

# INTERPERSONAL MORAL LUCK AND NORMATIVE ENTANGLEMENT

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I introduce an underdiscussed type of moral luck, which I call *interpersonal moral luck*. Interpersonal moral luck characteristically occurs when the actions of other moral agents, qua morally evaluable actions, affect an agent's moral status in a way that is outside of that agent's capacity to control. I suggest that interpersonal moral luck is common in collective contexts involving shared responsibility and has interesting distinctive features. I also suggest that many philosophers are already committed to its existence. I then argue that agents who are susceptible to interpersonal moral luck are usually for this reason defeasibly entitled to make demands of those agents who are the source of that luck. This is the phenomenon of *normative entanglement*. I conclude by discussing some of the important ways in which normative entanglement can shape the norms that govern the actions of agents in collective contexts as well as explain some of our intuitions about what participants in these contexts owe one another.

**M**ORAL luck occurs when an agent's moral status depends upon factors that are at least partially outside that agent's control. Philosophers have identified many contexts wherein agents seem to be susceptible to moral luck. In this paper, I discuss moral luck in collective contexts, especially those involving shared responsibility. Shared responsibility occurs when an individual is morally responsible, in the sense of being praiseworthy or blameworthy, for what distinct individuals or groups do. The connection between moral luck and shared responsibility is not discussed much in the literature on either of these topics, and one of my goals is to show that it deserves more attention.

In the first section of the article, I introduce a type of moral luck, which I call *interpersonal moral luck*, via an example involving shared responsibility. I discuss some of its features and relate it to familiar categories of moral luck. I argue that

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the distinctive mark of interpersonal moral luck is that it occurs when the actions of others, qua morally evaluable actions, affect one's moral status in a way that is outside of one's capacity to control. In the second section, I argue that agents who are susceptible to interpersonal moral luck sometimes on that basis enjoy special claims against those agents who constitute the source of that luck. This is the phenomenon of *normative entanglement*. I then argue that normative entanglement should affect our thinking about the norms that govern action in collective contexts.

My discussion presupposes the existence of shared responsibility. I will not argue for this presupposition except insofar as I present cases which, I think, elicit intuitions supporting it. Those who are categorically opposed to shared responsibility can think of my arguments as an exploration of the implications of a false view that many, philosophers and laypeople alike, find plausible.

## 1. Interpersonal Moral Luck

Consider a case:

**BANK HEIST:** Robin is recruited to play a role in a bank heist. Robin's task is coordinated in advance since Robin will have no way of communicating with anyone on the day of the heist. On the morning of the heist, Robin will park her car in a prearranged location a few blocks from the bank and then retreat without her car to the countryside so that Robin's coconspirators can escape using Robin's car upon finishing their dirty work in the bank. Everything goes as planned: Robin parks her car, and later Robin's coconspirators rob the bank and use Robin's car to escape.

BANK HEIST involves both a shared intention (to perform a bank heist) and a joint action (heisting a bank). Since Robin intentionally participated in the heist she is morally responsible to some degree for that heist, which is an action that is partly constituted by the actions of other individuals.<sup>1</sup> In other words, Robin shares responsibility for the bank heist.

Given that Robin shares responsibility for the heist, she is subject to moral luck. For if Robin's coconspirators had decided at the last-minute not to perform the heist, Robin would not have been morally responsible for the heist, since

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1. Counterfactual accounts of moral responsibility drive a substantial wedge between the degree and scope of moral responsibility (Zimmerman 2002). In this paper I assume that such views are mistaken and that one's degree of responsibility is closely tied to what one is responsible for. For a comprehensive criticism of counterfactual accounts, see Hartman (2017: Ch. 4).

there would not have been a heist for which she could be morally responsible (a single parked car does not a heist make). Yet incommunicado Robin cannot control whether her coconspirators decide at the last-minute to go through with the heist. Hence, Robin's moral status—in particular, her blameworthiness for the heist—depends upon factors that are partially outside of her control, that is, her coconspirators' actions.<sup>2</sup> Call this particular way in which Robin is morally unlucky *Robin's participatory luck*.<sup>3</sup>

What are the features of Robin's participatory luck? Robin's participatory luck bears similarities to two types of moral luck identified by Thomas Nagel in his initial taxonomy of the subject (1979). *Resultant moral luck* concerns those outcomes of an agent's action that, while being in some relevant sense outside of the agent's control, can affect the agent's moral status. *Circumstantial moral luck* concerns an agent's circumstances, insofar as those circumstances, while being outside of the agent's control, can affect the agent's moral status. Let us closely examine Robin's participatory luck in relation to these familiar types of moral luck.

