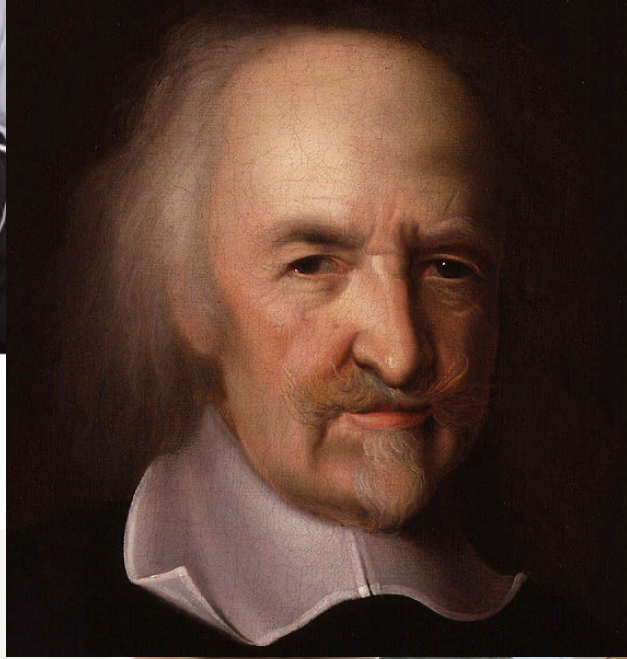
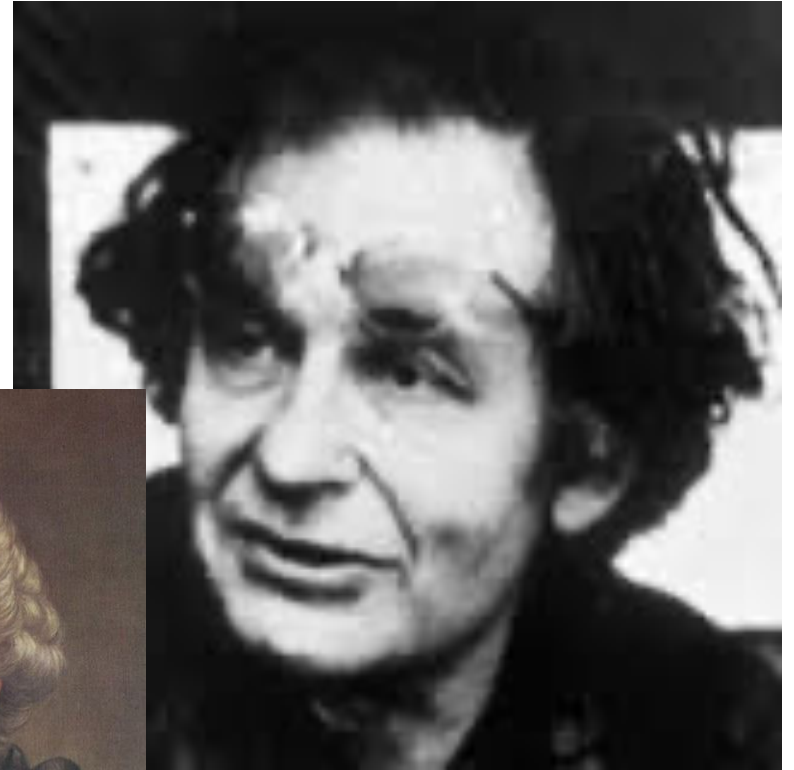
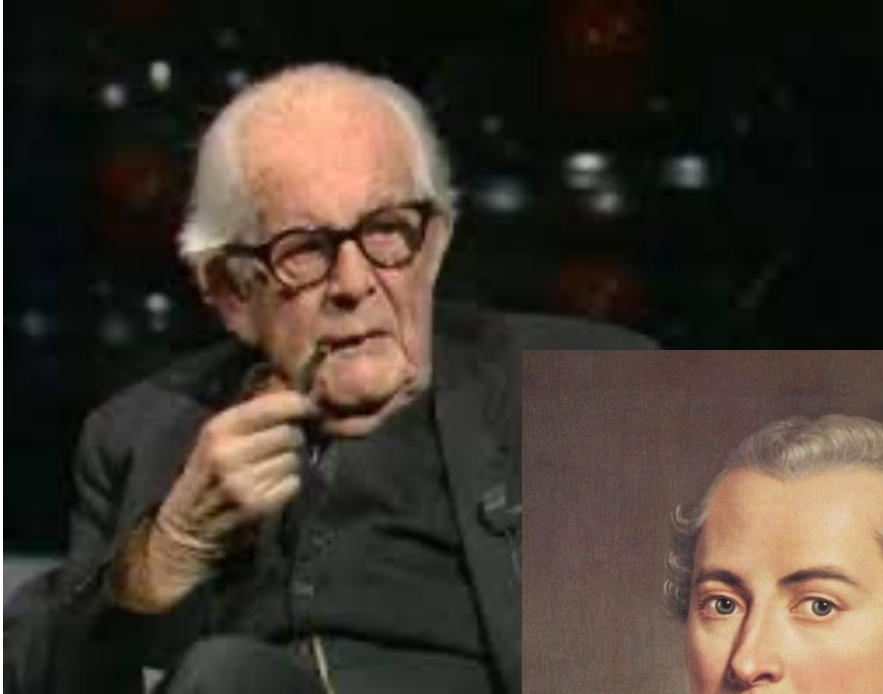


