

LUCIANO GASSER, EVELINE GUTZWILLER-HELFFENFINGER,
BRIGITTE LATZKO & TINA MALTI

III. MORAL EMOTION ATTRIBUTIONS AND MORAL MOTIVATION

INTRODUCTION

Ruby is complaining about Lucy who hit her in order to get on the swing. Lucy is swinging happily. Michael feels sorry for Ruby and tells Lucy to leave the swing to her, whereas Peter does not care, a common enough situation. One of the questions this example raises is why these children act in such different ways, although they are involved in the same situation. Why does Michael care for Ruby's welfare and try to help, and Peter does not? Or, generally, why do some people act morally in some situations and others do not? Does this in any way relate to the presence or absence of emotions (Michael feeling sorry and Peter not caring) and to the nature of these emotions?

In the present chapter, we offer some responses to these questions from a moral developmental perspective. Most of the moral psychological literature is concerned with the concept of moral motivation to explain why people act in different ways in morally relevant situations. In the moral developmental literature, moral motivation has often been related to children's moral emotions. Taking this relationship as a vantage point, we argue that moral emotions serve as a central source of moral motivation. In our view, this conceptualization lies at the core of explaining the link between moral motivation and (im)moral behaviour.

A prominent developmental approach, which elucidates the link between moral emotions and immoral action, is the so-called Happy Victimizer Paradigm – or Phenomenon. The happy victimizer phenomenon describes the finding that preschoolers attribute happiness to a moral transgressor in spite of judging the transgression as morally wrong (for reviews, see Arsenio, Gold, & Adams, 2006; Krettenauer, Malti, & Sokol, 2008). Only at primary school age do children begin to consistently attribute feelings of remorse or guilt to a moral transgressor. This finding is somewhat surprising, given that children already understand the intrinsic aspects of moral rules at three or four years of age (for a review, see Turiel, 2006). Accordingly, this asynchrony between the development of moral rule knowledge and negative (i.e., moral) emotion attributions has attracted much attention because it reflects our common sense that (a) moral emotions offer privileged access to a person's morality (Malti & Latzko, 2010); and (b) persons in real-life contexts

often decide against their better judgment (Gutzwiler-Helfenfinger, Gasser, & Malti, 2010). In the following sections, we discuss the research on moral emotion attributions and moral behaviour according to the following questions: Are moral emotion attributions distinct indicators of moral motivation? Can they serve as indicators of the meaning morality has for a given person (i.e., what motivates individuals to act in accord with moral norms and obligations)?

To answer these questions, we first provide central defining characteristics of moral emotions. Second, we will introduce two central theoretical positions regarding the role of emotion attributions in predicting (im)moral behaviour. To evaluate the empirical soundness of the two approaches, we will then discuss selected studies on the relationship between emotion attributions and morally relevant behaviour. We use this evaluation to underpin our own theoretical position introduced above. Afterwards, we will again address the question whether moral emotion attributions can be considered as indicators of moral motivation and offer some conclusions. Finally, we will use these conclusions to substantiate our position, both theoretically and empirically, and present some implications for future research.

WHAT ARE MORAL EMOTIONS?

Developmental researchers conceptualize moral emotions as self-conscious or self-evaluative emotions, because they are evoked by self-reflection and self-evaluation (Eisenberg, 2000; Malti & Latzko, 2012; Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007). Moral emotions represent central experiences in the context of moral conflicts. We speak of indignation because we heard of an instance of injustice; of guilt because we hurt someone; or of pride because we managed to resist temptation. Due to the subjective salience inherent to moral emotions in the context of moral conflicts, it is not surprising that they are ascribed an important role in situations calling for a decision. In such situations, moral emotions can serve as motives in the formation of moral action tendencies (cf. Malti & Keller, in press; Tangney et al., 2007).

