A Theory of the Self for the Sociology of Morality

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Abstract

Sociology has seen a renewed interest in the study of morality. However, a theory of the self that explains individual variation in moral behavior and emotions is noticeably absent. In this study, we use identity theory to explain this variability. According to identity theory, actors are self-regulating entities whose goal is to verify their identities. An individual's moral identity—wherever it falls on the moral–immoral continuum—guides behavior, and people experience negative emotions when identity verification does not ensue. Furthermore, the identity verification process occurs within situations that have cultural expectations—that is, framing rules and feeling rules—regarding how individuals should act and feel. These cultural expectations also influence the degree to which people behave morally. We test these assumptions on a sample of more than 350 university students. We investigate whether the moral identity and framing situations in moral terms influences behavior and feelings. Findings reveal that the identity process and framing of situations as moral are significantly associated with moral action and moral emotions of guilt and shame.

Keywords

emotions, identity, morality, self

The sociology of morality is experiencing a resurgence in the discipline (Abend 2010). This is timely given the culture of unchecked consumption and greed that contributed to the 2008 downturn of the U.S. economy. Sociologists are re-examining issues discussed in earlier work, such as the relationship between the moral order and market society (Fourcade and Healy 2007), class and morality (Sayer 2010), and moral order and community (Vaisey 2007). While morality helps maintain the social order, we must be careful not to reify the impact of social institutions on moral behavior and discount the self as an agent of moral action. If we recognize social actors as moral actors, then at issue is why some individuals behave morally and others less so, and why some feel bad for immoral actions while others do not.

Sociological theory and research is needed to understand this variability. For this, we need a theory of the self. We rely on identity theory in sociology (Stryker [1980] 2002; Stryker and Burke 2000) to explain the internal operations of the self. We apply these internal operations to reveal individuals' variability as moral actors, and we test this theory on a sample of college students.

We focus on the identity verification process in identity theory (Burke and Stets 2009).

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Identity theory assumes that humans actively engage in goal-directed action as they interact with their environment. People continuously evaluate their actions in relation to their internal identity standard. Their identity standard defines who they are along various dimensions such as being (more or less) moral. Identity verification occurs when individuals' perceptions of who they are in situations correspond to their identity standard. Non-verification between their identity standard and who they are in situations generates negative emotions. Additionally, the identity verification process occurs within settings that are framed as (more or less) relevant to one's identity. Identity theorists have not thoroughly examined the framing of situations. This study investigates how the internal identity process and framing of surrounding situations are associated with moral behavior and moral feelings.

BACKGROUND

Broadly speaking, morality represents cultural codes that specify what is right or wrong, good or bad, or acceptable or unacceptable in a society (Turner 2010; Turner and Stets 2006). Traditionally, as seen in the work of Durkheim, Goffman, and Collins, the sociology of morality emphasizes how morality binds people together through a common system of rules and expectations during interactions. Durkheim (1965) revealed how morality emerges from the collective effervescence that occurs when people congregate in groups. In his studies of Aboriginals, he noted that religious and moral practices stem from ritual worship of cultural symbols (totems) that are attributed a sacred quality and arouse strong emotions in interaction. The power of cultural symbols resides in their ability to define appropriate moral behavior. Actions conforming to these expectations are virtuous; actions violating these expectations cause outrage.

For Durkheim (1961), morality controls and integrates members of a society and thereby generates social solidarity. Society is impossible without a moral system, as individuals will act solely in their own interest, disregarding the collective interest. Self-serving action leads to anomic conditions and is pathological for society; happiness results from social systems with strong moral orders. Durkheim's theorizing revealed much about macro-level moral processes. However, at the micro level, he did not provide insight into *why* some people behave morally while others do not. Not everyone behaves morally, so what explains this variation? The answer may reside in how individuals see themselves in moral terms and behave accordingly.

