

What do People Mean when Speaking of Evilness?

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The term evilness started to become popular in social psychology after the publication in 1999 of the special issue edited by Arthur G. Miller, "Perspectives on evil and violence". It is usually used to define behaviors that are extremely and strongly harmful. However, the concept is still imprecise and needs to be empirically delineated. This article attempts to answer the following questions. What is evilness? What is the difference between aggression and evilness? We conducted several studies with three goals: to analyze how laypersons and experts define evilness, to verify whether laypeople distinguish between different intensities of evilness, and to determine the dimensions that predict aggression and evilness. The results offer preliminary answers to the three questions.

Keywords: aggression, evilness, harm.

El término maldad comienza a difundirse en psicología social tras la publicación en 1999 del monográfico editado por Arthur G. Miller, "*Perspectives on evil and violence*". Usualmente se emplea para definir acciones extremas e intensamente dañinas, pero el concepto es impreciso y necesita ser delimitado empíricamente. Este artículo trata de responder a las preguntas ¿Qué es la maldad? ¿Qué diferencias existen entre la maldad y el concepto tradicional de agresión? Para ello, llevamos a cabo varios estudios con tres objetivos: analizar cómo legos y expertos definen la maldad, verificar si las personas legas diferencian niveles de intensidad de la maldad y determinar las dimensiones predictivas de la maldad y la agresión. Los resultados ofrecen respuestas preliminares a las tres cuestiones.

Palabras clave: agresión, maldad, daño.

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Psychologists have always been astonished by the various forms people can use to harm others: murder, physical and sexual abuse, torture, neglect, threat. In spite of this constant interest, the 90s constituted one of the summits in the investigation and conceptualization of aggressive behaviors (Miller, 1999). The term “evilness”, familiar to philosophers and theologians, but new to social psychologists, started to appear in various publications (Alford, 1997; Baumeister, 2000; Darley, 1992; Katz, 1993; Zimbardo, 1995) under the impact of Staub’s book (1989), *The Roots of Evil: The origins of genocide and the other group violence*. The concept of evilness remains however imprecise and needs empirical delineations. In general, it refers to extreme behaviors. One thinks of the Holocaust, of ethnic and religious genocides, torture, or disappearances in Chile and Argentina, not to mention the terrorist acts of September, 11th, and the 11th of March. The rarity and extremity of this kind of behavior raises the question: What do people call evilness? The answer to this question first requires that laypeople and experts identify behaviors representative of evilness in many contexts of everyday life rather than further scrutinize extreme behaviors. One will then verify whether laypeople can quantify different degrees of evilness, and finally, look for characteristics specific to evilness and aggression.

What is evilness?

Evilness was popularized in 1999 in the special issue of *Personality and Social Psychology Review* edited by Arthur G. Miller. According to Staub, it is appropriate to speak of evilness when the actions are extremely harmful, have no common measure with the instigating conditions, and are persistent or repetitive. If one agrees that aggression is a behavior aimed to harm others (Berkowitz, 1993), it is obvious that evilness is for Staub an extreme form of aggression, both in its expression and consequences. Not all the authors agree with this perspective. For Waller (2002) or Baumeister (2000), evilness can also be small harms happening in everyday relations. For Waller, evilness is distinguishable from other obnoxious events because it implies deliberate harm creating the conditions that, materially or psychologically, destroy or decrease the quality of life of the victims. Baumeister also insists on the importance of considering small everyday life cruelties and transgressions that suppose interpersonal intentional harm. These hypotheses support the perspective adopted in this paper, that is, there are various ways to show evilness and there is a large array of behaviors going from common and frequent to extreme and infrequent.

It is certain that the main discussion about evilness closely associates this word with tyranny or torture. An example is provided by the current debate between the situational perspective and the interactionist approach. The first point of view is defended by Zimbardo (Zimbardo, 2004; Zimbardo, Banks, Haney & Jaffe, 1973) in his study of the Stanford prison for which he assumes that anybody (even a good person) can accomplish atrocious acts if the situation is appropriate. The second viewpoint considers that individual and/or dispositional characteristics interact with the situation that may also be variable (e.g., Carnahan & McFarland, 2007; Haslam & Reicher, 2007). Research by Reicher and Haslam (2006), called as the BBC prison study, was partially aimed at replicating Zimbardo’s (2007) Stanford Prison and, unexpectedly, it showed prisoners who became aggressive towards guards, and even more aggressive than guards. These authors argue for an approach that asserts that both persons and situations are transformed through their interplay (Haslam & Reicher, 2007).