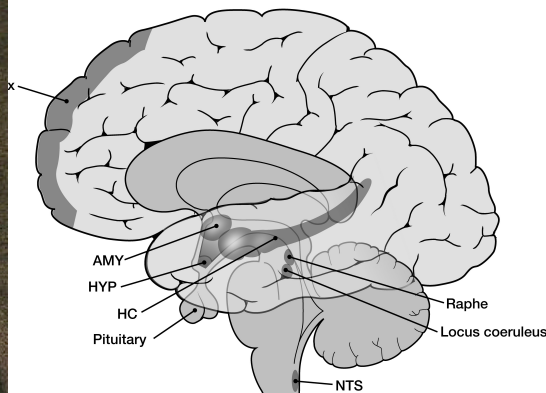
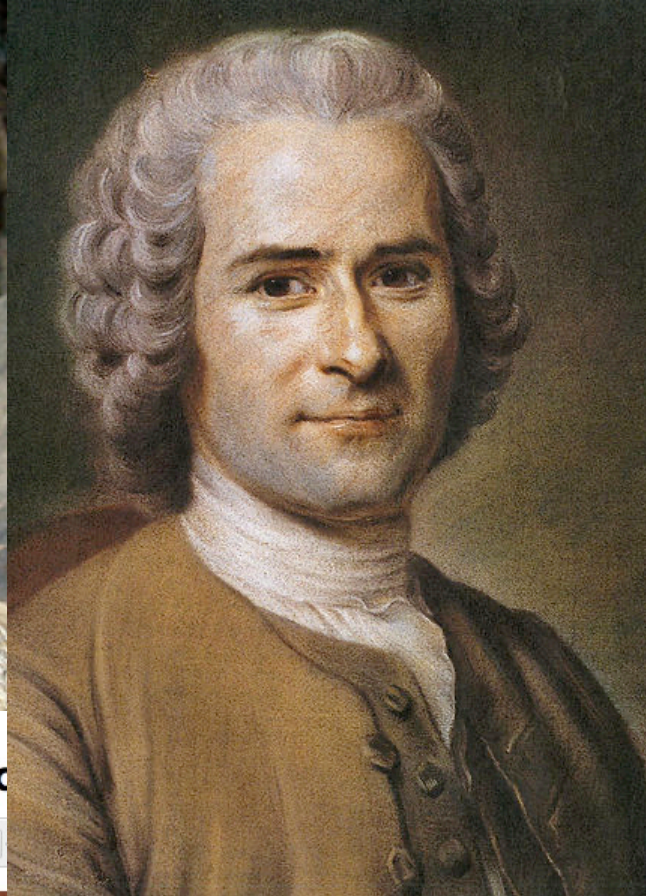
The roots of helping, sharing and caring