The notion that moral emotions are relevant for moral motivation and moral behaviour has not remained unchallenged. Within cognitivist approaches in moral philosophy and psychology, moral emotions were ascribed a minor role (Kant, 1781; 1785; Kohlberg, 1984). Because – as compared to moral arguments – moral emotions were viewed as not being intersubjectively accessible, they were considered unstable and unreliable for the prediction of moral behaviour. Along with an increasing insight into the interconnectedness between emotions and cognitions came the rehabilitation of moral emotions as motives for moral behaviour. For instance, moral emotions were no longer conceptualized as being independent of a person's cognitive representation of situations (Piaget, 1981; Montada, 1993; Nunner-Winkler, 1999; Turiel, 2006). Thus, emotions and judgments are inherently linked in moral conflict situations. For example, a child who is accidentally harmed by another child and ascribes harmful intent to that other child is more likely to show anger and revenge

than a child (correctly) interpreting the incident as accidental (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2004). Moral values and the moral judgments associated with these values also play an important role in engendering moral emotions. Often, moral emotions are triggered by a conviction that a given action or behaviour is morally wrong (Turiel, 2006). Moral judgments can be highly automatized and internalized, resulting in their being perceived less as cognitive and more as emotional experiences in the first place (Turiel, 2006). Accordingly, emotions include cognitive aspects in various ways and can therefore be judged in their own right. And they can be adequate or inadequate, depending on the (correct or incorrect) assessment of a given situation or with respect to a given moral judgment. In line with recent integrative approaches to moral cognition and moral emotion (e.g., Arsenio et al., 2006; Malti & Latzko, 2010), we argue that cognitive moral processes and moral emotions are closely linked.

Nevertheless, moral emotions and moral judgments are not identical and do not necessarily correspond with one another. This can be explained by the differential physiological mechanisms associated with cognition and emotion. In contrast to moral cognitions, moral emotions are strongly related to the perception of physiological processes and states. According to William James, this marks emotions as distinct from “cold cognition”: “Without the bodily states following on the perception, the latter would be purely cognitive in form, pale, colorless, destitute of emotional warmth.” (1890, p. 450). Experiencing an emotion means to feel something which gives rise to specific sensations. Moral judgments lacking emotional evaluation are not accompanied by the experience of physiological reactions. In this sense, emotional reactions offer a different response to moral situations than non-emotional moral judgments (Nozick, 1989). They impart something about the way persons relate to situations as well as the aspects which are specifically relevant for a certain person (Blasi, 1999; Montada, 1993).

Accordingly, we argue that emotions, and in particular the accompanying physiological processes experienced in moral situations, trigger moral motivation. Before we can pursue this argument any further, we first need to consider two relevant theoretical approaches which address exactly this differentiation between moral cognition and moral emotion.

THEORETICAL EXPLANATIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MORAL EMOTION ATTRIBUTIONS AND IMMORAL BEHAVIOUR

Why should emotions attributed to a moral transgressor be considered indicators of moral motivation? Moral emotion attributions are usually assessed using everyday stories in which the protagonist is tempted to break a moral rule in order to satisfy his or her own needs (e.g., stealing a friend’s candy). In a first step, children’s moral rule knowledge is probed (“Is it right/okay or not to do x? Why?”). Next, children are asked to attribute emotions to the transgressors and to provide a justification for the emotion attribution (“How does [the protagonist] feel? Why?”).

The hypothesis that moral emotion attributions can be viewed as indicators of moral motivation was first formulated by Nunner-Winkler (e.g., Nunner-Winkler, 1999; Nunner-Winkler & Sodian, 1988). The underlying assumption is that children's emotion attributions represent authentic expressions of what is important to them in a given moral conflict. Thus, moral emotion attributions are seen as indicating the degree to which a child feels personally committed to moral principles and hence also the degree to which moral principles are integrated into the self. In this sense, moral emotion attributions were interpreted as indicators of moral motivation and were expected to be closely related to morally relevant behaviour. To validate this hypothesis, Nunner-Winkler drew on a study of children aged 6 and 7 years, showing that moral emotion attributions predicted both children's cheating behaviour and their egocentric pursuing of their own goals in an experimental situation (Asendorpf & Nunner-Winkler, 1992).

