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Social Explanatory Style as a Foundation of Social Orientation

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The present work examines the notion that people's *social explanations*—the explanatory frameworks they use to make sense of others' behaviors and outcomes—are intimately tied to their *social orientation*, or the extent to which they demonstrate tendencies such as empathy, forgiveness, and a rejection of punitiveness. More specifically, the central argument of the present work is that social explanations can vary along a number of dimensions, and where a person's explanations characteristically fall on these dimensions has important implications for her social emotions, cognitions, and behaviors. This claim is analogous to the claim underlying work on *explanatory style* (Buchanan & Seligman, 1995), which suggests that the manner in which one characteristically explains *one's own* behavior and outcomes is related to one's orientation toward the self (e.g., depression). While evidence for our proposed link between social explanations and social orientations is suggested by existing work (Gill & Andreychik, 2006; Weiner, 2006; Gill & Andreychik, 2007), that work differs from the present approach either by focusing on orientations toward particular social groups (rather than general social orientations) or by focusing on the situational manipulability of social explanations (rather than the idea that people have characteristic styles of explanation).

At a broader level, we are interested in contributing to knowledge regarding the multiple bases of prosocial orientations (see Dovidio, Piliavin, Schroeder, & Penner, 2006). Existing work has demonstrated that prosocial orientations can stem from sources such as spontaneous affective reactions to others (e.g., Batson, 1991; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1990), parental modeling of prosocial behaviors (e.g., Eisenberg et al., 1992), quality of mother-child attachment (e.g., Kestenbaum, Farber, & Stroufe, 1989), and styles of reasoning with children about moral and social situations (e.g., Hoffman, 2001). Importantly, we want to contribute to that body of knowledge by emphasizing the role of social explanatory style in fostering prosocial tendencies.

Because the seeds of our ideas regarding explanations and social orientation were planted during our research on the basis of intergroup attitudes, we must begin with a review of relevant intergroup literature to construct the rationale for the present work.

Internal Explanations and Negative Intergroup Attitudes

The starting point of our approach is the long tradition of scholars who have studied intergroup attitudes; a tradition that has offered many views regarding the origins of such attitudes. It has been suggested that intergroup attitudes may stem from sources as diverse as group-image maintenance (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), conflict over tangible resources (Sherif, 1966), attempts to maintain or restore equity in social relationships (Adams, 1963; Lerner, 1980), and socialization processes that are devoid of intergroup contact (Allport, 1954). Scholars have also advanced other "purposes" of intergroup attitudes, and especially stereotypes, such as the release of repressed hostilities (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950) and cognitive efficiency (Macrae, Milne, & Bodenhausen, 1994).

Most germane for the present analysis, however, are approaches that have emphasized the role played by the human proclivity for constructing explanations (e.g. Allport, 1954; Hoffman & Hurst, 1990; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Yzerbyt & Rocher, 2002). Such work underscores a view of explanation as a fundamental human activity (e.g., Gopnik, 2000; Heider, 1958; Fiske, 2004) that enables us to better understand our environment (Kelley, 1971; White, 1959) thereby enhancing the efficacy of future behavior (Weiner, 1983) and the subjective sense of cognitive mastery (Heider, 1958; Weiner, 1986). Indeed, the ubiquity of explanation suggests that it may be critically important for the coordination and effectiveness of nearly all complex human social activity (Malle, 2004).

One possible outcome of this pervasive explanatory tendency, according to scholars who study intergroup attitudes, is the creation of negative or stereotypic attitudes. Hoffman and Hurst (1990) were among the first to suggest this. They presented participants with information about the traits and social roles of individual members of two fictional groups, the "Orinthians" and the "Ackmians." The two groups were constructed so that they possessed an equal number of communal (e.g., caring, compassionate) and agentic (e.g., assertive, decisive) traits (averaged across group members). One group however, was composed of 80% "city workers" and 20% "child raisers" (male-analogue), and the other group was composed of 80% "child raisers" and 20% "city workers" (female-analogue). Although both groups had the same number of communal and agentic traits, participants judged the male-analogue category as more agentic and the female-analogue category as more communal. Consistent with the idea that these stereotypes were created as explanations, stereotypes were of greater magnitude when participants had been explicitly asked to *explain why* the members of the groups occupied different social roles.

Jost and Banaji (1994) further examine the role of explanations in their *system justification theory.* This theory maintains that although social systems produce patterns of disparities among groups, such disparities do not result in an inordinate amount of discontent because people (including those who suffer most from such disparities) want to believe that their society is a fair one. In the service of upholding this belief, macro-level patterns of disparity are explained in terms of deficiencies of the low-status groups (e.g. they're lazy) or virtues of the high-status groups (e.g., they're intelligent), with negative attitudes toward low status groups emerging as a result of these "system-justifying" explanations.

Social Dominance Theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) presents a different but related argument, focusing instead on the idea that humans have an evolved preference for group

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hierarchy (rather than a desire to view society as fair). Such hierarchy necessarily creates inequality, but the inequality thus engendered is met with relative approval because the hierarchical systems themselves are supported by *legitimizing myths* which serve to explain and justify them. Such legitimizing myths often involve the creation of stereotypes that explain the inequality that exists in the social system as stemming from inherent differences between groups. For instance, as with system-justification theory, such justifications might take the form of locating the causes of African American poverty in the inherent laziness or inferiority of African Americans.

All of this work presents a clear message: negative orientations toward a group—prejudice, antagonism—are created when people observe broad patterns of group difference and then explain those differences using an *internal explanation,* or an explanation focused on qualities ostensibly possessed by group members (e.g., traits, attitudes, abilities). While we agree with the idea that internal explanations play an important role in shaping social attitudes, we also believe that the theories just discussed are limited by the fact that they concentrate exclusively on one type of causal explanation (i.e., internal explanations).

Our departure point, then, is with the observation that work on lay behavior explanations has highlighted a rich conceptual repertoire that human beings have at their disposal when they explain behavior (e.g., Dweck, 1999; Gilbert, 1998; Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1972; Weiner, 1986). Our goal with the present study is to broaden the scope of the types of explanations that are investigated and linked to social attitudes and, consequently, to examine not just the basis of negative social orientations but the basis of positive social orientations (e.g., empathy, compassion) as well. Also, we will broaden the focus from attitudes toward particular groups to more general social orientations: Empathy, forgiveness, and punitiveness as dispositions.

Three Fundamental Dimensions of Lay Social Explanations

Heider's Internal/External Distinction

Heider (1958) is credited with introducing what has become the best-known distinction with respect to lay behavior explanations: *Internal* ("something about the person") versus *external* ("something about the situation") explanations (cf. Malle, 2004). This distinction became the focal point of Kelley's classic (1972) ANOVA model, which sought to describe the reasoning procedures that perceivers use to choose between internal or external causes. Indeed, the internal-external distinction has underlain a wealth of research in the field (see Buchanan & Seligman, 1995; Gilbert, 1998; Weiner, 1986; 2006, for reviews).

Ross (1977), however, highlighted some conceptual ambiguities with the internal/external distinction. In particular, he noted that "causal statements which explicitly cite situational causes implicitly convey something about the actor's dispositions; conversely, statements which cite dispositional causes invariably imply the existence and controlling influence of situational factors" (pg. 176). For example, if Joe buys Jane flowers because of the situational fact that "*Jane was upset* at him," this also implies that Joe has a disposition to try to improve his relationships when they go awry. And, if Joe buys Jane flowers because "*he* likes to cheer people up," this also implies that there was someone in his situation who needed cheering up and thus is a relevant cause of the flower buying. So, looking at the surface content of what people say when making their attributions (i.e., whether they explicitly focus on the person or the situation) seems to provide a weak basis for distinguishing internal from external attributions. How, then, can we distinguish them? Ross suggests—and Gilbert (1998) makes precisely the same suggestion—that internal attributions are those implying an actor has dispositions that are atypical and that distinguish him from other actors ("Joe is *more likely to try to cheer people up*

than is the average person") and external attributions imply that an actor has dispositions that are typical for people in general ("*anyone would have bought flowers* in the situation Joe was in").

It is clear from our review above that internal explanations have received much attention in the literature on intergroup attitudes. External explanations, however, have received much less attention. In fact, much of the work reviewed conceives of intergroup attitudes as being uniformly based on internal explanations, with no attention paid to possible diversity in social explanations (e.g., Hoffmann & Hurst, 1990; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Other work does recognize diversity in social explanations, but conceives of that diversity in terms of gradations in *essentialism*—the extent to which group characteristics are perceived as stemming from a group's "inherent nature"—(e.g., Haslam et al., 2000, 2002; Keller, 2005; Yzerbyt & Buidin, 1998). Indeed, none of this work acknowledges the existence of external explanations. Nevertheless, other researchers have highlighted the fact that both internal and external explanatory frameworks show up in people's reasoning about social groups and that, moreover, educational interventions can shift an individual's manner of explaining from internal to external (e.g., Guimond, Begin, & Palmer, 1989; Lopez, Gurin, & Nagda, 1998; Gill & Andreychik, 2006).

Weiner's Stable/Unstable and Controllable/Uncontrollable Distinctions

During the infancy of empirical work on lay explanations, Weiner created a research program the results of which suggested that the internal-external dichotomy so familiar to attribution theorists since Heider (1958) did not capture all of the meaningful differences that exist among lay explanations (Weiner et al., 1971). Weiner posited that among internal causes, there exist degrees of stability such that internal causes may be further classified as either stable (e.g., aptitude) or unstable (e.g., temporary effort). This same distinction can be applied to

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external causes as well, resulting in external-stable causes (e.g., objective task difficulty), and external-unstable causes (e.g., chance). This scheme was further expanded in 1979 when Weiner added a third dimension of causality, controllability (Weiner, 1979). This final dimension captured the fact that within each of the four cells of the previous classification scheme, another property existed that could be used to describe the already classified causes. This dimension was characterized as discerning factors that are "controllable by anyone" from factors that are "not controllable by anyone." These dimensions have received much attention in work on achievement motivation (Weiner, 1986). Furthermore, the dimension of controllability has received attention with regard to its role in fostering social emotions such as sympathy and anger (see Weiner, 2006 for a review). That work will be reviewed below.

What is Social Orientation?

Having outlined a number of dimensions on which explanations may differ, we now turn to an examination of what we mean by social orientation. Toward that end, we will provide a brief overview of conceptual and empirical work on the core social orientation variables of empathy, compassion, and forgiveness.

In our view, two key aspects of social orientation are the tightly interrelated phenomena of *empathy* and *compassion*. In the social psychological literature, empathy is a more ubiquitous label and phenomenon of study, so we will begin there. In a recent review, Batson, Ahmad, Lishner, and Tsang (2002) defined empathy as "an other-oriented emotional response elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of someone else" (pg. 486). When people experience empathy, they become more likely engage in behavior aimed at alleviating the suffering or improving the welfare of others (see Batson, 1991 for a review). Additionally, the experience of empathy with respect to a particular member of a social group has also been shown to improve

feelings toward the entire group (Batson et al., 1997). Researchers have also shown that the robust relationship between empathy and prosocial behavior does not seem to spring from any "egoistic" motivation of perceivers (Batson, 1981; Batson et al., 1988; Batson et al., 1989; Toi & Batson, 1982; Fultz, Batson, Fortenbach, McCarthy, & Varney, 1986).

Whereas the approach of Batson and his colleagues has been to study empathy as a situationally-elicited emotion, our approach is to conceive of empathy as a general social orientation: That is, some individuals are more prone to experience empathy across different contexts and targets than are others. We are not alone, of course, in this approach. Indeed, the influential work of Davis (1996) has focused on the measurement of empathy as an individual difference variable. Reviews of the literature on dispositional empathy and social behavior suggest that, in fact, there are stable individual differences in empathy and these differences are predictive of prosocial behavior (see Davis, 1996; Eisenberg, Guthrie, Cumberland, Murphy, Shepard, Zhou, & Carlo, 2002; Eisenberg & Miller, 1987, for reviews).

