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Sunar, Diane; Cesur, Sevim; Piyale, Zeynep Ecem; Tepe, Beyza; Biten, Ali Furkan; Hill, Charles T.; Koç, Yasin
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People Respond With Different Moral Emotions to Violations in Different Relational Models: A Cross-Cultural Comparison

Diane Sunar
Istanbul Bilgi University

Sevim Cesur
Istanbul University

Zeynep Ecem Piyale
İsk University

Beyza Tepe
Bahçeşehir University

Ali Furkan Biten
Autonomous University of Barcelona

Charles T. Hill
Whittier College

Yasin Koç
University of Groningen

Consonant with a functional view of moral emotions, we argue that morality is best analyzed within relationships rather than in individuals, and use Fiske’s (1992) theory of relational models (RMs: communal sharing [CS], authority ranking [AR], equality matching [EM], and market pricing [MP]) to predict that violations in different RMs will arouse different intensities of other-blaming emotions (anger, contempt and disgust) in both observers and victims, together with different intensities of self-blaming emotions (shame and guilt) in perpetrators, and to predict that these patterns of emotion will show similarity across both individuals and cultures. Three studies, using vignettes portraying moral violations in all RMs in different experimental designs, supported these expectations, while also producing some unexpected results. The intensity of shame and guilt varied markedly across RMs, but with little difference between the two emotions. The intensity of all 3 other-blaming emotions also varied across RMs. Anger was the most intense emotional response to violation in all RMs, whereas disgust and contempt were stronger in CS than in other RMs. Disgust and shame were linked more strongly in CS than in other RMs, and anger and guilt were more strongly linked than other emotion pairs in EM. Moral emotions in RMs involving hierarchy (AR and MP) differed widely depending on the perpetrator’s dominant or subordinate status. Both Turkish (TR) and English-speaking (EN) samples showed similar patterns of all moral emotions across RMs. Understanding the functions of moral emotions in relationships using relational models can help to clarify multiple aspects of moral psychology.

Keywords: culture and morality, moral emotions, moral judgment, relational models, social hierarchy

Supplemental materials: http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/emo0000736.supp

Although virtually everyone seems to agree that morality is intrinsically social, considerably fewer than half of empirical stud-
Dearing, 2002; Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007). However, with the advent of Shweder’s model of the big three moral ethics (community, autonomy, and divinity; Shweder, Much, Mahapatra, & Park, 1997) and the suggestion that other-blaming emotions (contempt, anger, and disgust) could be matched to those ethics in the CAD triad (Rozin, Lowery, Imada, & Haidt, 1999), these three emotions began to draw substantial research attention.

Despite this recent trend, studies concerning the moral emotions constitute only about 7% of empirical studies in moral psychology, and many of those overlap with the intrapersonal studies (Ellemers et al., 2019). The present study represents what is perhaps a unique combination, by examining moral emotions, in relationships, across two cultures.

Although a few studies have focused on the links suggested in the CAD triad (see, e.g., Heerlink, Koning, van Doorn, & van Kleef, 2019), most recent studies of moral emotions have tended to focus on the effects on moral judgment of priming, arousing, or manipulating the other-blaming moral emotions, particularly disgust (see, among many others, Chapman & Anderson, 2014; Horberg, Oveis, Keltner, & Cohen, 2009; Landy & Goodwin, 2015; Wagemans, Brandt, & Zeelenberg, 2018).

Despite its relative isolation from other moral emotions in the literature, in social life disgust is frequently seen to co-occur with the other two emotions in the CAD triad. For example, in some contexts anger and disgust may be so closely related that their names function as synonyms in ordinary language (Gutierrez, Giner-Sorolla, & Vasilevich, 2012; Hutcherson & Gross, 2011; Molho, Tybur, Güler, Balliet, & Hofmann, 2017), and contempt is sometimes popularly defined as “a mixture of disgust and anger” (Wikipedia). It is notable that all three of the CAD (other-blaming) emotions are included among the seven basic emotions studied in the context of production and recognition of facial displays of emotion (Ekman, 1989; Ekman & Friesen, 1971; Matsumoto, Yoo, & Fontaine, 2008), whereas the self-blaming emotions are not. This difference might be attributable to the social functions of expressing these emotions.

From the point of view of relational models theory, morality “is relationship regulation” (Rai & Fiske, 2011, 2012). Any given moral infraction occurs within a relationship, and the disturbance to the relationship can be regulated (e.g., prevented, punished, ameliorated) by the perpetrator, the victim, or other participants in the situation. The experience and display of emotions may be powerful factors in relationship regulation. Evolutionary psychologists have postulated that emotions function as parts of regulatory systems (e.g., Sell, Tooby, & Cosmides, 2009; Tooby & Cosmides, 2008). For example, in reciprocal altruism, helpful behavior may be motivated by love or empathy, while the recipient responds to the favor with gratitude, a feeling which motivates later helpful acts (Trivers, 1971). Here, love, empathy, and gratitude serve to support the larger system of mutual and generalized helping and reciprocity, which in turn functions to promote survival and fitness of the individuals within the system.

Similarly, acts that disturb a relationship (violate the relational model) may be expected to evoke other-blaming emotions in the victim and/or in observers, which may motivate punitive behavior by the victim or observer and may be communicated to the perpetrator through facial expressions and other expressive behavior. Perception, or anticipation, of these negative reactions may evoke self-blame (shame and/or guilt) in the perpetrator, which may in turn motivate apology, reparation, withdrawal, or other action to restore (or end) the relationship. Thus other-blaming and self-blaming emotions may be seen as reciprocal or complementary to one another, with both of them serving regulatory functions in the larger relationship system.

The most direct tests so far of the usefulness of RMT in the empirical study of morality have come from work on judgments of degree of wrongness of particular acts (Simpson & Laham, 2015; Simpson, Laham, & Fiske, 2016; see also Simpson & Laham, 2015), demonstrating that moral wrongness judgments vary in predictable ways across different types of relationships representing the different relational models. Also, Dalğar (2019) has shown that intensity of shame varies across relational models, and Tepe and Aydını-Karakulak (2019) have presented evidence for the importance of relational motivations in wrongness judgments, with both studies suggesting that the meaning of an action, including whether or not it is a moral infraction, is closely connected with the nature of the relationship in which it occurs.

