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# **Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society**

### **Title**

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### **Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0bp211nq>

### **Journal**

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 45(45)

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### **Publication Date**

2023

Peer reviewed

# Intuitive theories of moral progress

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## Abstract

Many consider the world to be morally better today than it was in the past and expect moral improvement to continue. How do people explain what drives this change? We identify two ways people might think about how moral progress occurs: that it is inevitable or driven by human action. In Study 1 (N=149), we find that those who more strongly believe that moral progress is driven by human action are more likely to believe that their own intervention is warranted to correct a moral setback. In Study 2 (N=145), we find that this translates to action: those who more strongly believe that moral progress is driven by human action report that they would donate more money to correct a moral setback. Together these studies suggest that beliefs about the mechanisms of moral progress have important implications for engaging in political action.