The concept of compassion is closely related to empathy. Cassell (2002) describes compassion in terms of the feelings of pity, sadness, sympathy, or indignation that one experiences in response to the sufferings or injustices endured by another. He also provides the basic requirements for compassion: "First, we must feel that the troubles that evoke our feelings are serious; second, we require the sufferers' troubles not be self-inflicted—they must be the result of an unjust fate; finally, it is believed that for compassion to be evoked, we must be able to picture ourselves in the same predicament." Compassion as defined here depends on feeling a sense of connection with others—a sense that "we are the same" or that we might someday experience suffering similar to that of others—a propensity that humans notably possess from soon after birth (e.g., Meltzoff, 1985; Meltzoff & Kuhl, 1989). Much as compassion is posited to

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result from connection, a lack of compassion is thought to result from a disconnecting with others—indeed, history is filled with examples of the objectification of enemies, of adopting a view that they are "not like us". Cassell's approach is theoretical and not empirical, so what emerges from his work is a picture of compassion and its necessary preconditions, but little evidence regarding what compassion "does" for those who evoke it. Granting that compassion is perhaps another label for Batson's "other-oriented emotion," the literature reviews cited above support the importance of compassion as a motivator of prosocial behavior. Below, we will simply use the term empathy to refer to the class of other-oriented emotional responses referred to by the labels empathy or compassion in the literature.

An additional element of social orientation that we will discuss is *forgiveness*. As with empathy, forgiveness can be thought of in both situational terms (e.g., the forgiving of a particular transgression) and in dispositional terms (e.g., a general propensity to forgive). McCullough and Witvliet offer the following definitions: "As a response, forgiveness may be understood as a prosocial change in a victim's thoughts, emotions, and/or behaviors toward a blameworthy transgressor…As a personality disposition, forgiveness may be understood as a propensity to forgive others across a wide variety of interpersonal circumstances." (Pg. 447). Supporting the idea that forgiveness is a component of a general social orientation, those with dispositional tendencies toward forgiving have been shown to be higher in empathy (Tangney et al., 1999) and to endorse more socially desirable attitudes and behavior (Mauger et al., 1992). Regarding situational determinants of forgiveness, research has also shown that forgiveness is more difficult for transgressions that are severe and/or intentional (Boon & Sulsky, 1997). Forgiveness is also fostered by forgiveness-seeking and apologetic behavior on the part of transgressors (e.g., Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Girard & Mullet, 1997), and is more likely in

relationships that are satisfying, close, and committed (e.g., Nelson, 1993; Rackley, 1993). Because empathy, compassion, and forgiveness are related both conceptually and empirically, we will use the label *social orientation* to refer to this cluster of phenomena.

Rationale for Expecting Links between Social Explanations and Social Orientation

Now that we have provided some sense of what me mean by social orientation, we will provide some rationale for expecting social explanations to be associated with social orientation. The basis of our rationale will be two-fold: To some extent, the rationale will be based on our reasoning from the conceptualizations described above; furthermore, our rationale will be rooted in numerous findings presented in the literature.

Internality/Externality and Social Orientation

Why would social orientation be linked to the internality/externality of explanations? Weiner (2006) advances the metaphors of 'person as judge' and 'life as a courtroom' to offer us a possible explanation. For Weiner, it is the task of the social perceiver to assess the *responsibility* of someone whose action or outcome he observes. When a target is judged responsible, this implies that the target caused the outcome in question and is morally accountable in the sense of deserving blame/praise or punishment/reward (Weiner, 2006). Importantly, Weiner highlights the role of *explanations* in determining assessments of responsibility. While he concentrates primarily on the causal dimension of controllability, it seems likely that internality/externality may function in much the same way as controllability in affecting responsibility assessments. Specifically, Weiner states that outcomes or behaviors seen as controllable will result in greater perceived responsibility than will outcomes or

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behaviors seen as uncontrollable[1]. Similarly, it seems likely that outcomes or behaviors that are seen as stemming from internal qualities of the actor will likewise result in greater perceived responsibility (e.g., "It's her own fault; she just won't apply herself") than will outcomes or behaviors seen as stemming from forces external to the actor (e.g., "The schools in her neighborhood are terrible; they just didn't provide her with the skills she needs to succeed"). The underlying psychological principle here could be stated thusly: When people perceive an effect (e.g., behavior, outcome), they search for the cause of that effect; consequent cognitions, affects, and behaviors are directed toward the perceived cause.

A similar rationale for expecting a link between internality/externality and social orientation can be deduced from Cassell's second requirement for compassion: That compassion depends on perceiving a sufferers' troubles as not self-inflicted. To illustrate, consider the following example offered by Cassell. A subway motorman in New York City was interviewed regarding three people who were run over by his train. In discussing the first two of these incidents, the motorman offered the following explanation: "It was their own fault, you might even say foolishness, that landed them on the tracks in the first place. One man was drunk. The other fellow turned out to have been on drugs." In discussing the third of these incidents, in which the motorman hit two repairmen working on the tracks, he offered this statement: "The look on their faces; it was like looking into a mask of horror." In explaining the motorman's very different reactions to the plight of these individuals, Cassell points to the fact that compassion was felt for the repairmen but not for the first two men because in the eyes of the motorman the fate of the first two victims was self-inflicted.

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[1] A more detailed discussion of links between controllability and social orientation is provided in the following section.

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We of course cannot dispute the feelings of the motorman, but we can note that there is nothing in the nature of the incidents themselves or the "objective" facts of the situation that leads us inexorably to the same conclusion that the motorman reached. Put differently, the reason that the fate of an inebriated man was not met with empathy was because of the way the motorman *explained* the inebriated man's presence on the tracks. By saying that he was foolish—an internal explanation—his fate became self-inflicted and empathy was not felt. It is completely conceivable, however, that his presence on the tracks could have been explained using a more external explanation: Perhaps he had turned to drinking after his child's accidental death. In this case, the cruel fate was not self-inflicted but rather seems more indicative of "what might happen to any person under the circumstances," and so would be met with feelings of empathy. Importantly, this interpretation of Cassell's argument seems quite similar to Weiner's, in that explanations are the basis of judgments of what is deserved and what is undeserved (i.e., judgments of responsibility), and it is these judgments of deservingness that serve to determine the reaction a social perceiver will have toward an actor. In sum, the work of both Weiner and Cassell suggests that explanations affect the degree to which actors are seen as responsible for their actions and outcomes, and these assessments of responsibility influence social orientations toward those actors. Additionally, the degree of internality/externality associated with an explanation seems likely to affect the degree to which an actor is seen as responsible for an action or outcome.

Work from our lab is consistent with this idea (Gill & Andreychik, 2007). Across two studies, one based on the *should-would* paradigm of Devine, Monetith, Zuwerink, & Elliott (1991) and another utilizing a novel paradigm that involved getting participants to admit they would discriminate against Black males, we found that individuals who endorsed external

explanations for the social ills of African Americans reported greater levels of compunction (e.g., shame, anger at self) in response to their own prejudicial responses to African Americans than did individuals who rejected external explanations. If one grants that the experience of compunction indicates that one feels empathy for African Americans (e.g., compunction occurs because one's biases are incompatible with her empathetic orientation), then these data support a relation between external explanations and positive social orientation.

Additional work from our lab (Gill & Andreychik, 2006) examined people's open-ended explanations for the low SES of African Americans, for the violence and hatred of terrorists, and for the association with child-rearing of women. Across these target groups, external explanations were associated with more positive orientations toward the group than were internal explanations. That is, external explainers were particularly likely to embrace diversity as an important social goal, to have misgivings about killing terrorists as a solution to terrorism, and to be supportive of women's efforts to attain economic and social parity with men. All these findings can be interpreted, we think, in terms of people having more positive social orientations toward groups that are understood as possessing statuses and action tendencies that have been significantly shaped by external factors.

Finally, of course, all the literature on internal explanations and prejudice cited at the beginning of this paper (e.g., Hoffmann & Hurst, 1990; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) is consistent with the proposed linkage between internality/externality and social orientation. All that work points to the idea that people have more negative orientations toward targets whose status or action tendencies are perceived as rooted in factors internal to those targets.

In sum, there are strong reasons to suggest that internality is associated with negative social orientations and externality with positive social orientations. All the relevant evidence, however, concerns explanations and orientations toward particular groups and does not concern the present hypothesis that a general tendency toward internality or externality of explanation—across targets and contexts—is associated with a more general social orientation.

Controllability, Intentionality, and Social Orientation

Weiner's work focuses on explanations and social orientations far more explicitly than does that of most other attribution theorists, who tend to focus on attributions as endpoints rather than as contributors to subsequent emotional and cognitive responses. Instead of viewing social orientations as rooted in internality/externality, however, Weiner's work has focused on controllability. As already noted, controllability, in our view, may function much like internality/externality: It is a dimension with strong implications for whether a status or action is interpreted as self-inflicted. Weiner, Graham, and Chandler (1982) had participants read a story about a target who engaged in negative behavior. They systematically varied the perceived causes of the target's behavior (e.g., internal-stable-controllable; external-unstable-uncontrollable) and had participants indicate the degree of anger and pity they might feel toward the target. They found that internal-stable-*uncontrollable* causes resulted in the greatest levels of pity (relatively positive orientation toward target), and internal-stable-*controllable* causes resulted in the greatest levels of anger (relatively negative orientation toward target). Judgments of controllability have been found to similarly influence the emotional reactions perceivers have to the outcomes of specific target groups including the obese (DeJong, 1980) and alcoholics (Weiner, 1980a). Across all this work, the implication is that when negative outcomes and actions are interpreted as rooted in deliberation and choice (controllable), negative orientations

toward targets will predominate. Although clearly relevant to the present hypothesis, this work

has examined explanations and orientations toward particular individuals (or, occasionally,

groups) rather than more general social explanatory styles and general social orientations.

<p style="text-align:center">Stability/Instability and Social Orientation</p>

Unlike the dimensions of internality/externality, controllability/uncontrollability, and

intentionality, there is little conceptual or empirical work linking stability with anything that

might be labeled social orientation. Rather, most work on stability focuses on more cognitive

outcomes. For example, Weiner (1986) reports substantial evidence that outcomes attributed to

stable causes are expected to recur. While judgments of stability might not directly contribute to

social orientations, we suspect that they might serve to amplify the emotions engendered by

other features of one's attributions: For example, attributing African American social ills to

never-ending societal prejudice might engender more anger than attributing those social ills to

societal prejudice that is seen as on the wane. Perhaps the strongest evidence suggesting that

stability might interact with other factors to produce emotional responses comes from the

literature on depressive attributional style (Buchanan & Seligman, 1995). That literature suggests

that depression is heightened when one makes internal-*stable* rather than internal-*un*stable

attributions for one's negative outcomes.

<p style="text-align:center">The Present Study</p>

We have outlined a rationale for expecting links between social explanations and social

orientation. Specifically, we have highlighted the importance of explanations in determining the

extent to which actors are considered responsible for their actions and outcomes and we have

cited evidence suggesting a link between explanations and social orientation (e.g., Weiner,

1980a; Weiner, Graham, & Chandler, 1982; Hoffman & Hurst, 1990; Jost & Banaji, 1994;

<p style="text-align:center">16</p>

Buchanan & Seligman, 1995; Gill & Andreychik, 2006; 2007). While such evidence is limited in the sense that it concentrates on orientations toward specific others (e.g., specific social groups, the self), we feel that it offers valuable insights regarding the relationship between explanations and social orientation. Our goal in the study proposed below is to apply and extend those insights to the understanding of general social orientation, or the extent to which an individual is generally empathetic and forgiving.

The careful reader might also notice at this point that much of the evidence we have cited linking explanations with social orientation deals with explanations for negative outcomes. It seems logical to assume that internal or controllable explanations for negative outcomes will be associated with a relatively negative social orientation toward the groups or individuals who suffer those outcomes. However, what may be less clear is that internal or controllable explanations for positive outcomes will be associated with relatively negative orientations toward the groups or individuals associated with those outcomes. Given our concentration on social explanatory style, this point becomes important. We reasoned that while much of the work linking explanations and social orientation has concentrated on negative outcomes, the same relationships may hold between explanations and social orientation for positive outcomes. For example, it seems likely that individuals who primarily use internal explanations for both negative and positive events will possess a relatively negative general social orientation. This is because within an internal explanatory framework, people who achieve negative outcomes don't deserve our empathy, forgiveness, compassion, etc. (e.g., "It's their own fault they failed!"), and people who achieve positive outcomes don't need our empathy, forgiveness, compassion, etc. (e.g., "She's just such a talented person, she'll do well no matter what").

In order to examine the proposed relationships between explanations and social orientation, we designed a two-part study. In the pretest phase, participants completed a number of measures assessing their social orientation. Several weeks later, we measured participants' general social explanatory style. This was done by soliciting from them 12 free-response explanations for the positive and negative behaviors of groups and individuals. Relationships between the social orientation variables and the explanations were then assessed.

Method

Participants

Participants who completed both the pretest and the follow-up comprised 52 female and 50 male undergraduates at Lehigh University. All participants participated as one means of fulfilling a requirement of their Introduction to Psychology class.