Consider a typical example of resultant moral luck:

**DRUNK DRIVER:** Gately is driving drunk. A child happens to step in front of Gately's car just as he is driving past, and, because of his drunkenness, Gately cannot react quickly enough to avoid hitting the child. Gately hits and kills the child.<sup>4</sup>

Gately is morally responsible for driving drunk. Gately is also morally responsible for the child's death. **DRUNK DRIVER** is striking because we take Gately to be much more blameworthy than someone who is morally responsible for driving drunk but not for the death of a child, even when this difference in outcomes does not depend upon factors controlled by the blameworthy agents. Gately is morally unlucky because factors outside Gately's control affect his moral status. Notice that, strictly speaking, Gately's moral luck is not explained merely by the fact that Gately could not control whether the child died. If someone else had killed the child, then Gately would not have been morally unlucky, despite the fact that Gately had no control over the child's death. Gately's moral luck is explained by the fact that Gately is not in control of whether his drunk driving

2. This is not to deny that Robin would have been blameworthy for something (malicious premeditation, incipient attempt) if the heist had failed to materialize. But she is blameworthy for more and to a greater degree when the heist occurs.

3. There is, of course, another sense in which Robin's coconspirators' persistence constitutes good luck for Robin since it promotes a goal of hers. This should not worry us. Many cases of moral luck involve such a complexity, e.g., a case of an assassin who fails to kill her target (and thus fails to fulfill her goal but avoids blameworthiness for murder) because a bird intercepts her bullet.

4. Both **DRUNK DRIVER** and the following case (**PRISON GUARD**) are adapted from Nagel (1979).

results in the child's death (in conjunction with the fact that this relation between his action and the child's death is what makes him responsible). In general, resultant moral luck occurs when an agent is not fully in control of whether certain outcomes, which would affect the agent's moral status were they to result from the agent's actions, do in fact result from the agent's actions (Sartorio 2012).

We can imagine many ways in which Robin might be susceptible to moral luck with respect to the outcomes of the heist. Robin has little control over the heist's impact on others, yet the heist's impact can affect Robin's moral status. For instance, while Robin has little control over whether the heist causes intense psychological distress to retirees who store their money in the bank, Robin will be to some degree responsible for this outcome if and only if the heist does have this outcome.

Robin is not only susceptible to luck with respect to the outcomes of the heist, however, but also with respect to whether she shares responsibility for the heist at all. The issue does not depend on whether the heist is ultimately successful (I assume here that unsuccessful heists are possible). She will be blameworthy for it either way. The issue is that Robin does not fully control whether her action is a constituent part of a larger joint action that is inherently criticizable, and hence she does not fully control whether she is blameworthy for the joint action in virtue of her intentional participation in it.

If Robin's participatory luck turns on whether the heist materializes as an outcome of her action, then *BANK HEIST* is a special case of resultant luck. There is something strange about this way of characterizing the relationship between Robin's action and the heist, however. Describing something as an outcome of an action (e.g., describing the child's death as an outcome of Gately's drunk driving) usually implies that the thing described is not itself an intentional action. The heist, of course, is an intentional (joint) action, and for this reason describing the heist as an outcome of the individual contributions to it is not felicitous.<sup>5</sup> Rather than being related as action is to outcome, the individual participatory actions together constitute the joint action. Saying that the heist is an outcome of Robin's contribution is about as strange as saying that my action of cooking soup is an outcome of my action of getting the pot out of the cabinet. If there is a sense in which the heist is an outcome of Robin's action, I do not think it is a sense relevant to this discussion.

For this reason, I hesitate to categorize Robin's participatory luck as a case of resultant moral luck. Still, Robin's participatory luck in some ways resembles

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5. At least this seems true for actions of small scale, unstructured collectives. Philosophers have noted that large groups like corporations with decision procedures for determining the group's actions and attitudes look a lot like agents in their own right (French 1979; List and Pettit 2011). Perhaps the actions of these groups are best described as outcomes, in the relevant sense, of individual participatory actions.

Gately's resultant luck. And this discussion has revealed something important that is worth repeating: strictly speaking, Robin's participatory luck is not explained merely by the fact that she is not in full control of whether the heist occurs, but rather by the fact that she is not in full control of whether her action is a constituent part of the heist (in conjunction with the fact that this constitution relation grounds her moral responsibility).<sup>6</sup> If Robin were fully in control of whether this relation between her action and the heist obtained, then hers would not be a case of moral luck (see Footnote 11 below).

