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Intergroup Conflict is Our Business: CEOs' Ethical Intergroup Leadership Fuels Stakeholder Support for Corporate Intergroup Responsibility

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Abstract

Is reducing large-scale intergroup conflict the business of corporations? Although large corporations can use their power and prominence to reduce intergroup conflict in society, it is unclear to what extent stakeholders support corporate Intergroup Responsibility (CIR). Study 1 showed that support for CIR correlates in theoretically meaningful ways with relevant economic, social, and moral attitudes, including fair market ideology, consumer support for corporate social responsibility (CSR), social dominance orientation, symbolic racism, and moral foundations. Studies 2 and 3 employed experimental designs to test the hypothesis that business leaders who advocate for intergroup tolerance boost perceptions of corporations and their leaders as moral, just, and fair, which in turn, increases stakeholders' support for CIR. We found support for this hypothesis across two highly publicized and contentious events related to racial conflict in the U.S.: The White supremacy rally in Charlottesville and the federal government's announcement about the planned rescinding of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) immigration policy. Specifically, exposing participants to real-world tweets by CEOs who advocated intergroup tolerance following these events increased participants' support for CIR. This effect was mediated by heightened perceptions of corporations and their leaders as moral, just, and fair. Taken together, these findings enhance our understanding of the factors that shape stakeholders' reactions to CIR; highlight intergroup conflict as an emerging arena for CSR; and illustrate the power of ethical intergroup leadership.

Keywords Morality · Leadership · Intergroup relations · Corporate social responsibility · Ideology

Recent events in the United States and around the globe have thrust intergroup relations to the forefront of the public discourse. Whereas some leaders advocate passionately for divisive, sectarian, and intolerant ideologies and policies,

other leaders advocate equally passionately for peaceful coexistence, collaboration, and tolerance in intergroup relations. For example, the investment advisor and fund manager Marc Faber recently wrote in a public newsletter: "… thank God white people populated America, and not the blacks. Otherwise, the US would look like Zimbabwe, which it might look like 1 day anyway, but at least America enjoyed 200 years in the economic and political sun under a white majority" (Business Insider 2017). In contrast, Intel's former CEO, Brian Krzanich resigned from US President Trump's manufacturing council following the administration's reaction to the violent White supremacy rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, and tweeted: "There should be no hesitation in condemning hate speech or white supremacy by name. #Intel asks all our countries leadership to do the same" (CNNMoney 2017). Intel's leadership is not alone; over the past year numerous business leaders from a wide range of industries and organizations seem to have increased their efforts and public involvement in attempts to alleviate

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racial tensions and amend intergroup relations in the US and beyond.

This state of affairs presents new challenges for social scientists and organizational scholars who seek to understand this emerging phenomenon whereby business organizations and their leaders expand the scope of their involvement in social issues into influencing complex, contentious, long-standing, and politically-charged intergroup conflicts. Here we aim to address two interrelated questions: First, what are the factors that influence stakeholders' support for, or opposition to, Corporate Intergroup Responsibility? Second, how can business leaders influence stakeholders' support for Corporate Intergroup Responsibility? With regards to the first question, we propose, and empirically demonstrate, that ideological worldviews and attitudes related to economic, social, and moral issues jointly determine the extent to which stakeholders support or oppose Corporate Intergroup Responsibility (CIR). With regards to the second question, we propose, and empirically demonstrate, that business leaders who display ethical intergroup leadership in their public communications fuel stakeholders' perceptions of business organizations and their leaders as moral, just, and fair, which in turn, boost support for CIR.

To address these theoretically intriguing and practically important questions, we must first define the two new constructs we introduce in the current research: CIR and ethical intergroup leadership. Hence, we begin by explicitly articulating our conceptualization of each construct. We then derive three hypotheses from relevant theory and research, and report the results of one correlational and two experimental studies that tested them.

Corporate Intergroup Responsibility

We conceptualize Corporate Intergroup Responsibility (CIR) as a particular component of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Therefore, we first define CSR. CSR captures a firm's ethical obligations to its stakeholders, reflects a concern with meeting societal standards of justice and fairness, and manifests in comprehensive respect of stakeholders' moral rights (Carroll 1991). Both the practice and scholarly conceptualizations of CSR have evolved over the past few decades (Carroll 1979, 1999; Sabadoz 2011) with CSR activities becoming more diverse (e.g., philanthropic activities; support for health and educational NGOs; public–private partnerships; peacebuilding through commerce), broader in reach (i.e., targeting increasingly larger sets of stakeholders, including shareholders, employees, customers, local communities, activist groups, society at large, future generations, and the natural environment), and potentially, also deeper in their impact (i.e., exerting greater and more

lasting positive influence on stakeholders' well-being; see special issue on CSR: Wang et al. 2016).

As a particular facet of CSR, CIR captures a firm's moral commitment to reduce the harm intergroup conflict inflicts on its stakeholders, reflects a concern with intergroup justice and fairness, and manifests in regard for peaceful co-existence among different groups in society. Intergroup conflict is pervasive, destructive, and diverse: Its numerous manifestations range from stereotypes, prejudice, and hate crimes perpetrated by individuals, to institutional discrimination, terrorism, and warfare carried out by organized groups (Atran and Ginges 2012; Cohen and Insko 2008; Hewstone et al. 2002; Kruglanski et al. 2009). Consistent with the many faces of intergroup conflict, CIR can take different forms. For example, CIR may involve campaigns that denounce racial stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination; educational activities that seek to promote tolerance and respect for minority groups in society; or aid programs that aim to alleviate the suffering of individuals in conflict-stricken areas.

CIR shares certain similarities with two other components of CSR: Political corporate social responsibility (PCSR) and Corporate Diplomacy (CD). PCSR and CD represent proactive responses of corporations to governance failures by states. They include a range of activities, such as mediating in international disputes, promoting democratic values, engaging in policy dialogs, and negotiating behind the scenes with politicians, through which corporations seek to protect or enhance the well-being of stakeholders either in the corporation's home country (PCSR) or in the host country (CD) (Westermann-Behaylo et al. 2015). However, CIR is also distinct from PCSR and CD. Unlike PCSR, CIR is not necessarily a response to state failure nor does it aim to replace governmental functions. Rather, it may seek to support governmental efforts aimed at alleviating intergroup conflict and its harmful consequences. Unlike CD, which captures multinational corporations' efforts to promote stakeholders' well-being by acting as third-party conflict managers in conflict-prone host countries (see special issue on the 'business of peace': Fort 2016; Melin 2016), CIR may focus on reducing intergroup conflict domestically, in corporations' home country.

Given that CSR seeks to be responsive to societal expectations and standards of ethical conduct (Schwartz and Carroll 2003), an important question is: To what extent do stakeholders support CIR? Stakeholders' support for CIR is important because disapproval and disengagement of primary stakeholder groups can seriously damage corporations. As noted by Clarkson (1995), "failure to retain the participation of a primary stakeholder group will result in the failure of that corporate system" (p. 107). We therefore turn next to factors that shape stakeholders' support for, or opposition to, CIR.