Pretest

Participants completed a number of questionnaires assessing various aspects of their social orientation (e.g., empathy, forgiveness) at a testing session early in the semester. Participants completed the pretest in groups of 4-12. A complete version of each of the social orientation scales can be found in Appendix A, so we will describe them only briefly here.

Empathy. The Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI; Davis, 1980) is designed to measure empathy and consists of 28 items constituting four subscales. The four subscales are *empathic concern* (e.g., "I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me"), *perspective-taking* (e.g., "I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision"), *personal distress* (e.g., "In emergency situations, I feel apprehensive and ill-at-ease"), and *fantasy* (e.g., "I get really involved with the feelings of the characters in a novel"). Participants were asked to rate the extent to which each item describes them on a scale ranging from 0 (Does not describe me at all) to 4

(Describes me very well). A score was computed for each subscale by averaging the responses to the 7 appropriate items (empathic concern $M = 2.63$, $SD = .581$; perspective-taking $M = 2.35$, $SD = .637$; personal distress $M = 1.57$, $SD = .686$; fantasy $M = 2.33$, $SD = .806$).

Punitive/Compassionate Scale. We created the punitive/compassionate scale to assess the extent to which individuals favor punitive or compassionate responses to the negative or hurtful actions of others. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with each of ten items on a scale ranging from 1 (Disagree Strongly) to 6 (Agree Strongly). Five of the items are worded so that agreement corresponds to endorsement of punitiveness (e.g., "In response to something as horrific as terrorism, anything short of a powerful military response just doesn't make sense to me") and five items are worded so that agreement corresponds to an endorsement of compassion (e.g., "Love and compassion send a strong message to people, and anyone who experiences these things will become a better person"). After reverse coding of the punitiveness items, responses to the 10 items were averaged to arrive at an overall measure of compassion where higher scores indicated greater endorsement of a compassionate response style ($M = 3.58$, $SD = .913$).

Forgiveness. Dispositional forgiveness was assessed with the *Transgression Narrative Test of Forgiveness* (TNTF; Berry, Worthington, Parrott III, O'Connor, & Wade, 2001). The TNTF assesses the extent to which individuals are likely to forgive others across a range of situations. Participants were asked to indicate how they would be likely to respond to each of five scenarios on a scale ranging from 1 (Definitely not Forgive) to 5 (Definitely Forgive). An example of one of the scenarios is: "Someone you occasionally see in a class has a paper due at the end of the week. You have already completed the paper for the class and this person says he or she is under a lot of time pressure and asks you to lend him or her your paper for some ideas.

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You agree, and this person simply retypes the paper and hands it in. The professor recognizes the paper, calls both of you to her office, scolds you, and says you are lucky she doesn't put you both on academic probation. Imagine yourself in such a situation and mark how likely you are to forgive the person who borrowed your paper." Responses to the five scenarios were averaged to provide an overall measure of forgiveness ($M = 2.75$, $SD = .642$).

Philosophies of Human Nature. The revised version of the Philosophies of Human Nature scale (PHN; Wrightsman, 1974) is designed to assess whether one views human beings as "basically good" or "basically bad." The scale is composed of 20 items, 10 of which measure the belief that people are conventionally good (e.g., "Most people try to apply the Golden Rule, even in today's complex society"), and 10 of which measure cynicism (e.g., "People pretend to care more about one another than they really do"). Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with each statement on a scale ranging from 1 (Agree Strongly) to 6 (Disagree Strongly). Ratings on the 10 items for each subscale were then averaged to provide overall measures of trust ($M = 3.60$, $SD = .578$) and cynicism ($M = 3.01$, $SD = .630$).

Additional pretest measures

We also included several additional measures at the pretest that do not measure social orientation. These will enable the test of additional hypotheses involving possible moderator variables.

Attributional Complexity & Need for Cognitive Closure. Importantly, we were interested in testing whether links between social explanatory styles with and social orientations are moderated by the extent to which people think deeply and carefully about others' behavior. Accordingly, we measured both Attributional Complexity and Need for Cognitive Closure. The Attributional Complexity Scale (Fletcher et al., 1986) consists of items designed to measure the

complexity of people's attributional schemata for human behavior (e.g., "I believe it is important to analyze and understand our own thinking processes"; "I have thought a lot about the family background and personal history of people who are close to me, in order to understand why they are the sort of people they are"). Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with each of 28 statements on a scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). After reverse scoring where necessary, scores on the 28 items were averaged to provide an overall measure of attributional complexity ($M = 3.15$, $SD = .721$). The Need for Cognitive Closure Scale is composed of 48 items that measure the extent to which individuals tolerate ambiguity (e.g., "I feel uncomfortable when someone's meaning or intention is unclear to me"). Participants rated the extent to which they agreed with each item on a scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree). After reverse scoring where appropriate, the items were averaged to provide an overall measure of the participant's need for cognitive closure ($M = 3.84$, $SD = .589$).

As already noted, our intent in measuring these variables was to enable an examination of whether links between social explanatory styles with and social orientations are moderated by the extent to which people think deeply and carefully about others' behavior. For Attributional Complexity, we reasoned that the predicted links between social explanations and social orientation might be stronger for those participants with a relatively high degree of attributional complexity. The reason is that while participants high in attributional complexity are likely to have come to a particular explanation only after some measure of thoughtful consideration and to have traced out the implications of embracing one explanation rather than another, participants low in attributional complexity might offer particular explanations "off the top of their heads" (e.g., because they have heard such explanations offered by others in the past) without having an

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appreciation of the implications of embracing such an explanation. For example, explanations invoking childhood experiences as determinants of adult action and status predominate in modern American culture. While explanations such as these are clearly external (e.g., "He had a rough childhood"), participants low in attributional complexity might offer them without actually seeing the implication that, when external forces impinge upon an individual, it becomes less reasonable to blame or hold responsible that individual. Tracing out such an implication, we believe, is likely to require contemplation of a type unlikely to be engaged in by those low in attributional complexity.

In terms of Need for Cognitive Closure (NFCC), we reasoned that the predicted links between explanations and social orientation might emerge only for those participants with a relatively low degree of NFCC. This is because participants high in NFCC might offer the first explanation that comes to mind in order to eliminate their uncertainty most quickly. It seems possible, for example, that participants high in NFCC may offer the external-sounding 'childhood influencing adulthood' explanations discussed above because such explanations are prevalent in contemporary society and offer a ready device for reducing their uncertainty, and their tendency to rapidly seize upon such explanations might prevent them—as with those low in Attributional Complexity—from spending time tracing out the implications of such explanations. Participants low in NFCC, in contrast, might offer their explanations only after a more careful consideration of explanatory implications, and therefore should be more likely to show a connection between their explanations and social orientations.

Follow-up

Several weeks later, participants returned in groups of 1-6 to take part in an ostensibly unrelated study. During this follow-up session, they read 12 vignettes about the outcomes and

behaviors of both groups and individuals. In order to provide a measure of general social

explanatory style we varied both the target of the explanation (i.e.., individual or group) and the

valence of the behavior or outcome being explained (i.e., positive or negative). The vignettes

were completed by participants in a quasi-random order. A complete version of each of the

vignettes can be found in Appendix B.

After reading a consent form describing a study concerning "how people explain others'

behavior," participants learned that they would be explaining the behavior of others and that they

should provide as much information as they felt was necessary to provide an adequate

explanation of the behaviors contained in the vignettes. After all of the vignettes had been

completed, participants completed a demographic information sheet, and the experimenter

stapled all the vignettes and the information sheets together. All participants were debriefed upon

completion of the vignettes task[2].

Results

Coding Explanations

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[2] Participants also received one of two further instructions based on whether they had been randomly assigned to the
self-paced or the *experimenter-paced* condition. Self-paced participants were instructed to complete the packets at
their own pace. Experimenter-paced participants were told that they had 3 minutes to provide an explanation for
each vignette. Furthermore, the experimenter kept track of the elapsed time with a timer and gave participants the
vignettes one at a time to ensure that they could not proceed to another vignette prematurely. We elected to vary this
factor after reasoning that participants who complete the packets at their own pace might "rush" through the
explanations, thus providing relatively superficial explanations that are unlikely to predict much of anything.
Alternatively, though, we also felt that such "off the top of the head" explanations might be very meaningful in
terms of revealing people's characteristic thought patterns (i.e., what comes to mind first reveals one's cognitive
predispositions more than what one can recruit after applying substantial effort). By a similar logic, we reasoned that
participants given three minutes to complete each explanation might either provide more thoughtful explanations or
might "overthink" their explanations and come up with explanations that bear little relation to their "real"
explanatory tendencies. Notably, however, this factor showed no relations with any of our variables and thus will
not be discussed further.

Our key predictions concerned relations between dimensions of people's social explanations and their social orientations. Accordingly, we began by forming indices of externality, controllability, and stability. Two independent raters coded all the explanations on these three dimensions on scales ranging from 1 to 5, with endpoints corresponding to each pole of the dimension (e.g., a 1 corresponds to an internal, uncontrollable, or unstable explanation). (complete coding instructions can be found in Appendix C). The stability dimension will not be discussed further because there was very little variation in stability scores: Nearly all the explanations offered by participants were coded as very stable, suggesting that participants cited stable causal factors in almost all cases. And, of course, a variable with no variability cannot be predictive of anything. We examined the inter-rater reliabilities for codings of externality and controllability. For externality, 11 of the 12 items had good inter-rater reliability ($\alpha > .702$), while the reliability for the "Buddhist" item was somewhat lower ($\alpha = .526$). The controllability items had generally lower reliabilities, with 5 of the items having inter-rater reliabilities below .6. These items were "Missy" ($\alpha = .526$), "Joseph Cotton" ($\alpha = .556$), "Alain Locke" ($\alpha = .534$), "Joe Tax" ($\alpha = .319$), and "Jeanette Rankin" ($\alpha = .353$). The ratings of the two coders were then averaged for each of the 12 vignettes, resulting in 12 indices of externality and 12 indices of controllability for each participant.

Primary Analyses

Did people show a social explanatory style? An assumption of our approach is that individuals have a social explanatory style. That is, we assume that individuals will have characteristic tendencies to cite, for example, primarily internal or primarily external causal factors across the different vignettes. Accordingly, we examined whether this assumption was supported in our data. To do this, we computed reliabilities assessing the extent to which each

individual tended to respond consistently across the 12 vignettes in terms of both externality and controllability. For externality, the reliability when examining all of the vignettes was $\alpha = .675$. This suggests that participants did show tendencies to respond (somewhat) consistently across the vignettes in terms of the degree to which their explanations focused on external or internal causal factors.

We next examined whether participants tended to cite controllable factors to a similar extent across their explanations. When examining all of the vignettes, the reliability for controllability was $\alpha = .494$. As noted earlier, our controllability codings for a number of the vignettes did not show good inter-rater reliability. Because of this, we repeated our test of explanatory style for controllability including only those vignettes for which inter-rater reliability had exceeded $\alpha = .6$. After removing the vignettes that did not meet this criterion from our analyses, however, reliabilities remained low (total controllability $\alpha = .448$). These results suggest that participants' explanations were less consistent in terms of controllability than they were in terms of externality[3].

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[3] While our primary interest in examining participants' explanations was in gauging whether they showed a tendency to cite particular causal factors consistently across all types of explanations, we also felt it important to identify any possible differences in the consistency of explanations offered for particular subsets of vignettes. To address this question, we examined reliabilities separately for the two explanatory dimensions (i.e., externality and controllability) for positive, negative, individual, and group vignettes. In terms of externality for valence, the reliability for positive vignettes was $\alpha = .569$, and the reliability for negative vignettes was $\alpha = .595$. In terms of controllability for valence, the reliability for positive vignettes was $\alpha = .446$, and the reliability for negative vignettes was $\alpha = .271$. In terms of externality for target, the reliability for individual vignettes was $\alpha = .574$, and the reliability for group vignettes was $\alpha = .545$. In terms of controllability for target, the reliability for individual vignettes was $\alpha = .229$, and the reliability for group vignettes was $\alpha = .451$.

Importantly, examining each of the subscales separately did not result in reliabilities for any explanatory dimension that were higher than the reliabilities for all the externality or controllability items taken as a whole. This suggests that our decision to use the overall externality and controllability ratings in the primary analyses to follow was justified. It is also worth noting that the reliabilities for externality are quite consistent across both valence and

Was social explanatory style related to social orientation? A second key aim of our study was to examine the relations between externality, controllability, and relevant social orientation variables. To do this, we began by factor analyzing the social orientation variables to see if they could be sensibly combined into broader constructs (e.g., social emotions, social attitudes, etc.). The factor structure that emerged however, did not provide a compelling way to combine the measures, so they are treated separately in all the analyses below. We next performed multiple regression analyses in which externality, controllability,[4] and sex of participant were entered as simultaneous predictors of the social orientation variables. The results of these analyses can be seen in Table 1. Notably, the effect of sex was significant for all but one variable. Table 2 lists the means separately for each sex for all variables on which the effect of sex was significant.