Our perspective is not aimed at taking position in the Stanford versus BBC study. The debate may, however, become relevant as this paper concerns the daily conception of evilness. Our main question is “What do people mean when they speak of evilness?” We propose to determine this meaning and to see to what extent the answer corresponds to the theoretical arguments advanced by social psychologists. Before considering what social psychologists have to say about evilness, we will first look at the perspective of lay people. Is the meaning of evilness less restrictive for laypeople than for experts (Quiles, Morera, Correa, & Leyens, 2008)?

A pilot study¹ shows that people apply the term evilness to a large variety of behaviors that are less extreme than in the classic literature. Sixty participants wrote a list with all the behaviors they considered instances of evilness. They provided 581 behaviors that could be grouped into 14 categories: violence and physical harm (14.46%), psychological abuse like threat or moral harm (14.28%), fraud or deception (10.67%), despise or humiliation (8.10%), sexual abuse (7.57%), murder (7.4%), passivity or non assistance to persons in danger (7.23%), extreme evilness like torture, terrorism, and genocide (6.71%), discrimination on the basis of gender, skin color or other characteristics (6.2%), loss of liberty as in slavery or kidnappings (4.82%), stealing material goods (4.82%), abuse of power (2.58%), vandalism or aggression against public objects (1.72%), and endangering life as in drug trafficking (1.55%).

The results show that evilness can embrace all kinds of behaviors, and that the most representative ones in the

¹ Complete data are available from authors.

literature (torture, terrorism, genocide) are not among the most often cited. Even if the scores of evilness are not extreme (Quiles et al., 2008) it remains to verify whether lay people distinguish the level of evilness of different behaviors. A second preliminary study was conducted to this end.

Seventy-eight students of the University of La Laguna answered a questionnaire with 36 behaviors: four came from each of the 9 categories that received over 5% in the first pilot study. Participants had to rate the degree of evilness on a 7-point scale (0 = not at all; 6 = totally so). As shown in Figure 1, the behaviors were adequate examples of evilness given that all of them exceeded the mean of the scale (3). In addition, the values varied between 3.04 and 5.95, which indicates that the participants distinguish different levels of evilness, and that the latter is not a question of all or nothing. Looking at the behaviors rated as evil (see Table 1), one realizes that they are relatively frequent and do not necessarily imply extremely negative consequences.

The dimensions of Evilness

In this section we aim at exploring the dimensions that could be specific to aggression and evilness. These dimensions are consistently found in the scientific literature to characterize evilness and to differentiate it from other

types of harmful behaviors. However, no empirical study has ever been conducted about this problem. Our main investigation will try to verify to which extent laypeople associate these dimensions to concepts of evilness and aggression. First, we summarize the dimensions most often cited in the literature about evilness and, second, we feed them by the findings of the pilot studies.

Evilness brings harm to another person

Laypeople and experts agree that evilness has negative consequences for somebody, although the consensus is not especially great for the magnitude of consequences. For laypeople, evilness covers a variety ranging from extreme to slight harm. The type of harm can be physical, psychological, or addressed to self-respect. In this perspective, evilness goes beyond the commonly accepted meaning of aggression; it can be related to humiliation, distress, anguish, or with actions that are not necessarily obvious and direct.