Next let us consider circumstantial moral luck. Sometimes circumstantial moral luck is described quite broadly as occurring whenever aspects of an agent's circumstances over which the agent has incomplete control affect the agent's moral status (Hanna 2014: 683). Here is a prototypical case:

**PRISON GUARD:** Hans is a career prison guard in Nazi Germany who, although naturally inclined to treat prisoners decently, capitulates to social pressure associated with the regime and mistreats prisoners. Hans has little control over where he lives or his career. But if Hans had immigrated to Argentina before the war, he would have been a virtuous prison guard.

PRISON GUARD describes an individual who is blameworthy for actions that are in an important sense a product of his circumstances, which are largely outside of his control. In general, uncontrolled aspects of one's circumstances often affect the choices, opportunities, or challenges one faces, and these in turn affect what one does and what one is responsible for. When this occurs, one is subject to circumstantial moral luck.

On the face of it, Robin's participatory luck does not look much like Hans's moral luck, which consists in the fact that through no fault of his own he is in a difficult moral situation that leads him to act differently than he would have acted in more favorable circumstances. The sources of Robin's participatory luck are Robin's coconspirators and their actions on the day of the heist, and these are part of Robin's circumstances. But the actions of Robin's coconspirators on the day of the heist do not affect Robin's moral status by affecting the choices, opportunities, or challenges she encounters.<sup>7</sup> They affect it by making it the case

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6. Certain actions (e.g., murder) can be attributed to an agent only if they produce a certain outcome, and resultant luck with respect to an outcome of this kind is also luck with respect to whether something an agent does can be described in a way that entails that the outcome occurred as a result of what was done. This marks a structural similarity between some cases of resultant luck and Robin's participatory luck.

7. Of course, Robin's coconspirators' actions before the heist, e.g., their recruitment efforts, might have affected her in this way.

that Robin's action is a constituent of a bank heist. Some people reserve the label *circumstantial moral luck* for cases like PRISON GUARD wherein an agent's circumstances make moral choice more difficult. Robin's participatory luck is not circumstantial in this sense. If, however, circumstantial moral luck occurs whenever an uncontrolled aspect of one's circumstances affects one's moral status as is sometimes suggested, then Robin's participatory luck is circumstantial moral luck.<sup>8</sup>

There is some reason to be cautious at this point. If circumstantial moral luck is defined too broadly, then it will not pick out a distinctive phenomenon. Gately's moral luck in DRUNK DRIVER is a product of his circumstances in the sense that the child's action of stepping into the street is an aspect of Gately's circumstances. Nagel's taxonomy is designed to account for the differences between DRUNK DRIVER and PRISON GUARD, which suggests that the broad definition may be unsatisfactory. Ultimately, the issue is terminological and should not worry us overmuch here. What is important for our discussion is how Robin's participatory luck compares to Gately's and Hans's. While it has something in common with each, Robin's participatory luck does not primarily concern the outcome of Robin's action or the choices, opportunities, or challenges she faces. It consists in the fact that the actions of Robin's coconspirators, which are outside of her control, affect whether her action is a constituent of a larger joint action for which, in virtue of this connection, she is blameworthy.

Regardless of how it should be taxonomized, Robin's participatory luck possesses distinctive features that warrant special consideration. One distinctive feature is difficult to describe but relates to how the sources of the moral luck in BANK HEIST compare to the sources of moral luck in the prototypical cases discussed by Nagel and others. The sources of Robin's participatory luck are Robin's coconspirators and their actions. This, by itself, is not distinctive; the source of moral luck in DRUNK DRIVER is, in a sense, the action of the child who steps into the street, and the sources of moral luck in PRISON GUARD are the actions of those who directly and indirectly pressure Hans to act badly. But there is something special about BANK HEIST in that the actions of Robin's coconspirators enter the moral picture qua morally evaluable actions, in much the same way that Robin's

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8. In a footnote, Nagel intimates that we may be able to extend circumstantial luck to cover something like the kind of moral luck I have in mind (1979: 34). He suggests that U.S. citizens with anti-war sentiments were subject to a kind of circumstantial moral luck during the Vietnam War since they had no control over the government's war efforts but were nonetheless implicated in those efforts in virtue of their citizenship. Nagel's discussion in this passage is not entirely clear, and the example is controversial. But, in general, I think one can be subject to moral luck in this way. Sometimes an agent shares responsibility for the actions of other members of a group to which the agent belongs simply in virtue of belonging to that group. While it is sometimes tempting to describe this sort of luck as circumstantial moral luck, I am hesitant to do so for reasons I mention in the next paragraph.