In contrast to sex, and contrary to our expectations, social explanations had virtually no effects in these analyses. One exception was that controllability was a marginal predictor of perspective taking such that higher scores on controllability were associated with lower levels of perspective taking. Notably, externality did not emerge as a significant predictor in any of these analyses.

Were relations between social explanatory style and social orientation moderated by cognitive style variables? As noted previously, we measured two potential moderators of the relation between social explanations and social orientation: Attributional Complexity and Need for Cognitive Closure. We first examined the moderating role of Need for Cognitive Closure. Neither externality nor controllability showed any significant interactions with NFCC for

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target, while the reliabilities for controllability differ by both valence and target. Specifically, the controllability reliabilities for negative behaviors and for behaviors of individuals are lower than the reliabilities for positive behaviors and for behaviors of groups.

The controllability scores used in these and all future analyses include only those vignettes for which inter-rater reliability was above $\alpha = .6$.

predicting our social orientation variables ($|ts| < 1.705$, *ns).* We next examined the moderating role of Attributional Complexity. In these analyses, as in the analyses examining the moderating role of NFCC, sex was included whenever it had been a significant predictor in the primary analyses described above. The results of these analyses can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3 omits the Punitiveness/Compassion scale because the only significant effect on that measure was the previously reported main effect of sex. Also, the Philosophies of Human Nature—Trust scale is omitted because there were no significant effects on that variable ($|ts| < 1.45$, *ps* > .15). To begin, there were several main effects of Attributional Complexity. Specifically, all four components of empathy as tapped by the IRI (i.e., Empathic Concern, Perspective Taking, Fantasy, and Personal Distress) tended to decrease as attributional complexity increased. In addition, Cynicism as tapped by the Philosophies of Human Nature scale tended to increase as Attributional Complexity increased. It thus appears that Attributional Complexity tends to lower empathy and increase cynicism.

In addition to these main effects, Atttributional Complexity was found, as expected, to moderate the relations between social explanations and social orientation. To begin, there were several moderating effects involving Attributional Complexity and Externality. For the empathic concern subscale of the IRI, there was a significant interaction between externality and attributional complexity. Following Aiken and West (1991), we conducted simple slope analyses to examine the nature of this interaction. As can be seen in Figure 1, these analyses revealed that externality was positively related to empathic concern for participants high in attributional complexity ($t = 2.18$, $p = .03$), but negatively related to empathic concern for participants low in attributional complexity ($t = -2.4$, $p = .004$).

For personal distress, there was again a significant interaction between externality and attributional complexity. As can be seen in Figure 2, simple slope analyses (Aiken & West, 1991) revealed that personal distress was positively related to externality for participants high in attributional complexity ($t = 1.98$, $p = .05$), such that higher levels of externality were associated with higher levels of personal distress. Personal distress was marginally but negatively related to externality for participants low in attributional complexity ($t = -1.74$, $p = .08$), such that higher levels of externality were associated with lower levels of personal distress.

There was also a single moderating effect of Attributional Complexity involving Controllability. That is, for forgiveness, there was a significant interaction between controllability and attributional complexity. As can be seen in Figure 3, simple slope analyses (Aiken & West, 1991) revealed that forgiveness was positively related to controllability for participants low in attributional complexity ($t = 2.26$, $p = .03$), such that higher levels of controllability were associated with higher levels of forgiveness. The slope of the line relating forgiveness to controllability for participants high in attributional complexity did not reach significance ($t = -1.23$, ns).

Discussion

The present work examined the idea that people's social explanations are linked to their social orientations. While past work has examined this notion as well, it has concentrated largely on explanations for specific behaviors and consequent evaluations of specific targets. In contrast, we sought to examine the relations between an individual's social explanatory style—the characteristic manner in which she explains behaviors and outcomes across situations and targets—and her general social orientation. Additionally, past work has largely focused on specific dimensions of causal explanation (e.g., internality). We sought to examine a greater

variety of explanatory dimensions (i.e., internality/externality, controllability, stability) than has been addressed in prior work.

To begin, we did find some evidence for the existence of a social explanatory style. In particular, we found that participants tended to offer explanations with similar levels of externality, but not controllability, across the 12 vignettes. With regard to links between social explanatory style and social orientation, we found no main effects for externality and only one main effect for controllability: Controllability was a marginally significant predictor of perspective-taking such that as controllability increased, perspective-taking decreased. This lack of main effects was unexpected given that past research linking explanations with emotional reactions toward both the self (e.g., Buchanan & Seligman, 1995) and others (e.g., Weiner, 1986; Gill & Andreychik, 2007) has provided support for the notion that explanations are important determinants of social orientations.

Importantly, however, a number of interesting interactions between externality and attributional complexity, and between controllability and attributional complexity, did emerge. Specifically, among those high in attributional complexity, empathic concern and personal distress increased as externality of explanations increased, while those low in attributional complexity showed the opposite pattern. In addition, among those low in attributional complexity, forgiveness increased as controllability of explanations increased. These results suggest that while explanations may indeed be importantly linked to social orientation, it may not be explanations *per se* but rather their interaction with other aspects of an individual's social cognitive orientation that drive that link.

As discussed earlier, one reason for this may be that individuals high in attributional complexity offer explanations only after thoughtful consideration of the implications of

embracing one particular explanation over another (e.g., to say that someone's actions were caused by external forces means I cannot hold that person accountable). Individuals low in attributional complexity, in contrast, might offer a particular explanation without having thought about what embracing that explanation means for how one should approach and relate to others. Our results suggest that it is only after tracing out the implications of adopting a particular explanatory framework that one shows the relationship between explanations and social orientation suggested by past work.

It is also important to note that our data are correlational and thus causality cannot be assumed. Importantly, however, a wealth of evidence exists that speaks to the causal influence of explanations on both emotional and cognitive reactions to the actions and outcomes of others. For example, in the context of a "getting acquainted" experiment, DeJong (1980) varied the explanation for an interaction partner's obesity. When the obesity was portrayed as controllable, the overweight individual was liked less and was more likely to be derogated by his interaction partner than when the obesity was presented as uncontrollable. In another study, Weiner (1980) manipulated the cause of someone falling down in a subway. When the cause was presented as controllable (e.g., the person who fell down was drunk), over 25% of participants directed negative affect toward the drunk, whereas only 3% of respondents reported such affective reactions when the cause was uncontrollable (e.g., illness). Finally, Gill and Andreychik (2006) showed that participants who watched a video emphasizing external obstacles to African American social progress showed increases in their support of social policies that might benefit African Americans relative to participants who did not watch such a video and that this change in attitudes was mediated by changes in social explanations.

The Changing Meaning of Explanations

Our findings suggest something potentially important: The meaning of a particular explanation is not static. It seems that "the same" explanation may mean something quite different to two perceivers, and that its' meaning is determined at least partially by other characteristics of the individual's social cognitive orientation (such as whether he tends to contemplate others' behaviors deeply). Indeed, *external* explanations are "good" (i.e., associated with positive social orientation) among those with high levels of attributional complexity, yet *internal* explanations are "good" among those with low levels of attributional complexity.

But what then does an internal explanation *mean* for someone low in attributional complexity? Why are such explanations—presumed by many theorists to be a foundation of social prejudice and negative social orientations—associated with positive social orientations for those low in attributional complexity? One possibility is that, for those low in complexity, it is not actually their explanations that are driving their social orientations (of course, our correlational data render this possibility perfectly plausible). Rather, perhaps it is the case that low complexity individuals with internal explanatory styles are a *particular type of person* who has high empathy levels due to a factor that is confounded with their (low) attributional complexity/(internal) social explanatory style. Indeed, low attributional complexity suggests a tendency to not be a deep thinker and, in addition, a tendency to make internal explanations also suggests a tendency to not be a deep thinker (e.g., Gilbert, 1998). Thus, the co-occurrence of these two tendencies might suggest that an individual is especially unlikely to employ the cognitive system very often or very deeply with respect to social judgment tasks. Why would a failure to engage the cognitive system often or deeply result in high levels of empathy?

Perhaps the empathy levels of low complexity/internal explainers are determined by cognitively undemanding psychological processes. And, furthermore, such processes might

generally be quite powerful (i.e., creating very high levels of empathy). Indeed, our reading of the literature suggests that prosocial responses such as empathy can be created via distinct processes. One process, which has not been the focus of the present article, involves an "automatic" feeling of tenderness brought about by the mere awareness of others' suffering (see Batson, 1991). Owing to their tendency to eschew deep reasoning about human behavior, it seems possible that low complexity/internal explainers have empathy levels that are primarily determined by such cognitively simple processes. If one assumes that these cognitively simple processes tend to create especially high levels of empathy, then one can make sense of the finding that low complexity/internal explainers had quite high levels of empathy in the present study.

Importantly, this analysis provides one way to make sense of the high empathy levels among low complexity/internal explainers. It is, of course, highly speculative and thus we cannot have confidence in its validity. Future research will need to examine whether the pattern found in the present study can be replicated and whether, as we suggest, the psychological basis of empathy differs systematically between those low versus high in attributional complexity.

Two Distinct Routes to Prosocial Orientation?

The preceding discussion has raised the possibility that there are (at least) two distinct routes to social orientation. One route, the focus of the present research, involves social explanations and reasoning about justice. The other route involves empathy reactions that are spontaneously triggered by *mind reading*, or awareness of another's mental states and emotions (e.g., suffering, anxiety). The distinctness of mind-reading vis-à-vis social explanations comes from work showing that empathic responses sometimes paradoxically contradict expectations based on a social explanations approach. For example, Batson and his colleagues found that

imagining the suffering of members of stigmatized groups improved attitudes toward that group even when the suffering of those group members was presented as self inflicted (e.g., a homeless man who "decided he was tired of working and quit his job") (Batson, Klein, Highberger, & Shaw, 1995). One interesting possibility raised by this work is that *mind reading*—awareness of the mental states of others, especially, in the present case, suffering—can increase empathy and prosocial orientation independent of social explanations. We are currently focusing our research efforts on exploring these hypothesized independent routes to prosocial orientation.

Conclusions

Some evidence was found for the existence of a social explanatory style: The explanations people offered tend to be relatively consistent across targets and behaviors in terms of their externality but not in terms of their controllability. Explanations taken alone were not strongly related to social orientation, a surprising finding given the wealth of literature and theorizing linking explanations and emotional reactions. However, explanations were found to interact with other variables, namely attributional complexity, such that individuals high in attributional complexity showed a relationship between explanations and social orientation that conformed to the predicted pattern, at least for some dimensions of social orientation.

These results suggest that it may not be explanations *per se,* but rather their combination with other aspects of the individual's social cognitive orientation that are important in determining general social orientation. In addition, results showing that attributional complexity was associated with lower levels of empathy when taken alone, and that individuals low in attributional complexity who endorsed internal explanations show unexpectedly prosocial orientations contradicted the hypothesized relations between explanations and social orientation and, we speculatively suggest, might point to the existence of a second pathway to social

orientation. One possible candidate for this second pathway is mind reading (Batson, 1991). It may therefore be the case that explanations are indeed related to social orientation in a manner advanced by theorists, but that the relationship holds only for some people. For others, social orientation may be the product of mind reading, and may not depend as critically on explanations and their consequent implications for personal responsibility. We are currently focusing our research efforts on exploring these hypothesized independent routes to prosocial orientation.

Table 1

Regression of Outcome Variables on Externality, Controllability, and Gender

Outcome Variable	Predictor	β	*t*	*p*
Fantasy Subscale of IRI	Externality	-.128	-1.201	.233
	Controllability	.008	.077	.939
	Sex	-.327	-3.301	.001 ***
Perspective Taking Subscale of IRI	Externality	-.177	-1.637	.105
	Controllability	-.207	-1.924	.058 *
	Sex	-.230	-2.291	.024 **
Empathic Concern Subscale of IRI	Externality	-.063	-.586	.560
	Controllability	.064	.594	.554
	Sex	-.290	-2.892	.005 ***
Personal Distress Subscale of IRI	Externality	.023	.215	.831
	Controllability	.113	1.045	.299
	Sex	-.285	-2.840	.006 ***
Punitiveness/Compassion	Externality	.083	.802	.425
	Controllability	-.145	-1.415	.161
	Sex	.383	4.004	<.001 ***
Forgiveness	Externality	-.128	-1.176	.242
	Controllability	.017	.161	.873
	Sex	-.310	-3.085	.003 ***
Philosophies of Human Nature—Trust Subscale	Externality	-.051	-.446	.657
	Controllability	-.013	-.111	.912
	Sex	.056	.534	.595
Philosophies of Human Nature—Cynicism Subscale	Externality	.082	.744	.459
	Controllability	.127	1.155	.251
	Sex	-.205	-2.014	.047 **

Note. N = 97.