Stakeholders' Attitudes Toward CIR

Stakeholders are likely to have mixed reactions toward CIR. First, given the afore-mentioned similarities to PCSR and CD activities, some stakeholders may oppose CIR activities because they view them as pursuits that renegotiate the private–public interface. Put differently, stakeholders may view CIR as challenging the existing social contract between business organizations and society, and as actions that aim to boost the power and influence of corporations as political, institutional actors in society. Essentially, in pursuing CIR activities, corporations may be seen as "taking some of the roles that have been generally associated with governments"; in doing so, they "….become holders of a greater symbolic power" (Ordeix-Rigo and Duarte 2009, pp. 556–557). Such perceptions may propel stakeholders to feel that business leaders are grossly overstepping their role boundaries and transgressing the status-quo in the business-society interface. Thus, those who believe that it is simply not the role of corporations to reduce intergroup conflict or improve intergroup relations in society are likely to oppose CIR, whereas those who are less concerned about the "privatization" of the public sphere (Bakker 2007), and the rising power of corporations in society are likely to support CIR. Based on this logic, and consistent with our conceptualization of CIR as a facet of CSR, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 1 Support for CIR will correlate positively with support for CSR.

Second, some stakeholders may oppose CIR because intergroup conflict is often a contentious and sensitive social issue that polarizes society. Specifically, whereas CIR is consistent with ideological beliefs of some stakeholders (e.g., those who endorse values of equality and tolerance: i.e., universalism: Schwartz 1992), it is inconsistent with the ideological beliefs of other stakeholders (e.g., those who support group-based hierarchy in society: Pratto et al. 1994). In a society in which stakeholders witness mounting political polarization and deepening ideological divide, those who view CIR as reinforcing their ideological position are likely to support CIR, whereas those who view CIR as clashing with their ideological position are likely to oppose CIR. Thus, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 2 Support for CIR will correlate negatively with intolerant ideological worldviews that support social hierarchy.

Third, the extent to which stakeholders support or oppose CIR may depend on the degree to which they perceive business organizations, their leaders, and the economic system as a whole to be moral, just, and fair. Individuals who find

leaders' use of moral justifications appealing (Kreps and Monin 2011; Van Zant and Moore 2015), and see corporations, their leaders, and the economic system as a whole as fair and just (Jost et al. 2003), are likely to support CIR whereas individuals who feel suspicious or distrustful of corporations' motives and see corporations' profit-seeking inclinations as inherently in conflict with the social good (Bhattacharjee et al. 2017), are likely to oppose CIR. Previous research has shown that fair market ideology——the belief that the market economy as a whole is inherently fair and just (Jost et al. 2003; Proudfoot and Kay 2014)—fuels managers' belief in the business case for CSR (Hafenbradl and Waeger 2017; cf. Hemingway and Maclagan 2004) and is associated with a tendency to downplay the severity of ethical scandals involving business corporations (Jost et al. 2003). Based on these ideas and findings, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 3 Support for CIR will correlate positively with fair market ideology.

Whereas fair market ideology captures people's beliefs about the morality of the economic system as a whole, people likely form impressions of the morality of two other kinds of relevant targets in this context: Corporations and their leaders. Research on person perception suggests that information about others' morality is particularly sought by social perceivers and is weighted heavily in evaluative judgments (more so than competence information: Fiske et al. 2007; Goodwin et al. 2014; Wojciszke et al. 1998). Individuals likewise attend to morality information at the organizational level. Indeed, research suggests that similar neural processes operate in moral judgments of individuals and corporations (Plitt et al. 2015) and that consumers' behavior is sensitive to information about firms' ethical conduct (Folkes and Kamins 1999). We propose that the tendency to view business organizations and their leaders as moral can fuel support for CIR. Thus, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 4 Support for CIR will correlate positively with perceptions of business organizations and their leaders as moral.

We propose that perceptions of business organizations as their leaders as moral, just, and fair are not entirely fixed. Rather, the impressions of moral character people form, and the inferences of businesses' ethicality they draw, depend on corporations' and leaders' behavior. The malleability of these perceptions and their linkage to overt behavior means that prominent business leaders can shape stakeholders' morality judgments, and through them, their support for CIR. The following section develops further the idea that displays of ethical intergroup leadership (which we define below) in particular, will boost stakeholders' support for

CIR indirectly, by enhancing perceptions of business organizations and their leaders as moral, just, and fair.

Effects of Ethical Intergroup Leadership on Support for CIR

We conceptualize ethical intergroup leadership by theoretically integrating definitions of intergroup leadership on the one hand, and definitions of ethical leadership on the other hand. Intergroup leadership is defined as a social influence process that propels individuals from multiple groups to collaborate effectively in pursuing a joint goal (Hogg et al. 2012, p. 234). Effective intergroup leaders help their constituencies develop an intergroup relational identity—an understanding that each group needs the other group to achieve its instrumental goals. Although this conceptualization explicitly identifies cooperation across group boundaries as the ultimate goal of intergroup leadership, the rationale for such cooperation is instrumental rather than value-based. Thus, moral or ethical considerations play no role in this (organizational) conceptualization of intergroup leadership.

In contrast, ethical leadership is first and foremost about morality. Ethical leaders show concern for the well-being of stakeholders and model moral behavior by communicating to constituencies the moral values they endorse (Brown and Trevino 2006, p. 597; cf. Wang and Hackett 2016). Whereas previous research focused on ethical leadership's effects on employees (e.g., Brown et al. Brown et al. 2005), building on Stakeholder Theory (Freeman 1984; Freeman et al. 2004) we propose that ethical leadership can impact various primary and secondary stakeholder groups, including customers, employees, local communities, society at large, and the media, who seek information about the morality of business organizations and their executives. Notably, although conceptualizations of ethical leadership are value-based and focus directly on morality, they do not address intergroup relations specifically.

Theoretically integrating the concepts of intergroup leadership and ethical leadership, we define ethical intergroup leadership as a top-down social influence process whereby leaders (e.g., formal role holders in the corporation) demonstrate, in their communications and actions, concern with intergroup relations in society, commitment to reducing intergroup conflict and its harmful consequences, value-based duty to protect and support the well-being of individuals from different groups, and an ethical obligation to promote peaceful coexistence across group boundaries.

Previous research from the perspective of stakeholder theory suggested that the survival and profitability of business organizations depends on their ability to create value for "each primary stakeholder group" (Clarkson 1995, p. 110). Promoting intergroup tolerance and peaceful coexistence between different groups in society has the potential to provide invaluable public goods to stakeholders (e.g., physical safety and psychological security), reaffirm their personal value priorities, and redefine the socio-moral contract between corporations and society. Thus, engaging in ethical intergroup leadership creates value for multiple stakeholder groups that expect business organizations and their leaders to: (a) care about the social issues that their group sees as ethical imperatives or protected/sacred values and (b) proactively shape public opinion and public policy to support the desired end states (Carroll 1979; Clarkson 1995). Thus, to the extent that customers, employees, local communities, society at large, and the media are concerned about mistreatment of racial, religious, and other minority groups in society, they will seek information about business leaders' and corporations' rhetoric and actions on issues related to stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, and other manifestations of intergroup conflict. Business leaders who demonstrate ethical intergroup leadership fulfill these expectations, thereby boosting perceptions of themselves and the organizations they lead as moral, just, and fair. Perceptions of business organizations and their leaders as moral, just, and fair, in turn, is likely to fuel support for CIR. Hence, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 5 Leader communications that demonstrate ethical intergroup leadership will increase support for CIR indirectly, by enhancing perceptions of business organizations and their leaders as moral, just, and fair.

