

*Intergroup Conflict & The Theory of Two Moralities:
An Investigation of the Causes of Intergroup Conflict*

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Observational and empirical evidence indicates that interactions between groups are more competitive and less cooperative than interactions between individuals in mixed-motive situations, such as the prisoner's dilemma game. In this research, I propose a "theory of two moralities" to account for the greater competitiveness of groups compared to individuals. According to the theory, different moral standards govern intergroup versus interindividual interactions. In one-on-one interactions individuals tend to abide by the rules of "individual morality"—a set of moral codes or norms encouraging fair and cooperative behaviors toward others. However, in group-on-group interactions, the codes of individual morality get replaced by the codes of "group morality." Group morality differs from individual morality in that fair and cooperative behaviors are only encouraged to the extent that they benefit the group. Instead, group morality prescribes that group members engage in ingroup-favoring behaviors, even if those behaviors have negative consequences for those outside the group. In this talk, I will present the results of several experiments designed to test this theory and discuss implications for understanding and reducing intergroup conflict.