* *p* < .10
** *p* < .05
*** *p* < .01

Table 2

Gender means for variables on which the effect of sex was significant when predicting each variable from externality, controllability, and sex of participant

Outcome Variable	Males	Females
Fantasy Subscale of IRI	2.10	2.56
Perspective Taking Subscale of IRI	2.34	2.50
Empathic Concern Subscale or IRI	2.47	2.83
Personal Distress Subscale of IRI	1.36	1.79
Punitiveness/Compassion	3.87	3.18
Forgiveness	2.55	2.90
Philosophies of Human Nature—Cynicism Subscale	2.88	3.17

Table 3

Regression of Outcome Variables on Externality, Controllability, Attributional Complexity, Gender (Where Appropriate), and All Two Way Interactions

Outcome Variable	Predictor	β	*t*	*p*
Fantasy Subscale of IRI	Externality	-.053	-.525	.601
	Controllability	.044	.442	.660
	Sex	-.186	-1.953	.054 *
	Attributional Complexity	-.443	-4.518	.001 ***
	Externality X AttCom	.133	1.342	.183
	Controllability X AttCom	-.070	-.676	.501
	Sex X AttCom	-.021	-.231	.818
	Externality X Controllability	.179	1.836	.070 *
	Externality X Sex	-.124	-1.240	.218
	Controllability X Sex	-.099	-.924	.358

* $p < .10$
** $p < .05$
*** $p < .01$

Perspective Taking Subscale of IRI	Externality	-.127	-1.158	.250
	Controllability	-.198	-1.824	.072 *
	Sex	-.152	-1.483	.142
	Attributional Complexity	-.305	-2.885	.005 ***
	Externality X AttCom	-.010	-.094	.926
	Controllability X AttCom	.094	.835	.406
	Sex X AttCom	.032	.322	.748
	Externality X Controllability	.062	.586	.559
	Externality X Sex	-.058	-.539	.591
	Controllability X Sex	-.135	-1.165	.247

* $p < .10$
** $p < .05$
*** $p < .01$

Empathic Concern Subscale of IRI	Externality	-.058	-.534	.595
	Controllability	.058	.536	.593
	Sex	-.181	-1.776	.079 *
	Attributional Complexity	-.286	-2.729	.008 ***
	Externality X AttCom	.323	3.046	.003 ***
	Controllability X AttCom	.059	.531	.597
	Sex X AttCom	.029	.294	.769
	Externality X Controllability	.037	.358	.722
	Externality X Sex	-.047	-.443	.659
	Controllability X Sex	-.053	-.459	.647

* $p < .10$
** $p < .05$
*** $p < .01$

Personal Distress Subscale of IRI	Externality	.045	.420	.676
	Controllability	.153	1.432	.156
	Sex	-.194	-1.919	.058 *
	Attributional Complexity	-.242	-2.322	.023 **
	Externality X AttCom	.205	1.947	.055 *
	Controllability X AttCom	-.054	-.483	.630
	Sex X AttCom	-.156	-1.581	.118
	Externality X Controllability	.128	1.232	.222
	Externality X Sex	-.034	-.316	.753
	Controllability X Sex	-.140	-1.228	.223

* $p < .10$
** $p < .05$
*** $p < .01$

Forgiveness	Externality	-.126	-1.126	.263
	Controllability	.030	.273	.786
	Sex	-.250	-2.397	.019 **
	Attributional Complexity	-.149	-1.398	.166
	Externality X AttCom	.046	.424	.673
	Controllability X AttCom	-.272	-2.389	.019 **
	Sex X AttCom	-.103	-1.022	.310
	Externality X Controllability	.147	1.384	.170
	Externality X Sex	.109	.989	.326
	Controllability X Sex	.185	1.574	.119

* $p < .10$
** $p < .05$
*** $p < .01$

Philosophies of Human Nature—Cynicism Subscale	Externality	.074	.653	.515
	Controllability	.155	1.367	.175
	Sex	-.135	-1.268	.208
	Attributional Complexity	-.222	-2.027	.046 **
	Externality X AttCom	.049	.441	.660
	Controllability X AttCom	-.125	-1.068	.289
	Sex X AttCom	-.133	-1.282	.203
	Externality X Controllability	-.021	-.189	.850
	Externality X Sex	.092	.815	.418
	Controllability X Sex	-.035	-.289	.773

Note. N = 97.

* *p* < .10
** *p* < .05
*** *p* < .01

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Simple slope analysis revealing that the relation between empathic concern and externality is moderated by levels of attributional complexity. As per Aiken and West (1991), high level of endorsement is 1 *SD* above the mean, medium is the mean, and low is 1 *SD* below the mean.

Figure 2. Simple slope analysis revealing that the relation between personal distress and externality is moderated by levels of attributional complexity. As per Aiken and West (1991), high level of endorsement is 1 *SD* above the mean, medium is the mean, and low is 1 *SD* below the mean.

Figure 3. Simple slope analysis revealing that the relation between forgiveness and controllability is moderated by levels of attributional complexity. As per Aiken and West (1991), high level of endorsement is 1 *SD* above the mean, medium is the mean, and low is 1 *SD* below the mean.

Relation Between Externality and Empathic Concern at Different Levels of Attributional Complexity
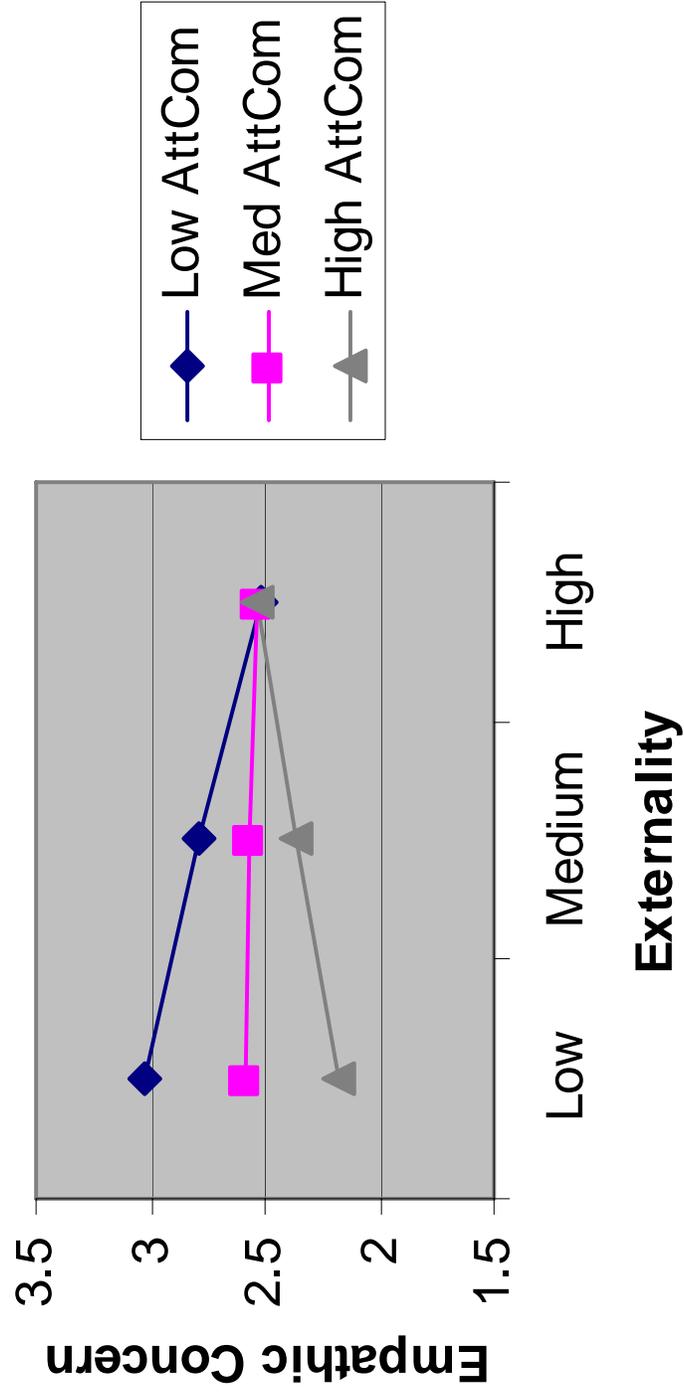
Relation Between Externality and Personal Distress at Different Levels of Attributional Complexity
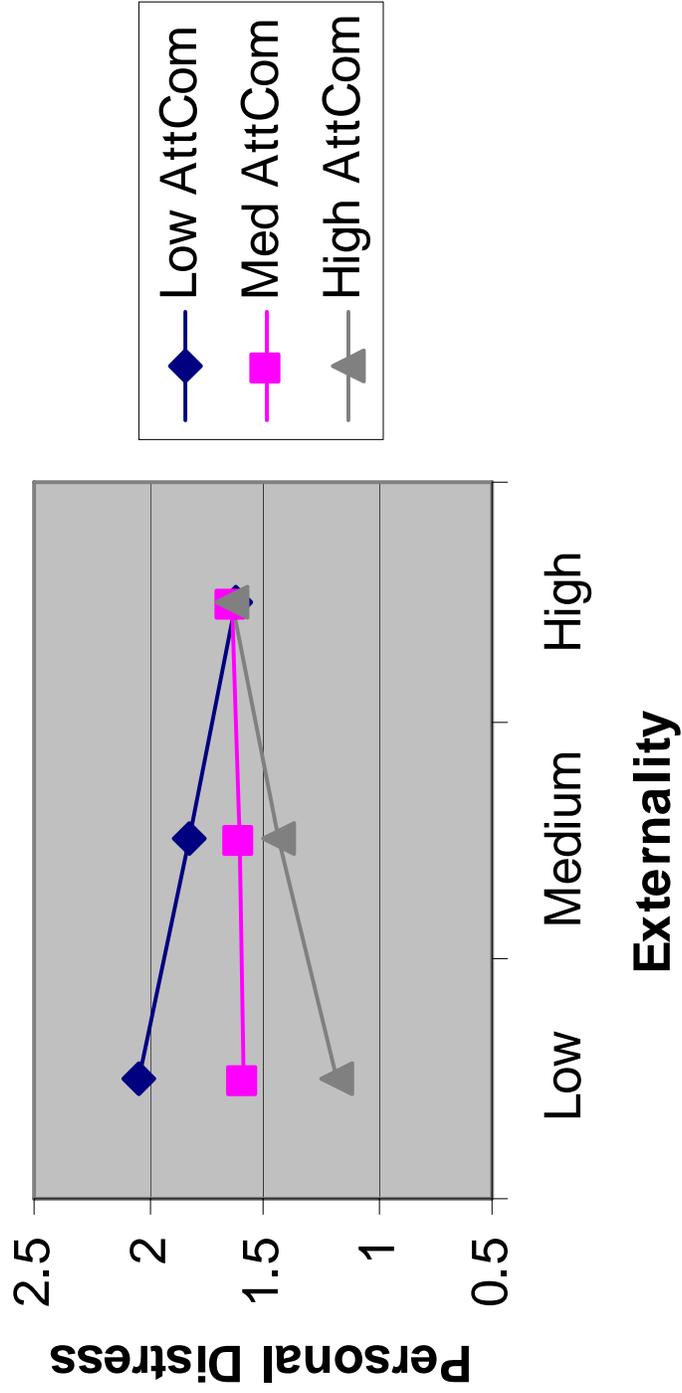
Relation Between Forgiveness and Controllability at Different Levels of Attributional Complexity

Legend:
- Low AttCom
- Med AttCom
- High AttCom

Y-axis: Forgiveness (2, 2.5, 3, 3.5)