Other approaches, however, see moral emotion attributions as a primary socio-cognitive competence. According to some researchers, for example, the transition from attributing positive to attributing negative emotions to a perpetrator parallels the development of an understanding that persons can have several emotions at the same time, that is, mixed emotions (Arsenio & Kramer, 1992; Arsenio & Lover, 1995, Harris, 1989; Sokol, 2004). Older children understand that a perpetrator can feel both good because of personal gain and bad because of the negative consequences of his/her action for the victim. This shows that children can take into account not only the perpetrator's perspective but also that of the victim. Therefore, moral emotion attributions are indicators of an individual's ability to coordinate social perspectives (Sokol, 2004). This shift from the perpetrator's to the victim's perspective constitutes an important, but not a sufficient precondition for moral behaviour, because perspective-taking may be used in the context of prosocial, as well as in the context of anti-social, goals. Accordingly, conceptualizing moral emotion attributions as a socio-cognitive competence cannot replace Nunner-Winkler's explanation, first and foremost because the ability to take someone's perspective does not guarantee that this capacity will be used for good (and not for evil) purposes. In the following chapter, we will examine the empirical literature on moral emotion attributions and immoral behaviour to evaluate the relative empirical basis of each of these two explanations.

RESEARCH ON MORAL EMOTION ATTRIBUTIONS AND IMMORAL BEHAVIOUR

To what extent does the empirical literature support the hypothesis that moral emotion attributions are indicators (a) of an individual's moral motivation or (b) of an individual's ability for perspective-taking? The following selective review of the literature critically discusses the predictive role of emotion attributions in immoral behaviour.

The present discussion focuses on aggressive behaviour, because most studies understand aggression as immoral action tendency (i.e., behaviour that is intended

to harm others). To introduce a new perspective to the evaluation of this literature, we argue that different forms of aggressive behaviour need to be distinguished. A first possible distinction can be made between proactive and reactive aggressive behaviour. Each of these forms is supposed to have a unique relationship with moral emotional attributions. Another distinction refers to intentionality, arguing that there are different degrees of intentionality in aggressive behaviour: For example, owing to deficits in affect regulation, some children are less able to control their behaviour and may display increased levels of aggression, whereas others, suffering from no such deficits, may use aggression in a more premeditated fashion.

To account for these differences, the present discussion of the literature is organized along different forms of aggression. First, we discuss studies that related emotion attributions to behavioural disorders, physical aggression, or unspecific forms of aggression (such as externalizing behaviour problems or conduct disorders). Next, studies investigating emotion attributions in relation to specific forms of aggression with high intentionality are discussed. Such forms of aggression include proactive aggression, bullying, or highly sophisticated forms of aggression (e.g., relational aggression).

Moral Emotion Attributions and Conduct Disorder

Studies involving behaviourally disruptive children or physically aggressive children offer an equivocal picture. For example, in a study by Arsenio and Fleiss (1996), primary school children with behavioural disorders ($n = 24$) attributed happiness to a moral transgressor as often as control children ($n = 24$) did. Moreover, they attributed sadness more often than did control children, although children with conduct disorders were expected to be “prototypic happy victimizers“. With respect to justifications of moral emotion attributions, however, results were as expected: Children with behavioural disorders gave more hedonistic justifications and used less reasoning based on fairness than control children. A study by Hughes and Dunn (2000), including 4 to 6-year-olds ($n = 80$), yielded similar results. Children with conduct disorders and control children only differed with respect to justifications of moral emotion attributions, not regarding emotion attributions themselves or regarding moral judgments. Children with conduct disorders more often used justifications involving fear of sanctions and less often moral justifications than control children. Finally, across both groups, negative correlations between justifications of moral emotion attributions and observed anger in social interactions were found. In another study including children aged 5, 7 and 9 ($n = 312$), attributions of happiness to a moral rule transgressor were positively related to aggressive behaviour, as rated by teachers (Malti, Gasser, & Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, 2010). However, after controlling for verbal ability, social cognition (interpretative understanding) and moral judgments, only justifications of both moral judgments and moral emotion attributions remained significant predictors of aggressive behaviour.

