

The Desire to Expel Unselfish Members From the Group

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An initial study investigating tolerance of group members who abuse a public good surprisingly showed that unselfish members (those who gave much toward the provision of the good but then used little of the good) were also targets for expulsion from the group. Two follow-up studies replicated this and ruled out explanations grounded in the target being seen as confused or unpredictable. A fourth study suggested that the target is seen by some as establishing an undesirable behavior standard and by others as a rule breaker. Individuals who formed either perception expressed a desire for the unselfish person to be removed from the group. Implications are discussed.

Keywords: cooperation, mixed motives, social comparison, norm deviance

An enduring issue in the study of behavior in mixed-motive situations, or situations in which there is a conflict between individual and group gain, is the extent to which individuals' choices are influenced by the actions of fellow group members. Although it is clear that expectations about and actual behaviors of others can affect one's own choices (e.g., Bornstein & Ben-Yossef, 1994; Parks, Sanna, & Berel, 2001), less clear is how one reacts to individuals who are making choices that conflict with one's own and/or are behaving in such a way as to put group gain at risk. Consider, for example, the problem of provision of funds for public broadcasting. Assume that a viewer who has given money during a pledge drive learns that coworkers who are frequent consumers of public broadcasting did not send money to the station. How will the viewer react to these coworkers? Will he or she conclude that they are harming the cause, or will he or she infer that they are such a small minority that they are ultimately harmless? Will he or she ascribe malevolent motives to them or instead assume that, at least for this task, they are incompetent and hence in need of education? Because many real-world mixed-motive tasks are ongoing situations in which participants have to make a series of decisions, one's current reaction to others can have implications for how the situation plays out in the future.

One aspect of these reactions is the perception of "bad apples" in the group's midst. A bad apple can be thought of as a group member whose actions are detrimental to the group's efforts and who has the potential to influence others to behave in the same way (Ouwerkerk, Kerr, Gallucci, & van Lange, 2005). Empirical evidence indicates that not only are people intolerant of bad apples and wish to banish them from the group, but they also wish to remove those who are willing to let the bad apple continue as a member (Kerr et al., 2009). It is

important to note that Kerr et al. (2009) portrayed a group member as a bad apple by revealing that the person had contributed far less to a public good than was optimal for the group to actually receive the good. However, such a behavior is reasonable if, in fact, the actor does not value the group payoff. A person who fails to donate money to public television but watches much of its programming is indeed taking advantage of other group members; a person who does not contribute because he or she does not watch the programming cannot be said to be exploitative. The original purpose of our study was thus to see if information about both giving and using could moderate the desire to expel seemingly selfish people. We did find this, but we also observed a completely unanticipated and, we argue, more interesting result: Those who give much to the group effort yet take little of its subsequent reward are not applauded but rather targeted for expulsion. The effect was replicated across three subsequent studies. Two of these studies ruled out some rather mundane explanations for the finding (lack of understanding of the task by the benevolent other, the other behaving unpredictably), and a third suggested that people are motivated to expel the benevolent other either for self-image reasons or because the other is not adhering to common rules of behavior. In this article, we report on this series of studies.

Study 1

The purpose of Study 1 was to test the idea that people who contribute little to a group endeavor will be tolerated if they use little of the subsequent group payoff and not tolerated if they use much of the payoff. This prediction can be justified from an equity standpoint: For the former person, inputs and outcomes are in balance, but for the latter, they are not, and people are generally averse to maintaining inequitable relationships (Adams, 1965).

Method

Subjects. The study subjects were 104 students enrolled in introductory psychology classes. Participation was in partial fulfillment of a course requirement.

Design. Subjects were told they were members of a five-person group; in reality, the other four "group members" were programmed sequences of choices. Three of the others made

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consistently moderate choices, but the fourth made consistently more extreme choices. For this target other, two features were orthogonally manipulated in a 2×2 design: contribution (large or small) and use (large or small).

