Perception of One's Own and Another's Behaviors Related to Morality—Does Self-accuracy Matter?

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Two independent studies examined judgments of ones' own vs. others' sins and virtues (Study 1) as well as ones' own vs. others' holy failures and sinful successes (Study 2). Comparison of actor's vs. observer's evaluations of free recalled event pertained to morality domain showed a negativity bias in observer's estimations. What interesting is that participants were able to assess their own sin as severely as observers did in two conditions: no cognitive load and concentration on own sin (Study 1), and cognitive load with suppression of competent aspect of sinful success (Study 2). The findings are discussed within Wegner's (1994), Baumeister and Vohs's (2004) ego depletion theories and Garcia-Marques, Hamilton, and Maddox's (2002) TRAP (twofold retrieval by associative pathways) model.

Keywords: morality, self-accuracy, cognitive load, actor-observer asymmetry, diagnostic behavior

Introduction

The main purpose of this paper is an attempt to compare the process of perceiving the “morality domain” among actors (agents and doers) with the same process occurring among observers of somebody else's behaviors. Actor's and observer's perspective is related to attributional theories (Reeder & Brewer, 1979; Reeder, Henderson, & Sullivan, 1982) and actor-observer asymmetry (Nisbett & Ross, 1980). The asymmetry consists in the difference of behavior's perception: Actor as surrounded by environment pays more attention to situational factors, whereas observer depends on actor's behaviors and rely on his/her traits as determinants of behaviors.

Actor-observer asymmetry psychological pattern is complicated by the domain to which people attribute traces of a given behavior. Most commonly used domains in attributional process are: competence and morality (Carlston & Skowronsky, 1994; Skowronski & Carlston, 1989). Morality domain seems to be of special interest (Kohlberg, 1984; Gilbert, 2006; Haidt, 2006; Schwartz & Rubel, 2005).

What Is Morality Domain?

People possess prototypes of virtues as “typical and normal” behaviors and prototypes of sins as “abnormal and atypical” deeds. Walker and Henning (2004) have developed an understanding of moral functioning (rooted in philosophy, e.g., Immanuel Kant, present in psychology, e.g., Damasio, 1994; Kohlberg, 1984). They suggested that moral excellence can be exemplified in quite different ways in the case of just (a judge), caring (Mother Teresa) and brave (a hero). All of these types of morality had a core understanding among social perceivers. For example, the core of the just type displays the following characteristics: listening

to all sides, having integrity; the essence of caring is: good-hearted and supportive; and the essence of brave is: honorable and courageous (Study 1). The authors showed in three studies that these concepts of morality were prototypes—prototypically organized in human minds, with some attributes being regarded as quite central and others more peripheral. The index of interprototype similarity indicated moderate relations among these person's concepts (just, caring and brave). In the third study, cluster analysis showed that “the honest, fair and principled” cluster gained the highest prototypical ratings for concept of just and that this concept was the most (out of three: just, brave and caring) representative for general “moral concept”.

Walker and Henning's (2004) researches indicated the prototypical nature of moral functioning and at the same time assured us about the necessity for the previous human internalization process of defining morality (which behavior means morality and which one shows immorality). Thanks to the internalization process, one's own sins could arouse a process of internal punishment, which might result in better cognitive processing and accessibility of these sins than (non-threatening self-esteem) one's own virtues. In other words, it was predicted that one's own sins might be more diagnostic, having much more psychological validity than virtues—not only in the perception of other people's behaviors but also in self-perception (Brycz, 2004).

It is considered below predictions within the social cognition perspective. Following this, the experiments and their results are presented.

Social Cognition: Diagnostic Content and Morality

Social cognition theories claimed that the content of behavior played a crucial role in the process of perception (Peeters, 1971; Skowronsky & Carlston, 1989). These theories, solidly supported by experimental studies, indicated two main contents used in self-perception and the perception of others: moral and competence domain. Social perceivers usually attributed their own and other people's behaviors to these two important and diagnostic contents. Besides, the process of evaluating the same amount of similarly prototypical positive and negative moral behaviors resulted in a negative effect, whereas the same process concerning competence behaviors ended in a positive effect (Wojciszke, Brycz, & Borkenau, 1993). This means that immoral behaviors (negative) and competent behaviors (positive) possessed a higher diagnostic value than moral (positive) and unintelligent (negative) deeds (Reeder, Henderson, & Sullivan, 1982). Moreover, the competent domain is often applied to explain one's own behaviors, while the moral domain is more frequently used to judge other's behaviors (Wojciszke, 1997).

Tetlock, Kristel, Elson, Green, and Lerner (2000) introduced actor-observer attributional perspective to understanding human evaluation process of morality domain. The authors explained the intuitive moralist metaphor, “which depicts people engaged in a continual struggle to protect their private selves and public identities from moral contamination by impure thoughts and deeds” (Tetlock, Kristel, Elson, Green, & Lerner, 2000, p. 853). The metaphor allowed for a form of SVPM (sacred-value-protection model), which made motivational and process-based assumptions about how people cope with threats to sacred values (like taboo trade-offs, heretical counterfactuals, forbidden base rates). The authors focused on two coping strategies: moral outrage and moral cleansing.

The person who observes someone else's transgression would express “moral outrage”. Moral outrage consists of: cognitive reactions (like harsh character attributions to those who violate standards), affective reactions (anger) and behavioral reactions (support for punishing deviant thinkers or doers). Someone who commits an unmoral action (or even briefly experiences counter-normative thoughts prior to rejecting them),

would engage in “moral cleansing” that reaffirms core values and loyalties by acting in ways that restore moral order. Moral cleansing is essential for reasserting the identification of self with the collective moral norms and cleansing can take diverse forms. For example, participants manipulated to think about own transgression showed more interest in helping to find a missing person (experiment 4) or creating a vision of caring society that helps those in need.

