

THE ROLE OF MORALITY IN NEWCOMERS' SOCIALIZATION

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THE ROLE OF MORALITY IN NEWCOMERS' ORGANIZATIONAL ADJUSTMENT

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This dissertation addresses the role of moral identity – or the self-importance that people place on morality as a central part of their identity – in the experiences of organizational newcomers. I address the role of moral identity from two sides. First, I explore how organizational forces in the form of ethical socialization interact with individual traits to determine whether moral identity increases or decreases. Second, I explore the role of individuals' moral identity in helping them transition during the socialization process from being organizational outsider to insiders. In the process, I address how moral identity influences the way that individuals come to think about their work. Finally, I conclude by discussing future studies that can and will follow in this vein. Specifically, I look at an important tool that can be used to influence individuals' values – the organizational story. I posit several research questions concerning how organizational stories may be used to achieve different outcomes.

I explore the empirical questions in the field using a longitudinal survey design. The sample site is a large IT firm that prioritizes ethics and organizational values.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

I grew up all over the country, though I am largely a product of the west (Arizona, California, Texas, and Washington). I received a B.A. from University of California, Santa Barbara. I majored in Global Studies with an emphasis in socioeconomics and politics. I also had a second major in Spanish. After college I moved to Los Angeles and tried the life of a struggling actor for a while until, lo and behold, I was struggling so well I was living out of my car. I then leveraged a job at Starbucks into admission to an MBA program at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, CA. While there I was elected class president, nominated as Cal Poly's graduate student of the year, and importantly, I won the National Intercollegiate Business Ethics Competition, besting MBA-student teams from around the country.

After my MBA, I started my own boutique consulting practice focusing on business development. After working with a wide range of companies and industries for several years, I saw that ethical considerations were prevalent, but not recognized in many situations. A lot of the unethical behavior I saw was small. Most of it was unintentional. I began to wonder about the role of ethics and morality in the workplace – how leaders and followers think about it differently, and how each can fail to recognize the moral weight of a given situation. These questions led me to return to school for a Ph. D, and I now study ethics and leadership as my vocation. I love what I do (although I'm ready to stop being a PhD student), and I look forward to helping produce new insights about the role of ethicality in the workplace, and to sharing that information with future leaders.

Dedicated to my family and friends, who were a wonderful source of support

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CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW

Organizations invest a lot of time and effort trying to change their employees in some regard. Largely, these attempts are aimed at improving organizational members in some capacity. Be it improving technical skills, emotional intelligence, mentoring, sales, resilience, presentation skills or even business etiquette, the variety of training that organizations provide in the hopes of improving their members in some way is truly staggering, with the dollar cost of said training often topping \$125 billion per year nationally (Stern, 2011).

Some organizations attempt to improve or educate their members in the area of ethics. Often, messages about what an organization considers to be ethical are provided during the socialization process – the process by which organizational outsiders become organizational insiders (Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007; Chao, O’Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, & Gardner, 1994; Latif, 2000; Ponemon, 1992). During this time, organizations endeavor to teach individuals how to do the technical tasks required in their job, how to integrate into the social environment, where to go for resources, and, importantly, what the organizational values are (eg., see Ashforth, Sluss, & Harrison, 2007 for review; Chao et al., 1994; Haueter, Macan, & Winter, 2003). However, there has been surprisingly little work analyzing the interplay of individual and organizational factors that determine individual responses to, or the individual and organizational outcomes of, organizational attempts to influence individuals’ values and ethical dispositions.

It stands to reason that individual differences will influence how members respond to organizational attempts to influence their ethics and values. After all, numerous studies indicate that individual factors influence how well socialized members are likely to become. For instance, factors such as extraversion and openness

to experience have been found to lead individuals to proactively seek performance feedback and build social relationships, thus leading to improved socialization outcomes (e.g., Ashford & Black, 1996; Ashford & Taylor, 1990; Ashford, 1986; Morrison, 2002). As well, individuals come to organizations with varying tendencies to prioritize ethics as part of their identity (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Reed & Aquino, 2003), and differences in beliefs about whether ethics are absolute standards for behavior or are contextually determined (Forsyth & Berger, 1982; Forsyth, 1980). These differences are likely a central part of individuals' self-concept (Schein, 1971), having been formed over a lifetime of experience prior to organizational entry (Gibbs & Schnell, 1985), and are likely to influence how individuals view the work they do and the organization that employs them. Individual differences are also likely to influence how newcomers respond to organization attempts to influence their ethical dispositions – in other words, it will affect whether and to what extent they align with organizational values, and whether they do, in fact, come to prioritize ethics and values to a greater degree.

In this dissertation, I present two papers that delve into these topics. In the first paper I explore the individual factors that predispose individuals to increase the degree to which they prioritize ethics as a central part of their self-concept – a factor referred to as their moral identity (Aquino & Reed, 2002). In this paper I also explore the organizational factors that catalyze said change, and show the organizational benefits of increasing individuals' moral identity. This paper argues and shows that individuals high in ethical idealism (Forsyth, 1980) and moral attentiveness (Reynolds, 2008) are predisposed to increase the importance of being moral to their self-concept, but that to catalyze the process they must be well-socialized to the organizational values (Chao et al., 1994; Edwards & Cable, 2009). There are also organizational benefits to increasing individuals' moral identity, beyond the obvious boon of increased ethical

decision-making. Individuals with higher moral identities also tend to hold more positive job attitudes. However, I also show that there is a dark side to organizational efforts aimed at making members prioritize ethics. Specifically, I show that Machiavellians (Christie, Geis, & Berger, 1970), when confronted with organizational efforts to impress upon them the importance of ethics and values, perceive a threat to their self-concept and respond by lowering the priority they place on being a moral person even further.

The second paper explores how individuals' moral identity at time of organizational entry facilitates numerous desirable outcomes for both the organization and the individual in terms of effective socialization, individuals' perceived meaningfulness of work, and subsequent job attitudes. Specifically, I analyze the effects of personality factors and moral identity on different outcomes of socialization. I show that while personality factors are significant predictors of increasing technical abilities, social acceptance, and understanding of the political structure of an organization, they are insufficient predictors of socialization to organizational goals and values. Instead, moral identity leads to increased socialization on this dimension. I also argue that prior studies of socialization have largely ignored a very important outcome that is likely to determine how individuals think about their work – namely, whether individuals perceive that their work is meaningful, or significant. I argue and show that individuals' perceptions that their jobs are meaningful are largely influenced by their moral identity. Finally, I show that moral identity has a significant indirect effect on both organizational commitment and identification, and that the relationship is mediated by their beliefs about the meaningfulness of their work.

This dissertation makes numerous contributions to extant knowledge about behavioral ethics, socialization, job attitudes, and individuals' beliefs about their work. In terms of behavioral ethics, moral identity has been largely considered a stable

disposition (Aquino, Reed, Thau, & Freeman, 2007; Aquino & Reed, 2002), though prior work has shown that it can be made more or less salient (Aquino, Freeman, Reed, Lim, & Felps, 2009). As such, we know very little about whether moral identity can be meaningfully developed, and if trying to develop it is a good thing for every person. This question gets to the heart of ethical socialization. Organizations that work to create an ethical workforce may be making some individuals better; they also may be making some individuals worse. And, it is possible that individuals' moral identity increase or decay could have significant repercussions on their job attitudes.

In terms of socialization, prior research has largely focused on personality factors that determine how well or poorly individuals are socialized. This dissertation shows that the ethical dispositions are influential in this regard as well. Indeed, it shows that while personality factors may be predictive of socialization to outcomes such as technical ability and social acceptance, for outcomes that have to deal with values, other individual factors may be significantly more predictive.

Finally, regarding perceptions of meaningful work, prior studies have focused largely on the organizational and social context as determinants of meaningful work perceptions. Recently, scholars have discussed the utility of identifying individual-level factors that predispose individuals to perceive meaning and significance in their work (Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010). This dissertation answers that call by positioning moral identity as a key antecedent of meaningful work perceptions. As well, it goes on to show that meaningful perceptions are a vehicle through which individuals' moral identity influences job attitudes.

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CHAPTER 2

BE ALL THAT I WANT YOU TO BE: THE BENEFITS AND PERILS OF TRYING TO MAKE EMPLOYEES MORE MORAL

Introduction

A recruiting slogan for the US Army once read, “Be all that you can be”; beckoning new recruits to enter the ranks of an organization that promises to shape and mold them into something better and stronger than they are today. In a very different arena, that of a civic organization, the motto of Freemasonry is, “Taking good men and making them better.” These organizations are not alone in their desire to improve their members. Indeed, although not always included as part of their public message, many organizations are concerned with how they can improve their members - be it improving technical or managerial skills, emotional intelligence, or some other aspect of the person. Organizations that care about their ethical reputation may be especially concerned with ethical socialization, or whether and how members’ ethical character changes during the socialization process, and whether the organization can play a role in encouraging that change. That is, these organizations may care a great deal about whether members value being moral¹ individuals, whether they “buy in” to the organizational values, and whether these outcomes can be influenced.

Moral identity – or the self-importance individuals place on being a moral person – is said to be a relatively stable disposition that is predictive of individuals’ ethical decisions and behaviors (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Aquino, Reed, Thau, &

Freeman, 2007; Reed & Aquino, 2003; Reynolds & Ceranic, 2007). For organizations that desire to have and maintain an ethical workforce, the stability of moral identity is a vexing problem. If moral identity is resistant to change, then organizations are faced with the daunting challenge of trying to hire only employees with high moral identities, while simultaneously reducing the organizational stimuli that tempt employees to behave unethically and putting in place rewards for ethical behavior. Indeed, these are important steps for organizations to take, and prior work has explored the efficacy of these types of practices. For example, research has explored the dangers of implementing overly ambitious goals (Schweitzer, Ordonez, & Douma, 2004), the importance of creating an ethical climate or culture (Flannery & May, 2000; Singhapakdi et al., 2001; Trevino et al., 1998), and of having ethical leadership (Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador, 2009). However, these approaches are largely concerned with accounting for unethical tendencies in organizational members or ensuring that they have ethical guidance from leaders rather than trying to fundamentally enhance members' intrinsic desire to be ethical. Trying to hire only highly moral individuals seems a Sisyphean task, given that moral identity is likely difficult to spot in an interview or hiring context. Similarly, given the complex and competitive nature of organizations, the likelihood of removing all unethical temptations seems remote. As such, it seems fruitful to explore whether individuals' moral identity – a powerful, internal motivator for ethical behavior (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Blasi, 1980) – can be enhanced, how organizations can play a role in that

¹ In this paper I use the words moral and ethical interchangeably to mean individuals' desire to uphold widely held behavioral standards that promote and protect the needs

process, and whether there are any pitfalls in trying to do so.

Some prior research suggests that individuals' moral self-image is malleable (Monin & Jordan, 2009), though this work has not typically explored whether changes in individuals' moral tendencies persist over time. In this paper I delve into the question of whether individuals' moral identity increases as a result of socialization into an organization that highly values ethics. I take a social learning theory approach to exploring an intersection of behavioral ethics and socialization research to propose two individual antecedents, moral attentiveness (Reynolds, 2008) and ethical idealism (Forsyth, 1980), that predispose certain individuals to increase the importance of morality to their self-concept. I also suggest a mediating mechanism, values socialization, which catalyzes the process of moral identity increase. In doing so I hope to illustrate the important role that organizations, by having and effectively socializing newcomers to a clear, high ethical standard, play in this process of changing individuals' moral identity. I also explore the organizational benefits of this process beyond the obvious boon of reducing unethical behavior. I argue that increasing moral identity can positively impact individuals' job attitudes, leading them to be more organizationally committed, identified, and satisfied with their jobs. Finally, I explore whether there are any damaging, perverse effects of trying to influence individuals' moral identity. I argue that for some individuals, socialization into an organization that values ethics and morality can have a perverse effect such that their moral identity is damaged by the experience rather than bolstered. I posit Machiavellianism as a key factor in predicting decay in moral identity during

and interests of others (Aquino et al., 2009; Kaptein, 2008).

newcomers' socialization into an organization that values ethics and morality. In this context, high Machiavellians will perceive a threat to their identity and respond by derogating the threat; paradoxically, and despite the best intentions of the organization, these individuals will effectively reduce the importance they place on being a moral person.

This research contributes to extant knowledge in important ways. Regarding research in business ethics, studies of moral identity has shown its many benefits, and that there are some factors that make moral identity more or less salient (Aquino, Freeman, Reed, Lim, & Felps, 2009). Yet, we know little about whether moral identity can be meaningfully developed. In that vein, we also do not know whether trying to improve upon a central aspect of a person's identity is always good. After all, alerting individuals to the fact that they should improve, while well intended, could also be threatening to one's self-concept as it also implies that they are currently inadequate in some way.

This work also contributes to our understanding of organizational socialization. Prior research, particularly that concerning socializing newcomers to organizational values, has shown that effective socialization leads to numerous beneficial outcomes such as improved job performance and career outcomes such as personal income and career involvement (e.g., Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, & Gardner, 1994; Saks & Ashford, 1997; Wanous, 1992). As well, research in values alignment has shown that when individual and organizational values are aligned, organizational members tend to hold more positive job attitudes (e.g., Cable & Edwards, 2004; Edwards & Cable, 2009). However, the values alignment work often does not focus on changing values

over time, and much of the literature regarding person change at the level of values has focused on relatively surface-level values such as one's interpersonal style or mode of dress (e.g., Black & Ashforth, 1995; Nicholson & West, 1988), and not on the deep-level changes such as how one considers morality in their self-concept. This work furthers these lines of work by showing that when organizations endeavor to create buy-in to the ethical values of the organization, it has a significant impact on the degree to which members prioritize being ethical as part of their self-concept.