That no difference was found between children with behavioural disorders and control children with respect to emotions attributed to a moral transgressor can be explained by the attribution task itself. Children had to attribute emotions not from their own perspective (self as perpetrator) but from an outside perspective (other as perpetrator) (see Krettenauer, Malti, & Sokol, 2008). Accordingly, it is highly probable that children did not identify with the protagonist (i.e., the perpetrator) and therefore reconstructed the situation merely from a factual and not from a moral point of view (see also Keller, Lourenco, Malti, & Saalbach, 2003).

This hypothesis has been confirmed in several studies which take into account the difference between the perspectives of self and other as perpetrator (Keller et al., 2003; Malti, 2007; Malti, Gasser, & Buchmann, 2009; Malti & Keller, 2009). For example, children aged between 7 and 11 years ($n = 93$) were asked to attribute emotions both to a hypothetical transgressor and to themselves in the role of transgressor in three situations involving moral conflicts (Malti & Keller, 2009). Parents' reports were used to assess externalising problem behaviour. Attributions to a hypothetical transgressor were not correlated with externalising behaviour. However, boys who consistently attributed negative emotions to themselves as transgressors across situations showed less externalising behaviour than boys who attributed less negative emotions to themselves as transgressors. For both boys and girls, a negative relationship was found between moral justifications of self attributed emotions and externalising behaviour. These findings were extended to include other age groups. Aggressive kindergarten children ($n = 98$) attributed negative emotions to themselves as perpetrators less often than prosocial kindergarten children ($n = 137$) (Malti et al., 2009). Finally, self-attributed moral emotions were also predictive of delinquent behaviour in an adolescent sample, after controlling for social desirability (Krettenauer & Eichler, 2006).

Still, the question remains why meaningful relationships were found between *justifications* of emotion attributions and problem behaviour in the studies by Arsenio and Fleiss (1996) and Hughes and Dunn (2000), whereas findings for *emotion attributions* are equivocal, depending on the perspective participants are attributing from. Another interpretation of the failure to detect a general relationship between moral emotion attributions and behaviour states that emotion attributions without accompanying justifications are bare of meaning and therefore do not predict social behaviour. Various, also non-moral, motives may underlie the attribution of a negative emotion to a perpetrator, like for example, fear of sanctions. Only by examining the justification given to a specific emotion attribution can its moral quality be assessed. Therefore, it is necessary to include justifications of emotions attributed to a perpetrator to gain insight into the motives underlying that emotion attribution in the first place.

Only some of the studies discussed have also included reference to moral knowledge. The study by Malti et al. (2009) showed that aggressive children more often referred to sanction-oriented reasons when justifying their moral judgments than prosocial children. And in the study by Malti et al. (2010), justifications of moral

judgments were significant predictors of physical aggression. These findings raise doubts as to whether deficits in moral emotion attributions by themselves represent genuine motivational deficits or whether they are linked to delays in the acquisition of moral knowledge. This question becomes even more urgent as behavioural problems and physical aggression have been shown to relate to deficits in social cognition, like, for example, social information processing (Crick & Dodge, 1998; Orobio de Castro, Veerman, Koops, Bosch, & Monshouwer, 2002). Hence, if we want to more clearly distinguish between moral emotion attributions as indicators of social or moral cognition, on the one hand, and as specific indicators of moral motivation, on the other hand, we need to include additional forms of aggression which are not *a priori* related to social-cognitive deficits.