Therefore, it seems that distancing oneself from normative transgressions depends on an actor-observer attribution perspective: The actor engages in moral cleansing, while the observer experiences moral outrage. Moreover, moral outrage and moral cleansing serve in SVPM respectively: instrumental interpersonal functions (norm enforcement) and intra-psychic purification functions.

The results obtained by Tetlock et al. (2000) supported thesis about the higher diagnostic sense of negative events (sins) over positive ones (virtues), not only in observers' attribution but also in the self-attribution process. People want to be moral and feel moral. Moral deeds support a positive self-view, but one's own moral behaviors do not induce intensive cognitive processing. Conversely immoral actions which threaten the positive self-view do arouse contemplation about ones' own transgression and its causes. Subjects engage in moral cleansing, which may frequently take the form of putting things right, helping others and repairing damage (e.g., Tennen, Affleck, & Gershman, 1986). Sometimes, moral cleansing may result in the phenomenon of dehumanizing a victim within cognitive processing (Kenrick, Neuberg, & Cialdini, 2002). Nevertheless, experiencing one's own transgression would engage more intensive cognitive elaboration than going through one's own moral behavior.

It might be expected then that participants will exhibit better control over their self-relevant thoughts concerning sins rather than virtues. One of ways to test the level of control is “cognitive load” manipulation. Wegner, Erber, and Zanakos (1993) have demonstrated that participants under cognitive load show rebound effects. This suggests that a reduction in cognitive resources sabotages the operating system during thought suppression, leading to ironic effects of mental control. However, if people find it relatively easy to select suitable disturbers (because of the high accessibility or prior cognitive elaboration of given thoughts), thought suppression might be more effective. For example, Kelly and Kahn (1994) did not observe rebound with personally intrusive thoughts.

It is plausible that recalling one's own sins will not result in a rebound effect, whereas remembering one's own virtues will do. Moreover, it is not worthless to provide the thesis that perceiving transgression in others will cause much more severe and negative morality trait attribution than that might be in the case of one's own transgression. Contrarily, virtues would be evaluated in a similar way by oneself and another person.

Studies were construed in experimental paradigm. Perceptions of the “moral domain” were generated by free recall and judgmental processes of their own or someone else's immoral behaviors (highly diagnostic sins) or moral ones (low diagnostic virtues) and mixture of moral and competent complex behaviors like holy failures (low diagnostic) and successful sins (high diagnostic). Study 1 describes an experiment conducted in groups of students that recalled her/his vs. somebody's else simple behavior related to morality (sins and virtues). Study 2 draw the same experimental paradigm concerned to actors' and observers' holy failures and successful sins. Contamination of the results of studies 1 and 2 was discussed in terms of self-other accuracy and information processing. Moreover, the limitations of these studies and the premises for future research were shown.

Study 1: Experiment “Self-other Attributions to Morality”, Simple Behaviors: Sins and Virtues

The purpose of the first study was to investigate the impact of interaction between diagnostic aspect (validity dimension) and valence (positive-negative dimension) of one's own or another's behaviors pertaining to the moral domain on attributions of students' traits.

Predictions

Presumably negativity effect would be found in perception of morality domain. Moreover, participants would assess their own sins more softly than another's sins. Sin is the diagnostic behavior which will not produce a rebound effect in contrary to virtues. It might be also possible that the only situation where an actor judges his/her behavior to the same grade of negativity, as observer does have appeared in no load, concentration on sin conditions.

Participants and Procedure

A sample of 352 undergraduate students (voluntarily recruited out of the Medical Academy of Science, the University of Gdansk and the Academy of Engineering), aged 19-40, participated in this study. Four were excluded, because they did not recall the number (cognitive load conditions). The results obtained from 348 participants were included in the final analysis (168 assessed virtues: 83 women and 85 men; 180 evaluated sins: 123 women and 57 men). Students were asserted about their anonymity and academic goal of the study. They participated were individually and randomly assessed to a given experimental condition. After experiment, they were allowed to ask anything about the study. Participants were fully debriefed, only if the experimenter felt confident about good mood of each student.

Method and Manipulation

The procedure was almost identical to that used by Wegner, Erber, and Zanakos (1993, p. 1095). The only difference was the content of recollections. Whereas Wegner et al. (1993) (procedure used also: Wegner, 1989, 1994; Wegner, Shortt, Blake, & Page, 1990; Wegner, Quillian, & Houston, 1996; Wegner, Quillian, & Houston, 1996) asked to recall for example positive or negative events (mood arousal), here we asked students to recall sin or virtue.

After coming to the laboratory, participants were individually assigned to different experimental groups: recalling sins vs. virtues. After “remembrance manipulation” (writing a “conscious stream” after and before free recall), they evaluated (on the basis of their recollection of behaviors) a set of traits (dependent measure). Afterwards, they were thanked and fully debriefed.

Half of the participants were asked to recall someone else's behavior, half—their own deed. In each group, half worked in cognitive load conditions (keeping in mind 9—digital number), whereas the other half had full access to their operating memory. Nevertheless, people were asked to recall sin or virtue, possessed full access to operating system or being loaded, one third of them were requested to suppress their thoughts of recalled behavior, one third—to concentrate on the behavior and one third served as control group (no manipulation). Experiment plan: 2 (valence: sin vs. virtue) $\times$ 2 (attributional perspective: own (actor) vs. others' behavior (observer)) $\times$ 2 (cognitive load vs. full access to memory) $\times$ 3 (suppress vs. concentrate vs. control).

Dependent Measures

For a set of traits referring to morality, participants indicated the degree to which they thought the item

was characteristic for the individually recollected action (self or else's) (using an 11-point antonymous scale: -5 negative end and +5 positive end). Traits were chosen from The List of Traits (Wojciszke, Pieńkowski, Maroszek, Brycz, & Ratajczak, 1993) as follows: -5 dishonest to +5 honest; -5 disloyal to +5 loyal; -5 unjust to +5 just; -5 irresponsible to +5 responsible; -5 hostile to +5 friendly; -5 selfish to +5 unselfish; and global evaluation -5 bad to +5 good. All morality traits were summarized and divided by the number of traits. The mean served as a dependent measure. Separately, we conducted the analysis of "good-bad" scale.