This paper also integrates behavioral ethics and socialization research, thus furthering both areas of research. The integration of these literatures takes ethical constructs out of their traditional sphere and argues that an ethical workforce is valuable to an organization for reasons that transcend reducing unethical behavior; moral identity also plays an important role in organizational members' job attitudes. As well, this work opens the door for future studies of ethical socialization, or explorations of how organizations shape individuals' identities in a way that prioritizes or subverts their moral identity. In other words, this study illustrates that socialization into organizations can influence who we are, and not just what we do. I explore these questions across two studies, using a longitudinal field survey design. Importantly, the longitudinal design allows me to measure moral identity multiple times, allowing me to explore the factors that predict its change over time. In Study 1 I explore the factors that lead to increased moral identity during organizational socialization, and the organizational benefits of that increase. In Study 2 I test the factors hypothesized to predict moral identity decay, as well as replicate some of the findings from Study 1.

Study 1: Increasing Moral Identity

Social cognitive theories of identity argue that individuals' self-concepts incorporate assorted hierarchically ordered identities, and that a subset of those identities is active at any given time (Stryker, 1980). Which identities are active determines how individuals cognitively process and respond to stimuli (Cervone & Shoda, 1999; Markus & Kunda, 1986). One self-concept that individuals may hold is that they are a moral person, or that being a moral person is an important part of who they are. Prior work refers to this as an individual's moral identity, a self-concept organized around a set of moral traits (Aquino & Reed, 2002). For individuals high in moral identity, morality is chronically active in their self-concept and is a strong motivator of moral action due to their desire to maintain cognitive consistency – that is, to behave such that their actions reinforce their self-concept (Blasi, 1980). To wit, moral identity has been shown to influence a number of important behaviors including charitable giving (Reynolds & Ceranic, 2007), the extension of empathy to out-group members (Reed & Aquino, 2003), and the neutralization of moral disengagement (Aquino, Reed, Thau, & Freeman, 2007; Bandura, 1996).

Moral identity is important in the organizational context as well. Indeed, a high moral identity can help to guide individuals' behavior through uncertainty that, given the complexity of the organizational environment, an employees are nearly certain to face (Reynolds & Ceranic, 2007). Also, organizations presumably desire their leaders and other powerful individuals to act with greater awareness of moral issues rather than less. To that end, having a high moral identity can lead powerful individuals to be more morally aware, whereas powerful individuals who lack a strong moral identity instead act more self-interestedly (DeCelles, DeRue, Margolis, & Ceranic, 2012).

Finally, and related to the latter finding, moral identity is a key antecedent of ethical leadership (Mayer, Aquino, Greenbaum, & Kuenzi, 2012), which has been related to a host of beneficial outcomes including leader effectiveness, employee job satisfaction, and willingness to report issues to management (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005). In short, if organizations desire an ethical constituency, having members with high moral identity is helpful.

Moral identity is one of many self-concepts however, and the importance placed on being a moral person varies from one person to another (Blasi, 1984). Moral identity has been argued to be a relatively stable disposition (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Aquino et al., 2009). Indeed, beliefs about ethics and morality are likely to be a stable part of the self (Schein, 1971) – one of the central aspects of a person that are foundational and resistant to change. As such, change at the level of moral identity is likely effortful, and requires a combination of individual and environmental pressures that motivate individuals to alter their self-concept.

At the individual level, I argue that if individuals are to increase moral identity they must be able to recognize the importance and prevalence of moral considerations in their daily lives. In other words, they must be attentive to moral information (Reynolds, 2008). After all, if one does not perceive that morality is an important consideration in their lives, or that they regularly face situations carrying a moral component, then there is little motivation or utility in viewing morality as an important aspect of the self. Next, individuals should perceive that there is a consistent, ideal standard of ethical conduct to which they should hew. Without a consistent standard, what is perceived to be moral vacillates, becoming a moving target against which

progress is difficult to assay. And in terms of organizational pressures to increase moral identity, I argue that to motivate an increase in moral identity organizations must effectively communicate a standard to which individuals desire to adhere and represent, and endeavor to create buy-in to that standard. In other words, while attentiveness to the moral aspects of situations and the belief in an ethical standard are essential elements in the equation, the organization must catalyze the process by providing a viable standard for gauging moral behavior and effectively socializing members to that standard.

Individual and Organizational Influences of Increasing Moral Identity

Whether individuals' moral identity does or does not increase as a result of organizational influence is a question of person change and newcomer adjustment, both of which have been the subject of many prior studies (e.g., Ashforth, Sluss, & Harrison, 2007; Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007; Black & Ashford, 1995; Kammeyer-Mueller, 2007; Nicholson, 1984). This study takes an interactionist approach (see Kammeyer-Mueller, 2007 for review; Treviño, 1986), which posits that individual differences interact with elements of the environment and that these interactions lead to changes that increase or decrease fit between the individual and the organization. While people are certainly capable of changing elements of themselves at a number of time points in their organizational tenure (Bauer et al., 2007), prior work argues that a lion's share of person change happens during the initial socialization process because as newcomers become more comfortable in their new environment they become less responsive to socialization efforts (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Ashford et al., 2007).

Socialization is the process by which individuals transition from being organizational outsiders to insiders (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). During the socialization process, organizations endeavor to imbue members with both the technical and social knowledge of what it means to be an effective organizational member – that is, how to do the job and how to be a part of the organizational culture (Chao et al., 1994; Haueter et al., 2003). Prior studies have shown that individual characteristics play an important role in the socialization process. For instance, personality traits such as extraversion and openness to experience lead individuals to proactively seek feedback and engage with their social environment to a greater extent during socialization, and therefore to achieve greater fit (Ashford & Taylor, 1990; Ashforth, Sluss, & Harrison, 2007; Kammeyer-Mueller, 2007; Kim, Cable & Kim, 2005; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). However, many adjustment and person change studies have focused on change at the level of job skills, performance improvement, tacit knowledge about the company, social acceptance, dress or interpersonal style, or job attitudes (e.g., Ashforth, 2001; Bauer et al., 2007; Black & Ashford, 1985; Nicholson, 1984) rather than a deep-level change in a stable part of an individuals' identity. And while personality traits are certainly important in helping organizational members evaluate their performance and learn the broader requirements of their job, it is less clear why they would be powerful motivators of deep-level shifts in one's moral identity (McCrae, 1996; Seibert, Crant & Kraimer, 1999). That is, personality factors may lead individuals to seek more feedback and to learn what to do and say to fit in well with their organization, but they may not motivate individuals to self-reflect in a way that fundamentally changes how they prioritize morality in their

self-concept. Below I posit two factors that have been shown to motivate reflection and lead to prioritization of ethics, and that I argue are likely to motivate an individual to enhance the importance of moral identity to their self-concept.

Moral Attentiveness. Moral attentiveness is a social cognitive concept reflecting “the extent to which one chronically perceives and considers morality and moral elements in his or her experiences” (Reynolds, 2008: p. 1027). Though correlated with other factors relating to individuals’ tendency to pay attention to moral issues, such as moral awareness and moral sensitivity, moral attentiveness is distinct from both. Moral awareness refers to an individuals’ certitude that a situation is a moral one, and is largely triggered by issue characteristics (Rest, 1986; Reynolds, 2006, 2008). Moral attentiveness, by contrast, reflects the chronic tendency to pay attention to moral considerations across issues. Moral attentiveness is also different from moral sensitivity (Sparks & Hunt, 1998), which refers to individuals’ ability to identify moral issues when present. Whereas morally sensitive individuals are capable of identifying moral issues in a situation, morally attentive individuals proactively search for and engage with moral considerations.

The chronic accessibility of moral information leads those high in moral attentiveness to screen for, and reflect upon, the moral elements of stimuli. Indeed, moral attentiveness is positively related to recall of moral situations, and to moral behavior (Reynolds, 2008). A logical assumption then, is that the tendency to reflect upon and recall moral information leads individuals to recognize the importance of moral considerations, and motivates a desire to be moral and act congruently. After all, individuals strongly desire to maintain a positive self-image (Cialdini & Goldstein,

2004; Dunning, 1999; Steele, 1988). Accordingly, when individuals recognize the moral components of situations they should more often than not be motivated to act in a moral manner to maintain a positive self-image (Reynolds, 2008). Therefore, when individuals chronically perceive the moral aspects of situations, they are more likely to recognize the value of being a moral person in that being and acting morally is an important manner by which they affirm their positive self-image. As such, I argue that individuals high in moral attentiveness, by dint of chronically perceiving moral aspects of situations, will be more predisposed to seeing the value of moral action and being a moral person, and will therefore be likely to make morality a more central part of their self-concept.

Hypothesis 1: Moral attentiveness will be positively related to increasing moral identity.

Ethical Idealism. If individuals are to increase their moral identity, it is important that they establish a consistent standard for moral behavior. Idealism, a part of Ethics Position Theory (EPT), refers to individuals' inherent concern for positive outcomes and others' wellbeing (Forsyth, 1980, 1992). Individuals high in idealism tend to "assume that desirable consequences can, with the 'right' action, always be obtained" (Forsyth, 1980: 176). By contrast, those low in idealism may believe that "harm is sometimes ... necessary to produce good" (Forsyth, 1992, p. 462), reflecting a less rigorous standard for what constitutes "right" behavior. Idealism also differs sharply from the other primary factor of EPT, relativism, which asserts that what is considered moral action can shift depending upon the situation (Forsyth, 1980; McDonald, 2010). It has been suggested that ethical relativism can deter reflection on or the desire to

resolve moral problems (McDonald, 2010), and increases the likelihood of unethical behavior. The opposite is true for idealism. A recent meta-analysis by Kish-Gephart and colleagues' (2010) showed that individuals' idealism was significantly and negatively related to unethical choice. And, Karande and colleagues (2002) found that idealism was related to stronger endorsement of corporate values. Because idealists tend to believe there is a correct way of achieving outcomes, they tend to hold firmly to ethical beliefs and to judge unethical behaviors, or even ambiguously ethical behaviors, more critically (Barnett, Brass, & Brown, 1994; Forsyth, 1985).

The tendency to believe in a correct and immutable way of acting, the concomitant condemnation of actions that are not "right," and the negative relationship between idealism and unethical choice, connotes a standard for behavior that those high in idealism are motivated to uphold. While idealists hew closely to a moral standard, it is possible that as they learn about and experience new environments or situations, their standards for what constitutes "right" behavior may grow to include new values and beliefs. In organizational terms, highly idealistic individuals may be motivated to learn about, incorporate, and adhere to the values of their organization. Increased alignment between individual and organizational values increases individuals' perceptions that they fit in that context, and increases job satisfaction and commitment to the organization (Verquer, Beehr & Wagner, 2003). Perceiving alignment will be affirming for the idealistic individuals, and lead them to place greater value on being a moral person. I therefore argue that idealistic individuals will come to value their ethical beliefs more dearly when seeing them to be organizationally valued, and thereby will increase the importance of morality to their

self-concept.

Hypothesis 2: Ethical idealism will be positively related to increasing moral identity.

Values Socialization. Being attentive to moral information and believing in an absolute standard for ethical behavior are likely to lead to moral identity increase because these orientations lead individuals to search for, consider, and hopefully endorse the ethical values of their organizations. As such, I argue that organizations need to provide a clear, high standard for ethical behavior, and endeavor to create “buy-in” to that standard, in order to see an increase in members’ moral identity. In other words, organizational values need to include high standards for ethical behavior because it is the organizations’ ethical values that will appeal to idealistic and morally attentive individuals, and lead them to align their ethical values with those of the organization and strive to uphold them.

Alignment with organizational goals and values is an important socialization outcome (Chao et al., 1994). Individuals that “buy-in” to their organization’s values tend to be more satisfied with their job, more organizationally identified, and committed to remaining with the organization (Edwards & Cable, 2009; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; Verquer, Beehr, & Wagner, 2003). Value congruence increases members’ trust in the organization, promotes communication within it, and increases members’ affective feelings toward it (Edwards & Cable, 2009).

Morally attentive individuals’ motivation to act morally (Reynolds, 2008) will predispose them to perceive, internalize, and act according to the ethical values

established by the organization. As well, individuals high in idealism search for and are motivated to adhere to a ‘right’ way of behaving (Forsyth, 1980), which will predispose them to incorporate and prioritize the ethical values of the organization. But the morally attentive and the idealistic employee will not just internalize and prioritize those ethical values automatically. Organizations must make the ethical values known, demonstrate commitment to those values, and effectively sell them to members. Doing so signals to morally attentive and idealistic individuals that the organization, like them, is driven by and prioritizes ethics and values, and validates these individuals’ beliefs that ethics are important. When peoples’ strengths are valued it bolsters their positive self-image (Steele, 1988), and increases the self-importance of that domain. In short, when organizations provide clear signals about what is ethically desired, the morally attentive and idealistic individuals will seek out and desire to uphold that ethical standard for behavior, and their endeavor to do so will correspond with an increase in the importance they place on being a moral person. As such, I expect the relationships between increasing moral identity and both moral attentiveness and ethical idealism to be mediated by the extent to which individuals are socialized to the ethical values of the organization.

Hypothesis 3a: Socialization to organizational values and goals will mediate the relationship between moral attentiveness and increasing moral identity.

Hypothesis 3b: Socialization to organizational values and goals will mediate the relationship between ethical idealism and increasing moral identity.

The Organizational Benefits of Increasing Moral Identity

Organizations should care about increasing individuals’ moral identities not

only because it reduces moral disengagement and unethical choice (Aquino et al., 2007; Reed & Aquino, 2003) or because it is a component of good leadership (Mayer et al., 2012), but also because increased moral identity as a result of socialization is, I argue, likely to be positively related to job attitudes such as organizational identification, commitment, and job satisfaction. As argued above, increased moral identity is likely the result of commitment to and alignment with ethical organizational values. Prior research has shown that values congruence promotes trust, communication, and liking between individuals and their organizations which in turn leads to job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Edwards & Cable, 2009). Having increased their moral identity during socialization, members will likely not only align to a greater extent with the organizational values, but also will see those values as being central, prioritized aspects of their self-concept, which will likely accentuate the affects of alignment and lead to even greater satisfaction and commitment. In addition, individuals who have aligned with organizational values and prioritized them in their self-concept will then see important aspects of their self reflected within the organization. In other words, they are likely to see the organization as identity affirming. Prior work has shown that individuals will work harder for and be more supportive of stimuli that affirm their identities (Cable, Gino & Staats, 2013; Cable & Green, 2012; Haslam & Platow, 2001). Accordingly, an increased moral identity as a result of socialization should correspond to increased commitment to, and identification with, the organization, as well as increased job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4a-c: Increased moral identity will be positively related to (a)

organizational identification, (b) organizational commitment, and (c) job satisfaction.