Whereas relationships are often classified intuitively (e.g., close/distant) or in terms of social roles (e.g., marriage partners, friends, boss/worker), RMT defines four structurally distinct relational models, each with different moral prescriptions, proscriptions, and motivations (Fiske, 1992; Rai & Fiske, 2011, pp. 61–64):

- **Communal sharing (CS)** is characterized by well-defined group boundaries and treatment of group members as equivalent, with moral priority given to meeting members’ needs, mutual help, and boundary maintenance; the overriding moral motivation is *unity*.
- **Authority ranking (AR)** is characterized by hierarchical relations (deemed legitimate by participants), with moral priorities given to the duties of obedience and respect (by subordinates), and protection and support (by the authority); the moral motive is to establish and maintain *hierarchy*.
- **Equality matching (EM)** is characterized by insistence on equal reciprocity, equal distributions, equal rights, and equal application of procedures; the moral motive is *equality*.
- **Market pricing (MP)** is characterized by equitable relationships in which distributions and exchanges are proportional to inputs in terms of units of some common currency (time, money, effort, etc.); the moral motive is *proportion*.

Even this brief description indicates clearly that moral priorities in each RM (e.g., need and care in CS, duty in AR, equality in EM, and proportionality in MP) are different, if not incompatible with the others, suggesting that a single moral rule may not be applicable across all social relationships; likewise, the emotions that function in regulation of these models may be predicted to vary. Accordingly, we expect emotional responses to vary with the nature of the infraction, as at least partly defined by the relational model (Laham, Chopra, Lalljee, & Parkinson, 2010; Roccas & McCauley, 2004; Sunar, 2009).

In defining the self-blaming emotions of guilt and shame, we note that anxiety regarding the judgments of others underlies both of them. We expect guilt to result from carrying out specific harmful acts that have the potential to arouse anger in others, and to function as an incentive to make reparations (quite literally, to repair the relationship). On the other hand, shame may derive from...
two different sources of anxiety: either actual/potential rejection or exclusion by a relationship partner or group, or actual/potential status loss, in which the person fears the scorn of the group rather than necessarily exclusion from it (see also Fessler, 2004, 2007 and Thomas, Deighton, Mizuno, Yamaguchi, & Fujii, 2019 for discussions of varieties of shame and their functions). Regardless of these theoretical distinctions, in ordinary usage, the words guilt and shame are used more or less interchangeably, or conflated with one another.

In a CS relation, moral violations include harming members of the communal group or dyad or ignoring their needs, or violating boundaries, taboos, or purity rules of the group. The ideal-typical (Weber, 1949) experience of a participant in a CS relation is belonging, acceptance and the security of knowing that help is available. The greatest threat is rejection or exclusion from the group. In experiencing (or fearing) rejection, a transgressor is expected to feel shame as impurity or unworthiness. When faced with a transgression, victims or observers are expected to feel—along with anger—disgust, which as a core (physical) emotion motivates extrusion of an offending substance from the body and in its social extension motivates exclusion of the human offender. To the extent that the CS model emphasizes boundaries and inclusion/exclusion, it shares features of the divinity ethic proposed by Shweder et al., 1997 (see also Sunar, 2009), and violations can be expected to arouse disgust, as predicted by both the CAD triad hypothesis (Rozin et al., 1999) and the related purity/sanctity foundation proposed by Moral Foundations Theory (Graham et al., 2013). Thus, in response to transgressions in CS relations, compared with other RMs, disgust is predicted to be higher for victims and observers, shame is predicted to be higher than guilt for perpetrators, and the link between disgust and shame is predicted to be stronger than other links between victim and perpetrator emotions.

In the AR model, violations include actions such as disobedience or disloyalty by subordinates, failure by superiors to protect subordinates, overstepping boundaries of rank, or otherwise neglecting duty and flouting authority and tradition. The ideal-typical experience in AR relations is framed deontically (Cummins, 2005), meaning that authority sets rules, whether formally or informally, regarding what is required, prohibited, and allowed, and that the rules are implicitly or explicitly accepted by the subordinate. Undoubtedly one’s position in the hierarchy—dominant or subordinate—strongly influences how the rules will be experienced, and what it means to transgress. Nevertheless, consequences of action for both positions in the AR model concern relative status, its gain and loss. A perpetrator is expected to feel shame owing to the experience or fear of loss of status or reputation, and the victim or observer is expected to feel contempt, looking down on the one who has fallen, or fallen short. Although contempt is generally conceived to be an emotion felt by the higher-status party, see Miller (1995) for the argument that both dominant and subordinate parties may feel contempt for the other. Thus, in response to transgressions in AR relations, compared with the other RMs, contempt is expected to be higher for victims and observers, shame is predicted to be greater than guilt for perpetrators, and the link between contempt and shame is predicted to be stronger than other links between victim and perpetrator emotions.

In both EM and MP relations a major type of infraction is cheating, that is, taking an undeserved benefit or inflicting an undeserved harm. EM violations also include deviations from equality, failure to reciprocate, and ignoring the rules of turn-taking and equality of opportunity. MP infractions are essentially deviations from equity, or proportionality of outcomes to inputs. The ideal-typical experience in both of these relational models is calculative and focused on fairness, justice, and dignity. The two models differ profoundly in the types of calculations made, and in the types of outcomes considered to be fair—equal outcomes for all participants in EM, versus proportionally ranked outcomes in MP; but the patterns of both self-blaming and other-blaming emotions are expected to be similar. In both EM and MP, compared with the other RMs, the violator is expected to feel guilt and a desire to make up for the misdeed and the injustice done to the other, whereas victims or observers are expected to feel anger and a desire to punish or exact revenge or retribution, and the link between anger and guilt is predicted to be stronger than other links between victim and perpetrator emotions.