Procedure. The procedure was of the same structure as that used by Kerr et al. (2009). The subject was told he or she was a member of a five-person group that would interact via computer. Each group member was assigned a color as an identifier. Each person was given an initial endowment of 10 points and was told that he or she could contribute some portion of the endowment, up to and including the full 10 points, toward provision of a group bonus pool. The amount contributed would be doubled before being added to the pool. Thus, the bonus pool could consist of as little as 0 points or as much as 100 points. Any portion of the endowment that was not contributed was the subject's to keep.

After everyone had made a contribution decision, each group member then had to make a "use" decision and take some points out of the bonus pool. Specifically, a person would be told the portion of the pool provided by the other four group members and would be able to take up to one fourth of this amount. Harvesting strictly from the bonus provided by others (i.e., not being able to simply recover the amount he or she put into the pool) makes the person's success fully dependent on the actions of the others. This harvest would be added to the portion of the endowment that had been retained, and this entire personal outcome would be banked. Any points not removed from the bonus pool would carry over to the next round. Subjects would make a series of such decisions (10, although the exact number was left unspecified), and at the end of the series, the total bank would be converted to tickets in a lottery for coupons to campus eateries run by the university's Dining Services. (A pilot study showed wide differences of opinion on the attractiveness of such coupons, although all respondents saw some value in them; it would thus be plausible to subjects that someone might not be interested in acquiring many of the tickets.) As well, if enough points were left in the bonus pool at the end of the trials, each subject would receive an additional 200 tickets. Several examples were worked, and the subjects completed a quiz to make sure they understood the dynamics of the task.

After the tenth trial, subjects were told that the trials had ended and they would now get to see the mean contribution and harvest values for every other group member. It was at this point that the manipulations were introduced. Three others were shown to have moderate mean contribution and harvest values, but the fourth, Person Blue, was shown as having some combination of large and small contributions (either 8/10 or 2/10 points on average) and harvest (a mean of 12 or 3 points, respectively, out of an average of 15 points available per trial). Subjects were then asked to indicate, on a 9-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 9 = *very much*), to what extent they would like each of the others to remain in the group if the task were to continue. Rating of Person Blue was solicited first. After this, subjects completed a questionnaire designed to assess their perceptions of the study, including any suspicion they might have had.

This concluded the study. Subjects were then debriefed, thanked, and dismissed. The debriefing included an explanation of the deception and reassurance that such deception is not normally a feature of psychological experiments. After the entire experiment was completed, four subjects were selected at random to receive the food coupons.

The key dependent variable is the rated desire to have Person Blue remain in the group. The combination of large and small contributions and harvests produces three different types of actors: a *fair actor* makes a large or small contribution and harvest, a *benevolent actor* makes a large contribution and small harvest, and a *selfish actor* makes a small contribution and large harvest. Our expectation was that someone who makes a large harvest will be targeted for expulsion only if he or she shows a selfish pattern.

Results

The data were analyzed with an analysis of variance (ANOVA), with alpha set at .05. There were significant effects for use, $F(1, 100) = 11.52$, and the contribution–use interaction, $F(1, 100) = 82.65$. Table 1 presents the mean retention ratings for Person Blue for each cell of the design. The use main effect indicates that people who take small amounts of the bonus are more likely to be retained than are people who take large amounts. Comparison of the cell means addresses our prediction. Application of a Tukey's honestly significant difference (HSD) value of 1.19 to the means reveals that fair actors (small/small or large/large contribution/use) are equally likely to be retained, and selfish actors (small/large) are less likely to be retained than are large/large fair actors. This is consistent with our prediction and shows that a heavy user will be tolerated if he or she is also a heavy contributor. The surprising result arises when we examine benevolent actors (large/small): Not only are they less popular than small/small fair actors, but their level of popularity is not different from that of selfish actors.