Methods

To explore the relationships hypothesized above, I conducted a longitudinal field survey, administered at two different time points. The research site is a large information technology firm pseudonymously called ITECH. The firm employs well over 100,000 people, and is growing rapidly. Company leaders and employees at all levels are tremendously proud of their reputation as a highly ethical company, and go to great lengths to preserve that reputation. Media outlets such as *Forbes*, *Wall Street Journal Asia*, *Newsweek*, and others have recognized ITECH multiple times as one of the most admired and ethical companies in the world. The organization goes to great lengths to impress upon its members the importance of being a well-respected, ethical company. There are special training groups to ensure that organizational members are aware of the organization's values. Every group of new hires gets to attend a town hall style meeting with one of the founders of the organization, in which the founder speaks to newcomers and affirms the importance of ethical behavior and an adherence to the company values. The company values are woven into all training material and classes, and actively promoted via internal marketing material (e.g., posters on office walls, companywide emails, etc.). Employees recall company leaders saying such things as, "You will never hang your head in shame because of something that [our company] has done." One high level leader within the organization explained to the author that, "[Member of this company] have a paranoia about living by our company values."

Sample and Design

The organization regularly brings newly hired cohorts of 500 to 1,000 employees to a large corporate campus where they live and receive specialized training for 4-5 months. They go through training in groups, training progresses in formal, predetermined stages, and newcomers are supported in their training by instructors and more senior members of the organization. Most of the new hires are recent university graduates with computer science or engineering degrees. During their time on the corporate campus, new hires receive training in computer programming to prepare them for the technical aspects of their job, as well as continuing lessons in business etiquette and language, and presentation skills to prepare them for doing business with international clients. As mentioned above, lessons in organizational values are woven throughout this intensive socialization process.

The sample consists of all 150 members of a new cohort who were to be sent to the same company location at the end of their training. Of the 150 eligible individuals for this study, 125 provided responses at both survey time points, yielding an 83% response rate. The average age of this sample was approximately 22 (range: 21-27) years old; 32% are male.

Participants received a computer-based survey during their first week of training, and a second survey at the end of their training. Survey 1 was used to collect the majority of the independent variables including a measure of individuals' moral identity at the beginning of their employment. Demographic information, as well as other variables that would serve as controls, were also collected on Survey 1. Survey 2 assessed socialization effectiveness, individuals' moral identity upon completing their

training, and a number of job attitudes. The organization set aside time during work hours for both surveys to be completed, and provided computers for use in completing them.

Independent and Dependent Variables

Moral Attentiveness. Moral attentiveness was assessed on the first survey using the 7-item perceptual moral attentiveness measure created by Reynolds (2008). The perceptual measure is associated with recall and recognition of moral content, and so is an excellent measure for the theory that chronic perception and recall of moral content will predispose individuals to increase their moral identity. Sample items from the perceptual moral attentiveness scale are, “In a typical day I face several ethical dilemmas,” “Many of the decisions I make have ethical dimensions to them,” and “I rarely face ethical dilemmas” (reverse scored). The seven items ($\alpha = .81$) were assessed with a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Ethical Idealism. *Idealism* was measured using the Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ) items created by Forsyth (1980). The idealism scale is a 10-item measure ($\alpha = .89$ in this sample) in which respondents rate their agreement with such statements as, “The existence of potential harm to others is always wrong, irrespective of the benefits to be gained”, “One should not perform an action which might in any way threaten the dignity and welfare of another individual,” and “Deciding whether or not to perform an act by balancing the positive consequences of the act against the negative consequences of the act is immoral.” Responses are measured on a 9-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 9 (*completely agree*).

Values Socialization. *Values socialization* was measured using the goals and values subset of items from Chao and colleagues' (1994) socialization outcomes measure. Respondents rate their level of agreement with a series of seven statements on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) scale. Example items include statements such as, "I would be a good example of an employee who represents my organization's values," "I support the goals that are set by my organization," and "I do not always believe in the values set by my organization" (reverse scored). Cronbach's alpha for this scale was $\alpha=.89$.

Moral Identity. *Moral identity* was measured in both Survey 1 and 2 using Aquino and Reed's (2002) internalization subscale. Intended to measure the degree to which individuals' self-concepts coalesce around a set of moral characteristics, individuals are presented with nine adjectives including compassionate, fair, honest, and kind. They are then asked to rate the degree to which they are, or desire to be, a person whom these words would describe. Example items include, "It would make me feel good to be a person who has these characteristics," "Having these characteristics is not really important to me" (reverse scored), and "Being someone who has these characteristics is an important part of who I am." Agreement is assessed on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) scale. Cronbach's alpha for this variable was $\alpha=.78$ at time 1, and $\alpha=.80$ at time 2.

Job Attitudes. *Organizational identification* was measured using Mael and Ashforth's (1992) 6-item measure ($\alpha=.84$), in which individuals rate their agreement on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) scale with statements such as, "When someone criticizes ITECH, it feels like a personal insult," and, "ITECH's successes

are my successes.” *Organizational commitment* was measured using 5 items from Meyer and colleagues’ (1993) affective commitment scale ($\alpha = .75$). Responses were measured on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Example items include, “I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization,” and, “This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.” Finally, *job satisfaction* was measured using three items from the Job Diagnostic Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). On a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) scale, respondents rate their agreement with statements such as, “All in all I like working in this job,” and “Overall I think I’m as happy as I could be about this job.” Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was $\alpha = .95$.

Control Variables

Control variables were measured on the first survey. Personality traits have been shown in numerous studies to influence socialization and person change. For instance, extraversion and openness to experience motivate proactive feedback seeking and relationship building (Ashford & Black, 1996; Ashford & Taylor, 1990; Bauer et al., 1998; Kim, Cable & Kim, 2005; LePine, Colquitt & Erez, 2000; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). As well, studies have found other personality dimensions such as agreeableness and conscientiousness influence socialization outcomes (Ashford & Taylor, 1990; Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003; LePine, Colquitt & Erez, 2000). As such, these factors were included as controls. All personality traits were measured using the 10-item versions of Goldberg’s (1992) “Big Five” scales. Participants read a list of descriptors and rated how accurate or inaccurate that descriptor is in describing them. Ratings were done using a 5-point

Likert scale ranging from 1 (*very inaccurate*) to 5 (*very accurate*). Example items for *extraversion* ($\alpha=.55$) include, “Am the life of the party”, “Start conversations,” and “Don’t talk a lot” (reverse scored). Example items for *openness* ($\alpha=.72$) include, “Have a vivid imagination”, and “Am not interested in abstract ideas” (reverse scored). Example items for *agreeableness* ($\alpha=.77$) include “Am interested in other people,” and “Feel little concern for others” (reverse scored). Example items for *conscientiousness* ($\alpha=.67$) include “Am always prepared,” and “Pay attention to details.” Reliabilities for the Big 5 scales, while low, are consistent with findings in numerous samples, and specifically in samples from the region where the ITECH is headquartered (see Schmitt, Allik, McCrae, & Benet-Martinez, 2007).

Prior research has shown that demographic factors can be significantly correlated to variables related to morality and ethical thought. For example, prior work has shown gender to correlate with unethical choice and moral identity (Reynolds, 2008). Age has also been shown to be negatively related to unethical choice (Kish-Gephart et al., 2010). As such, these demographic variables are included as controls. Finally, because this study predicts increase in individuals’ moral identity from before socialization to after it, time 1 moral identity is included as a control (alpha reported above).

Results

Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics and intercorrelations for all variables. The values and correlations among variables appear consistent with prior research and with relationships predicted above. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004) revealed that a multifactor model ($\chi^2[3761]=6820.35$, Normed $\chi^2 =$

1.81, RMSEA = .08) fit the data better than a one-factor model ($\chi^2[3827]=9160.06$, Normed $\chi^2 = 2.39$, RMSEA = .11) or other nested models with a lower number of factors in which the more highly correlated factors were combined (model combining job attitudes into single factor: $\chi^2[33]=327$, $p<.00$; model combining job attitudes into single factor, and personality into single factor: $\chi^2[45]=445$, $p<.00$).

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations of Study 1 Variables

<u>Variable</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>S.D.</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>
1. Age	21.93	0.94													
2. Gender	1.67	0.47	-.17												
3. Moral Identity (Time 1)	4.46	0.72	-.11	.18*											
4. Extraversion	3.30	0.50	-.01	-.10	.29**										
5. Openness	3.55	0.56	-.08	-.13	.09	.35**									
6. Agreeableness	3.77	0.60	.06	-.07	.09	.43**	.6**								
7. Conscientiousness	3.76	0.58	.10	.05	.12	.19*	.54**	.57**							
8. Moral Attentiveness	4.60	1.18	-.18	-.09	-.06	-.09	-.01	-.04	-.10						
9. Idealism	6.87	1.84	.01	.0	.29**	.1	.17*	.30**	.20*	.02					
10. Values Socialization	4.03	0.68	-.20	.20*	.07	.14	.23**	.27**	.31**	.16*	.27**				
11. Moral Identity (Time 2)	4.44	0.70	-.18	.24**	.27**	.07	.06	.12	.09	.16*	.31**	.48**			
12. Organizational Identification	4.22	0.73	-.04	.13	.01	.02	.19*	.30**	.24**	.20*	.13	.50**	.40**		
13. Organizational Commitment	5.76	1.17	-.02	.09	.07	.11	.14	.21*	.24**	.03	.27**	.47**	.50**	.44**	
14. Job Satisfaction	5.88	1.21	-.07	.25**	.08	.13	.16*	.19*	.21*	.14	.07	.52**	.41**	.62**	.50**

^a Dichotomous variable for gender: male = 1; female = 2.

** p < .01

* p < .05

The hypothesized relationships were tested using ordinary least squares regression analyses, the results of which are presented in Table 2. Hypotheses 1-3 were tested in models 1-3. Model 1 is a controls-only model. The control variables account for approximately 16% of the variance in the dependent variable. Model 2 tests Hypotheses 1 and 2 by entering moral attentiveness and ethical idealism into the regression. The addition of these two variables accounts for an additional 7% of variance in moral identity, representing a significant improvement over the controls-only model $F(2, 97) = 4.85, p < .01$. Hypothesis 1, that moral attentiveness is positively related to increased moral identity, was supported significance ($B = .10; p = 0.05$). Hypothesis 2, that ethical idealism was positively related to increased moral identity, was also supported ($B = .09; p = 0.01$).

Hypotheses 3a and 3b – that effective socialization to the values and goals of the organization will mediate the relationships between moral attentiveness, ethical idealism and increasing moral identity – were tested using the Preacher and Hayes (2008) bootstrapping technique for establishing mediation with 10,000 iterations. As shown in model 2, ethical idealism and moral attentiveness are significant predictors of the outcome variable. Both variables are also significant predictors of the goals and values socialization variable as the criterion variable (moral attentiveness $B=.10; p < .05$; idealism $B = .07; p < .04$). As seen in model 3, when entering moral attentiveness, idealism, and values socialization variables as predictors of moral identity, the effects of both moral attentiveness and idealism become non-significant, while values socialization is highly significant ($B = .42; p < .00$). The bootstrapping technique produced a 95% bias-corrected confidence interval that excluded zero for the indirect

effects of both moral attentiveness (.01 to .10) and ethical idealism (.00 to .07), suggesting significant indirect effect for each. Thus Hypothesis 3a and 3b were supported.

Table 2. *Individual and Organizational Effects on Time 2 Moral Identity*

	<u>Model 1</u>		<u>Model 2</u>		<u>Model 3</u>	
	<u>B</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>SD</u>
(Constant)	4.80**	1.65	3.65*	1.69	2.18	1.59
<i>Control Variables</i>						
Age	-.1	.07	-.08	.07	-.03	.06
Gender	.22	.14	.27 ^l	.14	.15	.13
Moral Identity (Time 1)	.26**	.09	.21*	.09	.24**	.08
Extraversion	-.08	.15	-.01	.14	-.07	.13
Openness	-.08	.15	-.08	.15	-.11	.14
Agreeableness	.20	.15	.11	.15	.09	.13
Conscientiousness	.00	.14	.02	.14	-.12	.13
<i>Independent Variables</i>						
Moral Attentiveness			.10*	.05	.06	.05
Ethical Idealism			.09*	.04	.06	.03
Values Socialization					.42**	.10
R ²	.16		.24		.36	
Adjusted R ²	.10		.17		.30	
Δ R ²	.10		.07		.13	
df (regression, residual)	(7, 102)		(2, 100)		(1, 99)	

^a Dichotomous variable for gender: 1=Male, 2=Female

** p < .01

* p < .05

Hypotheses 4a-c, that increased moral identity is a significant predictor of job attitudes was tested in models 4-9, shown in table 3. Models 4 and 5 test Hypothesis 4a, models 6 and 7 test Hypothesis 4b, and models 8-9 test Hypothesis 4c. Two regressions were run for each hypothesis in order to establish the statistical significance of the time 2 moral identity variable. An initial regression was run for each dependent variable, incorporating the personality variables, the Time 1 moral identity variable, and the socialization to goals and values variable as controls. Then,

Time 2 moral identity was entered as a predictor variable in a second model. The Time 2 moral identity variable is a significant predictor and explains significantly more variance for job satisfaction ($B=.38$; $p = .02$) and organizational commitment ($B=.61$; $p = .00$), and was significant at the 10% level for organizational identification ($B=.18$; $p = .08$). Thus hypotheses 4b and 4c were supported, and hypothesis 4a was marginally supported.