Results

The manipulation check appeared effective: virtue evaluations $M = 2.86$ were higher than sins $M = -2.48$; main effect of valence: $F_{(1,324)} = 1760.33, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.57$. No gender effect appeared: $F < 1$.

What is crucial is that the expected main effect of attributional perspective did turn up $F_{(1,324)} = 23.08, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.33$. Participants attributed more morality to their own behavior (aggregate judgments of sins and virtues) $M = 0.42$ than to another person: $M = -0.22, t_{(346)} = 2.01, p < 0.05$, showing a negativity effect in the perception of other people's morality.

Moreover, the interaction of attributional perspective and valence effect were found: $F_{(1,324)} = 37.20, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.21$. The interaction indicated that while participants similarly assessed their own ($M = 2.78$) and other person's ($M = 2.94; t < 1$) virtues, they attributed sins differently: ones' own $M = -1.78$ vs. the others' $M = -3.17, t_{(178)} = 7.96, p < 0.001$ (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Attributions of one's own or somebody else's virtues and sins.

Interaction between attributional perspective and the valence of recollections also appeared: $F_{(2,324)} = 4.26, p < 0.02, \eta^2 = 0.08$ as well as interaction between valence; cognitive load and suppress/concentrate manipulation: $F_{(2,324)} = 4.98, p < 0.008, \eta^2 = 0.09$. The latter meant a significant interaction between cognitive load and suppress/concentrate manipulation for attributions of virtues: $F_{(2,162)} = 4.23, p < 0.02, \eta^2 = 0.11$ and lack of the same interaction for attributions of sins: $F < 1$. These interactions marked the predicted rebound effect for trait attributions based on moral behaviors and lack of such an effect for attributions accomplished on

the basis of immoral conduct.

Sins

MANOVA 2 (cognitive load) $\times$ 2 (attributional perspective) $\times$ 3 (suppress, concentrate and control) conducted for sins showed the main effect of attributional perspective: $F_{(1,168)} = 63.96, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.22$ with mildly judged personal sins $M = -1.78$ and severe evaluations for others $M = -3.17, t_{(178)} = 7.96, p < 0.001$. The same effect appeared for separate scale bad-good: $F_{(1,168)} = 29.46, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.2$ judged others $M = -3.61$ vs. selves $M = -2.29, t_{(178)} = 5.45, p < 0.001$.

MANOVA 2 (cognitive load) $\times$ 3 (suppress vs. concentrate vs. control) conducted only for personal sins demonstrated the main effect of suppress/concentrate manipulation $F_{(2, 84)} = 3.24, p < 0.05, \eta^2 = 0.07$ and no interaction effect: $F_{(2,84)} = 1.94, n. s.$ (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Attributions of own sins in different experimental conditions.

Participants similarly self-attributed traits on the basis of their sins in all the conditions of cognitive load. When they had full access to their operating system, they were severe toward themselves when concentrated on behavior: $M = -2.47$ and indulgent—when suppressing thoughts about their sins $M = -1.17, t_{(28)} = 3.17, p < 0.005$ (see Figure 2).

The same MANOVA carried out for perceiving sins in others did not produce any effect (see Figure 3).

Participants generally became gentler on themselves than on others except one situation: assessing personal sins with no cognitive load and concentration on event $M = -2.47$ (in comparison with attributing traits based on others' sins in the same experimental conditions $M = -3.03, t_{(28)} = 1.17, n. s.$) (see Figure 4).

Virtues

MANOVA 2 (cognitive load) $\times$ 2 (attributional perspective) $\times$ 3 (suppress, concentrate and control) conducted for judgment of virtues did not show the main effect of attributional perspective: own $M = 2.78$ vs. others $M = 2.94, F < 1$.

However, interaction between manipulation: concentrate/suppress and cognitive load turned out significant: $F_{(1,156)} = 4.4, p < 0.02, \eta^2 = 0.06$.

Figure 3. Attributions of sins of others' in different experimental conditions.

Figure 4. Morality trait attributions base on ones' OWN vs. others' sins in different experimental conditions.

MANOVA 2 (cognitive load) $\times$ 3 (manipulation: suppress, concentrate, control) calculated only for personal morality trait's attribution revealed the main manipulation effect $F_{(2,78)} = 3.62, p < 0.04, \eta^2 = 0.08$ and the predicted interaction effect: $F_{(2,78)} = 3.10, p = 0.05, \eta^2 = 0.06$ (see Figure 5).

Significant interaction between cognitive load and manipulation (suppress/concentrate) obtained for "personal" morality attributions showed the rebound effect. Cognitive load caused an ironic effect of mental control: When participants tried to concentrate on their virtues, they attributed lower marks $M = 2.4$ than groups possessing full access to operating memory: $M = 3.55$. Mental control process proceeded properly without cognitive load: concentrate: $M = 3.55$ vs. suppress: $M = 2.02, t_{(926)} = 2.8, p < 0.01$ and control: $M = 3.01$ vs. suppress: $M = 2.02, t_{(26)} = 1.92, p = 0.06$.

Figure 5. Rebound effect for own morality attributions.

The same ANOVA carried out for perceiving the virtues of others also showed interaction: $F_{(2,78)} = 3.13$, $p < 0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.05$ (see Figure 6).

However, the ironic effect of mental control appeared only in suppress conditions: cognitive load $M = 3.27$ (another person's virtues more accessible) vs. no load: $M = 2.2$ (someone else's morality less accessible), $t_{(26)} = 2.18$, $p < 0.04$. Moreover, the lack of cognitive load enabled correct mental control: concentration $M = 3.44$ vs. suppression $M = 2.2$, $t_{(26)} = 2.43$, $p < 0.03$.