As benevolent actors are most beneficial to the group, their lack of popularity is puzzling. It is possible that the evaluations are predictable from the person's own behavior—perhaps selfish subjects are quite hostile toward benevolent actors, and maybe there are many selfish subjects in the sample. To check this, we correlated evaluation of the benevolent actor with the subject's own mean contribution, mean harvest, and the raw difference between contribution and harvest. None of these variables correlated with the evaluation: The values are $-.05$, $-.09$, and $-.06$ for contribution, harvest, and the difference, respectively. The correlation between contribution and harvest was .63, with a mean contribution of 3.99 units and a mean harvest of 4.32 units, indicating that the typical subject was a fair actor. It does not, then, seem that the benevolent actor was being evaluated by a large number of selfish individuals.

Table 1
Mean Retention Ratings for Combinations of Contribution and Use—Study 1

	Use					
	Small		Large		Row mean	
Contribution	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Small	6.31	1.57	2.35	1.13	4.33	2.42
Large	3.45	1.77	5.35	1.90	4.40	2.03
Column mean	4.88	2.17	3.85	2.16	4.37	2.22

Note. Mean square error = 2.62. Tukey's honestly significant difference = 1.19.

Discussion

As mentioned, the original purpose of this study was to examine how contribution and use information, taken together, impacted the desire to expel someone from a group. We expected and showed that someone who consumes much of the group product will be tolerated so long as he or she has also given much toward provision of the product. What we did not expect was for subjects to put a benevolent individual on a par with selfish individual and express a desire for the benevolent person to leave the group. As benevolent individuals are critical for success on many group tasks (Dawes, 1991; Macy, 1993; Simon, 1990), that people seemingly do not want them around is troubling. We thus decided to follow up on this finding to determine if it is robust and, if so, why it might be occurring.

Studies 2 and 3

It is possible that the result is merely an artifact. In particular, it may be that subjects are ascribing some level of incompetence to the benevolent other. Perhaps he or she is seen as being confused about the task or simply behaving in a random fashion. It is well-known that people generally do not like working with incompetent or unpredictable others (Arrow, McGrath, & Berdahl, 2000; Colvin, 1993), so if people are indeed making such an attribution, it makes sense that they would want the benevolent other to leave the group. Studies 2 and 3 were designed to test these possibilities. In these studies, we repeated the design of Study 1 and added information on the benevolent other's understanding of the task (Study 2) or predictability (Study 3).

Method

Study 2 design. Here the quiz was expanded. Before beginning the task, subjects were told the quiz score of each of the others. Person Blue was shown as having received either a perfect score or a 70% score. All others were shown as scoring at least 90%. No subject scored less than 90%, so the 70% score should have seemed quite poor. This design was thus a 2 (use) \times 2 (contribution) \times 2 (competence) design. A question was also added to the postsession questionnaire asking subjects to rate how well they thought each of the others understood the task (1 = *not at all*, 9 = *completely*). There were 64 subjects in Study 2.

Study 3 design. For this study, subjects were told that they would play two rounds of the game and that the first round would involve a completely different set of others than the second round. After the first round ended, subjects were told they would receive general feedback on the Round One choices of their new group members. Person Blue was said to have been either highly consistent or highly inconsistent in his or her choices. This design was, then, also a 2 (use) \times 2 (contribution) \times 2 (consistency) design. Here, a question was added to the postsession questionnaire asking how predictable they had expected each of the others to be before the second round started (1 = *completely unpredictable*, 9 = *completely predictable*). There were also 64 subjects in this study.

Results and Discussion

The Type I error rate was once again set at .05. A 2 \times 2 \times 2 ANOVA of rated competence showed only a main effect for

competence ($M = 6.25$ for the perfect scorer and 2.53 for the 70% scorer), $F(1, 56) = 113.55$, suggesting that that manipulation worked well. The cell means for the two studies are shown in Tables 2 and 3. The data for Study 2 replicate the main effect for use, $F(1, 56) = 4.17$, with those who take a small amount being more popular than those who take a large amount. The use–contribution interaction also emerges, $F(1, 56) = 53.48$, Tukey's HSD = 1.37, and the pattern replicates from Study 1: Benevolent and selfish actors are equally unpopular, and both are less popular than fair actors. Neither the main effect of competence nor its interactions were significant. Looking specifically at the benevolent actors, we see that the means are 3.62 for competent actors and 3.00 for incompetent actors. As well, there are no correlations between own choices and evaluation of benevolent actors ($r_s = .05, .10$, and $-.08$ for own contribution, own harvest, and difference, respectively).