Table 3. *Impact of Increased Moral Identity on Job Attitudes*

	DV=Organizational Identification				DV=Organizational Commitment				DV=Job Satisfaction			
	Model 4		Model 5		Model 6		Model 7		Model 8	Model 9		
	<u>B</u>	<u>S. D.</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>S. D.</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>S. D.</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>S. D.</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>S. D.</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>S. D.</u>
(Constant)	.27	1.64	-.20	1.65	.07	2.82	-1.53	2.70	-.74	2.57	-1.73	2.56
Age	.07	.07	.08	.07	.09	.11	.11	.11	.06	.10	.08	.10
Gender	.08	.14	.06	.14	.05	.23	-.01	.22	.33	.21	.29	.21
Moral Identity (Time 1)	.02	.09	-.04	.09	.06	.15	-.11	.15	.05	.14	-.06	.14
Extraversion	-.22	.14	-.20	.14	.03	.24	.10	.23	.15	.22	.19	.22
Openness	-.02	.15	.01	.15	-.10	.25	-.03	.24	.09	.23	.13	.23
Agreeableness	.32*	.14	.29*	.14	.14	.24	.05	.23	-.03	.22	-.08	.22
Conscientiousness	-.08	.14	-.06	.14	.14	.24	.23	.23	.08	.22	.14	.22
Values Socialization	.53**	.10	.45*	.11	.68**	.17	.39*	.18	.89**	.16	.71**	.17
Moral Identity (Time 2)			.18	.11			.61**	.17			.38*	.16
R ²	.32		.34		.20		.29		.34		.38	
Adjusted R ²	.27		.28		.14		.23		.29		.32	
Δ R ²	.27		.01		.14		.09**		.29		.03**	
df (regression, residual)	(8, 101)		(1, 100)		(8,101)		(1, 100)		(8, 101)		(1, 100)	

^a Dichotomous variable for gender: 1=Male, 2=Female

** p < .01

* p < .05

Discussion

Study 1, illustrates that individuals' moral identity is malleable over time, and that organizations can play a role in its growth. I proposed two individual factors, moral attentiveness and ethical idealism, that would predispose individuals to enhancing the self-importance of being a moral person. Indeed, ethical idealism and moral attentiveness were significantly predictive of moral identity increase. As well, this study argued and showed that individuals' socialization to organizational values plays an important, and catalyzing role in moral identity increase. The addition of the values socialization variable fully mediated the relationship between ethical idealism and moral identity increase, and accounted for an additional 13% of variance in moral identity change. Taken together, these findings represent an important first step in exploring how organizations can influence members to make morality an important part of their self-concept. Importantly, this study also illustrates that moral identity is positively related to job attitudes. This finding is exciting because it shows that moral identity is an influential variable for outcomes beyond the realm of behavioral ethics. Rather, it is a factor in determining how newcomers respond to their workplace.

Study 2: Moral Identity Decay

Arguing that moral identity is malleable is both encouraging and daunting. For while it implies, as argued and shown above, that individuals' moral identity can increase, it also implies that it might decrease as well. I argue that decrease is likely to be found in individuals who do not believe that ethics are important, and in those who feel threatened by organizational attempts to impress its importance upon them. One disposition that leads

individuals to devalue moral thought and action, is Machiavellianism.

Machiavellianism and Emotional Labor

Machiavellianism. Based on the 16th century writings of Niccolo Machiavelli, Machiavellianism was introduced as a dispositional trait and area of research by Christie and Geiss (1970). The construct is associated with unethical action and meta-analytic findings support the relationship between Machiavellianism and unethical choice (Kish-Gephart et al., 2010). As well, prior work has articulated numerous factors that will lead individuals high in Machiavellianism to devalue their moral identity. Primarily, high Machiavellians lack moral concern and prefer to view other individuals instrumentally, as a means to a self-interested end. This results in a repression of emotion and empathy in their relationships, as well as low ideological commitment to others' agendas, causes and belief systems. As such, they also tend to be renitent to appeals for attitude change (Christie & Geis, 1970).

Upon entering an organization that highly values ethical behavior, and that actively tries to promote ethical values among its employees, high Machiavellians are likely to perceive a threat to their identity. Threats to individuals' positive self-views often stem from an inability to meet social standards and expectations (Leary & Baumeister, 2000) and organizational signals that ethics and values are important and highly desired qualities will indicate to Machiavellians that their amoral or immoral leanings are judged negatively according to organizational standards. When individuals' positive identities are threatened, they may act defensively to restore their sense of self-worth (Festinger, 1957; Sherman & Cohen, 2006). Individuals often

ameliorate threat by rejecting threatening information (Sherman & Cohen, 2002) or derogating the group holding the threatening view (Branscombe & Wann, 1994). For instance, prior work has shown that individuals downplay the importance of domains in which they fail, thus allowing them to maintain their positive self-view but negating the possibility of future improvement in that area (Steele, 1997; Major Spencer, Schmader, Wolfe, & Crocker, 1998). Additionally, in response to identity threat, individuals can become more entrenched in their prior beliefs. Indeed, Lord, Ross and Lepper (1979) argued and showed that individuals allow their current beliefs to bias their evaluation of potentially contradicting evidence, and then use their biased conclusions to further support preexisting beliefs.

Based on the above arguments, I expect that Machiavellians, upon entering an organization that prioritizes ethical and moral behavior, will perceive a threat to their identity. In response, these individuals will reject the threat, resulting in moral identity decay.

Hypothesis 5. Machiavellianism is positively related to moral identity decay.

As discussed above, Machiavellians will respond to organizational attempts to impress upon them the importance of ethics by shunning those values, and the mechanism behind this impulse is the identity threat that Machiavellians perceive from organizations that prioritize ethical behavior during socialization. I argue that this threat is manifested in Machiavellians' perceptions that they must pretend to be someone they are not in order to blend in. Importantly, Machiavellians tend to hide their personal convictions (Christie & Geis, 1970), suggesting that they will try to "blend in" with an ethically conscious organization. Blending in with this type of

organization is likely to be a challenging endeavor for Machiavellians and the need to do so reflects a perceived threat. I argue that both the perceived discrepancy and the associated threat are captured by Machiavellians engagement in emotional labor, specifically, surface-level acting.

Emotional Labor. Emotional labor is defined as expressing one's self according to socially desired display rules, or the norms for how individuals should express themselves in a given context (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Ekman, 1973; Hochschild, 1979, 1983; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989). It is a form of impression management in which individuals try to foster and sustain an impression of themselves in the eyes of others (Gardner & Martinko, 1988). Emotional labor can be performed with either surface or deep acting. Surface acting refers to the projection of emotions that are not truly felt, and is done by acting out certain facial expressions, gestures, or vocal affectations (Hochschild, 1979, 1983). Deep acting, by contrast, refers to individuals' generating the normative emotions in order to actually experience them. Because Machiavellians tend to repress emotions and avoid them when possible (Christie & Geis, 1970), it stands to reason that they are far more likely to engage in surface acting rather than deep acting. As such, in discussing Machiavellianism, I focus on emotional labor at the level of surface acting.

Within an organization that highly values ethics, there are likely numerous display rules supporting the organizational values. These might include expressing disappointment or outrage at hearing of ethical lapses, showing the appropriate amount of reverence when hearing inspirational stories about organizational members who stood for ethical principles, or expressing agreement with and dedication to the

organizational values or mission. Machiavellians, not believing morals or ethical values to be as important as others members do, will have to fake these displays more often than other organizational members in order to blend in.

High levels of surface acting in organizations are reflective of potentially significant issues. They show that individuals recognize that their own natural responses to stimuli are discrepant from organizational display norms. In other words, high levels of surface acting indicate that individuals recognize they differ in some regard from what the organization desires. After all, if individuals' do not perceive discrepancy between what they feel and what the organization expects, there would be no motivation to engage in surface acting. If the discrepancy is in a domain that is self-reflective, as would be the case when discussing individuals' ethics, then it can result in dissonance and identity threat. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) argued that individuals "whose display rules are discrepant with those of the organizational role are more apt to experience emotive dissonance (p. 99)." This dissonance is can be stressful and threatening to one's identity (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). This threat is often resolved via psychological detachment (Peretti & O'Connor, 1989), or defensive derogation and self-affirmation (Branscombe & Wann, 1994; Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979).

Because surface acting reflects recognition of discrepancy between individual and organizational expectations, and because it engenders identity threat, I expect that emotional labor in the form of surface acting mediates the relationship between Machiavellianism and moral identity decay.

Hypothesis 6. Emotional labor mediates the relationship between

Machiavellianism and moral identity decay.

Methods

Study 2 was undertaken to explore the relationships argued above, as well as to partially replicate findings in study 1. The research setting was within the same organization as Study 1.

Sample and Design

The sample for Study 2 consisted of a group of 429 employees who had been hired at the same time but were to be sent to different locations than the Study 1 sample. Of the 429 employees, 290 provided useable responses at both time points, yielding an effective response rate of 69%. The average age of this sample was approximately 22 years old (range: 20-26) and 46% are male.

Participants received a computer-based survey during their first week of training, and again in their final week of training. Survey 1 was used to collect the majority of the independent variables, demographic information, and controls. Survey 2 measured participants' moral identity at the end of the socialization process, as well as a measure of emotional labor. Again, the organization set aside time during work hours for both surveys, and provided computers for completing them.

Independent and Dependent Variables

Machiavellianism. *Machiavellianism* was measured using Dahling and colleagues (2009) measure of Machiavellian personality. Using a 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree) scale, individuals rate their level of agreement with 16 statements ($\alpha=.88$). Example items include statements such as, "I would cheat if there were a low chance of getting caught," "I am willing to be unethical if I believe it will help me

succeed,” and, “I dislike committing to groups because I don’t trust others.”

Moral Identity. *Moral identity* was assessed on Survey 1 ($\alpha=.73$) and Survey 2 ($\alpha=.85$) using the Aquino and Reed (2002) measure described above. As with the prior study, the Survey 2 measure will serve as the dependent variable, and the Survey 1 measure will control for individuals’ initial level of moral identity upon entering the organization.

Emotional Labor. *Emotional labor* was measured on Survey 2 using six items ($\alpha=.83$) from the Lee, Lovell, and Brotheridge (2009) scale. These six items represent the degree to which an individual engages in surface-level acting, or the attempt to hide their own feelings and faking emotional displays for others. On a 1 (never) to 5 (always) scale, respondents rate the frequency with which they engage in a number of activities. Example items include, “Show emotions I don’t feel,” “Conceal what I am feeling,” and, “Pretend to have emotions that I really don’t have.”

Control Variables

Controls for Study 2 consist of the same demographic factors (age and gender) and a baseline measure of individual’ moral identity, as well as the individual variables predicted to lead to moral identity increase – ethical idealism and moral attentiveness – used in Study 1. Ethical idealism ($\alpha=.91$) was measured using 10 items from the EPQ (Forsyth, 1980) scale, and moral attentiveness ($\alpha=.78$) was measured using the seven items from the Reynolds (2008) scale, both of which were described above. These latter variables, besides serving as controls, allow for partial replication and a check that the findings from Study 1 are consistent.

Results

Table 4 presents the means and standard deviations for, and correlations between, the variables included in Study 2. All values and correlations appear normal and consistent with the predictions of this study. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004) on all variables except demographics revealed that multifactor model including one factor for each variable ($\chi^2[1112]=2654.88$, Normed $\chi^2 = 2.39$, RMSEA = .06) was a better fit of the data than a one-factor model ($\chi^2[1127]=6071.82$, Normed $\chi^2 = 5.39$, RMSEA = .11) or any nested model in which the more correlated factors were combined (model combining Machiavellianism and emotional labor: diff $\chi^2[5]=557$, $p<.00$; model further combining moral identity measures: diff $\chi^2[9]=870$, $p<.00$).

Table 4. Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations of Study 2 Variables

	<i>M</i>	<i>S. D.</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>
1. Age	22.02	.91							
2. Gender	1.52	.50	-.11						
3. Moral Identity (Time 1)	4.50	.65	.01	.14**					
4. Ethical Idealism	6.91	1.95	.03	.15**	.21**				
5. Moral Attentiveness	4.65	1.12	-.06	.01	.01	.05			
6. Machiavellianism	2.56	.67	-.01	-.13*	-.09	-.09	.26**		
7. Emotional Labor	2.91	.61	.04	-.19**	-.09	-.14*	.08	.21**	
8. Moral Identity (Time 2)	4.01	.88	-.06	.12*	.24**	.17**	-.04	-.21**	-.28**

^a Dichotomous variable for gender: 1=Male, 2=Female

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

Hypotheses 5 and 6 were tested using the three simple OLS regression models presented in Table 5. Model one is a baseline, controls-only model. Model 2 adds the Machiavellianism variable, and Model 3 adds the emotional labor variable. Hypothesis 5, that Machiavellianism is positively related to moral identity decay, is supported. As

shown in Model 2, the effect of Machiavellianism on individuals' Time 2 moral identity is significant and negative ($B = -.22, p=.00$). Hypothesis 6, that emotional labor in the form of surface level acting mediates the relationship between Machiavellianism and moral identity decay, was tested using Preacher and Hayes (2008) bootstrapping technique with 10,000 iterations. Machiavellianism is a significant predictor of emotional labor ($B = .19, p = .00$). As seen in Model 3, the emotional labor variable is a significant predictor of moral identity decay ($B = -.40, p = .00$), and the addition of it makes the effect of the Machiavellianism variable on moral identity insignificant. The bootstrapping technique provided a 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect that excluded zero (-.13 to -.03) suggesting a significant indirect effect. As such, Hypothesis 6 is supported. As well, and replicating the results of Study 1, ethical idealism is positively related to increasing moral identity. The significant effect of moral attentiveness on moral identity, however, was not observed.