Evilness is an intentional and planned behavior

Evilness as well as aggression implies intentional harm. Evilness not only entails intentionality, but, also a plan. For instance, when a person wants to slander someone, s/he has to lie about something concrete that is not trivial. Evilness requires knowledge of the other person and of his/

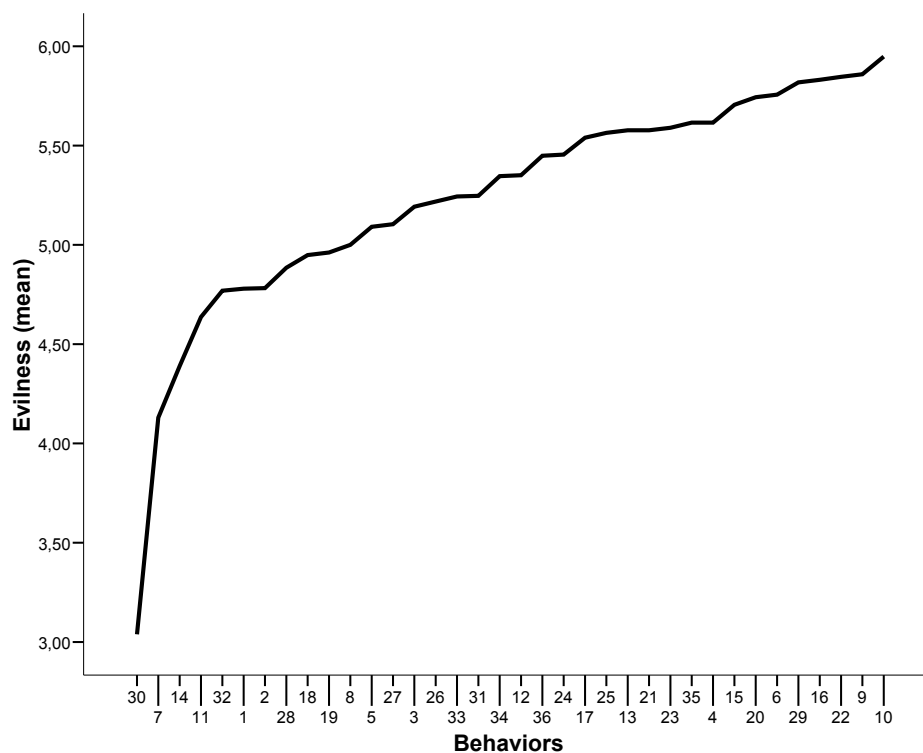


Figure 1. Means of evilness of the 36 behaviors (the behavior tag is its order in the questionnaire).

her context. Furthermore, it needs a strategy. Staub (1999, p.179) states that *one of the ways to differentiate evilness from violence is precisely the elaboration of a plan.*

Evilness implies a lack of compassion

The plan of evilness supposes calculated harm and no escape from it. To program the harm implies a complete lack of compassion, on top of the fact that the actor anticipates the pain of the victim. If knowledge of the suffering of others and if the possibility to increase or decrease it is what gives the meaning of compassion and cruelty (Eisenberg, 1986, 2002; Gilbert, 1989), one could define evilness as those actions that do not stop harming instead of alleviating pain (see also Baumeister, 2000).

Evilness relies on intrinsic motivation

If the magnitude of the harm bypasses the importance of any instigator of evilness (Staub, 1999), it means that an additional motivation must exist. At a general level, this motivation is the harm itself, and the desire to make suffer, to humiliate or to debase the victim. The action gives to its author an intrinsic satisfaction as well as other benefits.

Evilness lacks legitimacy

People are accustomed to justify their harmful behaviors. For instance, they may pretend that the situation did not offer another possibility, that they are simply making their duty (e.g., patriotism), or claim that victims are immoral and dangerous with their own pain being necessary to improve humanity (e.g., terrorism) (Staub, 1999). The Stanford prison experiment or Milgram's (1974) obedience to authority showed the power of social settings to transform the behavior of the persons who entered them. Authors like Berkowitz (1999), Miller, Gordon, and Buddie (1999) or Reicher and Haslam (2006) criticize this thesis because it excuses the behaviors of the actors. Indeed, these authors argue that Zimbardo's thesis could ultimately lead to consider that the executioners of Abu Ghraib prison were victims of circumstances. This debate reminds the scandal raised by H. Arendt (1967) when defending the banality of evil. In any case, it is clear that, from the point of view of the victim, no type of justification is sufficient to justify evilness.