Moral Emotion Attributions, Proactive Aggression, and Bullying

Within aggression research, meaningful distinctions were established to differentiate between more impulsive, uncontrolled and more purposeful, targeted forms of aggression. A highly meaningful distinction, in this respect, is the distinction between *reactive* and *proactive* or, as some say “hot heated” and “cold-blooded”, aggression (cf. Arsenio, Adams, & Gold, 2009; Dodge et al., 2006). Reactive aggression is defined as an impulsive and hostile reaction to a perceived threat or provocation. Reactively aggressive children often suffer from deficits in different areas of social competence and are usually rejected by peers. Proactive aggression, on the other hand, is not connected to any trigger and is both purposeful and calculating. It is positively correlated with various aspects of social adjustment and social competence, like, for example, popularity or communicative skills (e.g., Poulin & Boivin, 2000).

A study by Arsenio, Adams and Gold (2009) offers an interesting insight into the specific social-cognitive and moral-affective correlates of reactive and proactive aggression. Social cognition was operationalized on the basis of the *Social Information Processing (SIP) Model*. The SIP-Model encompasses six stages of social information processing: (1) encoding of the situation; (2) interpreting others' cues; (3) clarification of goals (instrumental versus relational); (4) response access or construction; (5) response decision; and, (6) behavioural enactment (cf. Crick & Dodge, 1994). In a sample of 100 adolescents, intent attribution, outcome expectancies of aggressive acts, and effectiveness of aggression were assessed using four stories describing ambiguous and deliberate provocations. Moral emotion attributions and justifications were measured using four stories of unprovoked aggression. Teachers rated adolescents' reactive and proactive aggression. For the prediction of aggressive behaviour by moral variables verbal ability, age, non-focal aggression (the opposite of the aggression form focused on, i.e., proactive or reactive aggression, respectively), and SIP variables were controlled for. Analyses showed that SIP variables were uniquely related to reactive and that moral variables were uniquely related to proactive aggression. These findings indicate that reactive aggression is more strongly related to social-cognitive deficits, whereas proactive

aggression is specifically related to deficits in moral emotion attributions. We can therefore conclude that children who use aggression in a deliberate and controlled fashion do not suffer from deficits in social cognition but from specific affective-moral deficits, providing support to the hypothesis of moral emotion attributions as indicators of moral motivation.

More recently, a different form of aggression, bullying, has been increasingly investigated in relation to moral development. Bullying is defined as systematic aggressive behaviour enacted repeatedly over time against another, weaker or less powerful child (Olweus, 1978). Unlike impulsive and direct aggression, bullying is characterized by a complex social dynamic reflected in bullies' ability to win over other children and manipulate them for their own goals (Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Bjoerkqvist, Oesterman, & Kaukiainen, 1996). Hence, bullies are another group of children presenting for testing of the hypothesis of a domain-specific deficit in moral emotion attributions.

An important distinction made in bullying research refers to *bullies* versus *aggressive victims* (e.g., Alsaker & Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, 2009; Schwartz, 2000). Aggressive victims are involved in the bullying process, both as aggressors and as victims. They can be characterized as ineffective aggressors, showing impulsive and inadequate reactions to social challenges owing to problems in affect regulation (e.g., Hanish & Guerra, 2004; Veenstra et al., 2005). Bullies, on the other hand, act aggressively without being victimized. Unlike aggressive victims, they show advanced levels of social and social-cognitive competencies, giving them privileged access to material and social resources (Gasser & Keller, 2009; Hawley, 1999; Pellegrini et al., 1999). Bullies are popular and have a wider circle of friends (Estell et al., 2007). They also display comparatively high levels of Machiavellian characteristics, like manipulative and exploitative strategies (Gasser & Keller, 2009).