Although there is evidence that anger may be “the principal emotional response to moral transgressions irrespective of the normative content involved” (Royzman, Atanasov, Landy, Parks, & Gepty, 2014, p. 892), there are also findings that support associations between specific other-blaming and self-blaming emotions in different situations. For example, some studies have related the emotion of disgust with the moral code of divinity (for a review see Russell & Giner-Sorolla, 2013), and Giner-Sorolla and Espinosa (2011) present evidence showing that exposure to angry faces was more likely to elicit guilt than shame, whereas disgusted expressions were more likely to elicit shame than guilt, as well as showing that angry expressions were more likely to be expected in situations involving harming or rights violations than in violations involving body-related norms. Miller (1995) has also suggested the pairing of contempt and shame in hierarchies, and Laham et al. (2010) found that both British and Indian respondents reacted with contempt to “community” (i.e., hierarchy) violations.

The present study attempts to examine the complementary roles of emotions in response to moral violations systematically, by measuring both other-blaming emotions and self-blaming emotions in the same moral violations in all four RMs.

In this paper we report three studies, aiming to investigate a series of questions that build upon one another.

1. Study 1: What moral emotions does an observer feel toward the perpetrator of violations in different relational models? Do the emotions differ among the relational models?

2. Study 2: What moral emotions does an observer attribute to both the perpetrator and the victim in different RMs? Do the emotions differ according to the RM? Is there a complementary relationship between the other-blaming emotion attributed to the victim and the self-blaming emotion attributed to the perpetrator? Do the complementary pairs of emotions differ in the different RMs?

3. Are the same complementary emotion pairs found in the same RMs across cultures? How do the patterns of moral emotions differ across cultures?
To answer these questions, the first study examined within-participant patterns of moral emotions in observers associated with violations in the four relational models; the second study examined within-participant patterns of moral emotions attributed to perpetrators and victims associated with violations in the relational models; and the third study examined between-participants patterns of moral emotions in perpetrators and victims associated with violations in the different relational models, including a comparison across two distinct cultural groups, namely native English speakers in the United States and United Kingdom, compared with native Turkish speakers in Turkey.

All three studies were approved by the Istanbul Bilgi University Research Ethics Review Board; additionally, Study 3 received IRB approval from the University of Sussex in England and Whittier College in the United States.

Study 1

Study 1 was designed to investigate the intensity of other-blaming emotions an observer would expect to feel toward perpetrators in each RM.

Hypotheses

1. Intensity of each of the other-blaming emotions will be correlated with judgments of moral wrongness.
2. Observer disgust toward the perpetrator will be greater in CS violations than in the other RMs.
3. Observer contempt toward the perpetrator will be greater in AR violations than in the other RMs.
4. Observer anger toward the perpetrator will be greater in EM and MP violations than in the other RMs.

Method

Participants. One hundred ninety students (165 female, 24 male, one unspecified, mean age = 22.15, SD = 3.29) enrolled in undergraduate psychology courses in five universities in Istanbul participated in the study in exchange for partial course credit. Because no data were available for an a priori power analysis, we aimed to recruit approximately 200 participants, expecting that this would be sufficient to detect a medium to large effect (effect size $f = .33$; power = .85). With a single group of participants and five emotions across four relational models, a post hoc power analysis with G Power 3.1 (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009) indicated that the final sample of 190 participants attained a power of .85 to detect medium to large effects of $4 \times 5$ crossed variables within subjects ($n_{eff} = 11$).

Instrument. Twenty short vignettes depicting violations in the four RMs were constructed for the study. All items were written in Turkish. For each violation, participants rated the degree of moral rightness/wrongness of the act on a scale ranging from 1 (morally very wrong) to 7 (morally very right). A preponderance of the vignettes concern everyday types of violations that individuals may experience personally, or hear about from others or in the media; none involve extremely severe or weird (Gray & Keeney, 2015) violations. Within RM, the violations portrayed in the vignettes range from relatively trivial to more serious. Three raters familiar with relational models theory classified the items into the four RMs; the interrater reliability coefficient was .91. Examples of violations from each RM include the following:

- Communal sharing (CS): A wife catches her husband kissing another woman.
- Authority ranking (AR): A professor exploits a research assistant for personal errands.
- Equality matching (EM): Someone cuts into a line of people waiting to buy concert tickets.
- Market pricing (MP): A student works hard to be first in the class but another student cheats and gets the highest exam score.

A full list of vignettes can be seen in the online supplemental materials.

The items were presented in randomized order, and to control for order effects, the list of emotions was presented to half the sample in alphabetical order and to the other half in reverse alphabetical order.

Participants were asked to indicate, if they had personally witnessed the actions portrayed, how strongly they would feel each of 15 emotions toward the perpetrator of the violation on a scale from 0 (no feeling at all) to 6 (feel the emotion extremely strongly). The list of emotions was derived from a pilot study conducted to identify emotional responses to moral violations and other social situations. The list included five moral emotions (anger, contempt, disgust, guilt, shame) and 10 others (disappointment, envy, pity, fear, gratitude, happiness, indifference, pride, sadness, surprise). Further information on the emotion list can be found in the online supplemental materials. Only the data on the moral emotions are reported here.

Procedure. Questionnaires were administered online using Survey Monkey. Items were presented only after the participant indicated informed consent. No identifying information was collected.

Results

Prior to hypothesis testing, responses were examined to determine whether the acts depicted in the vignettes were actually seen as moral violations. On a scale from 1 to 7, where lower scores indicate greater wrongness or less approval, one of the items was not seen as a moral violation, receiving a neutral rating ($M = 4.19$) on moral wrongness; data from this vignette were discarded. For the remaining items, the overall mean of moral wrongness scores was 1.78 ($SD = .4$), indicating relatively severe levels of disapproval. Ratings in the AR model showed much greater variability than in the other RMs, suggesting that judgments of wrongness might depend on the position of the perpetrator (dominant or subordinate) in the relationship. Accordingly, although Simpson et al. (2016) had found no differences in terms of hierarchical position in their investigation, we elected to classify the AR vignettes according to the perpetrator’s dominant or subordinate position (AR-dom or AR-sub), consistent with the analysis of AR by Roccas and McCauley (2004) and the findings of Simpson and Laham (2015).

No sex differences or order effects were found.

Hypothesis 1. Intensity of each of the other-blaming emotions will be correlated with judgments of moral wrongness. Pear-
son correlations between moral wrongness scores and intensity of other-blaming emotions felt by the observer toward the perpetrator were calculated for each RM; the results can be seen in Table 1. Wrongness was highly significantly correlated with intensity of all three other-blaming emotions in all five RM categories, with the single exception of contempt in EM.