Ross A. Thompson
University of California, Davis

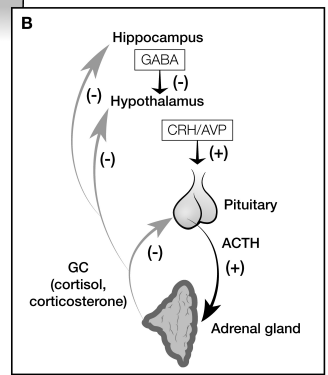


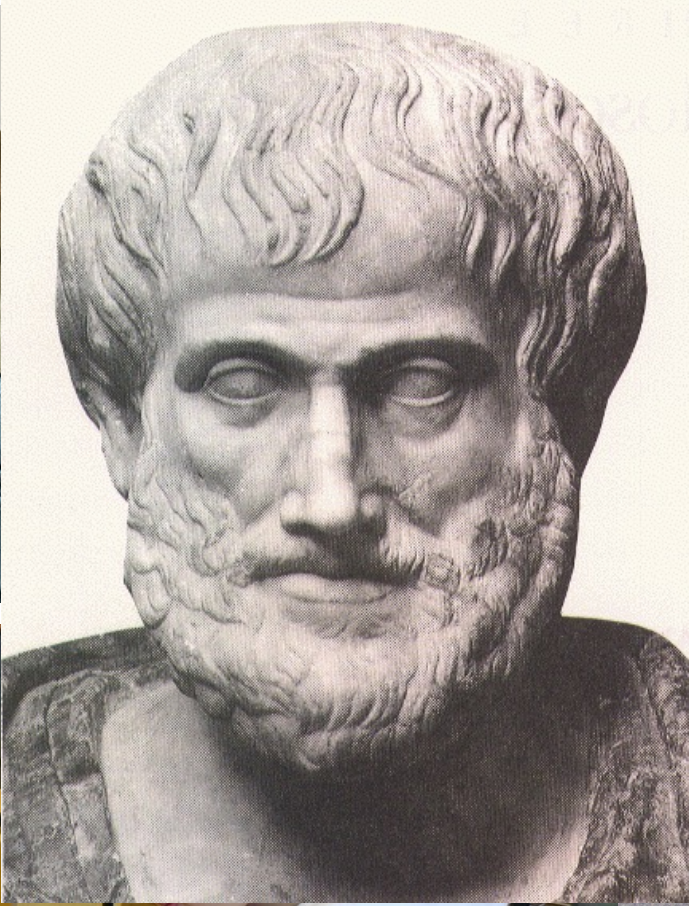




Babies help unlock the c

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A new developmental perspective

- early social-cognitive understanding provides the basis for a primitive **premoral sensibility** that underlies social evaluations and motivates prosocial behavior and socially constructive actions
- this premoral sensibility develops further in the context of parent-child interaction, particularly the sensitivity and warmth of care
- conversational discourse linking the child's intuitive premoral sensibility to broader values is important to the growth of more genuinely **moral** motivation
- the early growth of the "moral self" through these influences also contributes to developing moral identity

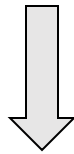
developing an early premoral awareness ...

- understanding of another's intentions and goals

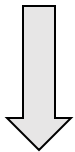


developing an early premoral awareness ...