own actions do. Indeed, our moral evaluation of Robin as a blameworthy participant in wrongdoing is essentially tied not just to the coconspirators' actions, but to their status as morally evaluable actions. This is not usually true in prototypical cases of moral luck. Even when the sources of the moral luck are actions, they enter the picture qua interloping events. This is reflected in Nagel's discussion of the skeptical import of these sources for our ordinary notions of moral agency and responsibility:

The problem arises, I believe, because the self which acts and is the object of moral judgment is threatened with dissolution by the absorption of its acts and impulses into the class of events. Moral judgment of a person is judgment not of what happens to him, but of him. . . . The effect of concentrating on the influence of what is not under his control is to make this responsible self seem to disappear, swallowed up by the order of mere events. (1979: 36)

This passage betrays a conception of moral luck as a product of forces foreign to the domain of moral agency that shape the agent's moral status from the outside. Robin's case is fundamentally different in this respect. A full specification of the salient aspects of her moral position does not bring with it the threat of seeing her agency swallowed up into mere events; at most, we risk seeing her agency swallowed up into the agency of others. This is important because the moral luck in Robin's situation cannot be explained away by resolving a confusion about what sorts of things are morally evaluable, since moral agents and their intentional actions are incontrovertibly evaluable.

This feature of Robin's participatory luck, then, differentiates it from other types of moral luck. Let us say, somewhat imprecisely, that when the actions of others, qua morally evaluable actions, affect one's moral status in a way that is outside of one's capacity to control, one is subject to *interpersonal moral luck*. A rough-and-ready test for identifying interpersonal moral luck is to ask oneself, can we make sense of the way in which the agent is subject to moral luck without thinking of the actions and agents that are the sources of that luck (assuming there are any) *as* morally evaluable actions and agents? Can we make sense of the moral luck if, as Nagel puts it, we view the actions from a standpoint external to agency, as mere "components of the flux of events in the world" (1986: 110)? In *DRUNK DRIVER*, *PRISON GUARD*, and many cases like them, I think the answer is yes. The child's action in *DRUNK DRIVER* can be thought of as a mere event in a larger chain of events, and the actions of Hans's compatriots in *PRISON GUARD* can be thought of as fixed psychosocial factors without a serious loss in under-

standing of the moral luck in either case.<sup>9</sup> This is not true for *BANK HEIST*. Robin's coconspirators' actions and the joint action as a whole, qua morally evaluable actions, feature essentially into an explanation of Robin's moral responsibility, and hence into an explanation of Robin's participatory luck. We cannot make sense of what Robin is blameworthy for or why without taking a moral (and agential) perspective on the sources of her moral luck.

There are at least three reasons why interpersonal moral luck deserves special attention. The first I have gestured at already: unlike the familiar types of moral luck, interpersonal moral luck does not threaten to dissolve our moral conception in the way Nagel feared, and this may have implications for wider discussions about moral luck.

The second reason is that many philosophers writing on interpersonal moral phenomena already seem to be committed to interpersonal moral luck. Although there is room to quarrel about the details, many philosophers accept the general thesis that in collective contexts (paradigmatically, contexts involving joint action), the actions of others can sometimes affect an agent's moral status.<sup>10</sup> This possibility suggests that collective contexts sometimes bring with them a vulnerability to interpersonal moral luck, since the actions of other participants can sometimes affect one's moral status in a way that is outside of one's control, as *BANK HEIST* illustrates.<sup>11</sup> Consider a different sort of example. Many philoso-

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9. Perhaps Hans is blameworthy for the German nation's wrongdoing because he is a member of that group (see Jaspers 1947 for an argument for this claim). If so, then he may be subject to interpersonal as well as prototypical circumstantial moral luck. But notice that Hans would be circumstantially morally unlucky in the same way that he actually is if the pressure he felt to mistreat prisoners were a product of life-like Nazi automata who, in virtue of not being persons, were not morally evaluable. The crux is that he is in a situation wherein moral choice is difficult. It is not an essential feature of his difficulty that the difficulty is brought about by morally evaluable actions.