X-axis: Controllability (Low, Medium, High)
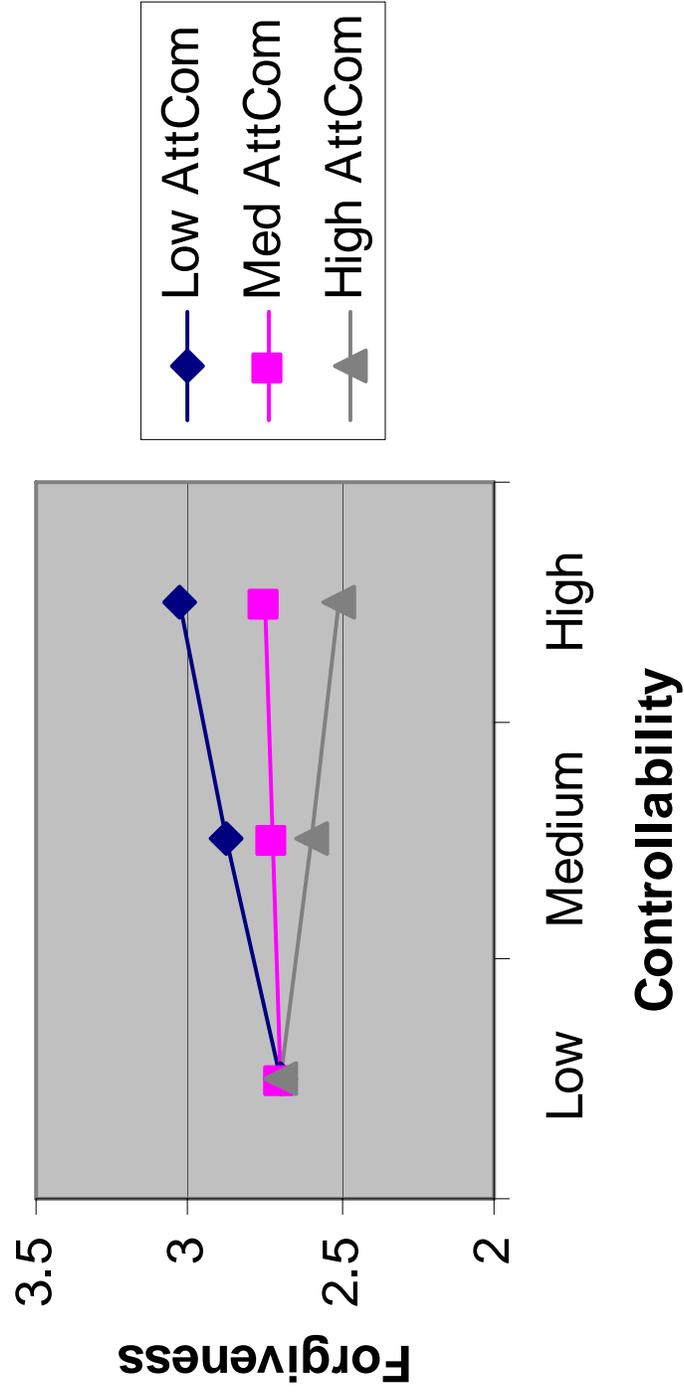
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Below are a series of opinions about strategies for managing certain types of social relations. Of course, because these are opinion statements, there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement using the scale below:

1---------------2---------------3---------------4---------------5---------------6
DISAGREE   **AGREE**
STRONGLY   **STRONGLY**

_____ (1) *An eye for an eye* seems like a proper approach to justice; people who do terrible deeds should receive terrible punishments.

_____ (2) If someone causes harm to me, I often strive to cause harm to him or her in return.

_____ (3) In response to something as horrific as terrorism, anything short of a powerful military response just doesn't make sense to me.

_____ (4) Strong punishments send a strong message about bad behavior, and thus are a critical tool for preventing bad behavior.

_____ (5) If we are too "soft" with bad people, they will fail to learn the right lesson.

_____ (6) *An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind* seems like a wise insight to me: As long as people continue in a cycle of violence and retaliation, there is no end to human suffering.

_____ (7) If someone causes harm to me, it is important to me to seek communication and understanding, and to attempt reconciliation with that person.

_____ (8) In response to something as horrific as terrorism, we should not seek vengeance. Rather, we should ask *Why would people do such an unfathomable thing?* and we should use our answers to that question to create programs and policies that will prevent future terrorism.

_____ (9) Love and compassion send a strong message to people, and anyone who experiences these things will become a better person.

_____ (10) Even when a person does a terrible deed, if we respond compassionately he or she can be redeemed.

IRI

____ (1) I daydream and fantasize, with some regularity, about things that might happen to me.

____ (2) I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.

____ (3) I sometimes find it difficult to see things from "the other guy's" point of view.

____ (4) Sometimes I don't feel very sorry for other people when they are having problems.

____ (5) I get really involved with the feelings of the characters in a novel.

____ (6) In emergency situations, I feel apprehensive and ill-at-ease.

____ (7) I am usually objective when I watch a play or movie, and I don't often get completely caught up in it.

____ (8) I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision.

____ (9) When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective toward them.

____ (10) I sometimes feel helpless when I am in the middle of a very emotional situation.

____ (11) I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.

____ (12) Becoming extremely involved in a good book or movie is somewhat rare for me.

____ (13) When I see someone get hurt, I tend to remain calm.

____ (14) Other people's misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal.

____ (15) If I'm sure I'm right about something, I don't waste much time listening to other people's arguments.

____ (16) After seeing a play or movie, I have felt as though I were one of the characters.

____ (17) Being in a tense emotional situation scares me.

____ (18) When I see someone being treated unfairly, I sometimes don't feel very much pity for them.

____ (19) I am usually pretty effective in dealing with emergencies.

____ (20) I am often quite touched by things that I see happen.

____ (21) I believe there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both.

____ (22) I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person.

____ (23) When I watch a good movie, I can easily put myself in the place of a leading character.

____ (24) I tend to lose control during emergencies.

____ (25) When I'm upset at someone, I usually try to "put myself in his shoes" for a while.

____ (26) When I am reading an interesting story or novel, I imagine how *I* would feel if the events in

the story were happening to me.

____ (27) When I see someone who badly needs help in an emergency, I go to pieces.

____ (28) Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how *I* would feel if I were in their place.

FORGIVENESS

Below are a number of situations in which people might find themselves. People respond in different ways to these situations in terms of what things they will forgive. We would like you to read each situation and imagine it has happened to you. Then, using the scale beneath each item, indicate how you think you would respond to the situation.

---

(1) Someone you occasionally see in a class has a paper due at the end of the week. You have already completed the paper for the class and this person says he or she is under a lot of time pressure and asks you to lend him or her your paper for some ideas. You agree, and this person simply retypes the paper and hands it in. The professor recognizes the paper, calls both of you to her office, scolds you, and says you are lucky she doesn't put you both on academic probation. Imagine yourself in such a situation and mark how likely you are to forgive the person who borrowed your paper.

1------------------------2------------------------3------------------------4------------------------5
Definitely   **Not likely to**   **Just as likely**   **Likely to**   **Definitely**
NOT forgive   **forgive**   **to forgive**   **forgive**   **forgive**
as not

---

(2) A fairly close friend tells you that he or she needs some extra money for an upcoming holiday. You know a married couple who needs a babysitter for their 3-year-old for a couple of nights and you recommend your friend. Your friend is grateful and takes the job. On the first night, the child gets out of bed and, while your friend has fallen asleep watching television, drinks cleaning fluid from beneath the kitchen sink. The child is taken by ambulance to the hospital and stays there for 2 days for observation and treatment. The married couple will not speak to you. Imagine yourself in such a situation and mark how likely you are to forgive your friend.

1------------------------2------------------------3------------------------4------------------------5
Definitely   **Not likely to**   **Just as likely**   **Likely to**   **Definitely**
NOT forgive   **forgive**   **to forgive**   **forgive**   **forgive**
as not

(3) A friend offers to drop off a job application for you at the post office by the deadline for submission. A week later, you get a letter from the potential employer saying that your application could not be considered because it was postmarked after the deadline and they had a very strict policy about this. Your friend said that he or she met an old friend, went to lunch, and lost track of time. When he or she remembered the package, it was close to closing time at the post office and he or she would have to have rushed frantically to get there; he or she decided that deadlines usually aren't that strictly enforced so he or she waited until the next morning to deliver the package. Imagine yourself in such a situation and mark how likely you are to forgive your friend for not delivering the application on time.

1------------------------2------------------------3------------------------4------------------------5
Definitely   **Not likely to**   **Just as likely**   **Likely to**   **Definitely**
<u>NOT</u> forgive   **forgive**   **to forgive**   **forgive**   **forgive**
as not

(4) You just started a new job and it turns out that a classmate from high school works there, too. You think this is great; now you don't feel like such a stranger. Even though the classmate wasn't part of your crowd, there's at least a face you recognize. You two hit it off right away and talk about old times. A few weeks later, you are having lunch in the cafeteria and you overhear several of your coworkers, who do not realize you are nearby, talking about you and laughing; one even sounds snide and hostile toward you. You discover that your old classmate has told them about something you did back in high school that you are deeply ashamed of and did not want anyone to know about. Imagine yourself in such a situation and mark how likely you are to forgive your old classmate for telling others your secret.

1------------------------2------------------------3------------------------4------------------------5
Definitely   **Not likely to**   **Just as likely**   **Likely to**   **Definitely**
<u>NOT</u> forgive   **forgive**   **to forgive**   **forgive**   **forgive**
as not

(5) A distant cousin you haven't seen since childhood calls you one day and asks if he can stay with you while he looks for work and an apartment. You say it will be fine. He asks you to pick him up from the bus station that night and you do so. Your cousin is just like you fondly remember him; you reminisce for several hours. The next morning you give him some advice on job and apartment hunting in the area, then you go about your own business. That night you come home and witness an angry argument in front of your residence between your cousin and a neighbor. Your cousin is obviously very drunk, cursing, and out of control. You ask what's happening and without really taking the time to recognize you, your cousin throws a bottle at you, cutting the side of your head. The police arrive, and with some scuffling, take your cousin away and take you to the emergency room where you have stiches put on your cut. The next afternoon, your cousin calls from the police station. He says he is really sorry about the whole scene and that it was not like him but he was upset about being turned down for three jobs that day. Imagine yourself in such a situation and mark how likely you are to forgive your cousin.

1------------------------2------------------------3------------------------4------------------------5
Definitely   **Not likely to**   **Just as likely**   **Likely to**   **Definitely**
NOT forgive   **forgive**   **to forgive**   **forgive**   **forgive**
                                                as not

PREFERENCE FOR VARIOUS FORMS OF INTERGROUP RELATIONS

The world consists of many different social groups. Some group memberships are based on nationality (e.g., U.S., Egypt, Japan, Ireland), some are based on ethnicity or culture (e.g., Hispanic, African American, European), and so on. Below, you will find several general descriptions of the manner in which groups might relate to each other. Then, you will be asked for your personal opinion of each of those styles of relating. Please give your opinion on the scales provided.

RELATION STYLE #1: Every social group takes a "one for all and all for one" approach toward the other social groups. Each group feels that "what's ours is yours" and that what happens to other groups is as important as what happens to one's own group. If one group needed help, other groups would help, and all groups would be willing to do this for each other. Every group would give the other groups "the shirts off their backs." Groups would willingly share resources such as food, wealth, knowledge, and so on.

	NO	**YES**
Would you like social groups to relate in this manner?	1 ---- 2 ---- 3 ---- 4 ---- 5 ---- 6	
Does this sound like an ideal of intergroup relations that appeals to you?	1 ---- 2 ---- 3 ---- 4 ---- 5 ---- 6	
Would you be happy if society functioned in this way?	1 ---- 2 ---- 3 ---- 4 ---- 5 ---- 6	
Would this form of intergroup relations be difficult and stressful for you?	1 ---- 2 ---- 3 ---- 4 ---- 5 ---- 6	

RELATION STYLE #2: Certain social groups tend to "call the shots" and take initiative and the others tend to follow along. These "leader" groups make most of the decisions and the other groups go along with those decisions. The groups in charge usually get their way, and take responsibility for things. The other groups are followers and back the leaders, knowing that they can depend on those leaders to lead and protect them when it's needed.

	NO	**YES**
Would you like social groups to relate in this manner?	1 ---- 2 ---- 3 ---- 4 ---- 5 ---- 6	
Does this sound like an ideal of intergroup relations that appeals to you?	1 ---- 2 ---- 3 ---- 4 ---- 5 ---- 6	
Would you be happy if society functioned in this way?	1 ---- 2 ---- 3 ---- 4 ---- 5 ---- 6	

Would this form of intergroup relations be difficult and

stressful for you?   1 ---- 2 ---- 3 ---- 4 ---- 5 ---- 6

RELATION STYLE #3: Group relations are structured on an even basis. The groups feel like they are pretty equal in the things they do for each other. If one group does something for another, the recipient will try to do the same thing in return at some point in the future. If groups are dividing something up, they would tend to split it into even shares. Groups take turns leading, making decisions, and so on. To keep things balanced, the groups keep track of favors and obligations among them. All groups get irritated if they feel that one group is taking more than it is giving. What all groups want is equal treatment and equal shares.