Table 5. *Machiavellianism, Emotional Labor and Moral Identity Decay*

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	S. D.	B	S. D.	B	S. D.
(Constant)	4.29**	1.32	4.81**	1.32	5.36**	1.26
Age	-.10	.06	-.10	.06	-.06	.05
Gender	.08	.10	.05	.10	-.03	.10
Moral Identity (Time 1)	.29**	.08	.28**	.08	.25**	.07
Ethical Idealism	.08**	.03	.07**	.03	.06*	.03
Moral Attentiveness	-.03	.04	.00	.05	.01	.04
Machiavellianism			-.22**	.08	-.14	.07
Emotional Labor (Surface Acting)					-.40**	.08
R ²	.11		.13		.21	
Adjusted R ²	.09		.12		.19	
ΔR^2	0.11		0.03**		0.08**	
df (regression, residual)	(5, 285)		(1, 284)		(1, 283)	

^a Dichotomous variable for gender: Male = 1; Female = 2.

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

Discussion

Whereas Study 1 illustrated that moral identity is malleable and that organizations can play a role in catalyzing its increase, Study 2 reveals the dark side of endeavoring to do so. Specifically, in response to organizational messages that ethics and morality are important and highly valued, Machiavellian individuals will respond by getting worse in that regard rather than better. That is, their moral identity decreases in face of attempts to increase it. This effect is driven by the recognition that they must ‘fake it’ to get by, which represents a threat to their identity. This mechanism was demonstrated by showing how emotional labor, in the form of surface acting, mediates the relationship between Machiavellianism and moral identity decay.

General Discussion

Contributions and Future Research Directions

The concept of moral identity has been increasingly applied to studies in organizational environments and to explorations of individuals’ ethical propensities. This study complements that work, while extending it in meaningful ways by showing how organizations play an active role in *shaping* individuals’ moral identities, and the value of moral identity increase to individuals’ job attitudes. As well, this study identified that both moral identity increase and decay are the result of individual factors (idealism, moral attentiveness, and Machiavellianism, respectively) interacting with organizational influences.

Analyzing these relationships paints a complex picture, however. After all, while some individuals increased their moral identity during the socialization process, other individuals’ moral identities became significantly lower. This highlights a

potential “double-edged sword” for organizations endeavoring to create an ethical workforce. There is certainly more work to be done in this vein. Seeing that moral identities can change indicates that individuals with lower moral identities may not be a lost cause. And there are likely to be other factors, aside from those in this study, that motivate individuals to value morality as an important part of their identity. For instance, it is possible that organizations that recognize ethical behavior as part of employee evaluations or by incentivizing it might also be able to increase individuals’ moral identity. As well, there may be different predisposing factors at the individual level that motivate change. For instance, in situations where ethical behavior is incentivized or used as a performance criteria, it is possible that individuals with a high need for achievement (Jackson, 1974) or with particularly high levels of self-interest (Miller, 1999) might be the most highly motivated to place greater importance on being a moral person. On the other side of the coin, it is possible that other factors besides Machiavellianism are predictive of moral identity decay. Trait cynicism (Wrightsman, 1992) has been shown to lead individuals to be highly skeptical. It is possible that these individuals will perceive organizational attempts to prioritize ethics and values as being disingenuous, and will lead them to reject an organization’s messages. As well, future work should address how long these individuals for whom moral identity decreases remain employed, and whether their exit, should they leave, is voluntary or involuntary.

In terms of the socialization literature, this research highlights the power of effective socialization to go beyond educating newcomers about how to do their job, how to interact with coworkers, or what to espouse. Through socialization,

organizations can create deep-level person change in what have been presumed to be stable aspects of the self. Aside from this contribution, this work adds to the growing focus on an interactionist perspective in socialization research (Kammeyer-Mueller, 2007). That is, this work does not take an overly organization-centric perspective, presuming high pliability to organizational forces in all members. Nor does this research take an overly-individualist perspective. Instead, it shows how the right combination of individual dispositions encountering the right organizational stimuli can create deep-level change in both directions. This study also contributes to the small number of studies addressing ethical socialization, or how socialization into an organization influences the ethical disposition of newcomers. Whereas prior work in this area has largely been relegated to illustrating values socialization in a number of professions (e.g., Landau, 1999; Latif, 2000; Ponemon, 1992), this study opens the field to explore the interactions between individual factors and organizational stimuli that lead to greater prioritization of ethics as part of the self-concept.

Another emergent theme from this study is the importance of moral identity to organizational outcomes beyond the ethical realm. Indeed, for organizational leaders who are skeptical regarding the importance of ethics and values and therefore not paying close attention to the ethical dispositions of their members, this study illustrates the value of creating an ethical workforce that values moral identity as a central part of their self-concept. Those individuals who increase their moral identity also tend to be more highly committed to and identified with the organization. This is another area for future research. Most prior work has addressed the importance of ethical factors for influencing ethical behaviors; to be sure that is a logical and

appropriate focus. However, it may help to begin exploring the influence of ethical factors in a more expansive manner, investigating their role in outcomes like turnover, motivation, customer or client satisfaction, and objective performance. Doing so may help to demonstrate the importance of ethics and morality to skeptics who seek to view the impact of ethics on the “bottom line.”

Limitations

Despite its contributions, this paper’s two studies also have some limitations. For instance, the samples both come from one organization, and one with a very strong culture at that. The fact that newcomers receive highly intensive training and operate in a near-total organization context (Goffman, 1961) makes it difficult to confidently generalize these findings. However, given that this is an initial foray into exploring organizations’ power to alter individuals’ moral identity, the strong context of this institution makes an excellent setting in which to establish proof of concept. Still, future work is needed to explore the power of socialization to influence individuals’ ethical dispositions in less strong contexts.

The other problematic aspect of exploring the influence of socialization in one organization is that this study could not account for the effects of different socialization tactics since every individual went through essentially the same formal socialization experience. It is logical to assume that certain socialization tactics may be more effective than others in encouraging positive person change. For instance, prior work has shown the effectiveness of having an ethical role model or leader in encouraging ethical behavior in individuals (e.g. Mayer et al., 2009; Weaver, Trevino, & Agle, 2005). As such, serial socialization, in which individuals are able to learn

from more experienced members or mentors, may be even more effective for achieving person change at the level of morality than disjunctive socialization tactics in which newcomers do not have the same access to senior organizational members (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). As well, it is possible that the near-total institutional context amplified the effects of Machiavellianism and led a stronger downward shift in these individuals' moral identity. As argued in this study, moral identity decay is the result of perceived threat. In total organizational settings, individuals' identities are often overwhelmed by the context (Dornbusch, 1955; Goffman, 1961; Schein, 1961) and this could potentially lead to even greater perceived threat and subsequent moral identity decay. As such, future research should address the influence of organizational tactics on creating identity threat and its effect on individuals' moral identity.

Current research suggests a possible factor that may help to mitigate the negative effects of strongly encouraging individuals to adopt organizational values. Cable, Gino and Staats (2013) recently showed that when individuals are able to affirm their identities during organizational entry it leads to positive socialization outcomes. It is possible that this identity affirmation aspect of socialization could buffer individuals' identity from the threat they might experience otherwise, and allow them to be more open to organizational appeals for prioritizing ethical and moral behavior. While most organizations presumably would not want to affirm the Machiavellian, unethical aspects of individuals' identities, it is possible that by allowing them to affirm other aspects of their self-concept they will be less threatened to messages about their ethics and values. Indeed, this strategy has proven effective in prior social psychological research (Sherman & Cohen, 2002, 2006).

Implications

At a broad level, it is important to recognize that individuals' moral identity is not set in stone and that organizations play a role its enhancement and its phthisis. To that end, these studies point to the importance of effective and careful socialization, particularly in terms of values. It is likely more comfortable and less confrontational for organizations to focus their efforts on socializing newcomers to the technical details of performing their job and to making them feel socially accepted. But if organizations desire an ethical workforce, then effective values socialization must comprise an important part of the socialization process. As these studies shows, organizations that endeavor to create change in individuals' moral identity are walking a tightrope – alternately encouraging the adoption of organizational values, but trying to do so in a way that is non-threatening to individuals' self-concept. It also points to the importance of identifying and potentially removing those members who do not buy in to the organizational values. These individuals may not only disagree with the organizational values, but over time their moral identity may deteriorate. As this study illustrates, effective values socialization can be a catalyzing force that leads individuals to prioritize ethics as a part of their identity. But, when it leads individuals to feel threatened, it can also have a perverse effect that leaves individuals even worse off in terms of moral identity than they were before organizational entry. As suggested above, a possible remedy for the negative effects may be allowing individuals opportunities to affirm their identities during the socialization process.

Another implication is that organizations should work to identify and pay closer attention to their morally attentive and idealistic members because these

members are likely to be very valuable for a number of reasons. Although these individuals can be difficult to work with at times (Tsai & Shih, 2005), and though they may hold those around them to higher standards of behavior or be more judgmental (Barnett, Brass, Brown, & Hebert, 1998), they are also likely to be those that come to place greater value on morality for themselves and others. And that, in turn, will lead them to be more organizationally identified and committed. Taken in sum, these individuals are likely to be the ones that will hold the organization to a standard of ethical excellence. Finally, and more generally, this study suggests that, beyond hiring for moral identity, companies might consider other individual factors that might indicate individuals' susceptibility to being developed morally.

Conclusions

Much of the prior work regarding moral identity has focused on the benefits of having a high moral identity. Scant attention has been paid to how it might be developed. This study suggests that individuals with a low moral identity may not be lost causes. And that just as job skills can be developed through effective socialization, so might individuals' moral identity. However, this study also points to the dangers of trying to improve individuals' moral identity – showing that organizations can unintentionally create the types of employees they are trying to avoid when they threaten newcomers' identities. These findings highlight the importance of training and socialization that balances a strong commitment to ethics and morality with sensitivity to the original identities of its members.

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CHAPTER 2

THE IMPORTANCE OF NEWCOMERS' MORAL IDENTITY IN SOCIALIZING TO ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES AND SEEING MEANING IN ONE'S WORK

Introduction

Numerous studies have shown that moral identity – or the extent to which individuals prioritize being a moral as a part of their self-concept – motivates ethical behavior. And while ethical behavior is unquestionably important, moral identity is likely related to a number of other factors about which organizations might care. After all, if moral identity is a motivating influence, then it may also influence individuals' responses to organizational stimuli in broader ways than just ethical reasoning or decision-making.

In this study I explore the role of moral identity in shaping newcomers' transition from being organizational outsiders to insiders. I do so by addressing its influence on the socialization process, and in helping individuals to find the meaning and significance in their work. The socialization process endeavors to help newcomers become proficient performers, to teach them the political and operational functioning of the organization, and to help narrow gaps between their values and those of the organization. Prior work has identified personality traits that lead to improved socialization outcomes (Ashford & Black, 1996; Kim, Cable & Kim, 2005). I argue that personality traits, while predictive of some outcomes, are likely less suited than moral identity to predict socialization to organizational values.

I also argue that moral identity influences the degree to which individuals see

their job as meaningful. The perception that one's work is meaningful has significant effects on individuals' job attitudes (Grant, 2008; Lodahl & Kejner, 1965; Roberson, 1990; Vecchio, 1980), and people likely make decisions early on about whether the work they do, and the organization they work for, are worthwhile. As such, it is logical to explore it as part of newcomers' transition into an organization. I argue moral identity influences judgments of work meaning and significance by leading people to moralize their work. That is, it leads people to perceive more meaning and significance in what they do, because believing their work is meaningful is identity affirming. I also show that, through meaningful work perceptions, moral identity has a significant indirect effect on organizational commitment and identification.

This research makes several contributions. First, it illustrates that moral identity serves a purpose other than guiding specific decisions or behaviors. It influences how individuals think about their work and the significance they perceive in it. Recent reviews of work meaningfulness studies have articulated the need for greater attention to identifying the way that self-concepts and individual values influence individuals' perceptions that their work matters (Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010). This study answers that call, and takes moral identity out of its traditional sphere of behavioral ethics, thus establishing its relevance for new processes and outcomes. In doing so, it opens the door for future work exploring moral identity's influence on organizational factors perhaps not immediately related to ethical decision-making. Second, it integrates research in behavioral ethics, meaningfulness of work, and organizational socialization. Prior research has argued that various personality factors are important predictors of effective socialization in

terms of technical performance and social acceptance (e.g., Ashford & Black, 1996; LePine, Colquitt & Erez, 2000; Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003), and that socialization leads to improved job attitudes. But I argue that while it seems clear that certain personality differences will facilitate learning technical skills and how to integrate socially, it is less clear why they should lead to effective socialization to organizational values. After all, socialization to values involves more than just learning what the values are, it requires individuals' knowledge of, agreement with, and beliefs that they would be good representatives of the organizational values (Chao et al., 1994; Haueter et al., 2003). In other words, it reflects some degree of shift in a central aspect of newcomers' self – their values. Indeed, I argue that socialization on this dimension is better predicted by newcomer's moral identity, and that moral identity influences job attitudes as well by increasing individuals' beliefs about the significance of their work. Together these contributions elucidate the important role that moral identity plays in facilitating newcomers' assimilation into an organization. This is also an important contribution because while some studies have explored the role of moral identity in an organizational context (e.g., DeCelles, DeRue, Margolis, & Ceranic, 2012; Mayer et al., 2012) they typically have done so by analyzing its effect on individuals with power or in leadership positions. This study, by contrast, explores how moral identity influences individuals at the opposite end of the hierarchy.

Moral Identity, Socialization, and Meaningful Work

Socialization is the process by which new members become a part of an organization's pattern of activities (Anderson, Riddle & Martin, 1999). It is the time during which they learn about their job and role in the organization, their place in the

formal hierarchy, and how well they fit with their group, department, or organizational culture. Newcomers often require special attention in order to inculcate the technical and tacit knowledge required to be effective organizational members, and foundational work in this area has articulated various socialization tactics that organizations use to assist newcomers in acquiring that knowledge (Jones, 1986; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Effective socialization has been conceptualized in numerous ways, but most frameworks posit that it should lead to outcomes such as improved job performance, increased understanding of the political and operational nature of the organization, an ability to integrate socially, and alignment with the organizational goals and values (Ashforth, Sluss, & Harrison, 2007; Chao et al., 1994; Haueter et al., 2003; Morrison, 1993; Taormina, 1994). I argue that this final outcome, being socialized to organizational goals and values, is substantively different than the others.