10. Two examples of philosophers who are so committed are Larry May and Christopher Kutz. May argues that agents share responsibility for the wrongdoings of others when, among other things, they causally contribute by act or omission to those wrongdoings or to the communal climate from which those wrongdoings arise (1992). Kutz argues that the teleological connection between a participant who intentionally participates in a collective action and the shared goals to which that collective action is directed is enough to impute accountability to the participant for the collective's actions, even when the participant is ignorant of the content of the shared goals or of the wrongdoings (2000: 156–159). Both views make room for interpersonal moral luck.

11. This point should not be overstated. Shared responsibility does not always entail moral luck. Andrew Khoury has argued that it does (2017: 13–18). Khoury's argument seems to be this: shared responsibility is always grounded in a contingent connection between the object of responsibility (a collective action) and some distinct property of the individual (e.g., a participatory intention), and since the property can exist while the connection fails to obtain, it is always a matter of luck whether the property is related to the object in the appropriate way, and hence whether the individual shares responsibility. The problem with Khoury's argument is that it does not follow from the fact that the relation is contingent that the individual is not in control of whether the relation obtains. For instance, suppose that, unlike in *BANK HEIST*, Robin was not recruited in advance to play a role in the heist. Instead, Robin just happens to see the heist and decides to help the heis-



phers would agree that shared responsibility can occur in contexts involving commands. On the one hand, a commander who commands a subordinate to act wrongfully shares some responsibility for that wrongdoing if and only if the subordinate obeys that command. Insofar as the subordinate's actually obeying the command is in some relevant sense outside of the commander's control, the commander is subject to interpersonal moral luck.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, a subordinate who obeys a malevolent command may be morally responsible for doing so. Thus, a commander's willings can affect a compliant subordinate's moral status, and this may be true even when the commander's malevolence is unknown to the subordinate.<sup>13</sup> These examples expose the close connection between shared responsibility and interpersonal moral luck.

Finally, interpersonal moral luck is of independent interest because its very possibility and presence affects the normative landscape, so to speak, of many interpersonal exchanges. In the next section of the article I will be occupied with the ways in which interpersonal moral luck affects the norms that govern interactions between participants in joint action and the like. The basic idea for which I will argue is this. Often when an agent is susceptible to interpersonal moral luck, the agent is for that reason defeasibly entitled to demand of the agents who are (or whose actions are) the source of that susceptibility that they avoid acting (or failing to act) in ways that would directly negatively affect the agent's moral status. I call the special relationship marked by this entitlement *normative entanglement*. Normative entanglement, I will argue, is grounded in the interest the agent has in maintaining a certain moral status (or in avoiding a certain moral status and its accompaniments).

## 2. Normative Entanglement

To illustrate the phenomenon of normative entanglement and its connection to interpersonal moral luck, let us examine a different sort of case.

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ters by distracting the bank guards at a crucial moment. In this case Robin shares responsibility for the heist in virtue of her intentional participation in it, but she is in full control over whether she shares responsibility (i.e., of whether the relevant relation between the individual basis of the responsibility attribution and the object obtains). Hence, she is not susceptible to moral luck (in this respect). And hence, shared responsibility does not entail moral luck.

12. This point is due to Gregory Mellema (2016: 83–86). Mellema discusses several ways in which one can be saved from complicity by moral luck, but not all of the ways he mentions should be characterized as interpersonal moral luck.

13. Matthew Hanser's (2015) recent account of commands has this implication. According to Hanser, a subordinate who acts on a command acts for the sake of whatever ends the issuer meant the commanded act to serve, even if the subordinate is unaware of what those ends are. Because others' ends are often opaque to us, acting on a command is a morally risky activity.

**THIEVING PLUS-ONE:** Marianne is invited to her friend Elinor's house for a party. Marianne wants to bring a plus-one, but the only person available is her acquaintance Willoughby. Marianne knows that Willoughby is a bit of a scoundrel but brings him to the party anyway, and unbeknownst to Marianne, Willoughby steals some of Elinor's electronics.