As it can be seen in Figure 7, no load resulted in correct mental control, nevertheless this concerned one's own or others' virtues. Cognitive load resulted in chaos. Still some judged the moral behavior of others in a really flattering manner.

Figure 6. Morality attributions based on the recollections of others' virtues in different experimental conditions.

Figure 7. Morality attribution base on own and another person's virtues in different experimental conditions.

Discussion

Participants have been good public prosecutors: They judged another person's sins very severely, though they were much gentler on themselves. However, when concentrating on their sins in no load conditions, they were able to evaluate their sin as severely as observers did.

It seems that immoral behavior is more diagnostic for both groups: performers and observers (no rebound effects). In compliance with expectations, moral deeds were not diagnostic either for actors' or for observers' cognitive processing (traces of ironic effects of mental control). The comparison of actors' and observers' ratings about virtues indicated that moral behaviors were valued equally well by performers and observers. Contrarily, personal sins seemed to be less negative than those of others.

Probably, our participants' sins employed more cognitive elaboration than their virtues. The possible explanation is an operating process aroused by the self-improvement motive. Virtues are consistent with positive self-views, thus it is not necessary to engage elucidation. Sins violate positive self-views and require cognitive work. The work takes the form of moral outrage in the case of observers and moral cleansing in the case of actors (Tetlock et al., 2000).

Good elaboration of one's own and others' sins is favorable better adaptation to the environment (actor: harmonious relationships with others and well-being) and better knowledge of possible dangers stemming from society (observer: approach-avoid decision). These results are consistent with other studies. Wicklund and Gollwitzer (1982), for example, explained in their symbolic self-completion theory that definition of one's own behavior as a violation of norms and goals stimulated the presence of a motivation to restore values.

Verplanken and Holland (2002) proved that central values were incorporated in the structure of self. What is more, emotion researches also confirmed this explanation. Smith, Webster, Parrott, and Eyre (2002) clearly showed in their studies that guilt had a special link to feelings associated with a privately troubled conscience and people wanted a label to characterize these feelings. The authors explained that shame had a close connection to incompetence, whereas guilt was largely associated with moral transgressions. Of most importance is fact that shame had a closer connection with negative self-appraisals than guilt.

Study 2: Experiment 2: “Ones’ Own vs. Other’s Attributions to Morality” —Complex Behavior: Sinful Success (2a) and Holy Failure (2b)

The purpose of the second study was to investigate the impact of interaction between diagnostic (validity dimension) and valence (positive-negative dimension) of one's own or another's behaviors pertaining to complex moral and competence domains behaviors on attributions of students' traits.

Diagnostic behaviors pertain to high competence and low morality. They are manifested both in single behavior as “sinful success”. It is, for example, never reviled martial infidelity and caught shoplifting and clever cribbing during exam. All behaviors like this consist of highly diagnostic and positive in valence success: e.g., avoiding being caught and highly diagnostic and negative in valence sin: coping from better student, betrayal and stealing consumer goods. Similarly, non-diagnostic behaviors can relate to low competence and high morality. They are emerged both in single behavior as “holy failure”. It is, for example, helping to take a senior citizen across the street and unwillingly come up a car which knocked the old man down and trying to improve a mood of depressed handicapped person by telling a joke on a cripple (unintentionally handicapped person schemata is accessible (Schwarz & Strack, 1999) for joke's teller). All behaviors like this are composed of low diagnostic and positive in valence virtue: helping people and low diagnostic and negative in valence failure: Good intention turns up into hurting the one you wish to protect.

Predictions

Low diagnostic holy failure and high diagnostic sinful success would be differently judged by participants: actors and observers, dependently on conditions: load vs. no load, and instructions: concentrate or suppress the thought of event. When people concentrate on one domain out of the event, e.g., competence, the other domain, in this case, morality is inhibited, and in the other way round (Wojciszke, 1997). Newby-Clark, McGregor, and Zanna (2002) showed that people avoid simultaneous accessibility of two different categories. Concentrate-suppress experimental manipulation was applied only to competence domain in this study. Suppressed competence would result in better accessibility of morality domain (sin or virtue). Concentrating on competence could produce unnoticed uncontrolled judgments of inaccessible morality domain. Moreover, observers possess chronic mental accessibility of morality domain (Peeters, 1971), because immoral deeds are much more dangerous for social survival than incompetent actions. Actors build their identity on agency as well as community factors (Aarts, Custers, & Marien, 2009). Moreover, it is important to emphasize the role of self-enhancement motive (Swann, 1990; Sedikides, 1993; Sedikides & Strube, 1997; Sedikides, Herbst, Hardin, & Dardis, 2002; Sedikides, Gaertner, & Toguchi, 2003), which is the strongest self-motive. The motive in question makes us blind for negative evaluations formed on us by others, whereas we are eager to see ourselves in bright light.

All predictions get also entangled in cognitive load or no load conditions. Probably, no load conditions which means full access to cognitive resources allow participants to see own diagnostic behavior (sinful success) in flattering colors whereas own non-diagnostic (not so valid for self-esteem) behavior (holy failure)—according to experimental instruction (suppress vs. concentrate). The latter prediction is supported by the thesis that people are cognitive misers (Nisbett & Ross, 1980). When their self-esteem is not threatened, they do what somebody else makes them to do. On the contrary, load conditions caused ego depletion (Baumeister & Vohs, 2004) and people even in dangerous for their self-evaluation conditions (diagnostic sinful success) could do what experimenter made them to do. When behavior is not diagnostic, rebound effect might

turn up (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. Predicted judgments of own holy failures and sinful successes.

Experimental procedure, while falsification predicts, was identical for both holy failure or sinful success, even though two separate studies were conducted for each of behavior. That is the reason why beneath procedure and manipulation and dependent measures are described for both experiments.