Evilness requires a special personality

To attribute evilness to special personality characteristics of the actors is one of the most intuitive explanations. Considering these persons sadists, or perverse, focuses the origin of evilness in the person and in one of his/her peculiarities. Baumeister and Campbell (1999) consider that, for some individuals, evilness can be gratifying and that there are mediating factors, such as the degree of culpability feelings, research of sensations, narcissism, or sadism, that may explain the degree of satisfaction. Similarly, Carnahan and McFarland (2007) argue that understanding extreme

actions requires consideration of individual characteristics and the interaction between person and situations. For Haney and Zimbardo (2009) this dispositionalism corresponds to the "fundamental attribution error" and actually serves to "absolve the rest of us of any responsibility ignoring these pernicious and destructive environments, or failing to take steps to ameliorate them" (pp. 807). "If people cannot help but act in terms of assigned role, it implies that they have little choice, and hence little responsibility, for their social actions." Reicher and Haslam (2006, p. 6) claim that situations allow several roles, and that Zimbardo's error has been to generalize a single role to a variety of situations.

Evilness can be prevented and avoided

A consequence of the above characteristics is that evilness does not constitute an unexpected and explosive reaction like other types of behaviors that are considered aggressive. Given that evilness requires plan, temporal organization, and most likely a special personality, it is possible that other persons may see the danger coming. For Staub (1989), the most important analysis of the origins of evilness is that it requires the simultaneous investigation of its prevention.

The following study has the objective to determine the extent to which each of the dimensions reviewed above is related to evilness and aggression according to lay people. More concretely, we will try to identify the dimensions characterizing evilness and differentiating it from aggression. We expect the two concepts, although overlapping up to a certain point, to be different at the level of the predictors. In line with the classic literature, we predict that aggression will be centered on the harm done, while evilness will be focused on the agent of the action.

Method

Participants

There were 327 participants (64.5% females) with a mean age of 21.06 ($SD = 3.5$). Participants from the University of La Laguna were given the questionnaire as part of a classroom exercise.

Procedure and instruments

A questionnaire contained 21 behaviors (Table 1). *Twelve* of them were selected from the previous pilot study and represented three intervals of evilness: moderate, high or extreme evilness. The intervals were established taking into account the distance of the means of behaviors (focusing on the standard deviation) from the general mean of evilness. The 9 other behaviors were selected by a group of 8 judges to represent examples of aggression. There were three levels of aggression (moderate, high or extreme aggression).

There were two versions of the questionnaire: one order was random and the second was in the reverse order of the first one. Each version was randomly assigned to the sample. Participants had to rate each behavior on 17 dimensions (0 = not much; 7 = extremely). These dimensions are given in Table 2. Fifteen dimensions correspond closely to the characteristics associated to evilness and aggression and were presented in the introduction. The other 2 measured directly the degree of evilness and aggression on 7-point scales.

Results

Descriptive data about aggression and evilness:

More evilness ($M = 5.8$, $SD = .9$) than aggression ($M = 5.2$, $SD = .9$) was assigned to behaviors labeled as examples of evilness, $t(326) = 9.77$, $p < .001$, and more aggression ($M = 5.0$, $SD = 1.1$) than evilness ($M = 3.6$, $SD = 1.2$) was given to behaviors labeled as examples of aggression, $t(326) = 19.24$, $p < .001$. These differences do not mean that the two concepts are completely different. In fact, the correlation between evilness and aggression was $r(325) = .476$, $p < .001$.

To determine whether a given behavior presents significant differences in terms of scores of aggression and evilness, we calculated paired t tests. Nineteen behaviors present a significant difference (see Table 1) and only 7 are rated as more evil.

Conceptual relations of evilness and aggression

A way to explore the conceptual relations of evilness and aggression is to see how both are located in a factorial analysis and with which dimensions they are associated. We expected that the two concepts would be organized on different factors. We started by running an exploratory AF with principal components and varimax rotation.

The index KMO (.91) and Bartlett's test ($\chi^2 = 3851.7$, 136 gl , $p < .001$) indicate that the data are appropriate for this analysis. The factorial solution, with 3 factors, explains 64.36 of the variance. Table 2 shows the communalities of each dimension as well as their loadings.