Some socialization outcomes relate to individuals' abilities to do their job on a daily basis. For instance, performance proficiency assesses individuals' abilities to do the tasks their job requires. It reflects whether they have the technical know-how to be a good organizational member. Additionally, individuals need to understand the political structure of the organization, as they must be able to recognize where to go for resources, where to report issues, and which organizational members are influential. Finally, being socially accepted into the environment and supported by coworkers is likely to not only be felt by employees on a daily basis, but also influences their job attitudes and performance (Hoffman & Woehr, 2006; Verquer, Beehr, & Wagner, 2003). Achieving these outcomes requires newcomers to engage in

learning behaviors (Ashforth, Sluss & Harrison, 2007).

Taking an interactionist perspective, research has explored the role of individual differences in exploring why some individuals, going through the same socialization processes as other newcomers, are more or less effectively socialized. This work has found that certain personality traits enhance interaction with the organizational environment and facilitate learning, and therefore are important factors in effective socialization. Perhaps most robustly, studies have shown that the degree to which individuals are extraverted and open to experience influences their tendency to proactively seek performance feedback, to improve their technical performance, and to build relationships that lead to social acceptance and organizational understanding (e.g. Ashford & Black, 1996; Bauer et al., 2007; Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003; Morrison, 1993; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). Therefore, I hypothesize that extraversion and openness to experience will be positively related to newcomers' performance proficiency, organizational understanding, and social acceptance.

Hypothesis 1a-c: Extraversion will be positively related to newcomers' a) performance proficiency, b) organizational understanding, and c) social acceptance.

Hypothesis 2a-c: Openness to experience will be positively related to newcomers' a) performance proficiency, b) organizational understanding, and c) social acceptance.

Socialization to values is a more abstract notion than those described above in that it is less likely to directly influence newcomers' abilities to perform their job on a daily basis. Instead, it is a lens through which they interpret their environment. Effective socialization in terms of values requires more than just engaging in learning

behaviors; it requires adjustment or a willingness to alter central aspects of one's self. After all, socialization to values involves individuals' knowledge of, agreement with, and beliefs that they would be good representatives of the organizational values (Chao et al., 1994; Haueter et al., 2003). In other words, it goes beyond assessing understanding of organizational values, to assess whether individuals share those values and have aligned their own values with them.

Prior studies have shown the importance of values socialization (Chao et al., 1994; Haueter et al., 2003; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992), and a number of empirical works have illustrated the importance of aligning individual and organizational values to a number important factors such as organizational commitment and identification (Cable & Edwards, 2004; Chatman, 1989; Edwards & Cable, 2009). But creating values alignment is likelier easier said than done. Values and beliefs tend to be a part of the stable self (Schein, 1979) and have been formed over a lifetime of experience prior to entering an organization (Gibbs & Schnell, 1985). As such, they tend to be resistant to change. And while it is clear that personality traits like extraversion and openness to experience can lead to greater knowledge acquisition, it is less clear why they should be predictive of whether individuals' adjust central aspects of their selves. I argue that individuals' moral identity provides the motivation to make that change.

Moral Identity and Values Socialization

Social cognitive theories argue that there are many facets to one's identity, any subset of which may be more or less salient at any time (Stryker, 1980). Individuals' active identities guide their interpretations of and responses to stimuli (Cervone & Shoda, 1999; Markus & Kunda, 1986). One facet of an individual's identity is the

degree to which they prioritize being a moral person, or their moral identity (Aquino & Reed, 2002). For individuals high in moral identity, it is important to behave morally because doing so affirms their self-concept (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Blasi, 1984; Damon & Hart, 1992). In multiple studies, Aquino and colleagues (2002, 2003, 2007, 2009) showed that moral identity increases individuals' empathy for outgroups, their tendency to volunteer to help or contribute to social causes, and it can help neutralize their tendencies to morally disengage. Moral identity also plays an important role in the organizational context. For instance, Mayer and colleagues (2012) found that moral identity was a significant antecedent of ethical leadership, which in turn predicts followers' job attitudes and willingness to report problems to management (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005). Moral identity also moderates the effects of power such that powerful people with high moral identity exhibit greater moral awareness, while powerful people without a strong moral identity act more self-interestedly (DeCelles et al., 2012).

During the socialization process, newcomers learn about what is organizationally valued and what is considered to be desirable behavior. I anticipate that individuals with high moral identity will be motivated to learn and align with the organizational values, as doing so will demonstrate to themselves and others that they are ethical organizational members. As such, I expect that moral identity will be positively related to socialization in terms of organizational values, even controlling for personality factors.

Hypothesis 3: Newcomers' moral identity is positively related to values socialization, controlling for the effects of personality.

Moralizing Work, Perceiving Meaning

The meaning that individuals perceive in their work – that is, the existential significance that individuals attach to the work they do – is an important determinant in numerous, organizationally desirable factors. When organizational members perceive that their work is meaningful, they tend to perform better, and to be more dedicated to and satisfied with their jobs (Grant, 2008; Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, & Schwartz, 1997). Also, individuals who perceive meaning in their work become more strongly identified with it, and more willing to sacrifice for it (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009). Yet, while addressed as a unique construct, prior work has not conceptually connected work meaningfulness to studies of organizational socialization. This is puzzling because individuals make a lot of judgments about their organizations during the initial socialization process (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Ashforth et al., 2007). As such, early in the process of learning about their role in the organization and the organization's role in an industry, community or society, it seems likely that individuals will make a decision about whether the work they do is significant, has meaning, or matters.

Moral identity is apt to be an important predictor of newcomers perceiving meaning in their work. Specifically, I argue that when individuals have a high moral identity, the work they do takes on a moral aspect. After all, individuals are motivated to affirm their identities (Steele, 1988), and if a person highly values morality in their self-concept, then doing a job or working for an organization that is amoral (or worse, immoral,) is apt to create cognitive dissonance that he or she is motivated to resolve (Festinger, 1957). Individuals in this situation could search for an alternative, more

moral organization to join, or they could come to attribute more moral characteristics to their job and their organization because they implicitly desire it to be so (Kunda, 1990). The latter is likely the easier course of action. In other words, newcomers with a high moral identity are more motivated than others to moralize their work - to search for and endow their work with more meaning and significance – because believing their work is meaningful affirms their self-conceptions. Prior studies have shown that when individuals perceive that their work makes a difference to another party – be it more distal organizational members (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), people outside of one's organization (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Grant, 2008), or even animals (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009) – it is highly affirming. And so, I argue that moral identity will be positively related to individuals' beliefs that their work is meaningful, because it motivates them to search for and identify the people for whom their work matters.

Hypothesis 4: Newcomers' moral identity is positively related to perceptions that work is meaningful.

Moral Identity, Meaningful Work and Job Attitudes

As discussed above, individuals with a high moral identity are motivated to search for and find meaning and significance in the work they do because doing so is identity-affirming – it affirms their belief that they are moral and ethical people. Recent work has shown that when organizations allow for positive affirmation of members' identity it increases commitment and identification (Cable, Gino, & Staats, 2012; Swann, Kwan, Polzer, Seyle, & Ko, 2004). As well, when individuals' selves are verified, they tend to have more positive job attitudes (Cable & Kay, 2012). Prior research regarding work meaningfulness has also shown that individuals who perceive

meaning in their work tend to be more identified and committed to it (Grant, 2008; Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, & Schwartz, 1997), and more willing to sacrifice for it (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009).

Based on above arguments, beliefs about work meaningfulness are identity affirming and self-verifying for those with a high moral identity. As such, I anticipate that work meaningfulness beliefs will not only be predictive of organizational commitment and identification, but also that it will significantly mediate the relationship between individuals' moral identity and those job attitudes. In other words, I argue that moral identity influences organizational commitment and identification through individuals' beliefs about the meaningfulness of their work.

Hypothesis 5a&b. Perceptions of meaningful work will mediate the effect of moral identity on a) organizational commitment and b) organizational identification.

Methods

To explore the proposed relationships I conducted a longitudinal survey study of new hires to a large, information technology firm called ITECH (a pseudonym). New hires at ITECH come to a corporate campus and receive four months of training. Most new hires have undergraduate degrees in engineering or computer science, but due to the highly specialized nature of the work ITECH performs, extensive additional training is required.

Sample and Design

The population for this study is all 236 members of a new cohort that had been identified by the organization as being “fast track” trainees. The selection criteria for this group included higher levels of English proficiency and programming abilities

than other new hires. The group received a computer-based survey to assess this study's variables during their first week of training, and a second survey four months later during the final week of their training. The demographic information, controls, and most of the independent variables for this study were collected on Survey 1. All dependent variables were measured on Survey 2. Of the 236 individuals receiving the surveys, 182 provided usable responses, yielding a 77% usable response rate. The average age of this sample was approximately 22 (range: 21-26) years old, and 58% are male.

Survey 1 Variables

Moral identity was measured using Aquino and Reed's (2002) internalization subscale. Intended to measure the degree to which individuals' self-concepts coalesce around a set of moral characteristics, individuals are presented with nine adjectives including compassionate, fair, honest, and kind. Using a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) scale, respondents rate five statements ($\alpha=.73$) assessing the degree to which they are, or desire to be, a person whom these words would describe. Example statements include, "It would make me feel good to be a person who has these characteristics," and "Having these characteristics is not really important to me" (reverse scored).

Participants rated their personality traits using the 10-item versions of Goldberg's (1992) "Big Five" scales. Prior research has shown there to be, at times, high correlations between the personality dimensions (e.g., DeYoung, Quilty, & Peterson, 2007; John & Srivastava, 1999; Olson, 2005). As well, some work has found relationships between agreeableness, conscientiousness, and socialization outcomes

(Ashford & Taylor, 1990; Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003; LePine, Colquitt & Erez, 2000). Accordingly, while extraversion and openness are independent variables in this study, agreeableness and conscientiousness are included as controls.

Participants read a list of descriptors and rated how accurate or inaccurate that descriptor is in describing them. Ratings were done using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very inaccurate) to 5 (very accurate). Example items for *extraversion* ($\alpha=.74$) include, “Am the life of the party”, and “Start conversations,”. Example items for *openness* ($\alpha=.65$) include, “Have a vivid imagination”, and “Am not interested in abstract ideas” (reverse scored). Example items for *agreeableness* ($\alpha=.70$) include “Am interested in other people,” and “Feel little concern for others” (reverse scored). Example items for *conscientiousness* ($\alpha=.71$) include, “I pay attention to details,” and “Often forget to put things back in their place” (reverse-scored). Reliabilities for these factors are consistent with findings in samples from the region where the host organization is located (see Schmitt, Allik, McCrae, & Benet-Martinez, 2007).

Prior research has shown that certain demographic characteristics are related to factors assessing morality and ethical thought. For example, prior work has shown that gender is related to unethical choice and moral identity (Reynolds, 2008), and age has been meta-analytically related to unethical choice (Kish-Gephart et al., 2010). As such, these were included as controls.

Survey 2 Variables

Socialization outcomes were measured using dimensions of Chao and colleagues’ (1994) scale. Despite historically having suspect factor structure and item loadings (Haueter, et al., 2003; Taormina, 2004), this scale was chosen because it is

the most often used measure for assessing socialization outcomes (Bauer et al., 2007), and unlike other measures it includes a subscale to measure values socialization which is a central feature of this study. Following Klein and Weaver (2000), several questions were eliminated because they confound levels of analysis. The measures ask respondents to rate their level of agreement with a series of statements on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) scale. *Social acceptance* was measured using four items from the “people” dimension of the scale ($\alpha = .72$), which includes statements such as, “I believe most of my coworkers like me”. *Performance proficiency* ($\alpha = .65$) was measured using five items from the “performance” dimension including statements like, “I understand what all the duties of my job entail,” and “I have learned how to perform my job my job in an efficient manner.” *Organizational understanding* ($\alpha = .63$) was measured using six items from the “politics” subsection of the scale that assesses the degree to which individuals understand how things “really work” in the organization. Example items include, “I have learned how things ‘really work’ on the inside of this organization,” and, “I can identify the people in this organization who are most important for getting the work done” (Chao et al., 1994). *Values socialization* ($\alpha = .88$) was measured using seven items from the “organizational goals and values” dimension of the Chao et al., (1994) scale. This subscale includes statements such as, “I would be a good example of an employee who represents my organization’s values,” and “I do not always believe in the values set by my organization” (reverse scored). Reliabilities for these subscales, and for the total scale are consistent with prior research (e.g., Taormina, 2004).

Work meaningfulness was measured using Bunderson’s (2009) five-item scale

($\alpha = .95$), which was based on prior work (Spreitzer, 1995; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997; Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). On a 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) scale, respondents indicate their level of agreement with statements such as, “The work I do is important,” and “I have a meaningful job.”

Organizational identification was measured using Mael and Ashforth’s (1992) six-item measure ($\alpha = .88$). Individuals rate their agreement on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) scale with statements such as, “When someone criticizes ITECH, it feels like a personal insult,” and, “ITECH’s successes are my successes.”

Organizational commitment was measured using five items from Meyer and colleagues’ (1993) affective commitment scale ($\alpha = .79$). Example items include, “I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization,” and, “This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.” Responses were measured on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Results

Means, standard deviations and correlations for all variables appear in Table 6. Means and correlations among variables all appear consistent with prior research, and supportive of this study’s hypotheses. Moral identity is significantly correlated with values socialization, meaningful work perceptions, organizational commitment, and organizational identification. Confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004) on all variables revealed that a model including one factor for each variable represents a better fit of the data ($\chi^2 [3418] = 6129.92$, Normed $\chi^2 = 1.79$, CFI = .66, RMSEA = .07) than a single factor model ($\chi^2 [3485] = 8674.52$, Normed $\chi^2 = 2.49$, CFI = .35, RMSEA = .09) or any other lower factor model. I also conducted a

Harman's single factor test on both Survey 1 and Survey 2 responses. Results revealed that no single factor accounted for a significant portion of variance in the data in either survey.