Method and Manipulation

The procedure was almost identical to that used by Wegner et al. (1993, p. 1095) and to Study 1. The only difference was the content of recollections. Whereas in Study 1, students worked on their sin's or virtue's reminiscences, here it was requested to resemble sinful success's or holy failure's event. Participants were given an example of the behavior in question as well as specific cover story, followed by their own written description of the content of consciousness stream. Either in Study 1 or in Study 2, we did not take personal notes out of participants for ethical reasons. Students were not informing about the latter at the starting point of the studies.

After coming to the laboratory, participants were individually assigned to different experimental groups: recalling sinful success vs. holy failure (two separate experiments). After "remembrance manipulation", they evaluated (on the basis of their recollection of behaviors) a set of traits (dependent measure). Afterwards, they were thanked and fully debriefed.

Experimental manipulation was identical like it was used during Study 1 (see page 425). Experiment plan: 2 (attributional perspective: own (actor) vs. others' behavior (observer)) $\times$ 2 (cognitive load vs. full access to memory) $\times$ 3 (suppress vs. concentrate vs. control), separately for sinful success and virtues failure.

Dependent Measures

Dependent measure was similar to the one used during Study 1. For a set of traits referring to competence, students marked the degree to which they were sure that the behavior expressed: strong will vs. lack of strong will; resourcefulness vs. helplessness; critical judgments vs. indiscriminate (self vs. else's). Also, for morality traits, participants indicated the degree to which they thought that the item was characteristic for the individually recollected action (self or else's): -5 dishonest to +5 honest; -5 disloyal to +5 loyal; -5 unjust to +5 just; -5 irresponsible to +5 responsible; -5 hostile to +5 friendly; -5 selfish to +5 unselfish. Half of participants started from morality traits the other half—from competence traits. No sequence effect revealed $F < 1$.

Nevertheless, competence or morality domain both were presented by using an 11-point antonymous scale: -5 negative end; +5 positive end. Traits were chosen from The List of Traits (Wojciszke et al., 1993). Judgments on competence or morality scales were averaged within each domain. What means that all evaluations the participant marked on, e.g., morality scales (honesty, loyal, justice, responsibility and others) were summarized and divided by the amount of traits, individually for each person. The creation of two dependent measures: for competence and for morality were completed.

Study 2a: Sinful Success

Participants. A sample of 144 undergraduate students (voluntarily recruited out of the Law Faculty, Biological Faculty, Scandinavian Language Faculty of the University of Gdansk and the Marine Academy of Science), aged 20-30, participated in this study: 74 women and 70 men. Students were asserted about their anonymity and academic goal of the study. They participated individually and were randomly assessed to a given experimental condition. After experiment, they were allowed to ask anything about the study. Participants were thanked and fully debriefed, only if the experimenter felt confident about good mood of each student.

Results. MANOVA conducted within pattern: 2 attributional perspective (actor vs. observer) $\times$ 2 cognitive load (load vs. no load) $\times$ 3 experimental manipulation (suppress vs. concentrate vs. control group) independently for competence and morality dependent measures revealed: main effect of manipulation for morality $F_{(2,132)} = 4.5, p < 0.02, \eta^2 = 0.06$; main effect of attributional perspective $F_{(1,132)} = 40.78, p < 0.0001, \eta^2 = 0.24$ for morality (own morality $M = -0.85$ vs. others $M = -2.63, t_{(142)} = 4.75, p < 0.001$, showing typical negativity effect for others); no main effect for competence appeared: $F < 1$, own: $M = 0.98$ vs. others $M = 0.91, t_{(142)} = 0.21, n. s.$

After this main calculations, the hypotheses on chronical vs. temporary accessibility in different experimental conditions were tested, independently for actors judgments vs. for observers ones within analysis of variance pattern: 2 cognitive load $\times$ 3 manipulation for dependent measures: competence and morality.

Ones' Own sinful success. Predictions were related to cognitive load and manipulation impact on self-judgment of sin. It was expected that only in cognitive load conditions participants unconsciously, automatically would follow the instructions. When suppressing own success students really could give low evaluations of own success and as a consequence of better accessibility of morality domain: high evaluations of own sin. Concentration of own success would result in high marks given to own success (high accessible

competence domain) and low evaluations of own sin. No load conditions might allow for defending ego, what meant nevertheless of manipulation high assessment of own success (high accessibility of competence) and low evaluations of own sin.

MANOVA 2 cognitive load $\times$ 3 manipulation conducted only for dependent measures of actors showed a main effect of cognitive load for sin $F_{(1,66)} = 2.99, p = 0.08$ (tendency, border significance) $\eta^2 = 0.05$: load $M = -1.26$ vs. no load $M = -0.43$ and main effect of manipulation ($F_{(2, 66)} = 2.88, p = 0.06, \eta^2 = 0.08$ (also tendency)).

No interaction effect was found. However, concentration and no load conditions resulted in mean: $M = 0.21$ vs. suppression and load $M = -2.50, t_{(22)} = -2.26, p < 0.04$ (see Figure 9). Moreover, load and control group $M = -1.08$ differed from load and concentration on success group $M = -2.5, t_{(22)} = 1.84, p = 0.08$. Also, attribution of own success differed between no load conditions $M = 1.18$ in comparison to load $M = 0.78$.

Judgments of own sinful success in load conditions depended on manipulation (instruction) temporary accessibility, whereas no load conditions allowed for ego defence mechanism. Load conditions for actor's and observers' evaluations produced correlation between competence and morality domain $r_{(72)} = 0.30, p < 0.02$ (positive correlation is caused by the scale: Positivity of success is connected with unaccessibility of immorality, what means positive intensity of sin's judgments: in fact, accessibility of one domain inhibited accessibility of the other domain). Analogous correlation counted for load actors $r_{(36)} = 0.32, p = 0.05$, whereas for no load actors $r_{(36)} = 0.26$ n. s. The latter meant that when participants lost full access to their cognitive resources, they followed the instruction content in experimental manipulation. No load conditions took the liberty of self-favorability (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. Judgments of own sinful success under manipulation and load conditions.