THIEVING PLUS-ONE exhibits one of the many dangers inherent in opening one's home to others. Willoughby wrongs Elinor by stealing from her and betraying her hospitality, and for this he is blameworthy. Marianne is also blameworthy. She is blameworthy for putting Elinor at risk by bringing a known scoundrel to the party. But it seems to me that Marianne is more blameworthy than she would have otherwise been had Willoughby not stolen anything. She seems to share some responsibility for Willoughby's action. After all, it would be quite natural for Elinor to blame Marianne somewhat for Willoughby's action and perhaps even to demand that Marianne pay for the stolen property. Given that Marianne is blameworthy because of, or shares some responsibility for, her plus-one's immoral action despite her incomplete control over the situation, Marianne is susceptible to interpersonal moral luck.<sup>14</sup>

Recognizing this puts us in a good position to vindicate a commonsensical way of thinking about THIEVING PLUS-ONE. Suppose Marianne catches Willoughby in the process of pilfering Elinor's electronics. Marianne is entitled to demand—even quite forcefully—that Willoughby cease, and she can do this without the slightest hint of officiousness or impropriety. Now this entitlement is partly explained by Marianne's friendship with Elinor since the norms of friendship empower and require friends to protect one another's interests. But intuitively Marianne's entitlement is much more serious than any other partygoer's entitlement would be (excluding Elinor herself). I contend this is because Willoughby's wrongdoing would directly negatively affect Marianne's moral status, which Marianne has an interest in maintaining, by damaging her moral relationship with Elinor and making her blameworthy for wrongdoing.

Marianne's entitlement to demand that Willoughby conduct himself appropriately at Elinor's party is an example of the phenomenon I call *normative entanglement*. In general, X becomes normatively entangled with Y when

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14. You might have the intuition that in this case Willoughby's action gives Elinor a reason for believing that Marianne is blameworthy but does not actually contribute to her blameworthiness (cf. Richards 1986; Rosebury 1995). I do not think this is right. In my view, guests have an obligation to make use of hospitality in a way that does not result in harm to the person from whom the hospitality is received. Marianne makes use of Elinor's hospitality in bringing Willoughby as her plus-one, and when Willoughby intentionally steals from Elinor at the party, this constitutes a failure on Marianne's part to make use of Elinor's hospitality without harming her. This failure explains why Marianne shares responsibility for the theft.

X's moral status becomes bound up with Y's activities such that X is entitled to demand, at the very least, that Y avoid gratuitously damaging X's moral status by action or inaction. The entitlements of normative entanglement are grounded in the interest we all have in maintaining an unimpeachable moral status. There is no moral fetishism here. We have an interest in maintaining an unimpeachable moral status because we all have an interest in doing right by others, in maintaining relationships devoid of moral offense, and in faring favorably in others' moral assessments.<sup>15</sup> Marianne, just like all of us, has good reason to want to meet the obligations she owes to her friend and to avoid blameworthiness. Consequently, Marianne is defeasibly entitled to demand that Willoughby not put her in a situation for no good reason wherein she fails to meet her obligations to Elinor and is blameworthy.

One might be tempted to reduce the entitlements associated with normative entanglement to more familiar intragroup norms which exert normative pressure on participants in favor of cooperation in a joint project, like the mutual obligations that, according to Margaret Gilbert (2006), are constitutive of plural subjects. This would be a mistake. First of all, even if we assume that Marianne and Willoughby are participating in a joint action (e.g., attending a party together), it is not clear that the norms internal to their joint action proscribe theft. In any case, interpersonal moral luck as well as normative entanglement can conceivably occur outside the context of joint action.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, normative entanglement can defeasibly entitle an agent to demand that fellow participants refrain from doing their part in a joint action when their doing their part would damage the agent's moral status. I think that *BANK HEIST* is like this. If Robin could communicate with her coconspirators after she parked the car but before they entered the bank, she would, I think, be defeasibly entitled to demand that they refrain from robbing the bank or, at the very least, from using her car to escape. This sounds a bit strange because the intragroup norms associated with their shared intention prescribe cooperation and thus push in the opposite direction. Perhaps these intragroup norms ultimately defeat Robin's entitlement. The point is that when two or more agents engage in an activity that involves the possibility of interpersonal moral luck, the intragroup normative landscape may

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15. Saba Bazargan-Forward argues in a complementary way that when an agent P<sub>2</sub> acts wrongfully in a way that was foreseeably enabled but not condoned by another agent P<sub>1</sub>, P<sub>2</sub> wrongs P<sub>1</sub> by making P<sub>1</sub> responsible (and hence potentially liable) for the harmful effects of P<sub>2</sub>'s action. According to Bazargan-Forward, P<sub>2</sub>'s action is a setback for P<sub>1</sub> because P<sub>1</sub> has an interest in maintaining her status as an inviolable being, in avoiding disapprobation, and in not being responsible for a wrongful harm (2017: 119–120).