In a study by Gasser and Keller (2009), social perspective-taking, moral rule knowledge, and moral emotion attributions were assessed in a sample of 7- to 8-year-old bullies and bully victims. Based on peer nominations and a short teacher questionnaire, 211 out of 624 children were selected for the study. They were classified as bullies, aggressive victims, passive victims, and prosocial children ($n = 50$). Moral rule knowledge and moral motivation were assessed using four stories on moral rule transgressions. First, children had to judge if and why the transgression was right or wrong. Afterwards, they attributed an emotion to themselves in the role of the perpetrator and justified this attribution. If children justified moral transgressions as being wrong by giving moral reasons, moral rule knowledge was coded as 1 (versus 0). If children attributed themselves a negative emotion and gave a moral justification, moral motivation was coded as 1 (versus 0). A total score for both moral knowledge and moral motivation was computed by summing scores across the four stories. Strategic social-cognitive competence was assessed using tasks on cognitive and affective perspective-taking. Analyses indicated that bullies, along with prosocial children, possessed superior cognitive and affective perspective-taking ability as compared to aggressive victims. Furthermore, both

bullies and aggressive victims had deficits in moral emotion attributions, as compared to prosocial children. Interestingly, only younger bullies displayed deficits in moral rule knowledge, whereas older bullies' moral rule knowledge remained intact. However, independent of age, moral emotion attributions were low. It seems that bullies' moral rule knowledge becomes more differentiated with age, along with gains in social perspective-taking ability, but without causing corresponding changes in moral emotion attributions. These findings suggest that bullies fail to integrate moral knowledge and moral motivation (cf. Gasser & Keller, 2009). However, this interpretation is based on the assumption that moral emotion attributions are indicators of moral motivation, which is in line with our position stated at the outset of the chapter. In the next section, we critically discuss this position by referring to two recent studies in the field.

Can Moral Emotion Attributions Serve as Indicators of Moral Motivation?

Two further studies suggest that the assessment of moral emotions by way of emotion attributions needs to be critically scrutinized if the latter are postulated to serve as indicators of moral motivation (Gasser & Malti, 2011; Hawley, 2003). In the study by Gasser and Malti (2010), the predictive power of moral rule knowledge and moral emotions on relational, as compared to physical, aggression was investigated. Similar to findings for proactive aggression and bullying, a positive relationship between relational aggression and both social and cognitive competencies, like deceptive ability (Ostrov, Ries, Staffacher, Godleski, & Mullins, 2008) or an advanced understanding of another's mind (Renouf et al., 2010), were found. The study included children aged 7 to 9 ($n = 237$). Both physical and relational aggression were assessed using peer nominations and teacher reports. As expected, in older children, physical aggression was related to attributions of happiness, to less moral and more sanction-oriented justifications of emotion attributions, after controlling for gender, verbal abilities, and relational aggression. Surprisingly, exactly the opposite pattern emerged for relational aggression. Relational aggression was uncorrelated with attributions of happiness, but a positive relationship was found with moral justifications and a negative relationship with sanction-oriented justifications of emotion attributions (Gasser & Malti, 2011).

The study by Hawley (2003) yielded similar results. Based on resource control theory (e.g., Hawley, 1999), the relationship between kindergarten children's moral knowledge, self-attributed moral emotions, and resource control types was investigated ($n = 163$). Depending on the degree to which children used prosocial (PS) or coercive strategies (CS) for resource control (as assessed by teachers), she identified five distinct groups: (a) prosocial controllers (+PS, -CS); (b) coercive controllers (-PS, +CS); (c) bistrategic controllers (+PS, +CS); (d) non-controllers (-PS, -CS); and (e) typicals (medium levels of PS and CS). To some degree, bistrategic profiles correspond with the profile of cold-blooded bullies. They are aggressive but display the most effective resource control, and their social competencies and popularity

are as high as those of prosocial controllers. Findings showed that the moral rule knowledge of bistrategic controllers was superior to that of prosocial controllers, typical controllers, and non-controllers. Moreover, bistrategic controllers gave more moral justifications of emotion attributions than prosocial controllers. The latter finding is surprising, as emotion attributions were assessed from the perspective of self as perpetrator. A possible explanation is that children with high levels of relational aggression, or bistrategic control, may have disengaged themselves from the moral conflicts as presented in the stories and therefore gave socially desirable answers. In such cases, moral emotion attributions can no longer be understood as indications of what children see as important in moral conflicts. Rather, children with relationally aggressive behaviour seem to refer to moral conflicts in a merely cognitive mode without being personally involved. Thus, alternative assessments of moral emotions need to be included in order to understand the full meaning of moral emotions as motives for (im)moral behaviour.