Like Durkheim, Goffman (1967) emphasized the importance of ritual activity. Goffman saw interaction as characterized by rituals of openings and closings, entrances and exits, and corrections for deviant behavior. Interaction is also composed of particular frames (Goffman 1974). Frames provide meaning for individuals during interaction, organizing and determining appropriate roles and behaviors to be enacted. Unlike Durkheim, Goffman emphasized the self in interactions (Goffman 1959). His analysis of the self shows how individuals work at presenting a strategic image of themselves to others, in a manner similar to how actors play out a script on stage (Goffman 1959). In playing their part, individuals inform others that they are adhering to the cultural script. When individuals commit blunders and role playing fails, they feel embarrassed and modify their behavior, realigning actions with cultural expectations that preserve social interaction. In Goffman's work, actors are attuned more to cultural and moral codes than to their identities and stable self-views. Individuals are motivated to behave in a certain way to effectively play out a cultural script rather than—as we will argue—to verify their identities.

Collins (2004) extends these analyses of ritual interaction. Ritual interactions include elements such as the physical co-presence of individuals, a common focus of attention, a common emotional mood, symbolic representations of a common focus, and a sense of moral virtue about symbols that mark group

membership. As ritual activity continues in an interaction, emotions are aroused and build. Repeated and highly rhythmic ritual activity among group members produces collective effervescence—including positive emotions and moral feelings—that generate group solidarity.

Like Durkheim, Collins takes seriously the role of emotions in the moral order. He maintains that the motive underlying behavior in interaction is to experience and maximize emotional energy. Positive emotional energy mobilizes individuals to initiate interactions; negative energy fails to instigate interactions. Collins sees interactions that provide the most emotional energy as fostering the moral order, but we will argue that the self and identity help build and maintain the moral order through moral actions and moral emotions. This is consistent with Weber's ([1922] 1968) view that we need to examine patterns of individuals' actions—patterns that form the basis of social structures.

Weber (1978) saw moral values as residing within individuals. People carry beliefs about what is good/bad or right/wrong, and these beliefs influence their behavior. Weber believed that scientists can investigate individuals' internal meanings about morality and their corresponding actions, but that scientists cannot determine whether certain moral beliefs ought to exist. In the same way Weber conceived moral values as subjective and inspiring action, we see moral identity as guiding and regulating action and emotions within and across situations.

Psychologists rather than sociologists have looked to the individual as the source of moral action. For years, moral psychology addressed the question of how moral reasoning is related to moral behavior (Kohlberg 1981; Piaget [1932] 1965). Over time, scholars discovered that a strong relationship between advanced moral reasoning and moral behavior does not exist (Blasi 1980). Instead, scholars saw a *moral identity,* rather than moral reasoning, as crucial (Blasi 1984). How people see themselves along the moral dimension, rather than their adherence to particular moral principles, affects moral behavior. For two decades, Blasi advanced an understanding of the role of the self and identity in moral action, and this theory has gained appeal among many psychologists (e.g., Aquino et al. 2009; Aquino and Reed 2002; Frimer and Walker 2009; Hardy 2006; Lapsley and Narvaez 2004; Narvaez and Lapsley 2009). Recent work involves studying how central or important the moral identity is in determining moral action (Aquino et al. 2009; Frimer and Walker 2009).

In the current research, we present a model of moral action that examines the cognitive (i.e., identity) and affective (i.e., emotional) parts of the self. Indeed, Blasi (1999) acknowledged that moral emotions motivate moral behavior and the moral identity. For example, empathy motivates altruistic behavior whereas shame and guilt inhibit harmful behavior. More recently, psychologists (Haidt 2001; Hardy 2006; Hoffman 2000) and neuroscientists (Greene et al. 2001) have been investigating the relationship between moral judgments, moral behavior, and emotions. However, to advance the study of morality, we need a theoretical model that explicitly links the cognitive, behavioral, and emotional dimensions of the self; and we must then put that theoretical model to the test. We do that in this research, and we use the identity model in sociology.

