Furr, 2011), and moderated regression approaches fail to capture the complexity of the various combinations of two predictors (Cafri et al., 2010; Meilich, 2006). In contrast, RSA retains information about both impressions when indexing discrepancy and reveals effects for all possible combinations of impressions. Hopefully, future work exploring issues related to self-other agreement or discrepancies more broadly will also employ this approach.

Limitations and Future Directions

Our results suggest that failing to see eye to eye with a close other was linked to being valued less by that person, but it is unclear whether self-other discrepancies were driven by inaccurate self-impressions, inaccurate judge impressions or by biases from both parties. Others' impressions of evaluative attributes tend to be more accurate than self-reports (Carlson, Vazire, & Oltmanns, 2011; Vazire, 2010), suggesting that other impressions of moral character might be a reasonable, albeit imperfect accuracy criterion. However, the degree to which self and others' impressions of moral character are accurate is an empirical question. Thus, future work might measure diverse indicators of moral character (e.g., behavioral observations, interpersonal consensus, moral cognitions) to determine if the combination of self-impressions and ''reality'' predicts the same types of social outcomes (e.g., Tom is disliked by others when he sees himself as more moral than he really is). While we were unable to disentangle who is right when there is an observed discrepancy, our results suggest that a match between judge–target pairs in of itself is important for social value.

While our results suggest that there is a robust link between self-other discrepancies about moral character and social value, we could not evaluate the causal direction of this link. In early acquaintanceship, individuals who tend to see themselves as others do are liked more over time than are people who tend to self-enhance (Carlson & DesJardins, 2015; Human et al., 2012;

Paulhus, 1998), and individuals who are more aware of how others perceive them are liked more over time than are people who are less aware (Carlson, 2016). Thus, in this context, initial self-other disagreement might have led to less social value. Yet, it could be that losses in social value caused disagreement. For example, people might have bolstered their moral self-impression as a way of compensating for low social value. Future work employing a longitudinal or experimental design can shed more light on the direction of the effects we observed.

We focused on social value among close others, but future work might explore other interpersonal outcomes (e.g., influence, leadership, trustworthiness) and social contexts (e.g., coworkers, first impressions). Going further, targets were nominated and arguably liked by judges; thus, future work examining outcomes in contexts where judges do not select their targets or in contexts where targets are not already liked (e.g., work groups) might yield stronger effects given that judges who dislike targets perceive less positive qualities than do judges who like targets (Leising, Erbs, & Fritz, 2010). Future research might also test the robustness of the Potency Hypothesis by examining the consequences of disagreement on similarly evaluative, but nonmoral traits (e.g., competence).

Finally, our focus was on the judge's experience of self-other discrepancies, but the target might also experience costs to such disagreements. For example, Tom might like Jane less when she sees his moral character differently than he sees his character or he might feel less authentic with Jane. Interestingly, some work suggests that the self experiences positive effects of enhancement while others experience negative effects (Kurt & Paulhus, 2008; Paulhus, 1998). Thus, it might be that the self must weigh the interpersonal costs against the intrapersonal benefits of enhancement.

Authors' Note

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Funding

Supplemental Material

The online supplements are available at http://spps.sagepub.com/supplemental.

Notes

1. Other measures were collected as part of a larger project. Please contact the first author for specific study details and about other measures collected.

2. We selected items which had the highest factor loadings on their respected HEXACO facet in a prior data set.

3. If we conduct our analysis on an aggregate of moral impressions, our results parallel that of the broad moral character impression reported in Tables 1 and 2. These analyses are reported in the Supplemental Online Materials.

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Handling Editor: Wiebke Bleidorn