Research Overview

As noted in the opening, our aim in this paper is two-fold: First, we seek to illuminate the factors that influence stakeholders' support for, or opposition to, CIR. Second, and related to the first pursuit, we explore the extent to which business leaders can influence stakeholders' support for CIR by demonstrating ethical intergroup leadership. As our introduction illustrates, the emerging phenomenon of CIR is situated at the intersection of multiple related phenomena. As shown in Fig. 1, these phenomena include: corporate social responsibility and corporate diplomacy, intergroup relations and intergroup leadership, ethical leadership and stakeholder value. Therefore, to address our first research question, we explore the extent to which attitudes pertaining to these diverse phenomena explain variance in stakeholders' support for, or opposition to, CIR (Study 1).

To address our second research question we use experimental designs (in Studies 2 and 3) to explore whether exposure to messages that demonstrate ethical intergroup leadership (in real-world tweets sent by CEOs of large, publicly-traded companies) has an indirect causal effect on support for CIR via perceptions of business organizations and

Fig. 1 Graphic representation of Corporate Intergroup Responsibility's nomological network

their leaders as moral, just, and fair. We focus on displays of ethical intergroup leadership by CEOs, rather than by leaders occupying other ranks in the organizational hierarchy, because CEOs are often firms' most visible and influential figures. CEOs like Jeff Bezos (Amazon), Elon Musk (Tesla, SpaceX), and Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook) have attained 'celebrity status', are featured regularly in the business and general media, and essentially function as the public faces of their respective firms. Research shows that, even prior to the information revolution and the emergence of social media, prominent CEOs shaped the reputation of their firms (i.e., in the early 1990s: Love et al. 2017). The influence of prominent CEOs on public opinion has arguably increased with the introduction of means that facilitate direct real-time communication with different stakeholders (e.g., via Twitter).

Importantly, across all three studies we focus on the general public as the relevant stakeholder group. Local communities and the general public are often acknowledged as stakeholders (Adams et al. 2011; Donaldson and Preston 1995; Freeman and Evan 1990). Importantly, because our empirical focus is on large, prominent, publicly-traded companies (e.g., Apple, Intel, Google, and Facebook), individual members of the community may also belong to other stakeholder groups, such as consumers or investors.

Study 1 employed a correlational design: We surveyed US citizens about their support for (or opposition to) CIR and related their attitudes to support for CSR, fair market ideology, social dominance orientation, symbolic racism, and moral foundations. Study 1 thus enabled us to test Hypotheses 1–3. Our experimental studies—Studies 2 and 3—systematically manipulated participants' exposure to CEOs'

displays of ethical intergroup leadership (our independent variable), assessed the perceived morality of corporations and their leaders (our mediator), and then measured participants' support for CIR (our dependent variable).

The two experimental studies used similar designs, procedures and measures. In each study, we recruited participants following a highly publicized event related to intergroup relations in the US: The White supremacy rally in Charlottesville in Study 2; and the federal government's announcement about the planned rescinding of DACA in Study 3. In each study, we randomly assigned participants to experimental conditions in which we systematically varied the information they received. In one of our experimental conditions participants reported their baseline support for CIR without receiving any stimulus. In a second condition we exposed participants to vivid images of prominent CEOs' actual tweets advocating intergroup tolerance following the afore-mentioned events (but no other information was provided). This condition thus exposed participants to a real-world display of ethical intergroup leadership by a prominent CEO (Study 2) or several CEOs (Study 3). In the remaining experimental conditions we added to these vivid images of CEOs' tweets information that had the potential to dampen individuals' support for CIR. We did this to explore the potential boundaries for the positive influence of ethical intergroup leadership on support for CIR. Specifically, we added to the images of CEOs' tweets either information about the underrepresentation of certain racial minority groups in the organization's workforce that could have raised doubts about the organization's commitment to CIR (Study 2) or a prompt that asked participants to consider the possibility that the manifestation of ethical intergroup leadership (i.e., CEOs' tweets) was in fact motivated by instrumental, strategic motives rather than by genuine concern for stakeholders' well-being (Study 3).

Taken together, these two experimental studies use ecologically-valid stimuli (real tweets) to study the effect of CEOs' displays of ethical intergroup leadership on individuals' support for CIR. These studies also assessed the psychological processes that we suggest underlie support for CIR—the perceived morality of corporations and their leaders, as well as the perceived morality of the economic system as a whole (i.e., fair market ideology).

Study 1

To test Hypotheses 1–3, we created in Study 1 a short and reliable measure of support for CIR, and explored its association with relevant economic, social, and moral worldviews. To test Hypothesis 1, we examined the correlation between support for CIR and consumers' support for CSR (Ramasamy et al. 2010): The extent to which consumers

prefer to buy products from socially responsible companies. To test Hypothesis 2, we examined the correlation between support for CIR and two constructs: Social dominance orientation, which measures individuals' preference for group-based hierarchy in society (e.g., Halali et al. 2018; Ho et al. 2015), and symbolic racism, which measures animosity and prejudice toward African-Americans (e.g., Henry and Sears 2002; Tarman and Sears 2005). To test Hypothesis 3, we examined the correlation between support for CIR and fair market ideology (Hafenbradl and Waeger 2017; Proudfoot and Kay 2014). Finally, to explore our idea that support for CIR is best explained through the simultaneous consideration of economic, social and moral beliefs, we assessed the afore-mentioned constructs as well as individuals' endorsements of different moral foundations (Graham et al. 2009, 2013) and employed them as simultaneous predictors of support for CIR.

Methods

Participants

We aimed to recruit 200 participants from a nation-wide participant pool maintained by a private West-Coast U.S. university and ended up with 200 complete and 4 incomplete responses from participants who received $4 for their time. We excluded 15 responses from non-U.S. citizens given our focus on U.S. race relations. Our final sample included 189 complete responses (gender: 59 male, 127 female, 3 other; age: $M = 32.6$, SD = 10.8; ethnicity: 118 White, 31 Asian, 22 Black, 13 Latino, 5 other).

Procedure

Participants completed a consent form and then responded to multiple measures as described below. All the responses used 7-point rating scales (ranging from 1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree) unless specified otherwise.

Measures

Support for CIR We assessed support for CIR with four items: "Private companies and organizations can promote effective solutions to the problem of intergroup relations in society today", "For-profit organizations can lead the way in improving relations between different groups in society today", "I support the use of market-base solutions to the problem of intergroup relations in the U.S.", and "The U.S. should create public–private partnerships to manage intergroup relations in society better". The order in which these four items were presented was randomized for each participant. This four-item scale showed high reliability (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.89$, $M = 4.78$, SD = 1.23).

Consumer Support for CSR We assessed consumer support for CSR with the five-item scale developed by Ramasamy et al. (2010). Example items include: "I would pay more to buy products from a socially responsible company" and "I consider the ethical reputation of businesses when I shop" (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.73$; $M = 5.12$, SD = 1.17).

Fair Market Ideology We assessed participants' ideological tendency to view the economic system as a whole as fair, just, and moral with three items from the scale developed by Jost et al. (2003): "The free market system is a fair system"; "The free market system is an efficient system"; and "Profitable businesses tend to be more morally responsible than unprofitable businesses" (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.88$, $M = 3.92$, SD = 1.19).

Social Dominance Orientation We assessed social dominance orientation with the SDO-7 scale (Ho et al. 2015), which uses eight items that show either support or opposition to group-based hierarchy vs. equality. Example items include: "No one group should dominate in society" and "We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups". Responses to egalitarian items were reverse-coded such that higher values on the SDO index capture stronger support for group-based hierarchy in society (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.84$; $M = 2.82$, SD = 1.11).

