

**A social world for the rational tail of the emotional dog:
Roles of moral reasoning in group decision making**

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Abstract

We demonstrate that moral reasoning plays an important role in group discussions of moral issues. Groups of three children (6th or 8th grade) played dictator and ultimatum games in the role of proposer with another group of three children. Before group discussion, individual preferences were measured. In both games, there was no difference in individual offers between the two age groups. Analyses of group decision-making processes showed an age difference in the dictator game. The results indicate that in the 6th grade, individuals making altruistic offers were much less influential than individuals making egoistic offers. Altruists could not defend their arguments even when they were in a majority position. We further found that the level of moral reasoning was higher in the older age group. All results were congruent with the hypothesis that more advanced moral reasoning is necessary for defending prosocial arguments against egoistic arguments that are rational in terms of profit maximization.

Keywords: Dictator game, ultimatum game, moral reasoning, social preference, group decision making