16. Nagel's case of the anti-war citizen whose moral status is affected by the U.S.'s war efforts (Footnote 8 above) is an example of interpersonal moral luck outside the context of joint action. In cases like this, one is defeasibly entitled to demand that one's fellow group members act in ways that will not negatively affect one's moral status.

be altered, even if the entitlements associated with normative entanglement are quite circumscribed or ultimately defeated.<sup>17</sup>

The extent to which normative entanglement characterizes our social relations depends upon the pervasiveness of interpersonal moral luck, and if it is never possible for the actions of another to bear on my moral status in the relevant sense, then there will be no normative entanglement.<sup>18</sup> This skeptical position seems myopic, however. Many of our most morally important projects, such as child rearing and charity work, are undertaken jointly. To view these projects as consisting in patchworks of discrete moral agents is to ignore the ways in which those who work together for the moral good (or for the moral bad) are in a state of interdependence, not just with respect to their goal, but also with respect to how they should be assessed by others.

This is not to suggest that every instance of interpersonal moral luck involves normative entanglement, for it is possible to subject oneself to interpersonal moral luck in a way that precludes the generation of the relevant defeasible entitlements. Suppose that, without consulting you, I promise a friend that I will get you to perform a supererogatory act, so as to prove to my friend that you are a model of rectitude (a redundant measure, I am sure). Your performance of a supererogatory act is a constitutive condition of my promise's fulfillment, and my promise's being fulfilled (or not fulfilled) does seem to make a difference to my moral status. All else being equal, my moral status is worse if you do not perform the supererogatory act, and hence I am subject to interpersonal moral

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17. I have been focusing on the susceptibility of individuals to interpersonal moral luck and normative entanglement. Some of what I say about the susceptibility of individuals might also apply to collectives themselves. Mellema (1997) argues that if individuals are sometimes susceptible to moral luck, then collectives themselves are sometimes susceptible to moral luck. If collectives can have moral statuses in their own right and can enjoy obligations and rights, then perhaps collectives themselves can be susceptible to interpersonal moral luck and become normatively entangled with individuals or other collectives. For instance, plausibly a nation's moral status can be affected by the actions of its soldiers even when those actions are outside of the nation's control. And if so, then the nation, as a collective, may for this reason be in a position to demand that its soldiers avoid acting in ways that would negatively affect its moral status.

18. Even if there is no interpersonal moral luck and hence no normative entanglement, something similar to normative entanglement may still characterize our social relations. There are many contexts in which the actions of others can affect how one is perceived by others, and in some such contexts it seems for this reason appropriate to make demands of those whose actions can affect one's social status. For example, a faculty member of a philosophy department is arguably defeasibly entitled to demand that her colleagues not negligently embarrass themselves in professional settings, since their embarrassing themselves might reflect poorly on the faculty member's reputation as a member of the department. Another example: A virtuous member of a notorious crime family who has repudiated criminality may be defeasibly entitled to demand that her less scrupulous kin refrain from wrongdoing, since their committing crimes could give others misleading evidence concerning the virtuous member's blameworthiness. Hence, the phenomenon I am discussing may be of interest even to those who categorically deny the possibility of moral luck. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for helping me develop this point.

luck. Despite this, I think it would be a mistake to say that we are normatively entangled on this basis alone. The possibility of gaining the entitlement to make demands of you in this way, without the input of your agency, seems inconsistent with your autonomy. Still, I think most cases involving interpersonal moral luck will also involve normative entanglement because in most cases the potential for interpersonal moral luck comes about as a product of the agency of both parties.<sup>19</sup>

The significance of normative entanglement is not merely theoretical. The phenomenon has the potential to impact interpersonal dynamics in important ways. For instance, normative entanglement may facilitate stability in certain joint actions. When we engage in a joint action, there are special difficulties with respect to the stability over time of our shared intentions that do not typically crop-up in the intrapersonal case, which arise from the heterogeneity of our individual perspectives. As Michael Bratman (2006) points out, if you and I share an intention to paint the house on Friday, there is rational pressure on us favoring the stability of that shared intention, which is supported by instrumental and self-governance considerations. Normative or social-psychological factors that tend to increase the stability of joint projects over time are for this reason desirable.<sup>20</sup> Normative entanglement will sometimes produce entitlements to demand performance in a joint action and thereby generate normative pressure in favor of a joint project when failure to continue with the project would negatively affect participants' moral statuses. Hence, normative entanglement will sometimes desirably increase stability.