Symbolic Racism

We assessed symbolic racism with the 8-item scale developed by Henry and Sears (2002). Example items include: "Over the past few years, blacks have gotten more economically than they deserve" and "Irish, Italian, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same." Responses to items indicating lower levels of symbolic racism were reverse-coded such that higher values on the index capture stronger symbolic racism (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.90$, $M = 3.02$, SD = 1.28).

Moral Foundations

Researchers have established five kinds of intuitive considerations that guide moral judgments, known as moral foundations (Graham et al. 2009). The five moral foundations include Harm/Care, Fairness/Reciprocity, In-group/Loyalty, Authority/Respect, and Purity/Sanctity. Consistent with our focus here on intergroup phenomena, we posit that intuitions that belong to the In-group/Loyalty moral foundation should be most strongly related to support for CIR; however, for completeness we assessed all five moral foundations, with the 30-item scale (six items per foundation) developed by Graham and his colleagues (http://www.moralfoundations.org/questionnaires). The prompt that

preceded all items read: "When you decide whether something is right or wrong, to what extent are the following considerations relevant to your thinking?". Example items include: "Whether or not someone suffered emotionally" (Harm/Care); "Whether or not some people were treated differently than others" (Fairness/Reciprocity); "Whether or not someone's action showed love for his or her country" (In-group/Loyalty); "Whether or not someone showed a lack of respect for authority" (Authority/Respect); and "Whether or not someone violated standards of purity and decency" (Purity/Sanctity). Table 1 reports the Cronbach α coefficients, means, and standard deviations for all five moral foundations.[1, 2]

Results and Discussion

The pattern of correlations depicted in Table 1 lends support to our hypotheses. Consistent with Hypothesis 1, support for CIR correlated positively with consumer support for CSR ($r = 0.18$, $p < 0.05$). Consistent with Hypothesis 2, support for CIR correlated negatively with both social dominance orientation ($r = -0.22$, $p < 0.01$) and symbolic racism ($r = -0.16$, $p < 0.05$). Consistent with Hypothesis 3, support for CIR correlated positively with fair market ideology ($r = 0.19$, $p < 0.05$).

Table 2 reports the results of four regression analyses that used different ideological beliefs (economic, social, and moral) to predict support for CIR. Model 1 shows that support for CSR ($\beta = 0.23$, $p < 0.01$) and fair market ideology ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$) explain unique variance in support for CIR above and beyond each other. Model 4 shows that using economic, social, and moral beliefs together helps explain a larger proportion of the variance in support for CIR than using each type of beliefs separately (i.e., as in Models 1–3). Specifically, Model 4 shows that, when entering all of our predictor variables simultaneously, fair market ideology ($\beta = 0.25$, $p < 0.01$) and the In-group/Loyalty moral foundation ($\beta = 0.23$, $p < 0.05$) positively predict support for CIR, whereas symbolic racism negatively predicts support for CIR ($\beta = -0.30$, $p < 0.01$). Together, our predictor variables explain over 20% of the variance in support for CIR. It is notable that, although all five moral foundations correlate positively with support for CIR in Table 1, only the

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[1] Two of the thirty items, one belonging to the Authority/Respect foundation and one belonging to the Purity/Sanctity foundation, lowered the reliability of their respective indexes, and were therefore omitted when calculating the relevant indexes.

[2] We also included in Study 1, for exploratory purposes, items pertaining into inclusion of others in the circle of moral regard (Graham et al. 2017; Reed and Aquino 2003), political orientation (liberalism/conservatism), income, and other demographic characteristics.

Table 1 Means, standard deviations, reliabilities and simple correlations among the research variables (Study 1)

	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Support of CIR	4.78 (1.23)	α=0.89									
2. Support of CSR	5.12 (1.17)	0.18*	α=0.73								
3. Fair market ideology	3.92 (1.19)	0.19*	−0.21**	α=0.88							
4. Social dominance	2.82 (1.11)	−0.22**	−0.37***	0.40***	α=0.84						
5. Symbolic racism	3.02 (1.28)	−0.16*	−0.22**	0.51***	0.63***	α=0.90					
6. MF: Harm/Care	5.07 (0.88)	0.28***	0.50***	−0.14†	−0.52***	−0.27***	α=0.76				
7. MF: Fairness/Reciprocity	5.12 (0.81)	0.25***	0.47***	−0.10**	−0.48***	−0.29***	0.72***	α=0.75			
8. MF: In-group/Loyalty	3.54 (0.95)	0.25**	−0.06	0.55***	0.33***	0.47***	0.05	0.05	α=0.69		
9. MF: Respect/authority	4.01 (0.98)	0.18*	−0.07	0.53***	0.35***	0.50***	0.09	0.15*	0.67***	α=0.72	
10. MF: Sanctity/purity	3.85 (1.21)	0.22**	−0.03	0.46***	0.23**	0.40***	0.19*	0.11	0.57***	0.70***	α=0.82

*$p < 0.05$

**$p < 0.01$

***$p < 0.001$

†$p < 0.10$

Table 2 Standardized coefficients from hierarchical regression analyses predicting support for CIR (Study 1)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
1. Support of corporate social responsibility	0.23**			0.09
2. Fair market ideology	0.24**			0.25**
3. Social dominance orientation		−0.20*		−0.18†
4. Symbolic racism		−0.03		−0.30**
5. Moral foundation: Harm/Care			0.16	0.07
6. Moral foundation: Fairness/Reciprocity			0.13	−0.01
7. Moral foundation: In-group/Loyalty			0.23*	0.23*
8. Moral foundation: Respect/authority			−0.09	0.02
9. Moral foundation: Sanctity/purity			0.11	0.12
F value	8.69***	4.77*	6.06***	6.68***
Adjusted R^2	0.076	0.039	0.119	0.214

*$p < 0.05$

**$p < 0.01$

***$p < 0.001$

† $p < 0.10$

In-group/Loyalty moral foundation predicts support for CIR in Models 3 and 4.

As a whole, these findings lend support to our conceptualization of support for CIR as a construct that exists at the intersection of economic, social (intergroup), and moral worldviews, yet is conceptually distinct and empirically distinguishable from related constructs (such as consumer support for CSR). These findings lay the foundation for our experimental investigations (Studies 2 and 3), in which we explore the causal path from displays of ethical intergroup leadership, via perceptions of business organizations and their leaders as moral, to enhanced support for CIR (Hypotheses 4, 5).

Study 2

Study 2 examined the extent to which exposing participants to a message that demonstrates ethical intergroup leadership can boost support for CIR by increasing perceptions that business leaders and organizations are moral, just, and fair. We conducted Study 2 on August 21, 2017, 9 days after the violent clashes during a White supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, during which a protester drove a car into the crowd, killing one person and injuring 19 others.