The first factor is comprised of: willingness to destroy, willingness to make suffer, avoidable, satisfaction for the harm done, and special personality. Other dimensions are important although their weight on the second factor is also

Table 1
Differences of means in the scores of evilness and aggression

EVLNESS > AGGRESSION	M_{evilness}	$M_{\text{aggression}}$	t	
Deceiving stigmatized people to benefit economically from them	6.19	3.87	17.80	**
Excluding someone because of the color of her/his skin	5.45	5.06	3.26	**
Making as if someone did not exist	5.43	4.55	7.62	**
Abandoning a new born	5.23	4.19	7.29	**
Making a child anxious	4.91	4.67	2.05	*
Not caring for an old person	4.78	4.04	6.13	**
Lying to obtain something at the cost of others	4.49	2.35	17.42	**
AGGRESSION > EVLNESS				
Realizing a terrorist massacre	6.70	6.83	-2.76	**
Killing just for pleasure	6.67	6.89	-3.55	**
Raping a woman	6.51	6.82	-5.13	**
Punishing someone by pleasure	6.50	6.66	-2.76	**
Physically abusing one's spouse	6.19	6.85	-9.50	**
Hurting seriously someone during a discussion because of the traffic	4.51	6.20	-16.18	**
Shouting obscenities to someone	4.11	4.68	-5.01	**
Insulting someone who crosses the street outside of the crosswalk	3.45	3.88	-3.63	**
Slapping someone who has made a provocation	3.06	5.24	-19.06	**
Committing a fault to avoid a goal	2.80	3.41	-5.30	**
Giving a blow to an intruder to the house	1.90	4.52	-19.42	**
Killing another person to defend oneself	1.70	5.23	-26.34	**
EVLNESS = AGGRESSION				
Stealing a car with a gun	5.75	5.67	NS	
Threatening to kill the new companion of his/her ex boy/girlfriend	5.65	5.77	NS	

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

Table 2
Loadings and communalities of the dimensions

Dimensions	Component			<i>h</i> ²
	1 (27,79%)*	2 (25,31%)*	3 (11,26%)*	
Willingness to destroy	.844	.278	-.180	.822
Willingness to make suffer	.842	.333	-.190	.857
Willingness to humiliate	.809	.396	-.202	.853
Is planned	.701	.385	-.134	.659
Is evilness	.629	.378	-.399	.698
Implies lack of compassion	.611	.494	-.304	.710
Could have been avoided	.524	.106	.295	.373
Satisfaction for the harm done	.512	.257	.126	.344
Requires a special personality	.457	.278	.110	.299
Elicits psychological harm	.293	.816	-.055	.754
Is aggression	.224	.788	-.120	.685
Elicits harm to self-respect	.378	.783	-.047	.758
Elicits severe harm	.303	.755	-.178	.694
Is intentional	.267	.612	-.022	.446
Elicits physical harm	.419	.603	.097	.549
Is possible to forgive	-.138	.064	.829	.711
Can be justified	.053	-.237	.819	.729

*Variance explained after rotation

significant²: willingness to humiliate, planning, evilness, and lack of compassion. As one can see, the dimensions are related to the actor as an agent who wants something, as well as a special person. On the second factor, one finds the dimensions: psychological harm, aggression, severe harm, and intention. Other dimensions with important loadings are physical harm and harm to self-respect. The dimensions are clearly focused on the consequences for victims. On the third factor, there are only two dimensions, forgiveness and justification. They relate to the legitimacy of the behaviors.

Our expectation that evilness and aggression would fall on different factors is partially supported. If the second factor clearly represents aggression, evilness pertains to the first two factors but with more importance to the first one. This exploratory analysis has been conducted on 21 behaviors with distinct levels of aggression and evilness. We therefore looked much more in detail for an underlying factorial space.

To this end, *three* behaviors of each level of aggression and evilness were selected and a confirmatory AF was conducted. It found the three factors, but with fewer

dimensions. Factor 1 comprises planning, humiliation and destruction. Factor 2 contains serious harm and harm to self-respect. The third factor contains justification and forgiveness.