In identity theory (Burke and Stets 2009; Stryker [1980] 2002), when people have a moral identity, being (more or less) moral will influence their behavior in a situation. Other individuals will then react to their behavior. When individuals think others interpret their behavior in the same way they intended, they feel good. When individuals think others interpret their behavior differently (as either less or more moral than how it was intended), they feel bad. These ideas are consistent with Blasi's early idea on the link between the moral identity and moral action through self-consistency (i.e., matching behavior to people's identity) (Blasi 1984). It also incorporates his later idea that emotions play a role in moral functioning (Blasi 1999).
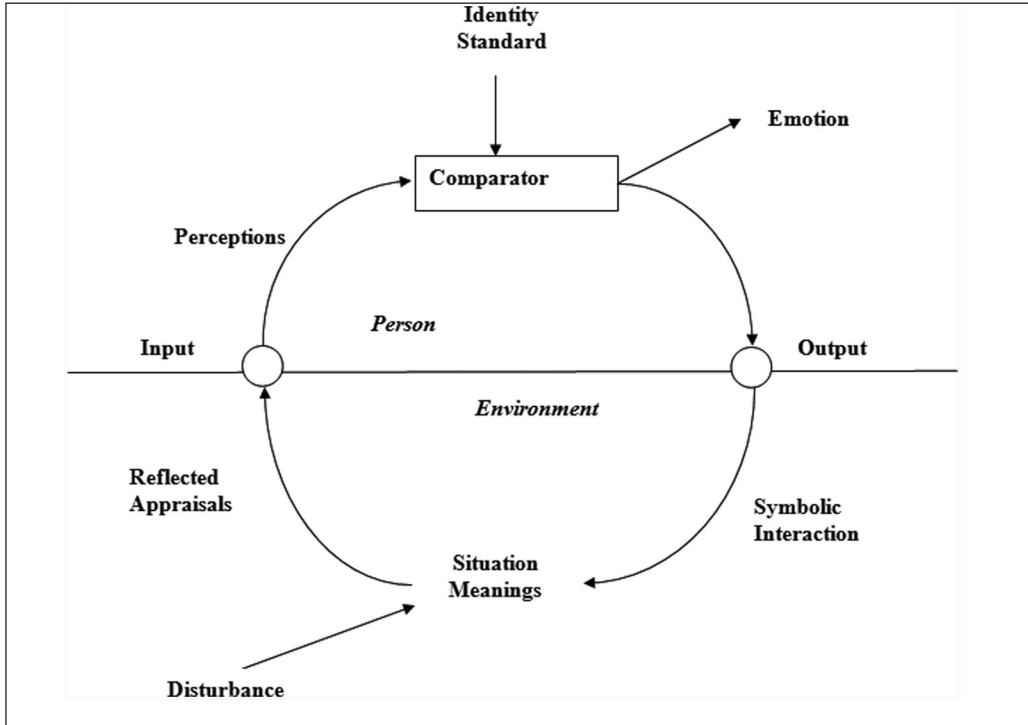
Figure 1. Identity Model

Some situations may be defined in moral terms to a greater degree than others. For example, attending a church service may make morality more relevant than attending a party. Recently, psychologists have studied how priming morality (e.g., having individuals review the list of Ten Commandments) may activate a moral self-view, and in turn, moral behavior (Aquino et al. 2009). However, we need a theoretical model that integrates the (internal) moral identity process with the (external) moral relevance of a situation. Identity theory provides this integration.

In general, while the study of morality appears in early sociological writings, there is no adequate conceptualization of the self, which is needed to theorize about variability in moral action and moral feelings. Goffman comes close, but we find his research on frames, which provides meaning as to how a situation should be interpreted, to be most relevant. While psychologists have attended to self and identity in the study of morality, an articulated and testable theory that integrates the moral identity, behavior, and emotions is needed, as well as a consideration of the situations within which they are embedded. For this, we turn to identity theory.

IDENTITY THEORY

In the control systems approach of identity theory, when an identity is activated in a situation, a feedback loop is established (see Figure 1) (Burke and Stets 2009). This loop has six components: (1) the identity standard (the meanings of an identity), (2) output (behavior), (3) input (how people think others see them in a situation [i.e., reflected appraisals]), (4) a comparator (which compares the input with the identity standard), (5) emotion (that results from the comparison process), and (6) situation meanings (which vary in the degree of correspondence with identity standard meanings). We apply each component to the moral individual.

Identity standard. The identity standard is the moral identity. This standard contains the meanings an individual associates with being a moral person. Meanings are individuals' responses when they reflect upon themselves (Burke and Stets 2009). For example, a woman may consider herself submissive when she thinks about how dominant she is, she may see herself as efficient when she thinks of herself as a worker, and she may define herself as dependable in her church group. Submissiveness, efficiency, and dependability are the meanings that help define her, and she will control these self-meanings when interacting with others so that they are maintained at a level she sets (whether high or low).