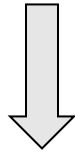
- understanding of another's intentions and goals



shared intentionality: intersubjective participation in activity involving shared mental states (pointing, collaborative problem-solving, cooperative social play)



helping



*responses to helpers
and hinderers*



*sensitivity to morally
relevant intentions*

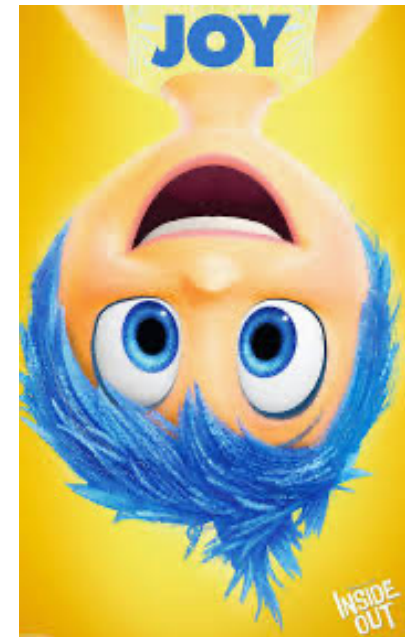
Fairness judgments of helpers and hinderers in 3½-year-olds:



(Baumard, Mascaro, & Chevallie, 2012)

developing an early premoral awareness ...

- understanding of another's intentions and goals
- emotion understanding



developing an early premoral awareness ...

- understanding of another's intentions and goals
- emotion understanding
 - Emotions are an important entrée into the psychological experience of another person
 - There is evidence for early resonant or empathic responding to the sight or sound of another's emotions
 - **But** others' negative emotions are conceptually and motivationally complex events for young children, so adult guidance is necessary to help children understand others' emotional expressions and enlist this understanding into constructive social responding



- You didn't like that he was bouncing your guy off the game, and that made you really mad.

- It's hard when you feel so angry. You're going "AAAHH, he's bouncing my guy off there!" Right?

- How did the other kids feel when you turned off the game? Did they want to play more?

- You know, after you stopped the game, the other guys said, "Joey wasn't really doing so bad." You thought you were losing, but you weren't.

- I wonder what you could do differently if something like this happens again.

2 ½ years: Mother-child conversation elements during conflict episodes in the lab

Talking about rules

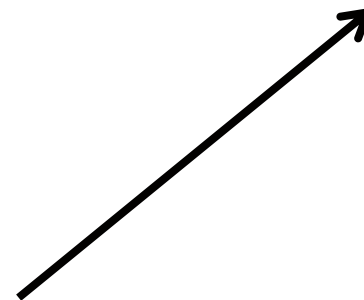
Talking about the consequences of actions

Talking about people's emotions

Moral evaluative statements ("good girl!")

Compromising or bargaining

Justification and reasoning /
Low use of threats, teasing or insistence



Conscience
Development
age 3



- You didn't like that he was bouncing your guy off the game, and that made you really mad.

- It's hard when you feel so angry. You're going "AAAH, she's bouncing my guy off there!" Right?

- How did the other kids feel when you turned off the game? Did they want to play more?

- You know, after you stopped the game, the other guys said, "Joey wasn't really doing so bad." You thought you were losing, but you weren't.

- I wonder what you could do differently if something like this happens again.