Method

Participants

Based on suggestions by Gervais, Jewell, Najle, and Ng (2015), we aimed to recruit 100 participants per experimental condition in Study 2. Our experimental design used a 2 (ethical intergroup leadership information: presented vs. not
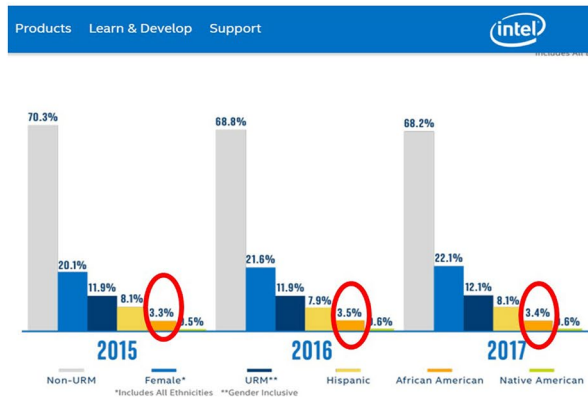
presented) × 2 (workforce diversity information: presented vs. not presented) + 1 (reversed order of the two kinds of presented information), between-subject design. Hence, for our 5-condition experiment we aimed to recruit 500 participants from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). MTurk is a commonly used platform for recruiting research participants (e.g., Chou et al. 2017; Jun et al. 2017) that has been shown to produce samples that are more socio-economically and ethnically diverse than samples recruited through other means, and to produce comparable (i.e., equally reliable and valid) findings that are indistinguishable from those obtained with samples from other sources (e.g., Buhrmester et al. 2011; Casler et al. 2013).

We collected 555 responses, of which 505 were complete. We excluded 50 responses from analyses due to duplicate MTurk IDs, and another five responses from participants who indicated that they were not U.S. citizens. Our final sample consisted of 500 responses, of which 477 were complete (gender: 245 men, 230 women, 2 other; age: $M = 36.3$, $SD = 11.6$; ethnicity: 360 White, 40 Asian, 40 Black, 26 Latino, 11 other) and 23 were incomplete. Each participant was paid $0.75 for their time.

Procedure and Experimental Manipulations

The survey software randomly assigned participants to one of the five afore-mentioned experimental conditions. We manipulated the availability of different kinds of information using images and verbal information retrieved from corporate and news websites, as shown in Fig. 2. We manipulated the availability of information about CEOs' ethical intergroup leadership by providing (vs. not providing) information about Intel's CEO intergroup tolerance advocacy. Specifically, we showed participants images of a Fortune.

Workforce Diversity Information Only

Tolerance Advocacy Information Only

Workforce Diversity & Tolerance Advocacy Information

Fig. 2 Stimuli employed in Study 2 by condition. Top panel: Workforce diversity information only. Middle panel: Ethical intergroup leadership information only. Bottom panel: Both kinds of information presented side by side

com news article reporting Intel CEO's resignation from US President Trump's Manufacturing Council as well as his Tweet from the same day (August 14, 2017) in which he condemned hate speech and white supremacy. These images were preceded by the following text: "As the images below show, following the events in Charlottesville, Virginia last week, the CEO of Intel, the technology company, resigned from President Trump's manufacturing council and strongly condemned hate speech and white supremacy."

To explore a potential boundary condition for the effect of displays of ethical intergroup leadership on support for CIR, we manipulated the availability of information that could challenge the company's level of commitment to racial minorities. We did so by providing (vs. not providing) information about the gap between African-American citizens' proportion in the population (based on current U.S. census data) and their representation in Intel's workforce (based on actual diversity information available from Intel's website). The image shown in Fig. 2 was preceded by the following text: "Although Blacks/African-Americans account for 13.3% of the U.S. population, as the images below show, the workforce of Intel, the technology company, consisted of 3.5% or fewer Blacks/African-Americans in the last 3 years."

Our experimental design was such that participants were presented with information illustrating Intel's CEO ethical intergroup leadership only; low workforce diversity information only; neither or both kinds of information. Participants in the fifth condition also received both kinds of information, but we reversed the order in which the ethical intergroup leadership vs. the workforce diversity information was described. In all five conditions, the presentation of information was followed by three items that assessed participants' desire to engage with Intel (as future investors, customers, or employees). These items served to reinforce participants' sense that they were stakeholders of the company. After being exposed to the experimental stimuli, participants completed our dependent measures, responded to an attention check question, a measure of fair market ideology, a short demographics questionnaire, and exited the study.

Measures

Participants used a 7-point rating scale (anchored at 1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree) to answer the questions described below unless specified otherwise.

Support for CIR Participants responded to four items that assessed support for CIR. The items were almost identical to those employed in Study 1; given the particular context of Study 2, the items focused on racial conflict rather than intergroup conflict more broadly (e.g., "For-profit organizations can lead the way in improving relations between racial groups in the U.S."; Cronbach $\alpha = 0.87$, $M = 3.68$, SD = 1.41).[3]

Morality Judgments Study 2 used validated measures of moral character to demonstrate that perceptions of morality mediate the effect of ethical intergroup leadership on support for CIR. Participants responded to twelve items that assessed the perceived moral character of U.S. companies and their leaders. Six of the items began with the stem: "U.S. companies are…" and six began with the stem "U.S. business leaders are…". For each target (companies, leaders), we used six adjectives derived from recent research on perceptions of moral character (Goodwin et al. 2014): Empathetic, helpful, kind, fair, principled, and responsible. The first three adjectives capture high-morality/high-warmth characteristics whereas the last three adjectives capture high-morality/low-warmth characteristics. A principal component analysis with a promax rotation showed that all twelve items loaded on a single factor that explained 73.69% of the variance in responses (eigenvalue = 8.84); we therefore averaged these twelve items to create a single index of perceived moral character of U.S. business and their leaders for each participant (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.97$, $M = 3.92$, SD = 1.29).

Fair Market Ideology Participants subsequently responded to the same three-item measure of fair market ideology employed in Study 1 (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.82$, $M = 4.08$, SD = 1.40). We included in Study 2 a measure of fair market ideology for three complementary reasons. First, we sought to replicate Study 1's positive association between fair market ideology and support for CIR using a different and larger sample, which would lend further support to Hypothesis 3. Second, we sought to provide a conservative test of Hypothesis 4 by showing that the perceived morality of business organizations and their leaders predicts support for CIR even when controlling for beliefs about the morality of the economic system as a whole. Finally, we reasoned that demonstrating positive relationships between perceptions of morality of different targets (business organizations, their leaders, and the economic system as a whole) and support of CIR would reinforce the moral meaning of CIR.

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[3] This four-item scale measured general support for CIR, which is also the level at which we conceptualize and measure this construct in Studies 1 and 3. We also included in Study 2 context-specific items that were relevant to the public discourse around the white supremacy rally in Charlottesville (e.g., "The U.S. should contract private organizations to monitor and manage crowd behavior in public events related to racial conflict"). Because our interest in this paper is in the construct of CIR more broadly, we focus on generalized (i.e., cross-situational) support for CIR.

Table 3 Standardized coefficients from a hierarchical multiple regression analysis predicting support for CIR (Study 2)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Exposure to CEO's ethical intergroup leadership	0.20***		0.20***	0.13*	0.12*
Exposure to information about limited workforce diversity		0.02	−0.01	0.001	−0.01
Interaction of information types			−0.02	−0.02	−0.01
Perceived morality of business organizations and their leaders				0.40***	0.24***
Fair market ideology					0.26***
Adjusted R^2	0.04	−0.003	0.03	0.18	0.22
F value of R^2-change			7.09***	64.54***	16.07***
F value	14.07**	0.09	4.76**	20.35***	21.35***

Ethical intergroup leadership information: $-1 =$ not shown, $1 =$ shown; workforce diversity information: $-1 =$ not shown, $1 =$ shown

*$p < 0.05$

**$p < 0.01$

***$p < 0.001$

Attention Check

Attention Check In line with research showing the value of instructional manipulation checks (e.g., Oppenheimer et al. 2009), we included an attention check item that asked participants to recall specific information mentioned in the survey instructions. We excluded from analyses participants who failed to respond correctly to this forced-choice attention check item ($n = 130$, 26.97%), as well as participants who haven't completed the attention check ($n = 18$). The attention check failure rate in Study 2 is comparable to the rates reported under similar conditions in past research (i.e., for unsupervised participants with limited motivation: Goodman et al. 2013; Oppenheimer et al. 2009; Paolacci et al. 2010). Notably, although it is difficult to draw conclusions about participants who failed the attention check, the results remain the same with and without these exclusions.