For the moral person, meanings of *justice* and *care* are implicated (Gilligan 1982; Haidt and Kesebir 2010; Kohlberg 1981). While most scholars agree that justice and care are fundamental to being moral, some argue that morality goes beyond justice and care and includes a broader spectrum of meaning. For example, some scholars have identified cross-cultural moral meanings of being autonomous, community-oriented, and acknowledging the divine (Shweder et al. 1997). Others have identified the meaning dimensions of harm/care, fairness/reciprocity, in-group/loyalty, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity as moral foundations (Haidt and Graham 2009; Haidt and Kesebir 2010).[1]

We focus on the degree to which individuals are just and caring for several reasons. First, all cultures appear to promote moral values based on being just and caring (Hauser 2006). Second, our sample, while ethnically diverse, shares values associated with Western culture; we thus follow Western conceptions of morality that tend to value protecting individuals' welfare and autonomy (Haidt and Graham 2009). While this minimizes an approach to the moral person that emphasizes ties to groups—which may describe many non-Western countries—justice and care do not exclude the collective. Justice can be a collective enterprise, particularly when it is imbued with meanings of cooperation and consensus within a group (Hegtvedt and Scheuerman 2010). Care can also be a collective

enterprise, as when our commitment and responsibility to others generates a "we-feeling" and a collective sense of self. In studying justice and care, we do not claim that they characterize all meanings of morality, only that they represent important meanings.

Output. When an identity is activated in a situation, it guides behavior (Burke and Stets 2009; Stryker and Serpe 1982). More specifically, meanings of the behavior (output) should correspond to meanings held in the identity standard. For example, an individual's self-meanings of being more just and caring should be related to behavior in a situation that carries meanings of being fair and supportive to others. Alternatively, self-meanings of being less just and caring should be associated with behavior that carries meanings that the person is acting unjust and is not being helpful. On average, moral behavior is conduct instilled with the expectation to do what is right or good based on social consensus, such as behaving in a just and caring manner (Turner and Stets 2006). Given this, our first hypothesis is as follows:

> *Hypothesis 1:* The higher a person's moral identity score, the more likely the person will behave morally.

Input. Input consists of situational meanings that influence how a person behaves and feels. These meanings have two sources: (1) reflected appraisals and (2) the definition of the situation. First, when a person enacts behavior, others react to the meaning of that behavior, and the person interprets this reaction. This is *reflected appraisal*. It is how a person thinks others perceive her in the situation. For example, a woman may see herself as just and kind (meanings in her moral identity standard). She may enact behaviors consistent with these meanings, such as treating another person fairly and being supportive. Others in the situation may react to her behavior by telling her that she is fair and caring.[2] She will then interpret this reaction as consistent with how she sees herself.

A second source of input is how one defines a situation. In defining a situation, one interprets the setting as containing meanings that characterize a particular social occasion or frame of interaction (Goffman 1974). Embedded within this frame of interaction are meanings related to goals to be achieved, roles to be played, identities to be verified, behaviors to be enacted, and feelings to be expressed. Individuals use these definitions of situations to guide behavior and feelings.

Comparator. Reflected appraisals and definitions of situations are continuously fed into the comparator. The comparator relates input meanings from both sources with stored identity standard meanings. It produces an error signal, which is the difference between the input and the identity standard meanings. In thinking about this numerically, if an identity standard is set at 7 (on a scale of 0 to 10) for being caring, and others indicate that the person is acting 7 in terms of being caring, there is a perfect match between input and identity standard meanings. This is *identity verification*. However, if others perceive the person as acting a 5 in terms of being caring, there is a mismatch between input meanings and identity standard meanings. This is *identity non-verification*. Similarly, if meanings in a situation are defined in terms of something other than what is relevant for an identity, a discrepancy emerges between identity meanings and situation meanings. For example, if meanings in a situation are about acquiring wealth rather than behaving morally, one will have difficulty verifying the moral identity.