autobiographical memory

"moral self" in early childhood



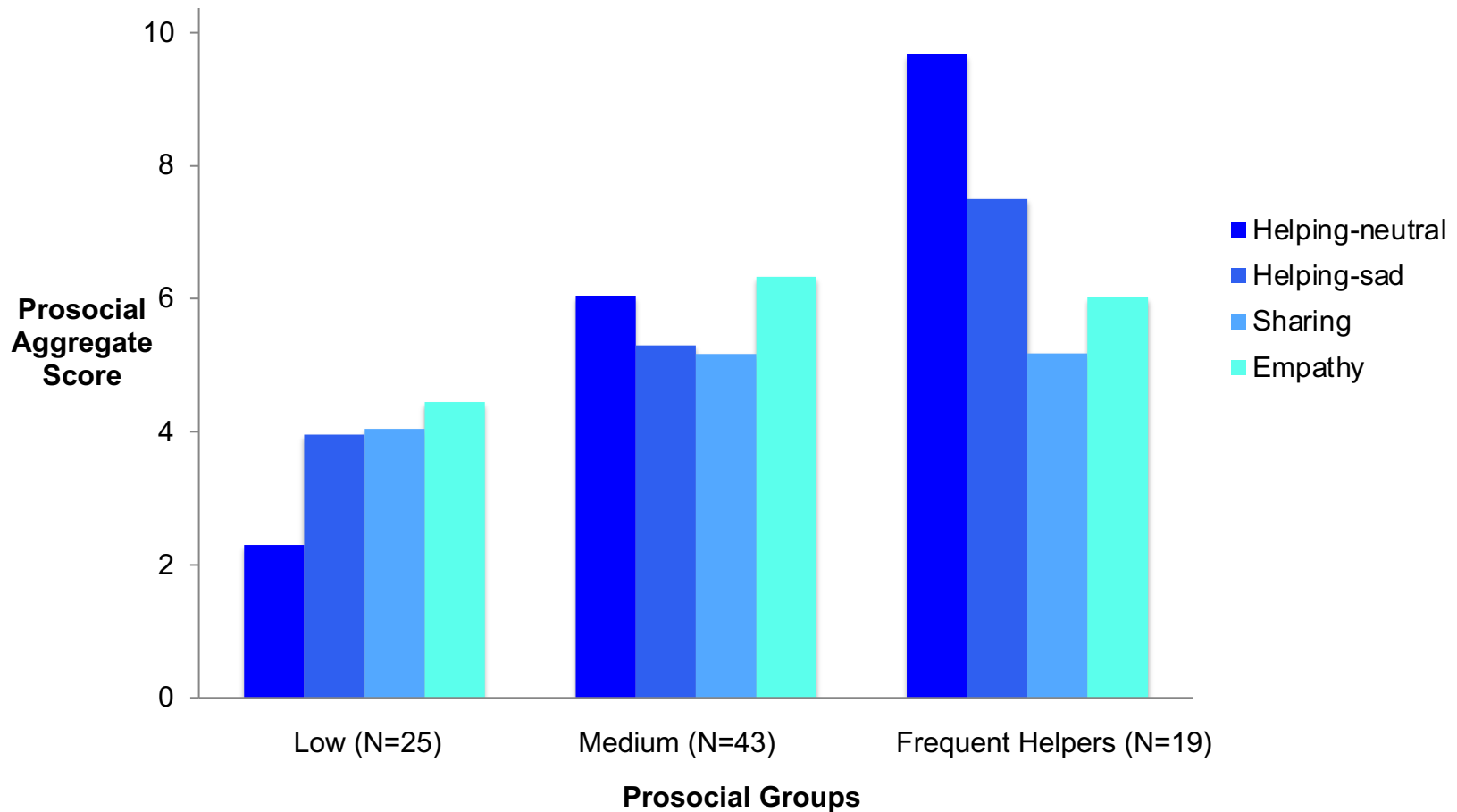
moral identity in adolescence and adulthood