The predictability manipulation in Study 3 also seems to have worked. Applying a 2 \times 2 \times 2 ANOVA to rated predictability, we found a main effect for consistency, $F(1, 56) = 82.92$, with the mean predictability rating 6.09 in the consistent condition and 2.69 in the inconsistent condition. There was also a main effect of use, $F(1, 56) = 5.09$, with small harvesters being rated less predictable ($M = 3.97$) than large harvesters ($M = 4.81$). On the face of it, this may be cause for concern; however, this result indicates that all small harvesters, not just the benevolent individuals, are considered relatively unpredictable. Thus, if unpredictability is truly the basis for wanting to expel group members, it follows that all small harvesters should be targeted, and they are not. It is only the benevolent actors who are targeted. We are inclined, then, to treat this difference as unrelated to the phenomenon.

Study 3 again replicates the use–contribution interaction, as well as the pattern of benevolent actors being as unpopular as selfish actors and both being less popular than fair actors, $F(1, 56) = 33.93$, Tukey's HSD = 1.85, but the data do not replicate the main effect for use. As with competence in Study 2, neither the main effect of consistency nor its interactions were significant. Focusing specifically on the benevolent actor, we see that he or she was equally disliked regardless of whether he or she had a reputation for consistency ($M = 3.50$) or inconsistency ($M = 3.00$). Once again, these results were independent of the subject's own choices, with the correlations between the evaluation and own contribution, own harvest, and the difference being $-.07, -.07$, and $-.01$, respectively.

Table 2
Mean Retention Ratings for Combinations of Contribution and Use—Study 2

	Use					
	Small		Large		Row mean	
Contribution	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Small	6.12	1.75	2.69	1.08	4.41	2.26
Large	3.31	1.30	5.25	1.61	4.28	1.75
Mean	4.72	2.08	3.97	1.88	4.34	2.00

Note. Mean square error = 2.16. Tukey's honestly significant difference = 1.37.

Table 3
Mean Retention Ratings for Combinations of Contribution and Use—Study 3

Contribution	Use				Row mean	
	Small		Large			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Small	6.12	2.09	2.75	1.69	4.44	2.54
Large	3.25	1.61	5.62	2.21	4.44	2.26
Column mean	4.69	2.35	4.19	2.43	4.44	2.38

Note. Mean square error = 3.90. Tukey's honestly significant difference = 1.75.

These two studies, then, establish the strength of the notion that benevolent actors are unpopular and targeted for expulsion and clearly rule out artifactual explanations for the effect. It thus seems reasonable that the unpopularity of benevolent others is instead due to some systematic influence. In Study 4, we consider two alternate possibilities: (a) that the benevolent other is an unattractive standard of social comparison and (b) that he or she is a rule breaker who is not following behavioral norms appropriate for the situation.

Study 4

We are seeing that group members want to remove someone who is acting selflessly and for the good of the group. We suggest that there are two possible motives driving this desire, one based on self-evaluation and one on normative considerations.

Removal Due to Negative Self-Evaluation

It has been shown that in mixed-motive settings, knowledge of how one is performing relative to similar others is desired. Indeed, this drive for evaluation is so strong that group members can be led to infer that they are performing poorly, even when objectively they are doing quite well (Parks et al., 2001). Research on social comparison processes shows that if some members of a group are clearly performing at a higher level than others, the lesser performers often develop negative self-evaluations, even if objectively their performance is acceptable and the group is doing well (McFarland & Buehler, 1995). From this perspective, then, the benevolent other can be seen as representing a standard of behavior that is plausible to achieve and will be attended to by others when performance feedback is provided. A person who is not similarly benevolent will see him- or herself as falling short by comparison, even if in truth he or she is behaving fairly. Although this discrepancy between self and the benevolent other may well motivate one to change, in fact, the impact of positive models tends to be undermined if one believes that one is already doing one's best (Lockwood & Kunda, 1999), and, as the dominant behavioral pattern in the first three studies was fair choice, it is reasonable to assume that fair actors see themselves as good group members who are behaving appropriately. Exploitative group members will, of course, be exposed by the presence of the benevolent other.