Results and Discussion

Table 3 presents the results of five regression analyses that used each of our experimental manipulations, their interaction, our hypothesized mediator variable (perceived morality of corporations and their leaders), and fair market ideology, to predict support for CIR.

As Model 1 in Table 3 shows, the experimental manipulation of making information about a CEO's ethical intergroup leadership available had a significant positive effect on participants' support for CIR ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < 0.001$). Neither the effect of information regarding limited workforce diversity nor the interaction of the two information types were significant (Models 2 and 3). Adding in Model 4 our hypothesized mediating variable——perceived morality of corporations and their leaders ($\beta = 0.40$, $p < 0.001$)——increased the explained variance significantly and substantially (by 15%), and reduced the magnitude of the effect of information about ethical intergroup leadership. Finally, Model 5 in Table 3 shows that, information about a display of ethical intergroup leadership by Intel's CEO, the perceived morality of corporations and their leaders, and fair market ideology all remain significant predictors when used together to explain variance in stakeholders' support for CIR. These findings lend support to Hypothesis 4.

To formally test our mediation hypothesis—Hypothesis 5—we conducted a bias-corrected bootstrap mediation analysis with 10,000 resamples (Hayes 2012).[4] This analysis provided evidence for a significant indirect effect whereby exposing participants to information about a CEO's display of ethical intergroup leadership increased the perceived morality of business organizations and their leaders ($B = 0.48$, SE $= 0.14$, $p < 0.001$), which in turn, enhanced participants' support for CIR [$B = 0.45$, SE $= 0.06$, $p < 0.001$; indirect effect: $B = 0.21$, SE $= 0.07$; 95% CI (0.10, 0.36); Fig. 3].

The main takeaway from Study 2's findings is that, although there are ideological grounds on which stakeholders may oppose CIR (e.g., individuals high on social dominance orientation and symbolic racism supported CIR less in Study 1), exposing stakeholders to ethical intergroup leadership by a large corporation's CEO can fuel support for CIR. The psychological process that mediates this effect is that exposure to displays of ethical intergroup leadership increases the perceived morality of corporations and their leaders. Study 3 was designed to replicate and extend the causal effects observed in Study 2 to another context.

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[4] This analysis used resampling with replacement was robust to the number of resamples, and yielded the same results with 1,000, 5,000, and 10,000 iterations.

Fig. 3 Indirect effect of information about Intel CEO's ethical intergroup leadership on support for CIR via perceived morality of corporations and their leaders (Study 2). Availability of information about ethical intergroup leadership was coded as 1 if it was shown, and 0 if it was not shown. *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$

Indirect effect: B=.21 (SE=.07)
95% CI: [.10, .36]
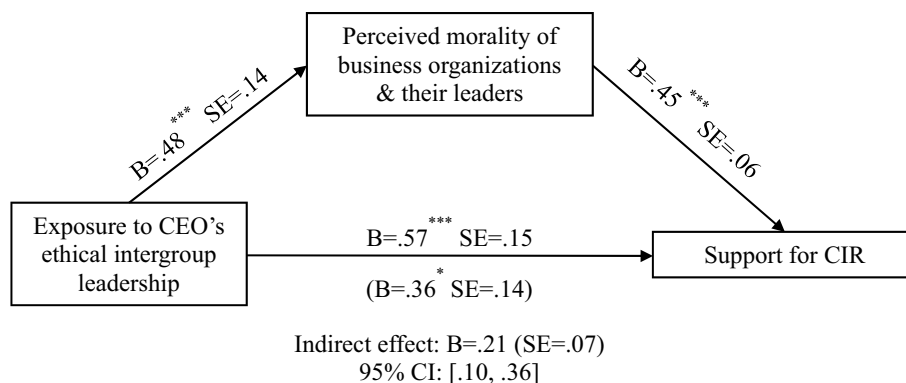
Study 3

Study 3 was designed to replicate and extend Study 2's findings in several ways. First, we conducted Study 3 in a somewhat different context, i.e., following a different highly publicized event that had implications for intergroup relations in the US. Second, Study 3 used information about multiple business leaders' ethical intergroup leadership rather than just a single leader's. Third, we examined whether individuals support CIR less when prompted to consider the possibility that business leaders' ethical intergroup leadership is motivated by strategic, instrumental considerations rather than by genuine concern for stakeholders.

We conducted Study 3 in the context of the federal government's announcement that it intends to suspend the Deferred Action of Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. The DACA program is a policy that allows many thousands of young people who were brought to the US illegally as children to remain in the country, live and work legally in the US. Study 3 was conducted on September 5 2017, the day US President Donald Trump issued a statement announcing the planned suspension of the DACA program. This political issue remained highly controversial, and played a role in the federal government's shutdown during January 2018.

Method

Participants

We employed a between-subject design with three conditions: Participants were randomly assigned to receive no information, to receive information about business leaders' ethical intergroup leadership, or to receive information about business leaders' ethical intergroup leadership as well as a prompt that raised the possibility that leaders' ethical intergroup leadership may be motivated, at least in part, by instrumental considerations. Given the need to exclude participants in Study 2 based on attention check failures and duplicate MTurk IDs, we aimed to recruit more than 100 participants per condition in Study 3. We recruited

participants via MTurk, as in Study 2, and paid each participant $0.75 for their participation.

Data were collected for 403 complete responses and 40 incomplete responses. We excluded 45 responses based on duplicate MTurk IDs, and another six responses from non-U.S. citizens. Additionally, we excluded responses from 42 participants who took part in Study 2 (though the results are the same without their exclusion). Our final sample included 350 usable responses, 335 complete (gender: 175 men, 156 women, 4 other; age: $M = 37.29$, SD = 12.02; ethnicity: 265 White 20 Asian, 26 Black, 21 Latino, 3 other race/ethnicity) and 15 incomplete responses.

Procedure and Experimental Manipulations

Upon consenting to take part in the study, participants were first asked three filler questions about how familiar they were with Google, Apple, and Facebook. As in Study 2, these questions were aimed to increase participants' sense that they are stakeholders of these publicly-traded corporations. Next, participants were randomly assigned to one of the three conditions described above. Participants assigned to be exposed only to information about ethical intergroup leadership read the following:

> President Trump has decided to end the DACA policy (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals). This immigration policy protects the "Dreamers" - young undocumented immigrants who entered the US as minors - from deportation, and makes them eligible to work in the US. As the images below show, the CEOs of multiple technology companies, including Facebook, Google, and Apple, have publicly condemned President Trump's decision to end DACA, and declared that they stand with the "Dreamers".

Participants in this condition viewed screen images of the actual tweets of Facebook's, Apple's, and Google's CEOs from the same day, in which they defended the DACA program (Fig. 4).