**RM and other-blaming emotions.** A 5 (RM) × 3 (Emotion) 2-way within-participants factorial analysis showed that RM had a highly significant effect on the intensity of the observer’s other-blaming moral emotions, $F_{12,178} = 47.83$, Wilks’ Lambda = .24, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2_p = .76$. Means, standard deviations, and confidence intervals for observers’ moral emotions toward the perpetrator in each relational model can be seen in Table 2.

**Hypothesis 2.** Greater observer disgust toward perpetrator in CS than in other RMs. Observer disgust was higher in CS than in any of the other relational models except AR-dom, which did not differ significantly from CS (see Table 2).

**Hypothesis 3.** Greater observer contempt toward perpetrator in AR than in other RMs. Examination of the means in Table 2 indicates that in neither AR-dom nor AR-sub were contempt scores significantly greater than for the other RMs.

**Hypothesis 4.** Greater observer anger toward perpetrator in EM and MP than in CS or AR. As can be seen in Table 2, the hypothesis is supported only for EM but not for MP.

**Discussion**

Support for the first hypothesis (that degree of moral wrongness would be related to intensity of other-blaming emotions) can be interpreted as support for the idea that moral emotions serve regulatory functions within relationships.

The general hypothesis that other-blaming moral emotions felt by an observer of a violation will be related to the relational model within which the violation takes place was strongly supported. Likewise, the specific hypothesis that disgust would be aroused more by violations in CS than in other RMs was supported, except for the unexpectedly high rating in AR-dom, where the victim is a subordinate. Because none of the CS (or AR-dom) vignettes portrayed weird or severe violations (Gray & Keeney, 2015), the higher levels of disgust in CS cannot be attributed to the strangeness of the situations. Also, although we assume that sanctity and purity are typically CS concerns, none of the vignettes referred explicitly to cleanliness, rituals, contamination, or symbolic representations of a group, which lends weight to the argument that it is the relational model rather than the specific content of the violation that gives rise to the moral emotion.

The prediction of higher observer contempt in AR violations not only was not supported, but when the perpetrator was in the subordinate position (AR-sub) the direction of difference was completely reversed. Along with the wrongness judgments, discussed above, and findings from Studies 2 and 3, reported below, this finding makes it clear that explanations of moral emotions in AR relationships need to take account of positional differences. Similarly, in studying the connections between relational models and preferences for social ideologies, Simpson and Laham (2015) concluded that AR effects differed depending on whether the focus was on subordination to authority or the pastoral duties of the authority.

The hypothesis that anger would be greater in EM and MP violations was only partially supported, as CS violations also resulted in high levels of anger, indeed higher than in MP. There are indications in the literature (e.g., Gutierrez et al., 2012; Huston & Gross, 2011) that disgust and anger may be highly correlated. Royzman et al. (2014) show that anger is likely to predominate over disgust in pathogen-free divinity violations; the vignettes used in this study could perhaps fit this description. Also, EM violations, although arousing the highest levels of anger, provoked relatively little disgust, suggesting that the higher levels of anger in response to CS violations may in fact reflect the higher levels of disgust aroused there. In support of the hypothesis, for both EM and MP violations, anger was the emotion most strongly correlated with judgments of moral wrongness (see Table 1).

**Study 2**

Study 1 investigated only the emotions that participants predicted they would feel if they were to personally witness various moral violations. However, in that format, neither the judgments and emotions of victims, nor the self-blaming emotions of the perpetrators, could be measured. To gain information about the moral emotions of the actors themselves rather than those of an outside observer, the same vignettes were presented to a different sample of participants with different instructions.

**Hypotheses**

Victims’ other-blaming moral emotions were expected to parallel those expected of observers; at the same time, perpetrators were expected to feel the complementary self-blaming emotions in each RM. Accordingly,

---

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>CS</th>
<th>AR-sub</th>
<th>AR-dom</th>
<th>EM</th>
<th>MP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$r$</td>
<td>$p$</td>
<td>$r$</td>
<td>$p$</td>
<td>$r$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>-.51</td>
<td>.0001</td>
<td>-.45</td>
<td>.0001</td>
<td>-.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contempt</td>
<td>-.26</td>
<td>.0001</td>
<td>-.37</td>
<td>.0001</td>
<td>-.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disgust</td>
<td>-.38</td>
<td>.0001</td>
<td>-.43</td>
<td>.0001</td>
<td>-.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $N = 190$. Lower scores indicate greater wrongness; negative correlations indicate that greater intensity of emotion is related to greater wrongness. AR = authority ranking; CS = communal sharing; EM = equality matching; MP = market pricing; RM = relational model.
Table 2
Means and Standard Deviations of Observers’ Other-Blaming Emotions Toward the Perpetrator in Each Relational Model (Study 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RM</th>
<th>Disgust</th>
<th>Contempt</th>
<th>Anger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td>CI Lower</td>
<td>CI Upper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>4.25±(1.51)</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>4.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR-dom</td>
<td>4.30±(1.66)</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>4.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR-sub</td>
<td>1.80±(1.17)</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM</td>
<td>3.85±(1.48)</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>4.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>4.01±(1.57)</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>4.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 190. AR = authority ranking; CS = communal sharing; EM = equality matching; MP = market pricing; RM = relational model.

1. The link between victim disgust and perpetrator shame will be stronger in CS than in the other RMs; and
2. The link between victim anger and perpetrator guilt will be stronger in EM and MP than in the other RMs.

Given the lack of support for expectations in AR relationships in Study 1, no hypothesis regarding emotions in AR violations is stated; rather, responses to AR violations will be examined in an exploratory manner.

Method

Participants. Two hundred twenty students (186 female, 33 male, one unspecified, mean age = 22.3, SD = 3.9) enrolled in undergraduate psychology courses in five universities in Istanbul participated in the study in exchange for partial course credit. A priori power analysis based on the criteria used in Study 1 indicated that 223 participants would be needed to attain a power of .85 to detect medium to large effects of 4

Results

As in Study 1, data from AR vignettes were split according to whether the perpetrator was in a dominant or subordinate position in the relationship. Table 3 shows mean values and standard deviations for each of the other-blaming emotions across RMs.