From a self-evaluation standpoint, then, the benevolent other would be expected to be seen as a negative presence by most other group members. Further, because the subject does not get to choose against whom he or she is compared and the behavior patterns for all group members are made public, the comparison against the benevolent other is a type of involuntary social comparison. Research on involuntary social comparisons identifies a variety of techniques people use to remedy the comparison, with one being to heighten the contrast between themselves and the comparison standard (Mussweiler, Gabriel, & Bodenhausen, 2001). Expulsion can be seen as a tool for accomplishing this—"I am in the group and you are not"—so one possibility is that benevolent others are targeted for expulsion to eliminate them as involuntary standards of comparison. One purpose of Study 4 was thus to test the notion that benevolent others are disliked because they are an undesirable standard for comparison.

Removal Due to Norm Deviance

Another possibility is that the benevolent other's behavior violates the norms associated with the situation. It is not that he or she makes others look bad by comparison. Rather, he or she is undesirable as a colleague simply because he or she refuses to adhere to the standards. That the norm violation is designed to help the group is irrelevant. As we have seen, the dominant tendency among subjects has been to make fair, equitable choices, and, more generally, people expect that others will adhere to principles of fairness in social decision making (e.g., Handgraaf, van Dijk, Vermunt, Wilke, & De Dreu, 2008; Molm, Collett, & Schaefer, 2006; Suleiman, 1996). As such, anyone who reveals a pattern of unfair behavior could be viewed as a norm deviant. Further, this person would be seen as antinormative, because his or her behavior moves away from a pattern of fair or equitable choice. (By contrast, a pronorm deviant would be someone whose choices rarely, if ever, waver from strict input–outcome matching.) In this light, the benevolent other would be seen as equivalent to the exploitative other. The body of research on subjective group dynamics consistently shows that ingroup deviants who are antinormative receive poor evaluations from fellow group members and are targeted for replacement by more ingroup-norm-consistent candidates (e.g., Abrams, Marques, Bown, & Dougill, 2002; Abrams, Marques, Bown, & Henson, 2000; Marques, Abrams, & Serodio, 2001). From this perspective, then, the benevolent other is disliked because he or she is an antinorm deviant. Study 4 was thus designed to also test the proposition that benevolent others are disliked because they are norm deviants.

We have, then, two alternative explanations for why benevolent others are disliked and preferred for removal from the group, one based on comparison processes and one on normative considerations. To test their validity, we used the basic paradigm from the first three studies, which was modified to include assessment of perceptions of the other. We tallied the frequency with which the benevolent other was described in comparative versus normative terms and tested for differences in reaction to the other between those who saw him or her in a comparative light versus those who saw him or her in a normative light.

Method

Subjects. The subjects were 104 students enrolled in introductory psychology classes. Participation was in partial fulfillment of a course requirement.

Design. We once again repeated the design from Study 1. However, to the posttask rating phase, we added questions designed to assess perceptions of each of the other group members. Specifically, after completing the 9-point rating scale on retention of the other in question, the subject was asked to explain why he or she rated the person as he or she did.

Procedure. The procedure followed that of Study 1, including posttask assessment of the benevolent other (Person Blue) first. Thus, the written explanation for the rating of this person was uncontaminated by evaluations of the remaining others. The explanations for Person Blue were coded by two independent judges who were blind to the hypothesis and who classified each explanation as referring to a comparison process, normative issue, or miscellaneous reason. Explanations that the judges agreed belonged to this last category were read by a second pair of independent judges to determine if additional categories of reasons might exist. All coders were trained before undertaking the classifications.