5

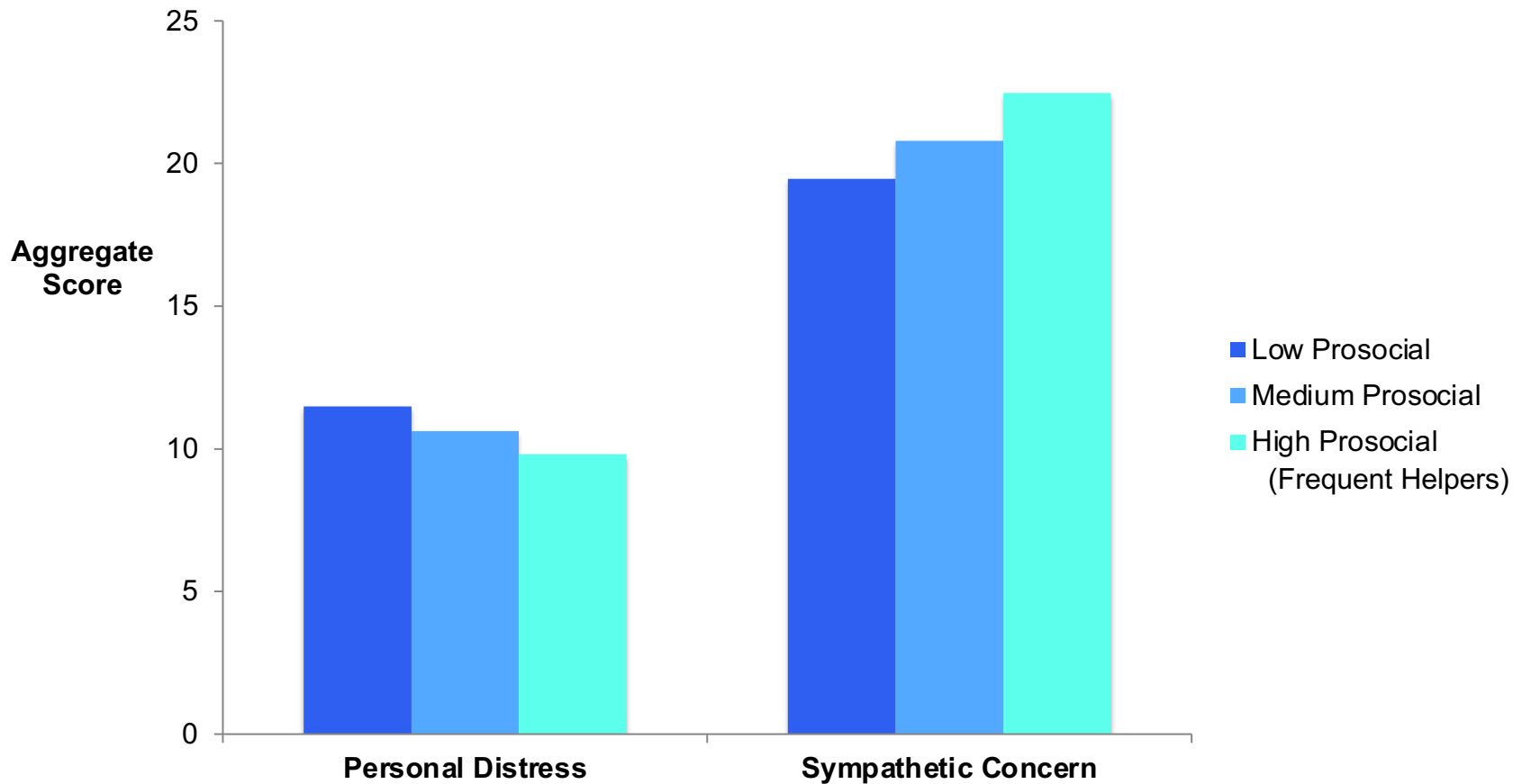
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Are there reliable individual differences in prosocial responding by toddlers?



How is prosocial behavior associated with children's sympathetic concern and personal distress?



for Personal Distress: $F(2,80) = 4.78, p < .05$ for Sympathetic Concern: $F(2,75) = 8.08, p < .001$

How are individual differences in prosocial behavior associated with mother-child interaction?

Logistic Class Regression Analysis

Variables	Class 1 vs. Class 2 OR (95% CI)	Class 2 vs. Class 3 OR (95% CI)	Class 1 vs. Class 3 OR (95% CI)
Child Sex	0.58 (0.20-1.68)	1.77 (0.50-6.22)	1.03 (0.27-3.93)
Child Age	1.02 (0.99-1.05)	0.99 (0.95-1.02)	1.01 (0.97-1.05)
Maternal Sensitivity	1.39 (0.85-2.27)	2.49 (1.17-5.31)*	3.45 (1.63-7.33)***
Maternal Mental State Language	0.95 (0.86-1.03)	1.17 (1.02-1.33)*	1.10 (0.96-1.27)
Sensitivity x Language	0.99 (0.92-1.05)	0.91 (0.81-1.01)	0.89 (0.80-1.00)*

* $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$

Class 1 = Not Prosocial, Class 2 = Moderately Prosocial, Class 3 = Frequent Helpers; OR = odds ratio

Early moral development and attachment relationships

- Securely-attached children show characteristics associated with an **emergent moral sense**: better emotion regulation skills, greater conflict resolution ability, stronger emotion understanding and empathy, more advanced conscience development, greater prosocial motivation.
- Mothers in secure relationships use richer emotion language, gentler discipline, and greater conciliation in conflict with their children; they also better coach children's emotion regulation.
- Secure attachment may also enhance the influence of other parental practices that contribute to (or undermine) an emergent moral sense.
- In sum, attachment theory underscores the constructive early emotional and relational basis to a developing **pre-moral sensibility**.