Somebody's else sinful success. Predictions allowed to assume that chronic accessibility of morality categories in the judgments of others might provoke severe sin's evaluation. Figure 10 showed hypothesis confirmation: No differences between conditions appeared in sin evaluation. MANOVA revealed only one interaction effect load $\times$ manipulation for evaluations of success: $F_{(2, 66)} = 2.4, p = 0.09, \eta^2 = 0.07$ (tendency). Observers deprived of cognitive resources assessed another person's success, according to manipulation instruction. Load did not play any role in severe evaluation of somebody else's sin.

Full comparison between evaluations of own vs. somebody's else sinful success is presented in details in

Table 1 and evaluations of other's vs. own attributions to sin are depicted in Figure 11.

Figure 10. Judgments of other's sinful success under manipulation and load conditions.

Table 1

Comparison of Ones' Own vs. Other's Judgments of Sinful Success in Different Manipulation Conditions

	Load			No load		
	Own	Other's	t-test	Own	Other's	t-test
Success						
Concentration	1.33	1.39	-0.09	1.58	0.58	1.22
Control	0.67	1.94	-2.07*	1.14	0.14	1.07
Suppression	0.36	0.86	-0.77	0.81	0.56	0.24
Sin						
Concentration	-0.21	-2.67	2.23**	0.04	-2.21	2.43**
Control	-1.08	-2.58	1.89'	-0.29	-2.21	2.02*
Suppression	-2.50	-2.42	-0.12	-1.04	-3.75	2.99***
Bad-good scale						
Concentration	-0.25	-1.92	1.70	1.58	-2.08	3.49***
Control	-1.08	-2.25	1.49	0.33	-3.08	3.07***
Suppression	-0.67	-3.17	2.37**	-0.92	-3.67	3.84***

Notes. 'p = 0.07; *p = 0.05, **p < 0.05, ***p = 0.001.

Discussion. It seems important that the actor is able to assess own sin ($M = -2.5$) (out of sinful success behavior) as severely as observer does ($M = -2.45$) only in one experimental condition: While both cognitive load and suppression thoughts of success were applied. Probably, in latter conditions, automatically participants-actors reached access to morality domain and even unwillingly (because of ego depletion) judged this aspect of their behavior as strictly as observers did (see Figure 11).

Study 2b: Virtues Failure

Participants. A sample of 144 undergraduate students (voluntarily recruited out of the Marine Academy of Science), aged 20-30, participated in this study: 80 women and 64 men. Students were asserted about their anonymity and academic goal of the study. They participated individually and were randomly assessed to a

given experimental condition. After experiment, they were allowed to ask anything about the study. Participants were thanked and fully debriefed, only if the experimenter felt confident about good mood of each student.

Figure 11. Sin's own vs. others' judgments in sinful success. Impact of different conditions (manipulation and load) is depicted.

Results. MANOVA conducted within pattern: 2 attributional perspective (actor vs. observer) $\times$ 2 cognitive load (load vs. no load) $\times$ 3 experimental manipulation (suppress vs. concentrate vs. control group) for competence and morality dependent measures revealed no significance: either for attributional perspective, for manipulation or cognitive load. Participants judged his vs. others' deed in a mildly positive way.

Own holy failure. It was predicted that rebound effect for actor's failure would turn up under cognitive load conditions. Full access to operating memory system should result in participant's meeting the manipulation's instruction. The latter means that when a person was asked to suppress the thought about incompetence of holy failure, he/she actually did not think about failure and he/she was concentrated on holy side of the action what went with high evaluation of virtue (good intention) as a part of the event. The former means that when a cognitively load participant was asked to suppress the incompetence excerpt of holy failure, he/she ironically focused on the failure, giving negative evaluations (consistent with the content of failure) of accessible failure and less positive evaluations of inaccessible morality side of the event (good intention).

MANOVA conducted only for actors within plan: 2 cognitive load $\times$ 3 manipulation revealed expected interaction effect of load and manipulation for failure $F_{(2,66)} = 3.26, p < 0.05, \eta^2 = 0.09$ and for holy side of the deed $F_{(2,66)} = 2.77, p = 0.07, \eta^2 = 0.077$ (tendency).

While examining Figure 12, it could be easy to observe the rebound effect. When cognitively load participants concentrated on own failure, their judgments appeared contrary to conscious control and instruction $M = 1.61$. The same manipulation (concentration on failure) and no load conditions gave up judgments consistent with the instruction $M = -0.33, t_{(22)} = 2.24, p < 0.04$. However, within no load conditions, people could consciously control their thoughts what resulted in difference between judgments focused on concentration on failure $M = -0.33$ vs. on suppression of the failure $M = 1.22, t_{(22)} = 2.17, p < 0.05$.

Judgments of "holy" aspect of the event were anchored on temporarily accessibility of moral category. The latter was caused by manipulation on competence domain. When cognitively load people concentrated on

their failure ($M = 1.61$), they were free to focus on their virtues ($M = 2.25$), because of the inaccessibility of competence domain (ironic effect of mental control). While cognitively load participants had to suppress the failure (which ironically became more accessible), inaccessibility of morality domain made judgments of own virtues less positive $M = 0.67$, $t_{(22)} = -1.98$, $p < 0.09$ (tendency).

Figure 12. Interaction effect (rebound) of cognitive load and manipulations for own holy failure.