Besides playing a stabilizing role in joint action, the claims associated with normative entanglement may help explain why people are entitled to demand transparency and conscientiousness from their superordinates and subordinates. A picture of moral agency that ties individuals together at the intersections of their sociality is one which subjects those agents to interpersonal moral luck, but it is also one that depicts a more collaborative moral world. We may wonder whether a richer conception of this kind is not more desirable insofar

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19. An exception is the class of cases wherein someone is susceptible to good but not bad interpersonal moral luck. If you cannot possibly damage my moral status, then I am not normatively entangled with you, even if some of your actions have the potential to cast me in a positive moral light. I believe such cases are very rare.

20. Such factors are much discussed. Some joint action theorists, such as Margaret Gilbert (2006) and Raimo Tuomela (2007), build stabilizing mutual commitments into the very concept of a joint action. Bratman (2006) suggests that obligations grounded in mutual assurances often play a stabilizing role. Seana Shiffrin (2008: 515–516) argues that promises and related commitments enable participants, through exchanges of practical authority, to take a first-person perspective on joint projects, a practice which should facilitate stability. Deborah Tollefsen and Shaun Gallagher (2017) argue that shared “we-narratives” can similarly play a stabilizing role. The plethora of proposals suggests both that group stability is a real pragmatic concern and that multiple factors can work together in contributing to stability.

as it allows us to make special judgments concerning interpersonal accountability and obligates each of us to concern ourselves not just with our own moral statuses but also with the moral statuses of those with whom we collaborate.<sup>21</sup> From the perspective of, say, philanthropists working together to relieve global poverty, the normative unity associated with normative entanglement may play a welcomed role in facilitating group cohesion.<sup>22</sup>

More generally, interpersonal moral luck may ground reasons for or against participating in joint actions in the first place. If a certain activity exposes one to interpersonal moral luck, then one puts oneself at moral risk by participating in that activity. The moral risk associated with employment at a shady corporation or in a questionable government administration exerts rational pressure against participation in those endeavors for the conscientious moral agent. At least with respect to cases like these, a willingness to take the potential effect of others' actions on one's own moral status into account in practical reasoning may lead to a better moral world if it contributes to greater conscientiousness about our role in collective harms.<sup>23</sup>

### 3. Conclusion

It is almost platitudinous to insist that the actions of others can affect an agent's moral status. The child who darts into the street and the Nazis who pressure prison guards to act wrongly affect other agents' moral statuses in ways that are outside of those agents' control. But what has been largely underappreciated by those who think about these issues is the unique way in which others' actions can bear on an agent's moral status in a particular class of situations—those involving interpersonal moral luck. Sometimes, such as in contexts involving shared responsibility, others' actions, qua morally evaluable actions, become relevant to my moral status in a way that I cannot fully control. This should make

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21. Margaret Urban Walker (1991) argues that acknowledging that moral responsibility outruns control enables us to make certain aretaic judgements concerning integrity and grace, and that this is a good thing. Similar considerations may be germane here.

22. David Owens (2012) argues that we have normative interests in being bound to others in certain ways. These normative interests explain our ability to voluntarily shape the normative landscape in certain ways, e.g., with a promise or consent. Although I am far from sure about this, I am inclined to think that normative entanglement could, in certain circumstances, be a source of intrinsic value for human beings. Just as it might be good for us to be bound by obligations of love and respect in friendship, so it might be good for us to be bound by obligations of mutual concern for one another's moral statuses in certain joint projects.

23. This is a familiar point. Tracy Isaacs (2011) has argued convincingly that a greater understanding of ourselves in relation to the collectives in which we participate can improve not only our understanding of our obligations (as individuals) in collective contexts, but also of the opportunities available to us for resolving collective harms.

a difference not only to our moral assessments, but also to how we respond to those whose agency affects our own moral status and to those whom our moral agency affects.

Investigating whether interpersonal moral luck pervades our moral community is important for those who are worried about the extent to which moral responsibility outruns control. The same arguments for and against the possibility of, say, prototypical resultant and circumstantial moral luck may not smoothly apply to interpersonal moral luck, and thus interpersonal moral luck may pose a new challenge to those who deny the possibility of moral luck altogether. Moreover, the phenomenon is important for anyone interested in elucidating the normative landscape of the moral community. If your moral status can become tied up with my actions and vice-versa, then this may have serious implications for the nature of our relationship. For these reasons, it is important that philosophers recognize interpersonal moral luck.

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