Results and Discussion

As before, a Type I error rate of .05 was used for all tests.¹ The means for the rating of Person Blue are shown in Table 4. We replicated the main effect for use observed in Studies 1 and 2, $F(1, 100) = 4.13$, with small users being evaluated more favorably than large users; more important, we once again replicated the interaction effect, $F(1, 100) = 93.07$. The post hoc analysis indicates that benevolent and selfish others were rated equally poorly, and both were significantly worse than ratings of fair users (Tukey's HSD = 1.23).² As with the previous studies, evaluation did not correlate with own contribution (.05), own harvest (−.02), or the difference between the two (−.10).

We had the coders evaluate all 104 explanations for the rating of Person Blue. The coders agreed on 92 of the 104 explanations, for a kappa value of .82; classification of the remaining 12 was accomplished through discussion. Across all of the statements, a fourth category emerged, applied almost exclusively to evaluation of the selfish other, which we label *destructiveness*. Basically, this reason references the fact that the person's behavior is damaging to

Table 4
Mean Retention Ratings for Combinations of Contribution and Use—Study 4

	Use				Row mean	
	Small		Large			
Contribution	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Small	6.12	1.40	2.58	1.27	4.35	2.22
Large	3.38	1.98	5.69	1.44	4.54	2.07
Column mean	4.75	2.19	4.13	2.07	4.44	2.14

Note. Mean square error = 2.39. Tukey's honestly significant difference = 1.23.

Table 5
Relative Frequency of Reasons Given for Evaluation of Target Other—Study 4

Target	Comparative reason	Normative reason	Destructive reason	Miscellaneous reason
Benevolent other	58%	35%	0%	7%
Selfish other	0%	15%	77%	8%
Fair other	4%	11%	4%	81%

the group's chances of success. Table 5 shows the relative frequency of each type of reason for each of the three types of target other. It can be seen that for benevolent others, 93% of the reasons given for wanting to remove this person were either comparative or normative. Table 6 presents some examples of each. So few miscellaneous reasons were given that there was no opportunity to look for other possible reasons.³ This supports our argument that the dislike of benevolent others can be explained in either social comparative or normative terms and suggests that the two are about equally prominent (a chi-square test of the frequencies of the two reasons equals 1.50, which is not statistically significant).

We then compared people who reported a comparative reason against those who reported a normative reason on their evaluations of the benevolent other.⁴ Because the cell counts are so different across the two groups (15 gave comparative reasons, 9 gave normative reasons), we analyzed these data with a Mann-Whitney test. The test was not significant ($Z = -0.40$), and the mean evaluations are 3.33 and 3.67 for those giving comparative and normative reasons, respectively. Thus, it does not matter whether the evaluator perceives a social-comparative or normative problem with the benevolent other's behavior—the desire to remove that person will be equally strong.

These data, then, provide potential explanations for why people want to remove a benevolent individual from the group. In some cases, the individual makes others feel they look bad in comparison, and, in other cases, the person is seen as violating rules of social interaction for mixed-motive situations. As we solicited these explanations after the expulsion preference had been stated, it is certainly possible that they represent not motivations for

¹ We also tracked the sex of subjects in Study 4 to see if there was a difference between men and women in desire to expel and/or reason given for expulsion. We observed no systematic effects of sex on either. Hence, the results are presented on the aggregate sample.

² Inspection across Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 reveals that the mean for small contribution/small use is the same (6.12) across the last three studies. We double checked the data in these cells, and these means are correct.

³ Note, however, that the two miscellaneous reasons referenced the same idea, namely, that the subject was suspicious of the benevolent other's ulterior motives ("I'll bet later on she or he would stop giving so much and would start taking more"; "This person probably wants us all to start taking less so they can come in and take a lot more and get more than us"). Thus, suspicion may be a viable, although less frequently invoked, third reason for wanting to remove a generous person.

⁴ We did not include the miscellaneous-reason individuals in this analysis because, given that the group offered a variety of reasons, it is hard to know what one should expect the mean for that group to be or how to interpret the mean.