	NO	YES
Would you like social groups to relate in this manner?	1 ---- 2 ---- 3 ---- 4 ---- 5 ---- 6	

Does this sound like an ideal of intergroup relations
that appeals to you?   1 ---- 2 ---- 3 ---- 4 ---- 5 ---- 6

Would you be happy if society functioned in this way?   1 ---- 2 ---- 3 ---- 4 ---- 5 ---- 6

Would this form of intergroup relations be difficult and
stressful for you?   1 ---- 2 ---- 3 ---- 4 ---- 5 ---- 6

RELATION STYLE #4: Social groups interact with each other in a purely rational, business-like way, focusing on "getting their money's worth." Each feels like it should get "a fair rate of return" on whatever it provides for others. How much each group gets out of its relationship with others depends on how much it puts in. So each group keeps track of the ratio of its "costs" (in terms of money, time, effort, aggravation, etc.) in relation to its "benefits." Intergroup relations basically come down to practical matters like these. When it comes down to it, each group chooses to contribute to others whenever doing so is profitable.

	NO	YES
Would you like social groups to relate in this manner?	1 ---- 2 ---- 3 ---- 4 ---- 5 ---- 6	

Does this sound like an ideal of intergroup relations
that appeals to you?   1 ---- 2 ---- 3 ---- 4 ---- 5 ---- 6

Would you be happy if society functioned in this way?   1 ---- 2 ---- 3 ---- 4 ---- 5 ---- 6

Would this form of intergroup relations be difficult and
stressful for you?   1 ---- 2 ---- 3 ---- 4 ---- 5 ---- 6

PHILOSOPHIES OF HUMAN NATURE

This questionnaire is a series of attitude statements. Each represents a commonly held opinion, and there are no right or wrong answers. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree by filling-in-the-blank next to each statement. Please use the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Agree Strongly	**Agree Somewhat**	**Agree Slightly**	**DISagree Slightly**	**DISagree Somewhat**	**DISagree Strongly**

____ (1) If most people could get into a movie without paying and be sure that they would not be seen, they would do it.

____ (2) Most people have the courage of their convictions.

____ (3) The average person is conceited.

____ (4) Most people try to apply the Golden Rule, even in today's complex society.

____ (5) Most people would stop and help a person whose car was disabled.

____ (6) The typical student will cheat on a test when everybody else does, even though he has a set of ethical standards.

____ (7) Most people do not hesitate to go out of their way to help someone in trouble.

____ (8) Most people would tell a lie if they could gain by it.

____ (9) It's pathetic to see an unselfish person in today's world, because so many people take advantage of him.

____ (10) "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" is a motto that most people follow.

____ (11) People claim that they have ethical standards regarding honesty and morality, but few people stick to them when the chips are down.

____ (12) Most people will speak out for what they believe in.

____ (13) People pretend to care more about one another than they really do.

____ (14) People usually tell the truth, even when they know they would be better off lying.

____ (15) Most people inwardly dislike putting themselves out to help other people.

____ (16) Most people would cheat on their income tax if they had the chance.

____ (17) The average person will stick to his opinion is he thinks he's right, even if others disagree.

____ (18) Most people will act as "Good Samaritans" if given the opportunity.

____ (19) Most people are not really honest for a desirable reason; they're just afraid of getting caught.

____ (20) The typical person is sincerely concerned about the problems of others.

ATTRIBUTIONAL COMPLEXITY

This questionnaire has been designed to investigate the different ways that people think about themselves and other people. There are no "right" or" wrong" answers. We are interested in your own perceptions. Please answer each question as honestly and accurately as you can, but don't spend too much time thinking about each answer. Please use the following scale:

1------------2------------3------------4------------5------------6------------7
Strongly   Strongly
Disagree   Agree

_____ 1. I don't usually bother to analyze and explain people's behavior.

_____ 2. Once I have figured out a single cause for a person's behavior I don't usually go any further.

_____ 3. I believe it is important to analyze and understand our own thinking processes.

_____ 4. I think a lot about the influence that I have on people's behavior.

_____ 5. I have found that relationships between a person's attitudes, beliefs, and character traits are usually simple and straightforward.

_____ 6. If I see people behaving in a really strange or unusual manner, I usually put it down to the fact that they are strange or unusual people and don't bother to explain it any further.

_____ 7. I have thought a lot about the family background and personal history of people who are close to me, in order to understand why they are the sort of people they are.

_____ 8. I don't enjoy getting into discussions where the causes for people's behavior are being talked about.

_____ 9. I have found that the causes for people's behavior are usually complex rather than simple.

_____ 10. I am very interested in understanding how my own thinking works when I make judgments about people or attach causes to their behavior.

_____ 11. I think very little about the different ways that people influence each other.

_____ 12. To understand a person's personality/behavior I have found it is important to know how that person's attitudes, beliefs, and character traits fit together.

_____ 13. When I try to explain other people's behavior I concentrate on the other person and don't worry too much about all the existing external factors that might be affecting them.

_____ 14. I have often found that the basic cause for a person's behavior is located far back in time.

_____ 15. I really enjoy analyzing the reasons or causes for people's behavior.

_____ 16. I usually find that complicated explanations for people's behavior are confusing rather than helpful.

_____ 17. I give little thought to how my thinking works in the process of understanding or explaining people's behavior.

_____ 18. I think very little about the influence that other people have on my behavior.

_____ 19. I have thought a lot about the way that different parts of my personality influence other parts (e.g., beliefs affecting attitudes or attitudes affecting character traits).

_____ 20. I think a lot about the influence that society has on other people.

_____ 21. When I analyze a person's behavior I often find the causes form a chain that goes back in time, sometimes for years.

_____ 22. I am not really curious about human behavior.

_____ 23. I prefer simple rather than complex explanations for people's behavior.

_____ 24. When the reasons I give for my own behavior are different from someone else's, this often makes me think about the thinking processes that lead to my explanations.

_____ 25. I believe that to understand a person you need to understand the people who that person has close contact with.

_____ 26. I tend to take people's behavior at face value and not worry about the inner causes for their behavior (e.g., attitudes, beliefs, etc.).

_____ 27. I think a lot about the influence that society has on my behavior and personality.

_____ 28. I have thought very little about my own family background and personal history in order to understand why I am the sort of person I am.

NEED FOR COGNITIVE CLOSURE

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each item below by filling-in-the-blank preceding the item with a number from the following scale:

1----------------2----------------3----------------4----------------5----------------6
Strongly   **Strongly**
Disagree   **Agree**

_____ (1) I think that having clear rules and order at work is essential for success.

_____ (2) Even after I've made up my mind about something, I am always eager to consider a different opinion.

_____ (3) I don't like situations that are uncertain.

_____ (4) I dislike questions which could be answered in many different ways.

_____ (5) I *like* to have friends who are unpredictable.

_____ (6) I find that a well-ordered life with regular hours suits my temperament.

_____ (7) When dining out, I like to go to places where I have been before so that I know what to expect.

_____ (8) I feel uncomfortable when I don't understand the reason why an event occurred in my life.

_____ (9) I feel irritated when one person disagrees with what everyone else in a group believes.

_____ (10) I hate to change my plans at the last minute.

_____ (11) I don't like to go into a situation without knowing what to expect from it.

_____ (12) When I go shopping, I have difficultly deciding exactly what it is that I want.

_____ (13) When faced with a problem I usually see the one best solution very quickly.

_____ (14) When I am confused about an important issue, I feel very upset.

_____ (15) I tend to put off making important decisions until the last possible moment.

_____ (16) I usually make important decisions quickly and confidently.

_____ (17) I would describe myself as indecisive.

_____ (18) I think it is fun to change my plans at the last moment.

_____ (19) I enjoy the uncertainty of going into a new situation without knowing what might happen.

_____ (20) My personal space is usually messy and disorganized.

_____ (21) In most social conflicts, I can easily see which side is right and which is wrong.

_____ (22) I tend to struggle with most decisions.

| 1----------------2----------------3----------------4----------------5----------------6 |
| **Strongly**   **Strongly** |
| **Disagree**   **Agree** |

____ (23) I believe that orderliness and organization are among the most important characteristics of a good student.

____ (24) When considering most conflict situations, I can usually see how both sides could be right.

____ (25) I don't like to be with people who are capable of unexpected actions.

____ (26) I prefer to socialize with familiar friends because I know what to expect from them.

____ (27) I think that I would learn *best* in a class that *lacks* clearly stated objectives and requirements.

____ (28) When thinking about a problem, I consider as many different opinions on the issue as possible.

____ (29) I like to know what people are thinking all the time.

____ (30) I dislike it when a person's statement could mean many different things.

____ (31) It's annoying to listen to someone who cannot seem to make up his or her mind.

____ (32) I find that establishing a consistent routine enables me to enjoy life more.

____ (33) I enjoy having a clear and structured mode of life.

____ (34) I *prefer* interacting with people whose opinions are very different from mine.

____ (35) I like to have a place for everything and everything in its place.

____ (36) I feel uncomfortable when someone's meaning or intention is unclear to me.

____ (37) When trying to solve a problem I often see so many possible options that it's confusing.

____ (38) I always see many possible solutions to problems I face.

____ (39) I'd rather know bad news than stay in a state of uncertainty.

____ (40) I do not usually consult many different opinions before forming my own view.

____ (41) I dislike unpredictable situations.

____ (42) I *dislike* the routine aspects or my work (or studies).

APPENDIX B—VIGNETTES

Individual/Positive

PEACE: Corrigan Mairead was awarded the 1976 Nobel Peace Prize for her work with the Peace People Organization, an interdenominational movement dedicated to ending the deadly violence between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland. How would you *explain the behavior* of Corrigan Mairead? That is, what are the *causes or reasons* that led her to work so hard to end violence? Say as much as you feel is necessary to provide a satisfying explanation.

PEACE/PROGRESSIVE ACTIVISM: Jeanette Rankin, the first woman to serve in the U.S. Congress, was a dedicated activist, working for both women's right to vote and laws to protect children from harsh work environments. A vehement pacifist, Rankin cast the only Congressional vote against declaring war on the Japanese after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. In 1968, she led the Jeanette Rankin Brigade to Washington to protest the Vietnam War. How would you *explain the behavior* of Jeanette Rankin? That is, what are the *causes or reasons* for her activism and pacifism? Say as much as you feel is necessary to provide a satisfying explanation.

PROSOCIAL: Alain Locke, an accomplished writer, educator, and philosopher, was the first Black Rhodes Scholar, studying at Oxford, and receiving his Ph.D from Harvard. As head of the Philosophy Department at Howard University, Locke developed the philosophy of 'cultural pluralism', which emphasized the value of respect for individuality as the most important guide of human conduct. How would you *explain the behavior* of Alain Locke? That is, what are the *causes or reasons* underlying his creation of the philosophy of cultural pluralism? Say as much as you feel is necessary to provide a satisfying explanation.

PROSOCIAL: Joseph Plesh achieved success as a businessman sufficient to enable his early retirement to a comfortable existence near the beautiful beaches of northwest Florida. Following his retirement, however, he was not content simply to relish his material success. Rather, he began working as a volunteer doing tax work for the poor, helping to ensure that they paid no more taxes than absolutely necessary and received refunds that they often did not know they were entitled to. How would you *explain the behavior* of Joseph Plesh? That is, what are the *causes or reasons* underlying his volunteerism? Say as much as you feel is necessary to provide a satisfying explanation.

Individual/Negative

CRIMINALITY: Robert Stone has been in and out of prison since he was 14. While he has not been involved in any 'violent' crimes, he has been arrested multiple times for offences such as burglary, robbery, and disorderly conduct. How would you *explain the behavior* of Robert Stone? That is, what are the *causes or reasons* underlying his criminality? Say as much as you feel is necessary to provide a satisfying explanation.

SENSITIVITY TO CRITICISM: Missy Gooding was devoted to becoming a great artist. She had a very difficult time, however, dealing with criticism. She would often become enraged if someone said something negative—even if it were potentially constructive criticism—about her work. On one occasion, she invited a famous artist to her studio to review her work. When the famous artist told her that she needed to work on a couple of technical issues, she began screaming and cursing at him! How would you *explain the behavior* of Missy Gooding? That is, what are the *causes or reasons* underlying her reactions to criticism? Say as much as you feel is necessary to provide a satisfying explanation.