Thompson, R. A. (in press). Attachment theory and moral development. In E. Harcourt (Ed.), *Attachment and character: Attachment theory and the developmental psychology of vice and virtue*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Thompson, R. A. (2019). Early moral development and attachment theory. In D. Laible, L. M. Padilla-Walker, & G. Carlo (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of parenting and moral development* (pp. 21-39). New York: Oxford University Press.

Humans are an **uber-social** species.

Even in the first year, infants begin differentiating among people according to social categories like ...



race

gender



even language and accent

... expecting people who share these characteristics to be alike in other ways (such as the food they like, and who they interact with)

Infants also prefer people who have the same characteristics that they do, preferring to look at them, imitating them, turning to them to learn new information, etc.

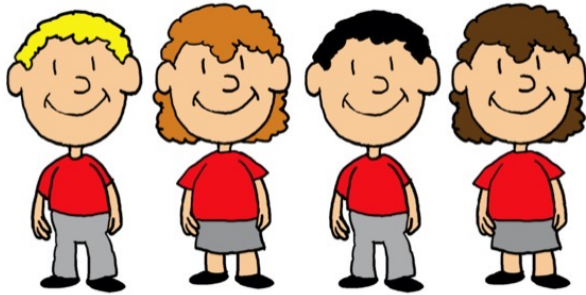
Familiarity appears to be the reason for these social category preferences.

Between ages 3 and 6, children show a strong ingroup preference as they increasingly perceive themselves not just as individuals, but as group members.

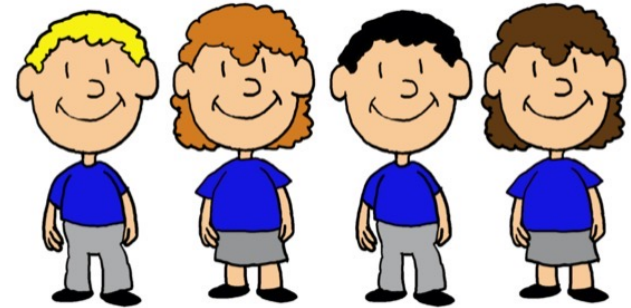


They prefer ingroup over outgroup members, expect ingroup members to follow shared rules, to help and share with each other, and they can even acquire negative beliefs about the outgroup, **even when group membership is arbitrary.**