Summing up, it could be asserted that rebound effect was presented in cognitive load conditions. Judgments of own competence and morality domain got on temporary accessibility of the given domain, nevertheless of load vs. no load. Moreover, correlation between “holy” and “failure” was significant $r_{(72)} = 0.47$; $p < 0.001$ (positivity of correlation is caused by the features of the scales). The same was true for cognitively loaded actor $r_{(36)} = 0.42$, $p < 0.02$ and no loaded actor $r_{(36)} = 0.53$, $p < 0.002$. Results asserted of the link between judgments of morality and competence domain, link going in line with temporary accessibility.

Somebody's else holy failure. MANOVA conducted within pattern: 2 cognitive load (load vs. no load) $\times$ 3 experimental manipulation (suppress vs. concentrate vs. control group) for observer's of other's competence and morality dependent measures revealed no significance: either for manipulation or cognitive load. Participants judged other's holy failure only in a positive way, as well competence aspect of the deed as morality one (see Figure 13). Observer's chronic accessibility of morality domain caused a positivity effect in morality and competence domain. Correlation between failure and morality was positive (specific effect of scales) $r_{(72)} = 0.37$, $p < 0.02$ (no load $r_{(36)} = 0.22$, n. s.; load $r = 0.53$, $p < 0.005$).

Discussion. Anticipated rebound effect in load conditions in judgments of own holy failure actually appeared. What means that holy failure is not very accessible in the mind of the performer. Experimental manipulation on failure created the pattern of ironic effects of mental control and “holy” aspect of own behavior followed accessibility rule typical for judgments within morality vs. competence domains.

When people concentrate on own competence in no load conditions, accessible failure (negative judgments of own failure) inhibited consisted with morality domain “holy” aspect, which resulted in inconsistent with high morality less positive judgments.

Judgments made of the other's holy failure were based on chronic accessibility of morality domain in assessing social environment. Failure appeared to be quite positive in face of holy intention of the performer.

Figure 13. Judgments of others' holy failure in different experimental conditions—no interaction effect.

General Discussion

The contamination importance of cognitive load experimental manipulation and attributional perspective for morality and competence judgments were proved. All mentioned experimental entities provoked special accessibility of morality or competence in participants' minds. Besides, people maintain their own intense accessibility of certain aspect of their behavior. They often build up their self-esteem on successes though successful actions are just at the surface of consciousness. However, self-enhancement motives unable people to precisely recognize their own immoral behaviors. It is worth chasing the pattern of morality domain in self-judgments. If we take under consideration that the observer is more accurate in morality judgments than actor ever can be and observer's attributions might serve (more or less) as the accuracy criterion (on real accuracy is written below in this text). In that case, the task was to look for situations in which morality judgments of actor and observer were almost the same.

Study 1 presented rather strong accessibility of own quickly recovered sin (good accessibility). Neither cognitive load nor experimental manipulation might change mild actor's judgments of sin in comparison to observer's ones. Moreover, no rebound effect was found. Only one situation fulfilled the expectations: When participants concentrated on their sin and had full access to their cognitive resources, they judged the immoral behavior as negatively as the perceivers did. Cautiously, it could be said that participants possessed ability to accurate assessment of their sin only in one situation: deliberation of the behavior and no loaded cognitive resources. Moreover, the bright side of participants was their modest approach to own virtues. Judgments of virtues showed rebound effect typical for not strongly accessible actions. Actors and observers were very close in assessment of virtues.

Study 2 went feather. Of most interest in that study was ones' own vs. others' evaluation of complex behaviors like sinful success or holy failure. Application of the same as in Study 1 experimental paradigm seemed to be the best way for comparison of both studies. Cognitive load reviled the fact that own behaviors

were judged in concordance with reversed accessibility of competence and morality domain. Moreover, when a person concentrated on competence's instruction in the load conditions, he/she had no real access to morality domain. The latter provoked estimations of morality's inconsistency with really recalled aspect of behavior.

Sinful success was evaluated as predicted. For success, no rebound effect was found. Cognitive load provoked actors to follow the instruction (concentrate-suppress) concerning the competence domain. When they concentrated on success, they estimated success more positive, when they suppressed the thought of their success. Meanwhile, estimations of sin depended on the level of accessibility. When participants concentrated on success, competence domain was accessible and they evaluated their sin less negatively (inaccessible morality domain blocked more accurate self-judgments, as negative as sin was). Only in one condition when loaded students had to suppress the aspect of success in own behavior named "sinful success", they unconsciously received good access to the aspect of their immorality and judged own sin as severely as observers did. Own holy failure fulfilled expected rebound effect for failure, which meant that good intentions blot the event out of memory (poor accessibility). Observers also positively evaluated others' holy failure, giving positive marks even for failure.

It could be asserted that two situations allowed participants for "accuracy" in judgments of own sin: full access to cognitive resources and concentration on sin (Study 1), and cognitive load with suppression of success, while sinful success was under consideration (Study 2). The results came closer to understand self-evaluations of morality. The latter not always depend on self-motives, especially self-enhancement.

The reason of accuracy in this field appears to be more complex. Moreover, it is a kind of misuse of the term accuracy. Huge literature on accuracy (Hirt, McDonald, & Erickson, 1995; Hirt, Melton, McDonald, & Harackiewicz, 1996; Funder, 1987, 1995; Kenny & DePaulo, 1993; Dunning, 2005) persuades that we should possess an objective measure of examined event as a criterion of accuracy. There was no real criterion of accuracy. Observer as a perceiver of another person's morality is also biased by his/her chronic accessibility of morality domain. Even if we know the mention fact, equality of actor's and observer's estimations could mark important phenomena. While observers are always biased, actors could (consciously in Study 1 and unconsciously in Study 2) in certain circumstances evaluate their sin as strictly as biased observers did.