To examine the impact of relational models on the complementary emotion pairs, first the product of scores for each pair was calculated. These emotion-pair products (Disgust × Shame, Contempt × Shame, and Anger × Guilt) were then analyzed using three within-subjects factorial analyses. Results revealed strong effects of relational models on all three emotion pairs: Disgust × Shame, F(3,66) = 147.76, \( \eta_p^2 = .40 \); Contempt × Shame, F(3,66) = 128.86, \( \eta_p^2 = .37 \) and Anger × Guilt, F(3,74) = 139.06, \( \eta_p^2 = .39 \). No gender differences were found. These mean emotion-pair products were used in testing the hypotheses, as they directly represent the interactions of the emotion ratings.

Table 4 displays mean products of scores for the hypothesized complementary emotion pairs (Disgust × Shame, Contempt × Shame, and Anger × Guilt), together with their standard deviations and confidence intervals.

Tests of hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1. Stronger link between disgust and shame in CS than in other RMs. In line with the hypothesis, the mean product of victim disgust by perpetrator shame (Disgust × Shame) is highest in CS compared with other RMs, M = 29.09, SE = .62, 95% CI [27.86, 30.32]. It should be noted that the links between other complementary pairs of emotions (Contempt × Shame and Anger × Guilt) were also stronger in CS than in the other RMs (see Table 4).

Hypothesis 2. Stronger link between anger and guilt in EM and MP than in other RMs.

The mean product of victim anger by perpetrator guilt in EM was M = 28.29, SD = 9.23, 95% CI [27.06, 29.51], and in MP it was M = 23.00, SD = 7.19, 95% CI [22.03, 23.95]. These mean

Table 3
Emotion Scores by Position (Victim or Perpetrator) and Relational Model (Study 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RM</th>
<th>Victim</th>
<th>Perpetrator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disgust (M SD)</td>
<td>Anger (M SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>5.13 (0.94)</td>
<td>5.85 (0.95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR-dom</td>
<td>5.01 (1.16)</td>
<td>5.78 (1.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR-sub</td>
<td>3.91 (1.25)</td>
<td>5.82 (1.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM</td>
<td>4.85 (1.08)</td>
<td>6.00 (0.95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>5.22 (1.11)</td>
<td>5.97 (0.99)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 220. AR = authority ranking; CS = communal sharing; EM = equality matching; MP = market pricing; RM = relational model.
products are higher than those for either Disgust × Shame or Contempt × Shame within EM and MP, respectively, although they are not higher than Anger × Guilt in CS or AR-sub.

**Additional findings.**

**Relation of shame and guilt.** As can be seen in Table 3, perpetrator shame was higher than perpetrator guilt in every RM except AR-dom, where the difference was not significant (CS, p ≤ .0001; AR-sub, p ≤ .0001; EM, p = .002; MP, p = .004). At the same time, the two self-blaming emotions were strongly and significantly correlated in all RMs: for CS, r = .76; AR-dom, r = .60; AR-sub, r = .78; EM, r = .81; MP, r = .77 (p ≤ .0001 in all cases), suggesting that they follow substantially parallel paths across the RMs (see Figure 1).

**Contempt.** Inspection of Table 3 reveals that mean victim contempt ratings were lower than those for either disgust or anger in all RMs, with the single exception of disgust in AR-sub, where the perpetrator is subordinate and the victim is dominant. In paired comparisons, victim contempt was significantly greater in MP than in any other RM (AR-dom, p = .002; EM, AR-sub and CS, p ≤ .0001), whereas in AR-dom, scores were only higher than in CS (p = .0001) and not significantly different from the rest.

The mean product Contempt × Shame was highest in AR-sub (except CS), M = 23.36, SD = 6.88, 95% CI [22.45, 26.01] and lowest in AR-dom, M = 16.16, SD = 4.79, 95% CI [15.52, 16.79]. Surprisingly, the mean product of perpetrator contempt and victim shame was also highest among all RMs in AR-dom, and lowest in AR-sub (M = 18.56, 95% CI [17.67, 19.44] and M = 14.05, 95% CI [13.56, 14.53]), respectively. That is, a dominant perpetrator arouses the most contempt in a subordinate victim and at the same time feels the most contempt for the victim, while a subordinate perpetrator arouses the least contempt in a dominant victim but feels the most shame. Also, in AR-sub, where the perpetrator is in the subordinate position, the (dominant) victim’s anger is more highly correlated with both shame, r = .63, p ≤ .0001 and guilt, r = .57, p ≤ .0001 in the perpetrator than in any other RM, whereas in AR-dom, where the perpetrator is in the dominant position, there is no significant correlation between any victim emotion and either shame or guilt in the perpetrator.

**Discussion**

The hypothesis predicting a stronger relation between victim disgust and perpetrator shame in CS was supported. Likewise, the hypothesis predicting a stronger relation between victim anger and perpetrator guilt in EM and MP was partially supported. These findings provide confirming evidence that the nature of the relationship in which a moral violation occurs affects the moral emotions experienced by victim and perpetrator alike.

Other findings in the study reveal complications when the relations are hierarchical. Most notably, subordinate perpetrators experience high levels of self-blame, whereas dominant perpetrators experience very little. Although this is clearest in the AR model, it is also seen to an extent in MP, with its proportional ranking. Similarly, contempt for the perpetrator is highest among the victims in MP and AR-dom.

Overall, links between victim emotions and perpetrator emotions were stronger in CS than in the other RMs, even in cases where the intensity of particular emotions was rated higher than in CS, for example anger in EM and MP or shame in AR-sub. This finding may be interpreted in light of generally greater intimacy and interdependence in CS relations (Haslam, 2004).

The preponderance of shame over guilt across all RMs raises the question of culture. Turkey is generally regarded as a shame...
culture (Üsküll, Cross, Sunbay, Gerçek-Swing, & Ataca, 2012); other cultures, particularly guilt cultures, might exhibit different patterns of self-blaming emotions.

Study 3

The first two studies showed clearly that the moral emotions attributed to observers, victims, and perpetrators are strongly influenced by the relational model within which a transgression takes place, and that their intensity is also related to judgments of moral wrongness. Both studies used a within-participants design, which bolsters the conclusion that RM is an important factor in moral judgment, by showing that the same judge evaluates transgressions differently depending on the nature of the relationship. The next step was to investigate whether the same patterns hold in a different culture, using a between-subjects design.