Dimensions predicting evilness and aggression

To know the variables that people use to judge the degree of evilness and aggression, we conducted two regression analyses. First, we ran a hierarchical analysis of regression with evilness as criterion and the dimensions as predictors. Lack of compassion, willingness to make suffer, intention, possibility to forgive, harm to self-respect, severe harm, and can be justified explained 68 % of the variance (Table 3).

Another analysis took aggression as criterion and the dimensions as predictors. Harm to self-respect, physical harm, severe harm, can be justified, and intentionality explained 54 % of the variance (Table 4).

Evilness has specific predictors that are centered on the agent of behaviors: lack of compassion, willingness to make suffer, and cannot be forgiven. Aggression has a

² Bigger than .35, significant for N = 327.

Table 3
Hierarchical regression of the dimensions predicting evilness

Dimensions	Phase 1 R ² = .56**		Phase 2 ΔR ² = .06**		Phase 3 ΔR ² = .03**		Phase 4 ΔR ² = .02**		Phase 5 ΔR ² = .01**		Phase 6 ΔR ² = .01*		Phase 7 ΔR ² = .004*	
	EE	β	EE	β	EE	β	EE	β	EE	β	EE	β	EE	β
Lack of compassion	.04	.75**	.05	.51**	.05	.45**	.05	.42**	.05	.46**	.05	.44**	.05	.42**
Willingness to make suffer			.05	.34**	.05	.31**	.05	.29**	.05	.34**	.05	.33**	.05	.35**
Intentional			.04	.19**	.04	.21**	.04	.21**	.04	.24**	.05	.20**	.05	.21**
Possible to forgive					.03	-.13**	.03	-.12**	.03	-.12**	.03	-.12**	.03	-.08*
Harm to self-respect									.05	-.13**	.05	-.17**	.05	-.17**
Severe harm											.06	.12*	.06	.10*
Can be justified													.04	-.08*

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

Table 4
Hierarchical regression of the dimensions predicting aggression

Dimensions	Phase 1 R ² = .43**		Phase 2 ΔR ² = .06**		Phase 3 ΔR ² = .03**		Phase 4 ΔR ² = .02**		Phase 5 ΔR ² = .01**	
	EE	β	EE	β	EE	β	EE	β	EE	β
Harm to self-respect	.04	.65**	.05	.48**	.05	.35**	.05	.34**	.05	.30**
Physical harm			.05	.29**	.05	.25**	.05	.27**	.05	.28**
Severe harm					.07	.24**	.07	.20**	.07	.15**
Can be justified							.04	-.13**	.04	-.14**
Intentional									.05	.13**

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

single specific predictor that focuses on the physical harm for the victim. Four predictors of aggression are shared with evilness (intention, harm to self-respect, severity of the harm, and justification), but the beta coefficients are superior for aggression. In addition, harm to self-respect relates positively with aggression and negatively with evilness. Such a result implies that if aggression supposes harm to the self-respect of the victim, nothing is left for evilness. Fundamentally, one may conclude that aggression is different from evilness in terms of physical harm. Evilness is more complex and gathers a series of dimensions.

Discussion and conclusions

This article had three aims. First, it wanted to see how experts and laypeople define evilness. Second, it planned to verify whether laypeople are able to distinguish among different intensities of evilness. Third, it aimed at differentiating the dimensions predicting evilness from aggression. The findings offered preliminary answers.