FLURPS



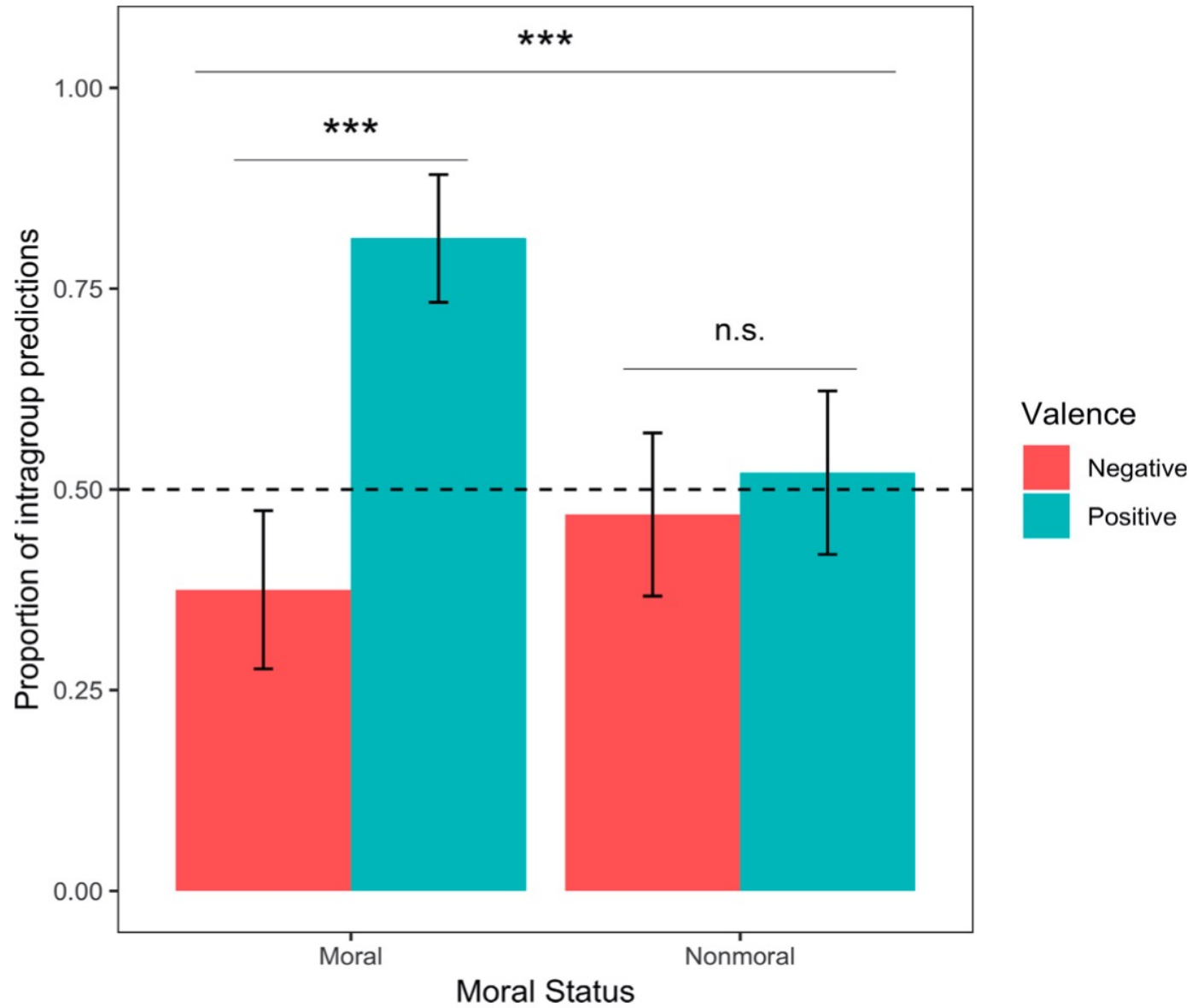
ZAZZES

It's good for kids to wug each other. Kids should wug other kids, and it's really good if they do. And, even if the teachers in school say you don't have to wug somebody, you still should no matter what.

Here's a Flurp on the playground. This Flurp *wugged* somebody. Who did the Flurp wug? Did the Flurp wug another Flurp, or did the Flurp wug a Zazz?

It's bad for kids to dax each other. Kids shouldn't dax other kids, and it's really bad if they do. And, even if the teachers in school say you can dax somebody, you still shouldn't no matter what.

Here's a Zazz on the playground. This Zazz *daxed* somebody. Who did the Zazz dax? Did the Zazz dax another Zazz, or did the Zazz dax a Flurp?



As young children develop a premoral sensibility based on growing understanding of another's feelings and goals, are they also narrowing the targets of moral sensitivity to others who are part of their group?

What are the developmental processes by which children extend their moral concern to individuals and groups that are dissimilar to them?

What are the social experiences that influence the tension between social exclusion and shared understanding in early childhood?

- early experience in heterogeneous social conditions
- help in perceiving common ground with those who are different, drawing on a young child's premoral sensibility
- establishing a human connection with other people through assisted role-taking, empathy, and young children's intuitive understanding of fairness

The development of a humanistic moral orientation toward others begins much earlier than traditionally assumed. So also does the process of character development – and character education.

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