Emotion. In identity theory, identity verification is associated with positive feelings and identity non-verification is related to negative feelings (Burke and Stets 2009). Negative emotions drive the identity control system to reduce the inconsistency by behaving differently so as to change meanings in the situation. In the earlier example, if others perceive the person's level of caring as a 5 rather than a 7, the person might take the time to help others more often and with increased intensity to signal the meaning that she is caring. If the same person is perceived as a 10 in terms of care, she might reduce her display of caring behavior toward others because others' perceptions reveal excessive caring compared to her identity standard.[3]

Identity theorists typically examine generalized positive and negative emotions to the neglect of specific emotions. We study two specific moral emotions: guilt and shame. While many feelings might constitute moral emotions (Haidt 2003; Turner and Stets 2006), most research focuses on guilt and shame (Tangney and Dearing 2002b; Tangney, Stuewig, and Mashek 2007). Shame is more intensely felt than guilt. Shame is tied to violations of moral standards in which the entire self is evaluated negatively, that is, the whole self is judged responsible for a violation. Individuals reflect upon themselves as horrible agents. They feel worthless to others and want to hide, escape, or strike back. Guilt involves behavior that is judged as bad. Rather than focusing on a bad self as in shame, guilty people focus on their bad behavior, allowing a good self to still exist. Guilt leads people to feel remorse and regret, and this motivates them to confess, apologize, and repair wrongdoings. The distinction between shame and guilt can be summarized as follows: someone feeling shame would say, "*I* did that bad thing"; someone feeling guilt would say, "I *did* that bad thing."[4]

Theoretically, we are interested in the commonalities between guilt and shame.[5] Both are intimately social because they involve others who may witness a person's actions and evaluate them. When feedback from others is discrepant with a person's self-view, this discrepancy will be associated with feelings of shame for not living up to one's own standards as well as guilt for having done something, the meanings of which signal an inconsistency with one's identity standard meanings. Ultimately, guilt and shame keep people integrated into society through internal monologues with the self and feedback from others (Turner 2010).[6] This leads to our second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: When there is a discrepancy between one's moral identity standard meanings and how moral a person thinks others see him or her in a situation, the person will be more likely to report moral emotions.

Situation meanings. Identity theorists have not closely examined how people's definitions of situations influence behavior and emotions in those situations. Rather, they have focused on how changes in a situation may change the meaning of an identity. For example, researchers have examined how the birth of a child changes one's gender identity, with women becoming more feminine and men becoming more masculine (Burke and Cast 1997). Alternatively, scholars have studied how salient identities are maintained in the face of situational changes, such as retaining an athlete identity when one goes to college (Serpe and Stryker 1987).

We study the degree to which a situation is interpreted as relevant to moral considerations because this interpretation may be related to moral action and moral feelings. We label this the *cognitive* (interpretive) aspect of situation meanings. Individuals likely draw on shared symbols and definitions derived from culture to identify the degree to which situations contain moral meanings. For example, deciding whether a friend should drive home drunk or whether to donate to a charity are more likely to be interpreted as containing moral meanings than deciding between two different detergent brands.

Researchers are beginning to investigate the influence of situational factors on moral behavior (e.g., moral priming activating a moral self-view) (Aquino et al. 2009), competing meanings in situations (e.g., financial incentives weakening moral behavior), and the presence of moral exemplars strengthening moral behavior (Aquino and Freeman 2009). Wikstrom's (2010) Situational Action Theory (SAT) of moral action is particularly relevant. Wikstrom addresses people's morality as well as the moral setting and argues that both are relevant in guiding moral actions. One's morality and moral context serve as a moral filter, defining what actions are appropriate in a situation. In identity theory, people's morality is the meanings in their moral identity. Moral context is how individuals interpret a situation as containing moral meanings. If individuals perceive meanings of good/bad or right/wrong behavior, a situation is high in moral content because there are moral meanings in the situation to attend to. In turn, this should influence moral behavior. This leads to our third hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: The more a person defines a situation as containing moral meanings, the more likely the person will behave morally.