Evilness was introduced in the field of social psychology because of its uncommon intensity relative to other aggressive behaviors (Bar-Tal, 1990; Staub, 1989/1999; Zimbardo, 2007). A debate started over the variables that can lead people to commit atrocious acts. In fact, the answer to this question revolves around two positions. The first is inspired by Hannah Arendt's (1967) perception of Eichman as a regular obedient employee. Her ideas concerning the "banality of evil" took an empirical form in the Stanford Prison Experiment (Zimbardo, Banks, Haney & Jaffe, 1973). The results of this study have recently led Zimbardo (2007) to explain the cruelty of Young Americans at Abu Ghraib. This thesis has revived the debate with the second position, more oriented towards a gamut of persons and situations, essentially represented by Carnahan and McFarland (2007) and by Haslam and Reicher (2007). These authors plead to take into account individual characteristics. According to them, not everyone answers in the same way to various situations susceptible to induce harmful behaviors. The answer also depends on flexible individual and situational characteristics. As said in the introduction, our research did not aim at taking position about the banality of evilness. Rather, it wanted to explore the evilness of banal acts and to distinguish it from common aggression. Clear responses to these answers would be relevant to the Lucifer-dispositionalism versus the social identity-interactionism. Our responses are only tentative, and they seem to indicate that banality of evilness is much rarer than evilness of banal acts.

When we asked laypeople to give examples of behaviors implying evilness, they provided a greater variety of behaviors than the one found in the specialized literature. Moreover, the extreme behaviors typical of evilness, such as torture, terrorism or genocide, represented only 6.71% of all the examples. Also, when participants were asked to rate

behaviors on a scale going from not at all evilness to total evilness, the responses started in the middle of the scale and went up to the very end. Apparently, some "evils" are more "evil" than others. Our results also show the importance of personal dispositions when people have to judge negative behaviors. Laypeople believe that evilness requires a special personality. They probably do not think of institutionalized evilness but of facts made available every day by the media (e.g., sexual abuse, domestic violence, racism).

Along the same perspective, other researchers have recognized that evilness could manifest itself by everyday deliberate noxious behaviors (Baumeister, 2000; Waller, 2002). The problem with this view is that it does not clearly differ from typical aggression, which is a behavior done with the intention to harm someone and which can occur with high frequency (Anderson & Carnagey, 2004; Berkowitz, 1993). Although our main study shows a large overlap between aggression and evilness, the two concepts present important differences. Laypeople consider that aggression is instrumental or hostile, and can be done by everyone. Evilness, by contrast, is made by an abnormal person who looks only for the suffering of others and takes pleasure in inflicting pain.

The analyses of regression also allow a better understanding of the naive concept of evilness. First, the predictors are more numerous for evilness than for aggression. This observation supports the viewpoint that evilness is a special kind of aggression: it is not necessary for calling a behavior aggressive but aggression is a necessary component of evilness. To determine the evilness level of each behavior, participants took mostly into account aspects associated to the willingness of the actor: lack of compassion, wish to make the victim suffer, and intention to cause severe harm. On the other hand, the measure mostly related to evilness shows least justification and forgiveness. Second, the relationship with self-esteem is negative, which is interesting because this link is positive for aggression. Research about the self-esteem of victims of aggressive acts is not very frequent but seems to indicate that, indeed, aggression tends to negatively affect the self-respect of the victims (Solomon & Serres, 1999; Cascardi & O'Leary, 1992; Zadro, Williams, & Richardson, 2004). Finally, when laypeople speak of aggression, they focus almost exclusively on harm (psychological, physical, or related to self-respect). Consequences are what matters for aggression.

What is interesting is the difference between intention and planning. As stated above, the intention is part of the definition of aggression, but in the case of evilness, this intention is planned. To the same extent that a voluntary crime is not the same as manslaughter with premeditation, evilness is not only intended to harm but the perpetrator has to carefully prepare his/her acts in "cold blood".

In an early pilot study (Quiles et al., 2008) that we conducted, we found that evilness was more specifically

human than was aggression. However, all the attempts to replicate this association experimentally failed. Obviously, evilness implies more intelligence than mere aggression, maybe because it is planned rather than simply intentional. In fact, agents of evilness give the impression of intelligent robots programmed to accomplish a given behavior without any emotion. In their Stereotype Content Model, Fiske, Cuddy, Glick and Xu (2002) divide groups according to two dimensions, warmth and competence. There is thus a cluster of groups characterized by their competence, but lack of warmth (e.g., bankers, Asians, feminists). Fiske, Cuddy and Glick (2002) compared these groups to robots. Further research may be an excellent path to study people who do not only commit immoral acts but who do it without feelings.

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