Table 6. Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations of Variables

	<u>M</u>	<u>S.D.</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>Survey 1</u>															
1. Age	22.08	.88													
2. Gender	.44	.50	-.01												
3. Extraversion	3.35	.61	-.02	.15*											
4. Openness	3.51	.50	-.04	-.06	.42**										
5. Agreeable	3.95	.57	-.05	.06	.36**	.45**									
6. Conscientious	3.74	.57	.04	.08	.34**	.43**	.49**								
7. Moral Identity	4.48	.66	.07	.06	.17*	.25**	.38**	.36**							
<u>Survey 2</u>															
8. Performance Proficiency	3.63	.66	.11	.05	.34**	.31**	.26**	.28**	.25**						
9. Organizational Understanding	3.31	.66	.05	-.02	.20**	.01	.01	.09	.09	.37**					
10. Social Acceptance	3.96	.68	.10	.06	.28**	.26**	.24**	.22**	.19**	.51**	.20**				
11. Values Socialization	4.07	.72	.12	.08	.21**	.17*	.20**	.25**	.27**	.72**	.37**	.58**			
12. Meaningfulness of Work	5.77	1.25	.06	.13	.17*	.20**	.24**	.30**	.30**	.54**	.22**	.40**	.62**		
13. Organizational Commitment	5.51	1.15	.09	.17*	.18*	.16*	.26**	.28**	.20**	.46**	.25**	.27**	.54**	.47**	
14. Organizational Identification	4.06	.79	.07	.03	.22**	.05	.21**	.19*	.18*	.45**	.24**	.41**	.66**	.55**	.47**

** p < .01

* p < .05

Hypotheses 1-4 regarding the relationships between personality variables, moral identity, socialization outcome dimensions, and employees' perceptions of meaningful work were tested using a series of ordinary least squares analyses. Table 7 shows the results of a series of regressions in which moral identity and personality variables are used to predict performance proficiency, organizational understanding, and social acceptance. Each hypothesis was tested with three models; a baseline model including only controls, a second model that adds extraversion and openness, and a third model including moral identity.

Table 7. *The Effects of Personality and Moral Identity on Socialization Outcomes and Meaningfulness of Work Perceptions*

	DV = Performance Proficiency						DV = Organizational Understanding					
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
	B	S. D.	B	S. D.	Beta	S. D.	B	S. D.	B	S. D.	B	S. D.
Age	.08	.05	.09	.05	.09	.05	.03	.06	.03	.06	.03	.06
Gender	.03	.10	.02	.09	.01	.09	-.03	.10	-.08	.09	-.09	.10
Agreeableness	.18	.10	.08	.10	.04	.10	-.02	.10	-.07	.11	-.10	.11
Conscientiousness	.23*	.10	.13	.10	.10	.10	.10	.10	.06	.11	.05	.11
Extraversion			.22**	.09	.22**	.09			.29**	.09	.29**	.09
Openness			.19	.11	.18	.11			-.10	.12	-.10	.12
Moral Identity					.13	.08					.08	.08
R ²	.11		.17		.18		.01		.06		.07	
Adjusted R ²	.09		.14		.15		-.01		.03		.03	
Change R ²	.11		.06		.01		.01		.05		.01	
df (regression, residual)	(4, 172)		(2, 170)		(1, 169)		(4, 172)		(2, 170)		(1, 169)	

** p < .01

* p < .05

Table 7. Continued

	DV = Social Acceptance								DV = Values Socialization			
	Model 7		Model 8		Model 9		Model 10		Model 11		Model 12	
	B	S. D.	B	S. D.	B	S. D.	B	S. D.	B	S. D.	B	S. D.
Age	.08	.06	.08	.06	.08	.06	.10	.06	.10	.06	.09	.06
Gender	.05	.1	.04	.1	.04	.1	.10	.11	.08	.11	.07	.11
Agreeableness	.24*	.1	.15	.1	.11	.11	.14	.11	.10	.11	.04	.12
Conscientiousness	.14	.1	.06	.11	.04	.11	.20	.11	.15	.11	.12	.11
Extraversion			.18	.09	.18*	.09			.14	.1	.14	.1
Openness			.17	.12	.17	.12			.05	.13	.04	.13
Moral Identity					.1	.08					.18*	.09
R ²	.09		.13		.14		.07		.09		.11	
Adjusted R ²	.07		.1		.1		.05		.06		.07	
Change R ²	.09		.04		.01		.07		.01		.02	
df (regression, residual)	(4, 172)		(2, 170)		(1, 169)		(4, 172)		(2, 170)		(1, 169)	

** p < .01

* p < .05

Table 7. Continued

	DV = Meaningfulness of Work					
	<u>Model 13</u>		<u>Model 14</u>		<u>Model 15</u>	
	<u>B</u>	<u>S. D.</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>S. D.</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>S. D.</u>
Age	.09	.10	.09	.10	.07	.10
Gender	.27	.18	.29	.19	.26	.19
Agreeableness	.29	.19	.24	.20	.12	.20
Conscientiousness	.46*	.19	.41*	.20	.34	.20
Extraversion			.04	.17	.05	.17
Openness			.16	.23	.13	.22
Moral Identity					.37*	.15
R ²	.11		.11		.14	
Adjusted R ²	.09		.08		.10	
Change R ²	.11		.00		.03	
df (regression, residual)	(4, 172)		(2, 170)		(1, 169)	

** p < .01

* p < .05

Hypotheses 1a-c and 2a-c, that extraversion and openness to experience would be positively related to performance proficiency, organizational understanding and socialization acceptance were tested in models 1-9. As predicted, extraversion is positively related to performance proficiency ($B = .22$; $p = .01$), organizational understanding ($B = .29$; $p = .00$), and social acceptance ($B = .18$; $p = .05$). Thus, hypotheses 1a-c were supported. Openness was not significant in any model, therefore hypotheses 2a-c were unsupported. Hypothesis 3, that moral identity was positively related to values socialization was tested in models 10-12. As seen in model 12, newcomers' moral identity is positively and significantly related to values socialization ($B = .18$; $p = .04$). Thus hypothesis 3 was supported. Hypothesis 4, that moral identity leads individuals to moralize their work, perceiving greater meaning in their job than others, was tested in models 13-15. Moral identity ($B = .37$; $p = .02$), as hypothesized, is a significant predictor of increased perceptions that work is meaningful.

Table 8. *The Effects of Socialization and Meaningfulness of Work on Organizational Commitment and Identification*

	DV = Organizational Commitment						DV = Organizational Identification					
	<u>Model 1</u>		<u>Model 2</u>		<u>Model 3</u>		<u>Model 4</u>		<u>Model 5</u>		<u>Model 6</u>	
	B	Std. Error	B	Std. Error	B	Std. Error	B	Std. Error	B	Std. Error	B	Std. Error
(Constant)	-.76	2.20	-.86	2.21	-.82	2.02	1.36	1.56	1.25	1.56	1.29	1.33
Age	.12	.09	.12	.09	.09	.09	.06	.07	.06	.07	.04	.06
Gender	.33	.17	.32	.17	.23	.15	-.03	.12	-.03	.12	-.12	.10
Extraversion	.09	.15	.10	.15	.08	.14	.24*	.11	.24*	.11	.23	.09
Openness	.09	.20	.08	.20	.03	.19	-.26	.14	-.27	.14	-.32	.12
Agreeableness	.38*	.18	.34	.18	.30	.17	.23	.13	.19	.13	.15	.11
Conscientiousness	.27	.18	.25	.18	.12	.17	.14	.13	.12	.13	.01	.11
Moral Identity			.11	.14	-.03	.13			.11	.10	-.01	.09
Meaningfulness of Work					.37**	.06					.33**	.04
R ²		.14		.14		.29		.09		.10		.34
Adjusted R ²		.11		.11		.25		.06		.06		.31
Change R ²		.14		.00		.15		.09		.00		.25
df (regression, residual)		(6, 170)		(1, 169)		(1, 168)		(6, 170)		(1, 169)		(1, 168)

** p < .01

* p < .05

Table 8 presents the results of regressions testing hypotheses 5a and b, that perceptions of meaningful work mediates the relationship between moral identity and organizational commitment and identification. I again ran three models for each dependent variable. The first model is a controls-only model including demographic and personality variables. The second model includes moral identity, and the third model adds meaningfulness of work variable. The direct effect of moral identity on organizational commitment and identification is not significant in either case, though numerous recent works have argued and shown that this is not a necessary precondition for establishing a mediating effect (see Zhao, Lynch & Chen, 2010 for review). Estimations using Preacher and Hayes (2008) bootstrapping techniques indicated meaningfulness of work is significant predictor of both organizational commitment ($B = .37, p = .00$), and organizational identification ($B = .33, p = .00$), and that the 95% confidence interval for each indirect effect excluded zero (organizational commitment: .42 to .27; organizational identification: .03 to .24) suggesting significant mediation for each outcome. Thus, hypotheses 5a and b were supported.

Discussion

This work integrates behavioral ethics with studies of meaningful work and socialization to make a number of contributions. First, it illustrates the importance of moral identity to organizationally relevant outcomes beyond ethical decision-making. Specifically, this work shows that individuals' moral identity is strongly predictive of newcomers' alignment to the organizational values, and thus should be considered alongside the personality factors that have dominated prior socialization research as an

important factor in helping newcomers transition from being outsiders to insiders (Ashforth et al., 2007; Bauer et al., 2007). Second, this study adds to a growing body of research regarding meaningfulness of work. Much of the prior work in this area has focused on the work context as a precursor to individuals' perceptions that their work is meaningful (see Wrzesniewski, Dutton & Debebe, 2003 for review), and posits that future research should endeavor to show how individual values and self-concepts influence tendencies to see work as meaningful or not (Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010). This study argues and shows that moral identity facilitates newcomers' tendency to see meaning and significance in their work. This latter finding is especially noteworthy given that the population for this study was a group of newcomers to an information technology firm in which they will be one of thousands of people doing the same type of work. The work they perform is highly technical, consisting almost entirely of writing "behind the scenes" codes for computer programs used by other large multinational corporations. On the surface this does not seem the most conducive setting for newcomers to perceive meaning and significance in their work. Yet the data indicate that, even in this setting, individuals with higher moral identities come to see their work as more meaningful. Finally, this research showed that moral identity, by leading people to see their job as meaningful, influences organizational commitment and identification. Taken together, these findings suggest that there is tremendous value to organizations for considering moral identity when selecting newcomers, and to scholars when exploring individuals' responses to the organizational context.

Limitations and Future Directions

While making a number of contributions, this study also has some notable limitations. Primary among them is that the sample comes from one organization, which limits generalizability to some extent. The organization for this study values their reputation of being an ethical firm and they endeavor to hold their members to a high ethical standard. Other organizations that do not prioritize ethics and morality as highly may not see the same results. For example, it is possible that newcomer perceptions of their organization as being (un)ethical could moderate the influence of moral identity on both values socialization and meaningfulness of work. Indeed, if an organization is seen as immoral (Tenbrunsel & Smith-Crowe, 2008), individuals with a high moral identity may strongly reject the organizational goals and values. However, it is also possible that moral identity interacts with factors such as moral relativism (Forsyth, 1980), leading individuals to value being moral according to the norm of the environment they inhabit. If this were the case, then individuals with a high moral identity and high relativist leanings might socialize to the values of an unethical organization because doing so allows them to be seen positively according to prevailing standards. Though not testable with this design, this possibility is an interesting direction for future exploration.

The single organizational sample also makes it impossible to explore the effects of socialization tactics (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) since all individuals go through the same process. Future research addressing the role of moral identity or other variables in facilitating effective socialization should endeavor to identify how moral identity may interact with different socialization tactics.

Finally, future research in work meaningfulness could explore more individual

factors that predispose people to see their work as meaningful or not. I argued and showed that high moral identity leads people to look for and see meaning in their work, but it is likely that other factors are influential too, and perhaps not always in a positive direction. For instance, it is possible that factors like trait cynicism (Wrightsman, 1992), which tends to engender pessimistic views about human nature, lead individuals to undervalue the meaning and significance of their work. Exploring more individual antecedents of meaningful work perceptions is potentially fruitful area for continued study.

Conclusions

The effects of moral identity extend beyond decisions about lying, cheating, stealing, or otherwise doing harm. Moral identity influences newcomers' transitions into organizations, and helps them to see the meaning in their work. Given that they are important predictors of outcomes such as organizational commitment and identification, understanding the individual antecedents that lead newcomers to be better socialized to organizational values and see meaning in their work is a valuable pursuit. This study is a step in that direction.

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CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This dissertation showed that the importance employees place on being moral influences their responses to organizational socialization processes, and is in turn influenced by those processes. For instance, in Chapter 2 I showed that newcomers' moral identity facilitates integration into an organization. Specifically, newcomers' moral identity upon organizational entry leads them to pay attention to and align with the ethical values of their organization. As well, this study argued and showed that moral identity leads these newcomers to moralize their work – that is, to imbue the work they do with greater meaning and significance – because doing so helps support their self-concept. In this sample, moral identity influenced newcomers' commitment and identification with their organization via their perceptions of meaningful work. Chapter 1 is consistent with the findings in Chapter 2 in showing that moral identity is positively related to job attitudes. But, Chapter 1 also showed that individuals' moral identity can change during socialization into an organization that prioritizes ethics, and that this change can be for better or for worse depending upon employees' individual characteristics. Specifically, ethically idealistic individuals were more likely to increase the importance they placed on being a moral person when they buy into the organization's ethical values. In contrast, Machiavellians were likely to decrease the importance of moral identity due to the emotional labor they feel they must engage in to 'fake' their fit with those values.