Table 6
Sample Reasons for Wanting to Exclude the Unselfish Individual—Study 4

Type of reason	Examples
Comparative	<p>“No one else is doing what he does. He makes us all look bad.”</p> <p>“Next to Person Blue I look a bad guy, but I don’t think I am.”</p> <p>“People would ask why we can’t be like him.”</p> <p>“This person makes me feel bad because I feel like I should do more.”</p>
Normative	<p>“It’s strange for someone to keep giving and not take much in return. If you give a lot you should use a lot.”</p> <p>“Nobody does this unless they’re super rich, but I think he has the same as the rest of us.”</p> <p>“This would be OK if someone else in the group was being like this, but no one is so it’s wrong.”</p> <p>“I probably would have been OK with him if I hadn’t seen everyone else’s choices and saw that he was so different. He’s too different from the rest of us.”</p>

removing a benevolent other but rather rationalizations for why subjects want the benevolent person removed. This could be formally tested by building in safeguards to the subject’s image and assurances that the benevolent other’s actions are within the bounds of normative behavior and then testing to see if the desire to expel this person remains. For now, we feel that the consistency of the data gives good clues as to what might be motivating people to want to see benevolent others leave the group.

General Discussion

We have presented four data sets that demonstrate the unpopularity of generous, group-regarding individuals. On the whole, people prefer these individuals not continue in the group. For some, this is because the generous individual makes fair actors look bad; for others, it is because the person is breaking the social rules for the situation in a negative way, that is, the person is going in a direction that others would prefer not to go. People on the whole are more supportive of keeping group members who consume a small amount of the good rather than those who consume a large amount. Unfortunately for benevolent individuals, when their conserving behavior is paired with generous support for the endeavor, their popularity declines.

The fact that generous people are unpopular is consistent with the well-documented aversion to exceptional individuals: dislike of those who seem extremely competent (Exline & Lobel, 1999); displeasure with those who offer help (Fisher, Nadler, & Whitcher-Alagna, 1982); and, more recently, the rejection of those who adhere strongly to a moral position (Monin, Sawyer, & Marquez, 2008). This phenomenon also speaks to issues of group process loss (Steiner, 1972), in that group members prefer not to involve someone who can contribute much toward the group’s success at low cost to the group. From a group productivity perspective, this is foolish.

At a more theoretical level, our data are pointing to an emerging notion that group members temper their desire for productivity with an equally strong, perhaps stronger, desire for equality of

participation. On the surface, this may not seem a surprising notion, as we have long known that people are intolerant of poor performers who otherwise seem capable of carrying their own weight (e.g., Kerr, 1983), and there is an ample literature on hostility toward free riders in mixed-motive situations (see Komorita & Parks, 1996). The novelty of our argument is that people want equal participation from everyone, even those who are capable of doing more. Evidence of this exists in other studies. For example, those who exceed informal performance norms are often greeted with displeasure (Bown & Abrams, 2003). People who adhere to a group norm more strongly than is typical are nonetheless seen by their own ingroup members as less attractive than those who follow the norm in a typical way (Abrams et al., 2000). Given the prominence of equality heuristics in other social domains (Messick, 1995; Messick & Schell, 1992), this is perhaps not surprising. Although this desire for equality is thought to be based on the simplicity of it as a heuristic, our data suggest that part of its popularity may also be attributable to the fact that it irons out undesirable differences between group members.

Why would removal of performance differences be important, so important, in fact, that group members are willing to sacrifice collective output for it? We suggest there are different reasons, associated with the different motivations we seem to have identified. Regarding those who emphasize the social comparative aspect of the benevolent other, there is evidence that, within a group task setting, social comparison tends to induce feelings of interpersonal competition (Munkes & Diehl, 2003). People feel driven to outdo the group member who is setting the standard. In a setting such as ours, the standard being set by the benevolent other is to give up a considerable amount of personal resources and receive only a small payoff in return. To compete with such a person means that one would need to give even more and take even less, not a very desirable prospect. Removal of this person would eliminate that competitive standard. Further, it is known that in social dilemma situations, people ignore the objective nature of their outcomes in favor of a subjective, relative evaluation of them (Parks, Rumble, & Posey, 2002). Pointing out that the benevolent other’s choices are allowing one to accumulate more than would otherwise be possible would have no impact on perceptions—people would still focus on the fact that the benevolent other is doing something that they are not and would feel that they should try to outperform him or her. Thus, we suggest that for those who see the benevolent other as an involuntary source of social comparison, expulsion serves to remove the need to compete with that person, which would occur at a considerable cost to self.