Summing up the matter of accuracy, it should be said that it was impossible to attend to create the real objective criterion for accurate judgments of a sin. Firstly, participants recalled different events either in case of their own sin or in the case of the sin of others. For ethical reasons, experimenters provided students to feel guaranteed with anonymously and protection of their privacy. That is the reason why we did not gather pieces of papers with written by participants' spontaneous thoughts about the content of their conscious stream. Ethical grounds put an obstacle in the way to compare contents of events. Secondly, even if there are the best experts on morality assessment, they were not be able to create the objective criterion for the intensity of moral vs. immoral behaviors. Morality domain has fuzzy boundaries and deeply relies on the standards of the perceiver. Even law rules are not enough for anybody to assert rigorously objectively the morality of the judged person's actions. Morality rules are rather connected with emotions and differences in type of moral reasoning and values (Schwartz & Rubel, 2005). Tetlock et al. (1996) splendidly showed circumstances in which people fell immorality, that were: taboo trades-offs (e.g., selling children) unthinkable statistics (IQ (coefficient of intelligence) connected with color of the skin) heretical counterfactuals (if Saint Joseph divorced Saint Mary, Jesus Christ as brought up in a single-parenthood family would have had different personality). Immoral deeds provoked outrage and disgust in Tetlock et al.'s (1996) studies, as was written above. Moral deeds are in people's minds less diagnostic, weakly

connected with strong emotions and not so easy to recognize. The perception of morality domain also depends on the valence's intensity of the behavior. Researches showed that weak valence of an action (scorch a toast) resulted in positive moral evaluations while intense valence of behavior (wife beaten up by a husband) strengthened negative feelings and morality estimations (Brycz & Wojciszke, 1992).

The question "Does accuracy matters in morality domain?" seems more or less unanswered. Accuracy of judgments in morality domain matters to the boundary that human mind reaches its extend. It is really exceptionally supposing to create the real scientific criterion of "good" or "bad". Comparison between self vs. other' evaluation of moral and immoral behaviors seemed to be a kind of more or less well-matched approach to understand the process of morality perception. Results showed that a person is able to assess her/his own sin as severely as an observer. That is true only in two cases: concentration on sin and full access to cognitive resources either suppression the competence aspect of sinful success and cognitive load conditions.

Immediately, it appears the question of self-motives hidden behind the phenomena of severe estimation of own immorality. Psychologists are used to know that self-enhancement motive is the strongest one (op. cit. Sedikides, Swann). However, other environmental circumstances also play its role. Baumeister and Vohs (2004) underlined the role of cognitive load. Authors presented plenty of experiments where people who were ego depleted and they worked very badly on the following task. What's more ego depleted participants were eager to make his/her way towards giving in social influence traps. The results make the reader agree with automatically processed information on behaviors performed in cognitive load conditions or ego depletion. It was definitely the case when loaded actor judged his sinful success while suppressing success.

Garcia-Marques and Hamilton (1996) explained the impact of cognitive load on remembering events and its judgments in TRAP model—the twofold retrieval by associative pathways. Authors established two ways of recollections: heuristic and exhaustive. The former was quick and automatic. It relied on consistency between temporary accessible environmental stimulus and long-term memory traces. The result of this process depended on salience of external stimuli. The latter was resources consuming. Using exhaustive way of recollection, a person precisely sought for a given memory trace, which became a clue to look for another trace. The model was created to explain effects: (1) better memory of inconsistent information; and (2) putting more weight on information consistent with expectation. What's more Garcia-Marques, Hamilton, and Maddox (2002) showed that inconsistent knowledge (e.g., with high self-esteem) were recovered only by exhaustive path and only without cognitive load. Moreover, cognitive load (remembering nine-digit number) caused equality of impression formation and frequency judgments based on free recalls—both dependent variables: Impression formation and judgments were highly correlated (p. 198). The authors explained the effect by cognitive load impact on memory. Load made path of searching through rather episodic (not semantic) memory network. What meant that cognitive load favored temporary accessibility of events and judgments of the events were based on those temporary accessible aspects of an action. Whereas no load conditions favored careful examination of events that were even inconsistent with expectations or self-regard. Authors added that exhaustive and heuristic styles of processing information might appear simultaneously.

TRAP model explains what happened in presented above Study 1 and Study 2. Study 1 showed that no load conditions and concentration on sin produced severe (inconsistent with self-enhancement) self-judgments (exhaustive path). Study 2 expressed that cognitive load and suppressed the success in sinful success conditions produced severe (inconsistent with self-enhancement) estimations of own sin (heuristic path). Generally, cognitive load employed impact of temporary accessibility on judgments, either with heuristic or exhaustive

path for both actors and observers.

Moreover, another phenomenon played its role in the explanation of Study 1 and Study 2: diagnostic aspect of the event. Diagnostic aspect was: own success and own sin (no rebound effect, nevertheless of cognitive load). However, own virtue and own failure judgments were assessed within rebound pattern, while cognitive load were present (low diagnostic events). Lack of load resulted in temporary accessibility (effect of manipulation-instruction). Holy failures were not diagnostic. Sinful successes were diagnostic. While we observe the latter, only cognitive load directed self-cognition towards temporary heuristic path. When participants had full access to cognitive resources, it could be seen self-enhancement motive and intense accessibility of diagnostic own success what resulted in mild self-estimations of own sin.

Limitations and Future Research

The main limitation of both presented experiments is their poor ecological validity. Participants were allowed for free recall of their behaviors in lab. They were instructed to concentrate or suppress the action. Moreover, they worked in load or no load conditions. Such circumstances are difficult to obtain in social reality. Laboratory experiments lack good ecological validity and it is difficult to generalize results on population.

Moreover, Studies 1 and 2 were held on polish population which is mostly catholic. Accessibility of own sin (Study 1) might be much intense among Polish students then among other individualistic nations.

Studies should be conducted on other collectivistic and individualistic students and compared to obtained results. What is more other replications of the Studies 1 and 2 could be done even among Polish students, as well as, among singles and married couples, or old people. There were no gender main effect in any analysis, and still it might be interesting to check the result once more.

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