Situation meanings also carry an affective aspect in the form of *feeling rules* that specify emotions individuals ought to experience, such as feeling sad at a funeral or happy at a party (Hochschild 1983). Feeling rules, or emotion norms, indicate the direction of an emotion (positive or negative), its intensity (from strong to weak), and its duration (from fleeting to lasting). They are not codified formally but are learned and reinforced in interaction. Like the cognitive aspect of moral situations, we expect people to draw on cultural expectations about emotions that ought to be experienced when moral rules are present. The feeling rules in moral situations involve the idea that individuals should feel guilt or shame when moral codes are violated. Knowledge of these feeling rules may redirect a person away from immoral behavior to avoid negative feelings.

Our two aspects of moral situations—cognitive and affective—are similar to Hochschild's (1979) discussion of *framing rules* and *feeling rules* in situations. Framing rules indicate which interpretations and meanings individuals should give to situations, and feeling rules specify how individuals ought to feel given the particular interpretation made by the framing rules. Consequently, we expect the following:

Hypothesis 4: The more a person reports that one should experience moral emotions

following immoral behavior, the more likely the person will behave morally.

Finally, we anticipate that a person attuned to moral meanings and feeling rules will be more inclined to experience moral emotions when enacting immoral behavior. This indicates an interaction effect. Awareness of meanings along the moral dimension in situations and the corresponding feeling rules associated with moral behavior should make individuals more attentive to their behavior. A violation in cultural expectations of behavior should produce guilt or shame. Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

> *Hypothesis 5:* The more a person defines a situation as containing moral meanings but behaves immorally, the more likely the person will report moral emotions.

> *Hypothesis 6:* The more a person reports that one should feel moral emotions for behaving immorally and engages in immoral behavior, the more likely the person will report moral emotions.

Summary. We see individual variation in moral behavior and moral emotions arising from two sources. First are the moral meanings in the identity standard. Identity standards are always arrayed on a continuum of meaning. Having a moral identity does not mean that one has meanings of being a good person; rather, one has meanings that fall within a range, for example, of being very uncaring and unjust to very caring and very just. The goal is to live up to one's self-view, however that view is arranged across the moral continuum. When the meanings of one's behavior based on feedback from others are inconsistent with the meanings in one's identity standard, the person will feel bad.

A second source of individual variation is situation meanings that have cognitive and affective components. When individuals interpret situations as moral and are attentive to the corresponding feeling rules for violating moral codes, they should be more likely to work to verify their level of morality in the situation. Under the guidance of feeling rules, individuals should be more likely to feel guilt or shame when they behave inconsistently. Thus, while the identity process involves individuals acting to control perceptions of themselves in situations to match their moral identity standard, this process exists in an environment that carries varying degrees of moral meanings and emotion norms about morality.

We test these assumptions on more than 350 students at a large southwestern university. Different moral issues may be relevant to students than to non-students or older adults. However, as is clear in identity theory, one should study meanings as they are understood by the people being investigated. Given our sample, we examine moral issues that are relevant in students' lives.

METHOD

We recruited participants for this study from undergraduate sociology classes at a large southwestern university during the 2007 to 2008 academic year. Classes were a mixture of lower and upper division as well as general education and elective courses. For their participation, we offered respondents extra credit in their classes and a chance to win $100 in a lottery. The response rate was 86 percent for a total of 369 individuals.

This was a two-part study. First, participants responded to a survey that measured their moral identity, moral behavior, and moral emotions. Three months later, they responded to a second survey that measured moral meanings and feeling rules in situations. We delayed administering the second survey to reduce the potential influence the first survey might have had on their responses. All respondents completed both surveys, so there was no attrition.

In the first survey, we obtained a measure of respondents' moral identity. Respondents identified their behavior and emotions across a variety of situations in which they had the choice to do the good or right thing (see the Appendix).

Respondents were asked to think about the last time they were in each situation and report what they did and how they felt following their actions. If they never experienced the situation, they were to imagine themselves in the situation and respond as to what they would do and how they would feel following their actions. Our analyses include only respondents who experienced the situation. Most respondents reported experiencing each situation: (1) copied a student's answers (75 percent), (2) drove home drunk (42 percent), (3) took an item (66 percent), (4) gave to charity (93 percent), (5) allowed a student to copy one's answers (75 percent), (6) let a friend drive home drunk (67 percent), (7) returned a lost item (84 percent), and (8) returned money to a cashier (78 percent). In the second survey, respondents were asked how they would rate each scenario in the Appendix in moral terms, and how they thought individuals ought to feel given particular courses of action in each situation.