What about those who instead see the benevolent other as a rule breaker, someone who is not following common codes of conduct? As we noted earlier, the benevolent person may well be seen as an antinorm deviant. The norm within the group is to take in proportion with what you give, but this person is not doing that, and their deviance is in the opposite direction, as a pronorm deviant would strictly match his or her harvest with his or her contribution. The research on norm deviance shows that antinorm ingroup members are dealt with harshly, because they represent a threat to the stability of the group norm (Abrams et al., 2000), and that others see removal as an effective method of dealing with the problem (Eidelman, Silvia, & Biernat, 2006). From a norm deviance perspective, then, the benevolent other would look like someone who has the potential to shift the norm away from equity and in an

undesirable direction, and an effective way to deal with such a person is to remove him or her from the group.

What we have, then, is a group member who objectively is benefitting the group but subjectively appears to be a problem. To some, the problem is that the other's benevolence demands competition, although competing would bring with it a significant loss of payoff. To others, the other represents a threat to the group norm for behavior toward the resource and would lead to a shift of the norm in an undesirable direction. For both, the solution is to remove the person from the group. The irony is that the other is likely looking at the situation from the objective perspective—it seems unlikely that a benevolent person is motivated by a desire to force others to compete with his or her actions or to make benevolence the norm—and would likely be surprised to learn that other group members want him or her to leave.

An interesting next step (besides formally testing our assertions) is to look at the reactions of the benevolent person toward his or her unpopularity. A number of predictions can be derived. The literature on ostracism, which is relevant here, suggests that one such reaction might be to change one's behavior so as to be more acceptable to group members (e.g., Carter-Sowell, Chen, & Williams, 2008). This solution would be problematic for the group as a whole and would increase the inefficiency with which the group manages the resource. The person may also decide to leave of his or her own accord, as research on both spurned helpers (Rosen, Mickler, & Collins, 1987) and ostracism (Williams & Govan, 2005) has demonstrated that the rejected usually lose their attraction to the group and make negative attributions about its members. This, of course, would also pose a problem for the group as a whole, because not only is it losing a member, it is losing a useful member. However, there is reason to believe that the person may, under certain conditions, instead increase his or her contribution to the group effort. Cheuk and Rosen (1996) showed that rejected helpers will actually increase their attempt to help if they see the issue as an important one, and there are a variety of conditions under which an ostracized individual may try to ingratiate him- or herself or cast aspersions on a different group member (Williams & Govan, 2005). Thus, it is far from obvious how the unpopular, unselfish individual would react to the discovery that others do not appreciate his or her efforts. Given how common such rejection seems to be, it is important to know under what conditions the group stands to lose such a beneficial member.

We also need to know whether the phenomenon is limited to social dilemma-type situations or occurs in collective-output groups as well. We suspect the effect arises only in those situations in which the emphasis is on individual performance and individual outcomes, and the collective aspect occurs at a more abstract level. Put another way, if group members are focused on the pooling of effort to produce a single output, the benefits of having a benevolent member should reveal themselves. Because, in a social dilemma, the emphasis is on what *I* have to do to try to get what *I* want, it is reasonable to think that the collective value of a benevolent person would be obscured by the impression that his or her presence does harm to me. And, in fact, this is the hallmark of a social dilemma: Trying to do what is best for each person singly brings problems for everyone in the long run. To that end, worrying about how a benevolent person hurts me instead of how he or she helps the group fits nicely within the structure of a social dilemma.

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