Relational Models Theory asserts that the RMs are “elementary forms of sociality” or “structures of social life” (Fiske, 1991, 1992). This claim would imply that the emotions provoked by violation of the RMs should be similar across cultures. Some evidence regarding cross-cultural similarity in patterns of the other-blaming emotions has been presented in tests of the “CAD triad hypothesis” (e.g., Rozin et al., 1999). However, comparable evidence regarding the self-blaming emotions of shame and guilt is not available. Whereas the considerable literature on distinctions between shame and guilt has focused mainly on individual experience of these emotions, anthropologists beginning with Benedict’s (1946) distinction between shame and guilt cultures have discussed cultural differences based on whether the chief mechanism of internalized social control in a given culture was shame or guilt. More recently, psychologists have begun to investigate whether these emotions are related to the cultural dimension of individualism-collectivism (e.g., Grey et al., 2018; Young et al., 2019).

Studies 1 and 2 were carried out in a single cultural setting (urban Turkey), in a language (Turkish) different from that of most studies in moral psychology (English). In Study 2, although patterns of shame and guilt were similar, ratings of shame were higher than ratings of guilt across all RMs, calling into question whether these emotions are related to the cultural dimension of individualism-collectivism (e.g., Grey et al., 2018; Young et al., 2019).

Hypotheses included the following:

1. Patterns of associations between RMs and moral emotions will be similar in both TR and EN samples.

2. The link between victim disgust and perpetrator shame will be stronger in CS, compared with other RMs.

3. The link between victim anger and perpetrator guilt will be stronger in EM and MP, compared with other RMs.

In addition, the relation between other-blaming and self-blaming emotions in AR will be compared with that in MP, and the two cultures will be compared with regard to the intensity of guilt and shame.

Method

Participants. For the TR sample, 374 students (294 female) from three universities in Istanbul, with mean age 21.20 (SD = 2.16), were randomly assigned to one of five conditions. The number of participants in each condition was as follows: CS = 69, AR-dom = 83, AR-sub = 73, EM = 81, MP = 68.

For the EN sample, 186 undergraduates (169 female) from a U.K. university and 76 participants from a U.S. college (44 female), for a total of 223 participants with mean age of 19.45 (SD = 2.10) who indicated that they were native speakers of English, were randomly assigned to conditions as follows: CS = 53, AR-dom = 40, AR-sub = 48, EM = 40, MP = 42.

All participants received partial credit in one of their psychology courses.

A priori power analysis indicated that approximately 580 participants should be targeted to attain a power of .95 to detect small to medium effects for 5 (RM) × 2 (culture) between-subjects × 5 (emotions) × 2 (victim/perpetrator) within-subjects effects (effect size f = .20, ηp² = .04). The total sample including both language samples consisted of 597 participants, meeting this criterion.

Measures. For the third study, the task was considerably streamlined by presenting only three vignettes from a single RM to each participant, and by eliminating all but one of the nonmoral emotions (fear) from the questionnaire. Thus there were five separate questionnaires, one for each RM, including one each for AR-dom and AR-sub. Each questionnaire consisted of (a) three vignettes describing a moral violation relevant to the particular RM; (b) ratings of moral wrongness of the action portrayed in each vignette on a 7-point scale, with 7 indicating maximum wrongness; and (c) the intensity (0–6, with 6 indicating extremely high intensity) of each of six emotions (anger, contempt, disgust, fear, guilt, shame) likely to be experienced by the victim and the perpetrator in each situation. The emotion words and the vignettes were translated from Turkish into English using standard translation-back translation-reconciliation procedures. To achieve equivalence of the emotion words, in some cases synonyms were used together to capture the range of meaning. The full set of Study 3 vignettes and emotion words in both languages can be found in the online supplemental materials.

Both the vignettes and the emotions were presented in random order.

Procedure. Participants followed a link to an online Qualtrics questionnaire, where after indicating informed consent, they were randomly directed to one of the five questionnaires in the appropriate language for their location.
Results

Independent samples t tests were carried out to examine potential differences between US and U.K. participants on three products: Disgust × Shame, Contempt × Shame, and Anger × Guilt. No significant differences between samples were found on any of the three products. Accordingly, the U.S. and U.K. samples were combined as the EN (English) sample.

Figure 2 displays the mean ratings of each of the other-blaming emotions (anger, disgust, and contempt) by RM, for the overall sample. Anger was rated highest in all RMs, followed by disgust and then contempt, with the only exception being in AR-sub, where contempt was slightly higher than disgust. Independent samples t tests revealed no significant gender differences on any of the emotion pairs.

A 2 (TR, EN) × 5 (RMs) × 3 (emotion pairs) mixed design ANCOVA was carried out, and, in light of the finding in Study 1 that perceived moral wrongness was related to the intensity of moral emotions, moral wrongness scores were entered as a covariate. The results revealed a main effect of culture, F1, 624 = 7.07, p < .01, ηp² = .01; a main effect of condition (RM), F4, 624 = 120.21, p < .001, ηp² = .44; an interaction between culture and condition, F4, 624 = 2.71, p < .05, ηp² = .02; an interaction between culture and the emotion pairs, F1,9, 1186.59 = 10.58, p < .001, ηp² = .02; and an interaction between condition and the emotion pairs, F7,6, 1186.59 = 19.21, p < .001, ηp² = .11, but no three-way interactions. Table 5 displays mean products of other-blaming emotions (disgust, contempt, and anger) and the complementary self-blaming emotion (shame or guilt) in two cultures in each relational model, together with their standard errors and confidence intervals. Please refer to this table for details of each of the relational models, together with their standard errors and confidence intervals. For all three emotion products overlap in both samples in

Main effect of condition. Mean products of the three pairs of emotion were highest for violations in CS and lowest for AR-dom, with the other RMs in between.

Culture × Condition. We decomposed the interaction with a Bonferroni corrected alpha of p < .002 for 25 comparisons. Only one significant difference was found between TR and EN participants was found, namely for EM and MP violations in which EN participants rated all three emotion pairs higher than TR participants did.