Fig. 4 Images of tweets demonstrating CEOs' ethical intergroup leadership shown as stimuli in Study 3

Participants assigned to consider the possibility that CEOs' displays of ethical intergroup leadership was motivated by strategic, instrumental goals read the same information and viewed the same images presented in the ethical intergroup leadership only condition, but were additionally asked a question about the possibility that business leaders may advocate for these causes for financial motives. Specifically, they read, "Some believe that business leaders and companies only intervene in social problems when it serves their financial interests. According to this view, business leaders and companies do not seek to do good; rather they intend to do well for themselves.", and were asked three related filler questions. We were not interested in participants' views on this assertion; rather, we used this question to explore the potential effect of doubts about the motives underlying CEOs' ethical intergroup leadership. Finally, participants assigned to the baseline, control condition were not exposed either to the displays of CEOs' ethical intergroup leadership or to the ulterior motives induction.

As in Study 2, participants then reported their perceptions of the moral character of US businesses and their leaders, their support for CIR, and their fair market ideology. Finally, similar to Study 2, participants answered an attention check question, reported their political attitudes and demographics, and exited the survey website. All measures used 7-point Likert scales (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree) unless specified otherwise.

Measures

Support for CIR Participants completed the same 4-item measure employed in Study 2 (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.91$, $M = 4.03$, $SD = 1.50$).

Morality Judgments Participants completed the same 12-item measure of perceived morality of business organizations and their leaders employed in Study 2 (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.97$, $M = 4.17$, $SD = 1.27$).

Fair Market Ideology Participants subsequently responded to the same three-item measure of Fair Market Ideology employed in Studies 1 and 2 (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.80$, $M = 4.23$, $SD = 1.32$).

Attention Check We included the same attention check question from Study 2, and excluded from analyses participants who failed to respond correctly ($n = 88$, 26.04%) as well as participants who did not complete the attention check ($n = 12$). The results remain unchanged without these exclusions.

Results and Discussion

Table 4 presents the results of hierarchical regression analyses that used our experimental manipulations, our mediator

Table 4 Standardized coefficients from a hierarchical multiple regression analyses predicting support for CIR (Study 3)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Contrasts between experimental conditions			
Ethical intergroup leadership versus control	0.13	−0.11	−0.12
Control versus ulterior motives induction	0.12	−0.01	−0.06
Ethical intergroup leadership vs. Ulterior Motives Induction	−0.01	0.11	0.07
Perceived morality of business organizations and their leaders		0.52***	0.25***
Fair market ideology			0.52***
Adjusted R^2	−0.004	0.25	0.45
F value of R^2-change		85.96***	89.12***
F value	0.45	29.05***	51.87***

*$p < 0.05$

**$p < 0.01$

***$p < 0.001$

Fig. 5 Indirect effect of information about CEOs' ethical intergroup leadership on support for CIR via perceived morality of corporations and their leaders (Study 3). Exposure to CEOs' ethical intergroup leadership was coded as 1 for the ethical leadership information only condition and 0 for the control condition. *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$

Indirect effect: B=.38 (SE=.15)
95% CI: [.12, .71]
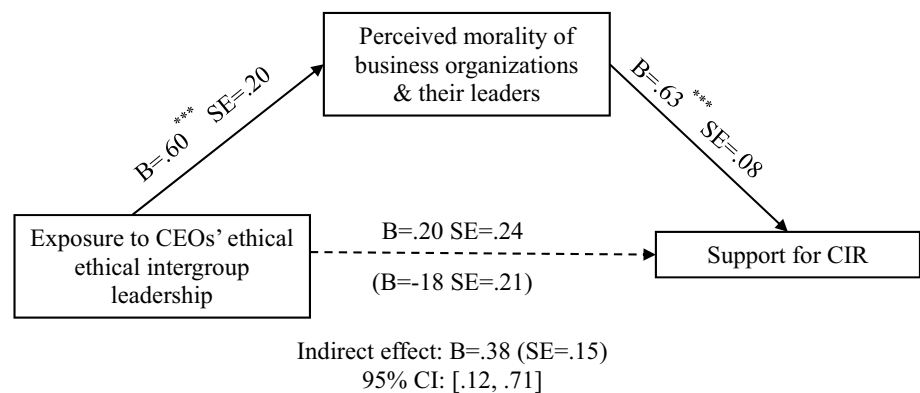
variable—the perceived morality of corporations and their leaders—and fair market ideology, to predict support for CIR.

Table 4 shows that there was no direct effect of information about CEOs' ethical intergroup leadership on participants' support for CIR. However, lending support to Hypotheses 4 and 5, and replicating Study 2's findings, a bias-corrected bootstrap mediation analysis with 10,000 resamples (Hayes 2012) (see footnote 4) that compared the control (i.e., baseline) condition with the exposure to ethical intergroup leadership condition showed a significant indirect effect of the ethical intergroup leadership information, via the perceived morality of corporations and their leaders, on support for CIR (Fig. 5). Thus, exposing participants to information about CEOs' ethical intergroup leadership increased the perceived morality of business organizations and their leaders ($B = 0.60$, $SE = 0.20$, $p < 0.01$), which in turn, enhanced participants' support for CIR [$B = 0.63$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < 0.001$; indirect effect: $B = 0.38$, $SE = 0.15$; 95% CI (0.12, 0.71)].

Although it is theoretically plausible that suspecting the motives of business organizations and their leaders could dampen the positive (indirect) effect of information about

CEOs' ethical intergroup leadership on support for CIR, the analyses reported in Table 4 show that considering this ulterior motive did not diminish participants' support for CIR in Study 3. Participants' level of support for CIR in this condition was comparable to the levels reported by participants in the other two conditions.[5] Thus, similar to Study 2, where information about limited workforce diversity did not dampen support for CIR following exposure to a CEO's ethical intergroup leadership, here too, information that could in principle cast doubt on the sincerity of the display of ethical intergroup leadership did not undermine support for CIR. Finally, Study 3 provided additional support to Hypothesis 3, by documenting a positive association between fair market

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[5] To examine whether there was an indirect effect of the ulterior motives induction on support for CIR, we conducted two additional bias-corrected bootstrap mediation analyses with 5,000 resamples. The mediation analysis comparing the ulterior motives induction condition to the control condition, as well as the mediation analysis comparing the ulterior motive induction condition to the ethical intergroup leadership condition, did not find support for a significant indirect effect (via dampening perceptions of the morality of corporations and their leaders).

ideology and support for CIR, replicating Studies 1 and 2. Notably, as Table 4 shows, our predictors jointly accounted for 45% of the variance in support for CIR.

General Discussion

Theoretically integrating the literatures on intergroup conflict, corporate social responsibility, ethical leadership, and the primacy of morality in social perception, the current research introduced the constructs of ethical intergroup leadership and CIR to capture emerging phenomena at the interface of business and society. We theorized, and empirically demonstrated, that public opinion about CIR critically depends on the extent to which individuals perceive business organizations, their leaders, and the economic system as a whole to be moral, just, and fair. We have shown further that exposing individuals to information about CEOs' ethical intergroup leadership—across two real-world contexts—can fuel support for CIR indirectly, by supporting the perceived morality of business organizations and their leaders. Although Study 1 showed that there are ideological and attitudinal grounds on which individuals oppose CIR—such as social dominance orientation and symbolic racism—Studies 2 and 3 showed that exposure to ethical intergroup leadership by prominent CEOs can boost support for CIR.

Theoretical Implications

The current research makes three theoretical contributions. First and foremost, the current research integrated multiple lines of research from management (e.g., on CSR), social psychology (on intergroup conflict, person perception), and political psychology (on ideological worldviews), to introduce the constructs of CIR and ethical intergroup leadership. The fact that concepts derived from distinct literatures, such as symbolic racism and fair market ideology, explain unique variance in support for CIR above and beyond each other underscores the importance of interdisciplinary thinking in explaining emerging phenomena at the intersection of business and society. We hope that the new constructs of CIR and ethical intergroup leadership, and the particular ways in which we operationalized them in the current research, will spur and enable future research on these emerging phenomena.