DISCUSSION

At the outset of this chapter, we introduced our theoretical position that moral emotions are of key significance to understand why some people act morally, whereas others do not. We raised the question whether moral emotion attributions can serve as indicators of an individual's moral motivation. Taking a developmental perspective, we revisited the relevant literature to address this question. Summing up the selected empirical literature, we conclude that, in most studies, moral emotion attributions were significantly related to aggressive behaviour, the prototypical operationalization of immoral behaviour in the developmental literature. More specifically, positive emotions attributed to the self as perpetrator were more strongly related to aggressive behaviour than emotions attributed to another as perpetrator. These findings show that some children – when attributing emotions to another as perpetrator – do not spontaneously identify with the perpetrator. This interpretation is supported by a recent meta-analytic study which showed that self-attributed moral emotions were more strongly related to aggressive behaviour than emotions attributed to hypothetical transgressors (Malti & Krettenauer, in press). Accordingly, moral emotions attributed to the self are especially relevant for one's own (im)moral behaviour, underlining the developmental importance of moral emotional growth.

Furthermore, in some studies, justifications of emotion attributions were more consistently related to aggressive behaviour than emotion attributions themselves. These results show that emotion attributions – as compared to justifications of emotion attributions – offer less information about the nature of underlying motives. This is particularly relevant for adolescence and young adulthood, when the motives underlying positive and negative emotion attributions become increasingly differentiated and diverse.

The present discussion also suggests that the differentiation between ineffective, impulsive aggression and effective, controlled aggression is highly relevant for

research on the relationship between moral emotion attributions and immoral behaviour. Studies including physically aggressive or impulsively aggressive children found that these children suffer from deficits both in moral judgment and in moral emotion attributions (e.g., Malti et al., 2010), whereas studies including proactively aggressive children or bullies identified specific moral-affective deficits (e.g., Arsenio et al., 2009; Gasser & Keller, 2009). It seems that, for at least some aggressive children, an asynchrony exists between their perspective-taking ability and moral understanding, on the one hand, and their moral emotion attributions, on the other hand. These findings offer strong support to Nunner-Winkler's hypothesis of an analytical independence of moral cognition and moral motivation (Nunner-Winkler et al., 2007) and underpin our own, related position.

Notwithstanding, matters are more complex owing to equivocal findings with respect to so-called socially competent and effective aggressors. In some studies, relatively advanced justifications of emotion attributions were observed in relationally aggressive children or so-called bistrategic controllers. Against the background of these studies, it seems natural to interpret moral emotion attributions as reflecting a mere social-cognitive competence. This interpretation does not question the hypothesis of moral emotions as indicators of moral motivation, but rather doubts the appropriateness of operationalising moral emotions exclusively by means of moral emotion attributions in the context of hypothetical transgressions. At the outset of this chapter, we introduced two essential features of moral emotions: (a) Moral emotions are significantly interwoven with cognitive aspects; and, (b) moral emotions can be distinguished from cognitive judgments with respect to the perception of bodily processes. The first aspect is usually taken into account, both on the level of theoretical conceptions of moral emotions and on the level of their operationalisation, whereas the aspect of bodily experience is hardly ever considered. In many moral psychological deliberations, moral emotions are almost equated with moral judgments (e.g., Deigh, 1994; Montada, 1993; Nunner-Winkler, 1999; Turiel, 2006). Accordingly, the admonition that this conception of moral emotions represents a form of "judgmentalism" seems fairly reasonable (Greenspan, 1988).