Culture × Emotion pairs. We decomposed the interaction with a Bonferroni corrected alpha of p < .006 for nine comparisons. Only one significant difference was found between TR and EN participants, for the complementary Contempt × Shame pair, which was higher for EN participants than for TR participants.

Condition × Emotion pairs. We decomposed the interaction with a Bonferroni corrected alpha of p < .001 for 45 comparisons. Comparisons among emotion pairs by RMs showed the following patterns: in CS, Contempt × Shame was lower than the other two pairs; in AR-dom, Anger × Guilt was higher than the other two pairs; in both AR-sub and EM, Anger × Guilt > Contempt × Shame > Disgust × Shame; and in MP, Contempt × Shame was lower than the other two pairs.

Comparisons among RMs by emotion pairs showed the following patterns: for Disgust × Shame, CS was higher than the rest and AR-dom the lowest; for both Contempt × Shame and Anger × Guilt, CS and AR-sub were highest and AR-dom the lowest. No significant three-way interactions were detected.

Tests of hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1. Patterns of associations between RMs and moral emotions will be similar for both TR and EN participants. Three overall culture difference were found: The EN participants rated victim contempt higher than TR participants did, whereas TR participants rated victim anger higher than EN participants did in all RMs. EN participants also rated perpetrator guilt higher (see Table 5 for details). These differences did not, however, affect the patterns of scores across the RMs (see Figure 3), and the culture variable accounted for comparatively little of the variance in the ANCOVA reported above (ηp² = .01 for the main effect of culture, vs. ηp² = .44 for the main effect of RMs).

Hypothesis 2. Stronger link between victim disgust and perpetrator shame in CS, compared with other RMs. As shown in Table 5, in both cultures Disgust × Shame scores were higher in CS than in any other RM.

Hypothesis 3. Stronger link between victim anger and perpetrator guilt in EM and MP, compared with other RMs. As shown in Table 5, the mean product of anger and guilt is higher in both CS and AR-sub than it is in either EM or MP. However, in comparing the mean Anger × Guilt products in EM in both TR and EN samples with other victim X perpetrator products, Anger × Guilt is higher than the others. Compared with EM, mean product scores are relatively lower for MP, and the confidence intervals for all three emotion products overlap in both samples in MP. The hypothesis receives some support for EM but not for MP.

Results for AR-dom, AR-sub and MP. Both in the intensity of shame and guilt, and in the links between other-blaming and self-blaming emotions, AR-sub showed the strongest self-blame compared with other RMs, except for CS in the EN sample, and the strongest link between both Contempt × Shame and Anger × Guilt, again except for CS (see Table 4). In contrast, among all RMs, AR-dom showed the lowest ratings for both shame and guilt,
and the weakest links between other-blaming and self-blaming emotions. (See Table 5 and Figures 2 and 3 for comparisons). In MP, scores for both of the self-blaming emotions were intermediate between the low AR-dom scores and the other three RMs (Figures 2 and 3), with no overlap between confidence intervals.

General Discussion

Results of the three studies were generally consistent with one another. In all three studies, in both cultures, and across all RMs, anger was the most intense other-blaming emotion, followed by disgust and then contempt. In Studies 2 and 3, with a few exceptions, CS violations elicited the greatest intensity of both other- and self-blaming emotions in both cultures. Shame and guilt were very closely related in both studies and in both cultures, despite slightly higher scores for shame in the TR sample and slightly higher scores for guilt in the EN sample, suggesting that respondents may not have made a sharp distinction between the two concepts (cf. Yalcindag, 2015). Also, vernacular understandings of words may vary considerably from the theoretical constructs that they are used to represent.

Effects of Relational Models on Moral Emotions

Predictions regarding disgust and its complementary relation to shame in CS violations were largely supported across the studies. Predictions regarding anger and guilt in EM and MP were partially supported, mainly for EM. In contrast, hypotheses regarding contempt and its operation in AR violations were largely disconfirmed, and the pattern of results regarding MP was mixed in all three studies.

Responses to violations in AR did not conform to predictions, regardless of whether the perpetrator was the dominant or the
subordinate relational partner, whereas the difference in position resulted in very different responses to transgressions, even at opposite extremes. Although AR-dom violations were seen as similar in severity of wrongness to EM and MP violations, the feelings of shame and guilt attributed to dominant perpetrators in AR in Studies 2 and 3 were strikingly lower than in any other RM. At the same time, unique to AR-dom, the correlations between perpetrator shame and guilt and the other-blaming emotions attributed to victims were all nonsignificant. This combination of findings suggests that participants strongly disapproved of AR-dom violations but expected the perpetrators to feel relatively little shame or guilt and to be unconcerned with the blaming emotions of their victims.

The contrast with AR-sub is nearly complete: Violations by subordinates in AR were judged the least morally wrong (these items included a vignette in which a soldier disobeys his commander, not usually regarded as a trivial offense), whereas the levels of shame and guilt attributed to subordinate perpetrators (AR-sub) were much greater than in any of the other RMs except CS. Meanwhile, the relation between the subordinate perpetrator’s guilt and the dominant victim’s anger was much stronger in AR-sub than in the other RMs. It may be inferred that, whereas dominant perpetrators (AR-dom) were perceived as indifferent to their victims’ other-blaming emotions, subordinate perpetrators (AR-sub) were perceived as intensely concerned with their victims’ anger.

Perhaps this is nothing more than common sense: dominant partners in AR relationships have little to fear from subordinates, whereas subordinate partners can potentially suffer a great deal from their superiors’ anger. Notably, the correlations between subordinate perpetrators’ shame/guilt and their dominant victims’ disgust and contempt were much lower than the correlations with their anger, suggesting that participants expect less danger from a high-ranking relational partner’s disgust or contempt than from his or her anger. In line with this, higher-ranking victims were believed to experience more anger than disgust or contempt toward a subordinate perpetrator.