Indeed, these studies show that individuals' ethical propensities and

dispositions are important factors to consider during newcomers' organizational entry. However, while showing that individuals' ethical dispositions are important, these studies did not address the specific tools organizations have that can facilitate change in those dispositions, nor whether these changes were manifest in observable behaviors. In what follows, I articulate a series of questions to be addressed in future research that may help further our understanding of the role of individuals' ethicality in an organizational context, and the tools available to organizations to create deep-level changes in individuals' ethics and values.

Future Directions

Distinguishing Between Espoused and In-Use Values

In discussing the individual and organizational factors that influence individuals' ethical values, an important first step is to clarify what is meant when referring to values. Values have been defined as beliefs pertaining to a desirable end state; they transcend situations and guide evaluation of potential behaviors or events (Schwartz, 1992). Every person holds a set of values, but often the values that individuals espouse as being important, and the values that actually guide their decisions and behaviors, differ. Paralleling work by Argyris and Schön (1978), who distinguished between espoused theories and theories-in-use, it may be helpful going forward to distinguish between espoused values (i.e., those values that individuals claim are important to them) and values-in-use (i.e., those values that actually guide decisions in-the-moment). The studies in this dissertation, and many other studies of value congruence between individuals and organizations (e.g., focus largely on values at the espoused level. That is, alignment between individual and organizational values is assessed by

asking individuals to rate, rank, or otherwise espouse the values they claim to be most important to them. Presumably, however, the goal of most organizations is not only to instruct newcomers as to *what* values are important, but also to motivate the *use* of those values to guide decisions and behaviors. As such, exploring the capacity of organizations to encourage values-in-use is an important and rich area for future works.

To that end, new instruments, dependent variables, or objective observations are likely needed that indicate the use of values to guide organizational members thoughts and actions. For instance, greater use of simulations or vignette-type scenarios in which employees must apply values to make and justify decisions may help to reveal what individuals are actually thinking when they make choices. As well, including measures of organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) (e.g., Organ, 1988, 1997), deviance (e.g., Bennett & Robinson, 2000), or turnover in future studies may be useful for detecting (mis)aligned values. The inclusion of these types of measures are important in future studies of moral identity, ethics, and values in organizations, as they may provide greater evidence of internalizing organizational values beyond perceived or espoused congruence.

The Tools for Creating Change: The Example of Organizational Stories

As discussed above, future work should also look at the tools that organizations use to instruct members as to what is considered ethical behavior. A promising place to begin may be analyzing a ubiquitous, yet understudied, aspect of organizational life – the organizational story. In organizations, stories are often used to educate newcomers about organization values, and to narrow potential gaps between

newcomers' values and those of the organization (Boje, 1991; Denning, 2004; Ready, 2002). Yet, while there are suggested elements of stories that make them more memorable, or “sticky” (Heath & Heath, 2007), we know surprisingly little about whether stories do, in fact, influence newcomers' values – particularly their values-in-use.

Stories are an ancient, widely used method for sharing knowledge. Be they epic tales, short accounts, or fables, stories have been used to teach important lessons about what a group values, of what dangers group members should be cognizant, and how complex events should be interpreted. The unfolding, sequential structure of stories enables people to better understand complex, ambiguous phenomena, thus helping them to make sense of their environment (Gabriel, 2000; McAdams, 1993; Shipp & Jansen, 2011). Narrative and case-based learning theories, along with work in psychology, argue that stories instruct and impart values largely by serving as a substitute for direct experience (Schank, 1990, 1999; Bruner, 1990; Randall, 1999; Polkinghorne 1988). When individuals hear a story, specific mental processes are activated. These processes are then activated again when people face similar situations themselves. In other words, individuals recall stories that resemble situations they face in real life, and those stories are then recalled and used as a guide for action.

Around the world, stories are used to provide a moral education and to teach a variety of different lessons (McIntyre, 1981; Tappan & Brown, 1989; Vitz, 2006) (e.g., the biblical parables, Grimm's Fairy Tales, Aesop's Fables, Kipling's Jungle Book, etc.). In the organizational context, it is possible that stories could be used strategically to create different outcomes. For instance, some stories may be more

effective for building identification with the organization or with one's leaders, whereas other stories may be more instructive regarding when and in what situations organizational values are likely to apply.

Many organizational stories involve high-level members such as founders, executives or other members of the top management team. These stories are often formally codified into organizational culture (Gabriel, 2000) and are used during training or formal sessions to illustrate the values to which the company desires to adherence. These stories tend to be positively valenced (i.e., relating an instance where an organizational member acted how the organization wanted, and there was a positive result), and aim to not only educate but also to inspire and motivate others to behave like the protagonists in those stories. As an example, Starbucks employees learn about how CEO Howard Schultz watched his father suffer and be abandoned by his employer after being injured on the job. As a result, Mr. Schultz vowed that no one working for him would ever be in that situation, and that is why he offers full medical benefits to any employee working 20 hours per week or more and why one of Starbucks' guiding values is "Respect and Dignity" for all employees. As well, new consultants to McKinsey & Co. hear stories about the brave positions taken by former CEO and founder Marvin Bower, meant to inspire them to the "highest standards of professional conduct".

However, lower-level organizational members generate stories as well. While their stories may involve high-level organizational members, they also may involve stories about people who are closer to them in the organizational hierarchy. These stories can be positively valenced, but often are either neutral or negative (i.e., they

relate instances where organizational members did not behave in an acceptable way and/or there was a negative result) (Gabriel, 2000). These different types of stories – about high- or low-level organizational members, and involving positive or negative examples of behavior – may influence individuals' values and beliefs about the organization differentially.

Stories about founders, executives, or high-level leaders in organizations are likely to create psychological distance (Lewin, 1951) between the actors in the story and the majority of the audience (i.e., lower-level organizational members). Many storytellers have recognized the power of creating distance between a story's actors and the audience when teaching lessons, particularly about values. For instance, Aesop's Fables often use animals as protagonists, thereby creating perceived social distance between those stories' actors (animals), and the intended audience (human children). Construal level theory (CLT) states that individuals tend to think more abstractly, or at a higher level of construal, when there is perceived distance between themselves and an event or object (Trope & Liberman, 2010). High-level construals are general, decontextualized features of an event or object that convey its essence. Low-level construals, by contrast, are the concrete, contextualized details of an event or object. Higher levels of construal enable individuals to not get bogged down in detail or complexity, and to more easily derive the super-ordinate structures of an event (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Schwartz, 1992; Trope, 1986, 1989). Values, being abstract concepts (Feather, 1995; Schwartz, 1992), represent a high-level construal. As such, when dealing with stories about values, one could argue that stories about socially distant characters should enable an audience to more readily derive the values

the story is intended to convey (Trope & Liberman, 2010).

Stories about lower-level actors are likely to be interpreted at a lower level of construal due to there being less psychological distance between the actors in the story and the audience. Other classic stories intended to teach values, Grimm's Fairytales for instance, tend to feature protagonists who appear similar to and less psychologically distant from the intended audience – that is, human children (e.g., Hansel and Gretel, Cinderella, Little Red Cap, etc). Narrative theory supports the efficacy of telling stories about proximal characters, positing that an audience's direct or indirect knowledge of the characters' context can significantly influence the meaning and impact ascribed to the story (Bal, 1985). Denning (2004) and Ready (2002) have further argued the effectiveness of this technique; the former asserting that if the object of a story is to transmit values, then the story must feel familiar to the audience, and the latter arguing that lower-level members likely will not learn much useful information from stories about very high-level leaders because they cannot relate to the context. These arguments may suggest that stories about lower-level organizational members may be more effective for illustrating when and in what contexts values are likely to be applied and be tested.

It is also possible that positive and negative stories influence organizational members differentially. It is well-established that individuals give greater weight to negative rather than positive stimuli (for reviews, see Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer & Vohs, 2001; Rozin & Royman, 2001). Bad events receive more attention (Pratto & John, 1991), their effects tend to wear off more slowly in people's consciousness (Brickman & Campbell, 1971; Sheldon, Ryan, & Reis, 1996), they lead

to greater processing (Baumeister, 1991; Taylor, 1993), and lead to greater psychological arousal (Taylor, 1991). It has been suggested that negative events may also result in stronger memories than positive events (Baumeister, 2001). Rozin and Royzman (2001) and Baumeister et al. (2001) cite a number of studies illustrating that negative events can produce more learning and rapid assimilation of knowledge compared with positive events, and that negative events are more effective in evaluative conditioning. In terms of teaching values, then, the negativity bias might suggest that a negative story in which a value is violated or a character experiences a bad outcome would be more memorable, and result in greater mental processing and potentially deeper learning.

However, negative stories about values also might influence thinking differently depending upon the proximal or distal nature of the main characters. Senior leaders' behaviors are closely watched (Fiske, 1993; Gerstner & Day, 1997) and amplified, and these leaders are often endowed with more charismatic attributions (Conger & Kanungo, 1987), and greater perceptions of responsibility for outcomes than may be the case (Meindl, Ehlich, & Dukerich, 1985). High-level leaders tend to be seen as representing the organization and, indeed, positive perceptions of leadership have been found to generate greater organizational commitment (Eisenberger, Fasolo, Davis-LaMastro, 1990) and value congruence (Liden, Sparrowe & Wayne, 1997). In terms of stories then, positive stories about leaders may not only illustrate values effectively, as argued above, but also may lead to greater positive perceptions of the organization as a whole. However, the amplification of leaders' behaviors and their perceived embodiment of the organization may also result in negative stories about

high-level leaders being especially damaging to individuals' perceptions of the organization. CLT research supports this assertion. Eyal, Liberman and Trope (2008) found that people judge negative acts as being more offensive when those acts were construed at a high rather than low level. As such, stories about leaders, when positive, may lead to more positive affective responses to the organization as a whole, whereas negative stories may have an opposite, deleterious effect.

Because lower-level members are not seen as embodying the organization to the same degree as are high-level leaders, stories in which proximal characters demonstrate positive organizational values are likely to be less significantly related to individuals affective responses to the organization. Similarly, negative stories about more proximal characters are likely to lead to a smaller rejection of the characters' behaviors, and have a smaller negative effect on perceived values congruence with the organization than would a negative story about a high-level leader. However, as argued by narrative theory, work in case-based reasoning (e.g., Schank, 1990), and practitioner-oriented studies of organizational stories (Denning, 2004; Ready, 2002), stories about proximal characters are likely to be effective for providing information about the context and situations in which values are likely to apply because the environments and actors are more reflective of the audience. As such, those stories will be indexed as more relevant, and will have a greater likelihood of being recalled when individuals face similar situations in the future. Therefore, negative stories about followers might be highly effective for teaching organizational members when values apply, and increase their motivation to use values in those situations.

In general, future research should endeavor to identify the more and less

effective tools available to organizations to influence how members think about and use organizational values in their lives, and whether those values lead individuals to be or become more ethical. As discussed above, organizational stories are one such tool that is often used, but not terribly well understood. Indeed, answering the above questions regarding stories could lead to many fruitful empirical endeavors, both in the lab and in the field.

A first step in this regard might be to broadly categorize stories along different dimensions like those described above – in terms of whether they are positive or negative stories, and whether they involved high- or low-level protagonists – and explore the affective and cognitive influences these stories may have on people. Table 9 presents a 2 x 2 matrix breaking stories into these suggested dimensions, and Table 10 illustrates graphically some of the arguments and expected relationships proposed above.

Table 9. *Distinctions between story-types, and quasi-experimental conditions*

	Positive Stories	Negative Stories
High-level Protagonists	Condition 1	Condition 2
Low-level Protagonists	Condition 3	Condition 4

Table 10. *Expected relationships between experimental conditions and dependent variables*

DV	Espoused Values	Values-in-Use	Organizational Attitudes
Condition			
High-Level Positive	+		+
High-Level Negative	+		-
Lower-Level Positive	+	+	
Lower-Level Negative	+	+	

+ represents an anticipated positive relationship

- represents an anticipated negative relationship

But the approach suggested here is not the only means of testing the effects of stories. Martin and colleagues (1983), for instance, suggested seven types of stories that are commonly told in organizations. While they do not claim that these stories are easily cast into a typology, they posit that these stories may be interpreted differently by different audiences. Interestingly, in discussing variation within each story type, the authors discuss how the stories vary in terms of protagonists and positive versus negative valence. As well, recent social psychological research has shown that individuals' telling of their own life stories may have a powerful effect on behavior (Dunlop & Tracy, 2013). As such, it is possible that stories are more or less powerful depending upon whether one is the storyteller or the audience. Finally, the approaches discussed above to studying stories are dominantly concerned with exploring their influence on thinking and behavior, whereas the overwhelming majority of research on organizational stories has involved content analysis. And while content analysis is fruitful in many ways, it is the opinion of this researcher that the time has come to move beyond specific analysis of *what a story says*, and explore *what a story does*.

Conclusions

More work is necessary to uncover the ways that organizations help members to "be all they can be" in an ethical sense. Indeed, there is surprisingly little literature regarding ethical socialization, training, or other means by which organizations influence the ethics or moral leanings of their members. This dissertation dealt largely with the questions of which individuals respond well or poorly to ethical socialization attempts, and the organizational benefits obtained by having members who prioritize ethics as part of their self-concept. Future research should investigate these issues

further. There is much to understand regarding the methods or strategies that are effective for influencing individuals at a deep level. For example, we currently know little about the tools, like stories, that organizations can use to influence employees' ethical leanings effectively. Finally, while prior work has shown cues that reduce or increase unethical behavior, scant work has shown other, broader benefits to having an ethical constituency.

The field of ethics has progressed to a point that it is expanding and merging with a wider variety of other research areas. While it is still important to learn about the individual and organizational factors that lead individuals to lie, cheat, or steal, it is also important to show that ethics and values affect other areas of organizational life. This dissertation took a meaningful step in that direction by integrating research in ethics, socialization, work meaningfulness, and job attitudes. In doing so, these studies revealed that ethics is an important consideration in each of the aforementioned research areas, leading individuals to be better socialized, more satisfied with their organization, and to perceive that their work has meaning and significance.

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