Narratives also offer an encouraging approach to overcome some of the difficulties inherent in using a response measure to assess moral emotions in the context of hypothetical stories. Recent research indicates that emotions attributed in the context of hypothetical scenarios do not necessarily correspond with emotions children experience in real-life situations (Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger et al., 2010). As emotions experienced in real-life moral conflicts provide an important source for children's moral learning (Smetana & Killen, 2008), using an assessment method that taps into children's first-hand experiences may be an important first step to learn more about the way they refer to emotions in narrations of morally relevant situations. Real-life narratives provide reconstructions of real-life experiences and are well suited to assessing children's moral understanding (Wainryb, Brehl, & Matwin, 2005). They can be conceptualized as reconstructions of personal

experiences, whereby those aspects that were salient at the time of the experience become part of the narrative (cf. Wainryb et al., 2005). A recent study by Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger et al. (2010), involving 5- and 9-year-old children ($n = 190$), found that the emotions and judgments constructed in the course of real-life narratives differed from those generated in the context of hypothetical transgressions. In the narratives, all emotions mentioned spontaneously were negative. In contrast, when affect ratings were offered, emotion attributions included also positive and neutral emotions. Moreover, children judged their own real-life transgressions (as recounted in narratives) as less severe and more justified than hypothetical transgressions. First, these initial findings show that using a response measure based on affect ratings results in the attribution of emotions differing in valence (positive, negative, and neutral) from emotions mentioned spontaneously when recounting a narrative (only negative). Accordingly, no indications of the happy victimizer phenomenon were found in narratives. Second, the differential findings regarding moral judgments and justifications generated in the context of real-life versus hypothetical transgressions clearly show that children's moral reasoning is complex and highly attuned to the circumstances in which it occurs, namely, reconstructing one's own experiences in the role of transgressor versus engaging in a more or less (emotionally) distanced act of deliberation about a hypothetical transgressor. As emotions experienced in real-life moral conflicts provide an important source for children's moral learning (Smetana & Killen, 2008), using an assessment method that taps into children's first-hand experiences may represent another important way to assess moral emotions. Moreover, narratives offer relevant insights into the affective/emotional side of moral experience. First, they (may) contain expressions relating to physiological reactions accompanying moral affect, e.g., "... and then my face turned very hot". Second, telling a narrative of a morally relevant situation may be accompanied by emotional reactions on the side of the narrator, which can be systematically observed, for example, by videotaping the process of narration.

CONCLUSION

In order to advance the development of methods to assess moral emotions, future research should additionally consider experiences of bodily processes as a core feature of moral emotions. Accordingly, assessment methods need to ensure that stories presented to participants trigger emotional involvement. For example, an extension of the happy victimizer paradigm might include assessing moral judgments and emotions in emotionally meaningful situations which occur naturally or are induced within an experimental setting (cf. Kochanska, Gross, Lin, & Nichols, 2002). In this sense, attempts at assessing judgments or emotions immediately after observed moral conflicts in real-life situations are especially promising (Smetana et al., 1999; Turiel, 2002).

Taken together, we draw two general conclusions. First, moral emotions – operationalized as moral emotion attributions – are of key significance in explaining

(im)moral behaviour. Second, we showed that the field is in need of additional, innovative studies to elucidate the intricate relationship between cognitive, emotional, and behavioural aspects of moral development. Alternative, innovative assessment methods, including both real-life and experimental contexts, offer a promising avenue towards gaining further insights into the role moral emotions play in morally relevant behaviour.

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AFFILIATIONS

Luciano Gasser
Institute of Education and Diversity
University of Teacher Education of Central Switzerland
Lucerne, Switzerland

Eveline Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger
Institute of Pedagogical Professionalism and School Culture
University of Teacher Education of Central Switzerland
Lucerne, Switzerland

L. GASSER, E. G.-HELFENFINGER, B. LATZKO & T. MALTI

Brigitte Latzko
Faculty of Education
Universität Leipzig
Leipzig, Germany

Tina Malti
Department of Psychology
University of Toronto
Mississauga, Canada