VIOLENCE/REPRESSION: Augusto Pinochet became the president of Chile in 1973 after violently overthrowing the government of then president Salvador Allende. Pinochet relied on mass arrests of people who disagreed with him as well as political assassinations, of which there were at least 2000, to keep his regime in power. His regime became internationally know for their "disappearances": Individuals who challenged his power would simply disappear and often were never found or heard from again. How would you *explain the behavior* of Pinochet? That is, what are the *causes or reasons* underlying his violent and repressive leadership style? Say as much as you feel is necessary to provide a satisfying explanation.

ANTI-SOCIAL TENDENCIES: Joseph Cotton is a difficult person. He has contempt for other people and their ideas, so he seizes every possible opportunity to belittle people and what they think. He controls people using his fierce temper: People are afraid he'll explode so they take special care not to offend him or oppose him. He rarely shows interest or concern about other people. How would you *explain the behavior* of Joseph Cotton? That is, what are the *causes or reasons* underlying his negative attitudes and behaviors toward others? Say as much as you feel is necessary to provide a satisfying explanation.

Group/Positive

PROSOCIAL: The Illinois Indian tribe of the Midwestern United States believed strongly in the ideal of egalitarianism. The Illinois culture was based on sharing power and resources among all tribe members, with no one able to grab an excessively large share of these things. In fact, even though they did choose a Chief to keep order in the tribe, the Chief did not get a much larger share of resources than did other members of the tribe. How would you *explain the behavior* of the Illinois Indian tribe? That is, what are the *causes or reasons* underlying their egalitarian tendencies? Say as much as you feel is necessary to provide a satisfying explanation.

ADVANCEMENT: The Mayans were one of the most advanced societies of classic Middle America. They developed astronomy, a 365 day calendar (as opposed to the less accurate lunar calendar), and they were the only Middle American society to develop a system of writing. Also impressive were their architectural feats, accomplished without the use of the wheel, draft animals, or metal tools. How would you *explain the behavior* of the Mayans? That is, what are the *causes or reasons* underlying their ability to make so many important advances? Say as much as you feel is necessary to provide a satisfying explanation.

PEACE: When conflict erupts among the Batek people of Malaysia they try to resolve it through informal discussions rather than through power assertion or violence. If threatened by neighboring tribes or societies with violence, the Batek flee rather than fight if no peaceful resolution can be achieved. How would you *explain the behavior* the Batek? That is, what are the *causes or reasons* underlying their tendency toward peaceful conflict resolution and the avoidance of violence? Say as much as you feel is necessary to provide a satisfying explanation.

COMPASSION/SELF-SACRIFICE: The Buddhist monks and nuns of Vietnam strongly sought to prevent and then end the war there between the United States and the Vietnamese communists. Some monks went so far as to douse themselves in gasoline and publicly burn themselves to death to convey their view that war is a senseless atrocity. Others devoted themselves to caring for the wounded, whether those wounded were U.S. soldiers, Vietnamese soldiers, or Vietnamese civilians. They continued to do this even as many of them were executed by both sides for suspected "collaboration with the enemy." How would you *explain the behavior* of these Buddhist monks and nuns? That is, what are the *causes or reasons* underlying their readiness to sacrifice their own lives to prevent or end the war? Say as much as you feel is necessary to provide a satisfying explanation.

Group/Negative

VIOLENCE/AGGRESSION: Ancient Sparta was a society based on militarism, taking young boys from their families and educating them in the arts of war. Sparta emphasized above all else the greatness of sacrificing one's life in battle for the state. How would you *explain the behavior* of Ancient Sparta? That is, what are the *causes or reasons* underlying their glorification of violence and death? Say as much as you feel is necessary to provide a satisfying explanation.

VIOLENCE/AGGRESSION: A highly important aspect of Yanomomi culture is aggression. The Yanomomi are constantly at war with one another, and much of their everyday social life is concerned with forming alliances with friendly groups and waging war against hostile groups. How would you *explain the behavior* of the Yanomomi? That is, what are the *causes or reasons* underlying their aggressive tendencies? Say as much as you feel is necessary to provide a satisfying explanation.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR: The Silány are a 'secret society' in Hungary. Their initiation rituals are characterized by humiliation of new members. They are a very exclusive group and treat non-members with scorn and derision. How would you *explain the behavior* of the Silány? That is, what are the *causes or reasons* underlying their humiliation of their new members and their scorn for outsiders? Say as much as you feel is necessary to provide a satisfying explanation.

VIOLENCE/FEARFULNESS: Within the U.S., there is a social movement combining religious fundamentalism and violent ideology. Members of this movement believe that the end of the world is near. They believe that the end will be preceded by a fierce battle, which many of them suspect will be between themselves and some element of the U.S. military/law enforcement apparatus. Accordingly, they live with high levels of fear and anxiety, and they stockpile massive arsenals of guns and explosives. How would you *explain the behavior* of these fundamentalists/militarists? That is, what are the *causes or reasons* underlying their belief system of fear and violence? Say as much as you feel is necessary to provide a satisfying explanation.

APPENDIX C—CODING INSTRUCTIONS

Psychologists have found that, when people explain others' behavior, their explanations vary along a dimension labeled **CONTROLLABILITY** (among other dimensions). The basic idea is that when people explain others' behavior, they sometimes view behavior as caused by a factor that is *under the control of someone*—a **controllable cause**. In other cases, they view a behavior as caused by a factor that *is outside of anyone's control*—an **uncontrollable cause**. This dimension of people's reasoning is conceived of as a continuum with **uncontrollable** causal factors at one end and **controllable** causal factors at the other.

To help you understand, here are some examples of **uncontrollable** explanations:

(a) PERSONAL TRAITS or ABILITIES: "She isn't very smart"; "he's not athletic"; "he's physically unattractive"; "she's Black"

(b) ELEMENTS OF THE CONTEXT/SITUATION: "there are lousy schools in that neighborhood"; "he had a high fever"; "it was very hot"; "the recession"

In sum, if an explanation makes mention of factors that are outside of anyone's control (i.e., ability, economic forces, luck), code that explanation as **uncontrollable.

Here are some examples of **controllable** explanations:

(a) LEVELS OF EFFORT or OPINIONS/BELIEFS: "she never studies"; "he thinks abortion is immoral"; "they just didn't care"

(b) ELEMENTS OF THE CONTEXT/SITUATION: "he joined the fraternity"; "the teacher is biased"; "her friends didn't help her"

In sum, if the explanation makes mention of factors that are within the control of someone (i.e. effort, hiring decisions, prejudicial attitudes, religious beliefs), code that explanations as **controllable.

NOTE: "Controllable" causes are causes that are *controllable by anyone, not just the individual in question.* For example, "the teacher was biased" and "he didn't study for the test" are both controllable causes (the teacher could presumably choose to be unbiased, and the student could choose to study harder). The same holds for uncontrollable causes.

NOTE: In some cases, you will need to "read between the lines," trying to figure out what the writer is *implying* rather than stating plainly. Do your best!

NOTE: You will make your ratings on a continuum. So, you can and should make distinctions among *degrees of controllability*. For example, "she never studies" is somewhat more controllable than "she has a difficult time studying." Likewise, "he wasn't prepared for the interview" is more controllable than "he was very fatigued."

NOTE: You can see above that intrinsic causes can be either controllable or uncontrollable, and extrinsic causes can be either controllable or uncontrollable.

NOTE: Two explanations can refer to the same causal factor, yet one can refer to that factor as controllable and another to that factor as uncontrollable: For example, the statement "he lives in a bad neighborhood" can be either uncontrollable (i.e. he has no choice regarding where he lives) or controllable (i.e. if he doesn't like it there, he can move!).

Psychologists have found that, when people explain others' behavior, their explanations vary along a dimension labeled **STABILITY** (among other dimensions). The basic idea is that when people explain others' behavior, they sometimes view behavior as caused by a factor that is *relatively enduring over time*—a **stable** *cause*. In other cases, they view a behavior as caused by a factor that *lasts for only a brief duration of time*—an **unstable cause**. This dimension of people's reasoning is conceived of as a continuum with **unstable** causal factors at one end and **stable** causal factors at the other.

To help you understand, here are some examples of *stable* explanations:

(a) <u>PERSONAL TRAITS or ABILITIES</u>: "she's just that kind of person"; "she's outgoing"; "she's smart"; "she has an attitude problem"; "she's lazy"; "she's naturally talented at drawing"

(b) <u>FIXED ELEMENTS OF THE CONTEXT/SITUATION ASSOCIATED WITH THE BEHAVIOR</u>: "physics is just really hard major"; "his family is just impossible to get along with"; "it's always cold there"; "she lives in a bad neighborhood"

In sum, if an explanation makes mention of factors that are relatively constant over time (i.e., ability, enduring personality traits, fixed aspects of a person's situation/context), code that explanation as **stable.

Here are some examples of **unstable** explanations:

(a) <u>TRANSITORY, SHORT-LIVED "STATES" OF A PERSON:</u> "she was in a really bad mood"; "he unexpectedly flew off the handle, that's not his usual tendency"; "I guess she was confused"

(b) <u>TRANSIENT ELEMENTS OF THE CONTEXT/SITUATION ASSOCIATED WITH THE BEHAVIOR:</u> "it was too loud in the dorm last night"; "she had a lot of things due all at the same time"; "someone had vandalized her car"; "her boyfriend had acted like a jerk"

In sum, if the explanation makes mention of factors that tend to fluctuate from moment to moment or day to day (i.e., effort, mood, luck, temporary situational factors), code that explanation as **unstable.

NOTE: In some cases, you will need to "read between the lines," trying to figure out what the writer is *implying* rather than stating plainly. Do your best!

NOTE: You will make your ratings on a continuum. So, you can and should make distinctions among *degrees of stability*. For example, "she is intelligent" is somewhat more stable than "she likes college." Likewise, "his family has never been supportive" is more stable than "graduate school is stressful."

NOTE: You can see above that intrinsic causes can be either stable or unstable, and extrinsic causes can be either stable or unstable.

NOTE: Two explanations can refer to the same causal factor, yet one can refer to that factor as stable and another to that factor as unstable: For example, "she's a lazy person" is stable, whereas "she was lazy when it came to that class" is unstable.

Psychologists have found that, when people explain others' behavior, their explanations vary along a dimension labeled **INTERNALITY/EXTERNALITY** (among other dimensions). The basic idea is that when people explain others' behavior, they sometimes view behavior as caused by a factor that lies *within that individual—*an ***internal cause.*** In other cases, they view a behavior as caused by a factor that lies *outside of the individual—*an ***external cause***. This dimension of people's reasoning is conceived of as a continuum with ***internal*** causal factors at one end and ***external*** causal factors at the other.

To help you understand, here are some examples of ***internal*** explanations:

(a) PERSONAL TRAITS, ABILITIES, or ENDURING CHARACTERISTICS:
"She isn't very smart"; "he's not athletic"; "they never put forth any effort"

** In sum, if an explanation makes mention of some trait or quality inside the person as having caused the behavior, code that explanation as ***internal.***

Here are some examples of ***external*** explanations:

(b) ELEMENTS OF THE CONTEXT/SITUATION or SOCIAL FORCES: "She was getting her tooth pulled"; "he had just won the lottery"; "they were out celebrating their victory"; "his family is very poor"; "she goes to a terrible high school"

In sum, if an explanation makes mention of some factor that is outside the person, code that explanation as ***external.*

NOTE: An external cause implies that *most people* would behave in the same way under similar circumstances. For example, if someone says "she was crying because her husband just died," this implies that she is merely reacting to a situation *in the manner most people would react.* That is, does not possess a uniquely strong tendency to cry.

NOTE: An internal cause implies that the cause of a behavior was something *relatively unique* about the person who performed the behavior. For example, "she failed the test because she is just dumb," describes the cause of her failure as lying in her unusually high degree of "dumbness." Likewise, "he's always getting into fights," describes an individual who is unusually aggressive or fight-prone.

NOTE: You are not offering *your* explanation for why a person performed a behavior, but are rather characterizing the explanation that the writer offered. For example, "he turned to crime because he had to feed his family," is an external explanation in the eyes of the writer. It does not5 matter whether *you* think this is an acceptable external reason for his criminal behavior.

NOTE: In some cases, you will need to "read between the lines," trying to figure out what the writer is *implying* rather than stating plainly. Do your best!

NOTE: You will make your ratings on a continuum. So, you can and should make distinctions among *degrees of internality/externality* in the person's total explanation. For example, "he said it because he is a cruel person," is more internal than "he does have a tendency to be obnoxious sometimes, but, on the other hand, he was in a hurry and maybe didn't have time to think about what he was saying."