Second, our theory and findings reinforce the linkage between the 'moral person' and 'moral manager' pillars of ethical leadership (Trevino et al. 2000). CEOs' verbal displays of ethical intergroup leadership fit the element of "communicating about ethics and values" within the 'moral manager' pillar of ethical leadership. Stakeholders' perceptions of business leaders' moral character fits the traits element in the 'moral person' pillar of ethical leadership. Our findings demonstrate the link between managerial behaviors that demonstrate morality, inferences of moral character, and their downstream consequences. Future research may capitalize on these findings by exploring other concrete behaviors of business leaders that similarly contribute to inferences of moral character.

Third, the current research responds to the call to study how business organizations drive positive social change in society (Stephan et al. 2016). Specifically, we have identified CEOs' use of social media to articulate their values and ethical standards as a means of shaping public opinion. Research on public opinion and policy change suggests that prominent figures in society can act as policy entrepreneurs by advocating for social change (Mintrom and Vergari 1996). The emerging phenomenon of ethical intergroup leadership by business leaders fits the definition of an advocacy coalition proposed by Sabatier (1988, p. 139), as it encompasses "people from a variety of positions…who share a particular belief system—for example, a set of basic values, causal assumptions, and problem perceptions—and who show a nontrivial degree of coordinated activity over time" (Weible et al. 2011). The CEOs whose tweets we employed as stimuli in the current research presumably subscribe to a shared definition of the problem (i.e., intergroup conflict); seek to promote universalism values (which capture "understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the well-being of all people…": Sagiv and Schwartz 1995, p. 438) as a possible solution to the problem; and show coordinated behavior by using social media to respond quickly and unequivocally to contentious, public events related to intergroup conflict. Future research may explore additional positive effects of ethical intergroup leadership, beyond support for CIR, and the extent to which such advocacy coalitions are effective in facilitating positive social change.

Practical Implications

In a 2018 commercial for SAP, movie star Clive Owen is shown saying (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GIqdK GJ6V2I): "We have got a problem. A few problems actually. We're over-producing, over-crowding, and over-heating. We've got aging roadways, aging power grids, aging everything…wait, it gets worse. We also have the age-old problem of bias in the workplace…The question is: Who is going to fix all of this? An actor? Probably not. But you know who can solve it? Business. That's right. The best-run businesses can make the world run better. Because solving big problems is what business does best. And doing good is just good business. So let's grow more food with less water. And make healthcare more healthy… Let's take on the wage gap, the opportunity gap, the achievement gap, together we can tackle every elephant in the room, and save the rhino

while we're at it. Because whatever the problem, business can help…".

This ad touches on a host of societal problems that large businesses can potentially tackle. Many of the world's largest economies are not nation states, but rather multinational corporations (Melloan 2004). Consequently, leaders of large multinational corporations have considerable economic and social power, which they can use to influence intergroup relations in society. Previous research has emphasized the critical role that explicit communication of ethical standards play in ethical leadership (e.g., Brown et al. 2005; Trevino et al. 2000). Building on the idea that a leader's communication constitutes an important aspect of ethical leadership, the studies reported in this paper have demonstrated that business leaders' (and in particular, prominent CEOs') displays of ethical intergroup leadership increases stakeholders' support for large corporations tackling the problem of intergroup conflict by engaging in CIR activities. Demonstrating a causal path from exposure of stakeholders to CEOs' ethical intergroup leadership, via perceptions of corporations and their leaders as moral, to greater support for CIR, should motivate business leaders to further engage in ethical intergroup leadership.

Strengths, Weaknesses, and Future Directions

The current research found robust support for the role of perceived morality in shaping support for CIR. This effect emerged consistently across different targets (i.e., morality of business organizations, their leaders, and the economy as a whole), using both correlational and experimental designs, and utilizing real-world events and actual leader communications (i.e., CEOs' tweets). However, like all research, our studies have certain limitations, which point to promising directions for future research on ethical intergroup leadership and CIR.

First, we sought to explore in our experimental studies potential boundary conditions for the positive effect of exposure to ethical intergroup leadership on support for CIR. We did so by providing information that could have led participants to infer that business leaders' displays of ethical intergroup leadership potentially reflect disingenuous posturing. Specifically, we showed participants information about limited workforce diversity (Study 2) or raised the possibility that instrumental rather than value-based motives underlie the display of ethical intergroup leadership (Study 3). We reasoned that, to the extent that participants view leaders' communications as insincere "cheap talk" motivated by external pressures and profit-seeking motives, rather than by deep commitment to universalism values, exposure to leaders' communications would not increase support for CIR. The positive effect of exposure to CEOs' ethical intergroup leadership was not moderated by these experimental interventions. Thus, one

fruitful direction for future research is to explore further the psychological processes that either strengthen or weaken the positive effects of exposure to ethical intergroup leadership.

Second, consistent with research that identified communities and the general public as stakeholders (Adams et al. 2011; Donaldson and Preston 1995; Freeman and Evan 1990) our research focused on support for CIR among these constituencies. Notably, because all the CEOs whose communications we used in the current research lead large, publicly-traded companies, participants may also relate to these corporations as consumers or investors. Future research may extend the current findings by exploring the extent to which CEOs' displays of ethical intergroup leadership influence the attitudes of other stakeholder groups, such as employees and shareholders. In addition to using a particular stakeholder group as the constituency or audience for the leader's communication, we also chose the highest ranking officer of these organizations, and focused on highly prominent CEOs of well-recognized companies. For instance, according to their twitter account pages (retrieved on June 18 2018), Tim Cook of Apple had 11 million followers (https://twitter.com/tim_cook?lang=en), and Sundar Pichai of Google had 1.89 million followers (https://twitter.com/sundarpichai). Future research may explore the extents to which leaders' characteristics, such as their organizational rank (e.g., mid-level managers vs. C-suite managers), their 'celebrity status', or their reputation (e.g., as philanthropists) moderate the effects of displays of ethical intergroup leadership.

Finally, future research may explore the extent to which leaders' displays of moral character that are unrelated to intergroup conflict fuel support for CIR. The consistent positive association between fair market ideology and support for CIR, as well as the mediating role of perceptions of business organizations and their leaders as moral, just, and fair, suggest that displays of ethical leadership may have similar positive effects on support for CIR. Future research may systematically examine how incidental (context-unrelated) vs. integral (context-related) ethical leadership behavior, as well as incidental vs. integral unethical leadership behavior, shape stakeholders' support for CIR and other kinds of CSR activities. Given that stakeholders may be exposed to many different pieces of information about business leaders' ethical and unethical behavior over time, an important challenge for future research on this topic is to assess the accumulated impact of this information on stakeholders' judgments and decisions in naturalistic settings.

Conclusion

The context of business is "moral in nature" (Freeman 1994, p. 412), as is the context of intergroup conflict (Halevy et al. 2008, 2015). Prominent business leaders increasingly bridge

these domains. The current research illuminates the factors that shape support for CIR and the impact of displays of ethical intergroup leadership by CEOs on support for CIR. Previous research at the intersection of business and society has shown that CSR activities have two primary functions—supporting the public, and gaining public support (Kreps and Monin 2011). The current research suggests that business leaders can achieve both of these functions by engaging in ethical intergroup leadership.

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