The apparent anomalies in the patterns of response to MP items may be conjectured to be a function of status differentiation in MP. MP shares with EM a concern with fairness (based on equality in EM and proportionality in MP), and victim anger was rated highly in both EM and MP. However, MP is also related to AR, as they share the aspect of hierarchy, and the patterns of emotional response appear to reflect this commonality. Because MP involves the differential allocation of some social outcome according to a rule of proportionality, using a common measure, its operation inevitably results in ranking, that is to say, hierarchy. Victim contempt was highest in MP and AR-dom, and victim disgust was high and equal to CS in both MP and AR-dom; correlations between self-blaming and other-blaming emotions were generally lower in MP than in other RMs except for AR-dom. Folger and Butz (2004) suggest that hierarchy gives rise to a “moral antipathy toward the powerfully unjust.” This moral antipathy appears to consist of a mixture of all three other-blaming emotions.

Thus the apparent deviations of both AR-dom and MP from the predictions of RMT can be understood as stemming from less-explored aspects of the relational models, especially hierarchy.

Culture Differences

The two cultural samples differed on two of the other-blaming emotions: The TR group expected more victim anger, and the EN group expected more victim contempt. Connotations of the words for anger and contempt may differ to some extent in the two languages, or there may indeed be a cultural difference to be explored. Although shame and guilt were essentially parallel to one another in both cultures, shame was slightly higher for the TR group, and guilt was slightly higher for the EN group; these differences are in line with findings suggesting that English-speaking cultures may be classified as guilt or dignity cultures while Turkish culture is seen as an honor or shame culture (Smith et al., 2020; Üskül et al., 2012).

It is the TR sample whose ratings for both self- and other-blaming emotions in AR-dom and AR-sub deviate further from the other RMs, with less blame for dominant or high-status perpetrators (AR-dom and MP) and greater anger toward subordinate perpetrators (AR-sub). This comparative tolerance of misbehavior by those in a higher status and intolerance of those in a lower status may be related to Hofstede’s (2001) rating of Turkish culture as moderately high on the dimension of power distance, compared with the moderately low ratings of the United States and United Kingdom.

Overall Patterns

Certain findings stand out. First, RM has demonstrably strong and differential effects on the intensity of moral emotions, both self-blaming and other-blaming, in all three perspectives studied: the observer, the victim, and the perpetrator.

Second, infractions in the EM model were most strongly disapproved, aroused the most anger in both observers and victims, and (with one exception) aroused the most shame and guilt in perpetrators, constituting almost a paradigm case of moral violation. This may be indirect support for Sousa’s contention (Bernius, Dranseika, & Sousa, 2016; Sousa & Piazza, 2014) that fairness is the most basic moral consideration. Or perhaps there is simply less ambiguity in EM violations than in other RMs: equality and/or reciprocity are easily visible or calculable, whereas other RMs include many subjective or ambiguous factors such as degree of need, justifications for authority, and value of contributions.

Third, of the three other-blaming emotions, anger is felt most strongly in all RMs, followed by disgust; the only exception is a higher rating for contempt than disgust in AR-sub. Nevertheless, there is evidence for the complementary emotions hypothesis in the links between disgust and shame in CS and between anger and guilt in EM.

Fourth, despite very similar overall patterns of response in two quite different cultures and languages, small cultural differences appear in the relative intensity of emotions attributed. English speakers expected higher levels of self-blame (guilt and shame) in perpetrators across all RMs, with slightly greater guilt than shame, whereas Turkish speakers expected somewhat lower levels of self-blame, but with a bit more shame than guilt. Similarly, notwithstanding a very similar overall pattern of other-blamings across the RMs, English speakers expected victims to feel comparatively more contempt toward perpetrators, and Turkish speakers expected them to feel comparatively more anger.
Finally, the findings show clearly that the AR model has distinct, indeed contrasting effects on moral judgments and moral emotions, depending on whether the perpetrator is in the dominant or subordinate position in the relationship. At the same time, the MP model’s effects are also partly explicable in terms of hierarchy. A more detailed conceptualization of the relational meaning of hierarchy will improve the capacity of relational models theory to explain moral judgments and emotions.

**Limitations and Future Directions**

Although the vignettes were constructed to provide samples of possible infractions in each of the RMs, they certainly did not encompass all kinds of immoral actions or all types of actors. In particular, in no case was either the perpetrator or the victim a group. Because not only dyads but larger groups also instantiate relational models, it will be important to investigate moral judgments and emotions in group-related transgressions. Also, use of other media (e.g., video) or methods (e.g., naturalistic interactions) would be desirable. The wide differences in reactions to dominant versus subordinate perpetrators in the AR model suggest that this issue needs to be investigated in a larger number and variety of situations.

Reliance on a student sample is an important limitation. Both in terms of their age and social situation (e.g., generally unmarried, childless, precareer), students may differ greatly from the general population in ways that may affect their moral construal of various relationships. For example, they may be more rebellious toward authority, less committed to current relationships, or have other characteristics and attitudes that set them off from other groups.

Despite the use of samples from two different cultures in this study, further cross-cultural validation of the current findings is essential. Although urban university students are in many ways similar to one another around the world, they are also products of their own cultures, so that their responses to moral violations may reflect their expectations of what others in their culture would think or feel; just as it is important to validate findings from “WEIRD” samples (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010) in different cultural settings (the most common method used in cross-cultural studies), it is also important to validate findings with samples from less Western, individualistic, or educated populations.

Finally, research that relies on natural languages to measure constructs such as experienced emotion inevitably suffers from ambiguities that arise from differing denotative and connotative meanings of words or labels in each language (see Fiske, 2020). Although the current study attempted to compensate for this weakness to some extent by using synonyms to indicate that ratings were to be made in reference to a range of emotional experience that could include different shades of meaning, development of a more precise method of measurement awaits further research.

**Conclusion**

The most important conclusions to be drawn from these studies are that the relational model in which an infraction takes place heavily influences the type and intensity of other-blaming emotions felt by an observer or victim as well as the intensity of self-blaming emotions felt by the perpetrator, and that the pattern of this influence is very similar across cultures. Contrary to the claims of Cameron, Lindquist, and Gray (2015), evidence is shown for “links between moral content and discrete emotions”—if the moral content is defined by the relational model rather than some specific act. Shifting the focus of moral psychology to the relationship will help to turn attention to the relational bases of moral domains, ethics and foundations, as well as clarifying the relational functions of the moral emotions; relational models theory can provide a fruitful point of departure in this effort.

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