The scenarios were a useful methodological procedure to get individuals to respond to a common set of experiences. To ensure scenarios represented situations individuals likely experienced, we administered a pretest a year earlier to approximately 150 undergraduates in similar classes. Respondents identified three recent situations they experienced where they had a choice between doing the right or wrong thing. They described the situation in detail, including what choice they made and why. For this study, we used the situations most frequently listed. We thus used situations relevant to the population from which we drew our sample. Past research has tended to rely on a class of moral dilemmas known as the trolley car problems to assess individuals' moral decision making (Greene et al. 2001; Hauser 2006). Some scholars argue that we need more research on real-life dilemmas (Walker and Pitts 1998; Walker et al. 1995), which is what we have attempted here. We do not claim that the scenarios we study represent the full domain of moral situations for all groups, only that they are situations students typically identify as moral situations in their everyday lives.

Table 1. Percentage of Respondents Reporting Moral Behavior

Situation	Moral Behavior (%)
Did not copy	70
Did not drive drunk	82
Did not take item	88
Gave to charity	57
Did not allow student to copy	59
Did not allow friend to drive drunk	87
Returned lost item	83
Returned money to cashier	47

Table 1 reports the percentage of respondents who behaved morally across the situations. The relatively high percentages reporting good actions suggest that respondents may be portraying themselves in a socially desirable way. To investigate this, we consulted data on these same individuals from a laboratory study that simulated a testing situation where participants had the opportunity to cheat to get a higher score on a test (Stets and Carter 2011). If respondents answered truthfully in the survey, individuals who reported they were more likely to copy a student's answers in the survey would be more likely to cheat in the laboratory study. This is what we found. The odds of cheating in the laboratory study increased by 30 percent for respondents who reported copying a student's answers in the survey compared to those who had not reported copying (odds ratio = 1.30, $p < .01$). While not definitive, these findings suggest our respondents were not simply answering in a socially desirable manner.

MEASURES
Moral Identity

For the moral identity, we examined how people view themselves along the justice and care dimensions. We gave respondents a list of 12 bipolar characteristics used in prior

studies: honest/dishonest, caring/uncaring, unkind/kind, unfair/fair, helpful/not helpful, stingy/generous, compassionate/hardhearted, untruthful/truthful, not hardworking/hardworking, friendly/unfriendly, selfish/selfless, and principled/unprincipled (Aquino and Reed 2002; Stets and Carter 2006; Walker and Hennig 2004). Respondents were told to think about what kind of person they thought they were for each pair of characteristics and to place themselves along a continuum between the two contradictory characteristics. A value of 1 reflected agreement with one bipolar characteristic, 5 reflected agreement with the other characteristic, and 3 placed the respondent halfway between the two.

This measurement procedure used to capture the meanings of many identities (Burke and Stets 2009) follows the Osgood measurement technique of using a semantic differential to measure meaning (Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum 1957). Characteristics thought to capture relevant underlying meaning dimensions of an identity are placed on a scale of polar opposites, and individuals respond to the characteristic as they take themselves as an object. These characteristics are not traits, which are usually conceptualized as habitual dispositions to act in a certain way that are acquired through learning. Rather, they are *meanings* or sets of responses people provide when they think about themselves (Burke and Stets 2009). Individuals control these meanings at a particular level. Traits are not subject to control in the same way that people manage the particular level of meaning of an identity. The idea of individuals managing the level of identity meanings is a core assumption in the self-regulating identity model.

To examine whether the 12 bipolar items characterize care and justice, we rotated the first two factors of a factor analysis using oblique rotation. Factor one represented the following items we labeled *care*: caring/uncaring, unkind/kind, helpful/not helpful, stingy/generous, compassionate/hardhearted, friendly/unfriendly, and selfish/selfless. Factor two consisted of the following items we labeled *justice*: honest/dishonest, unfair/fair,

Table 2. Principle Components Factor Analysis of the Moral Identity

Items	Factor Loading
Honest	.59
Caring	.65
Kind	.67
Fair	.58
Helpful	.63
Generous	.55
Compassionate	.54
Truthful	.62
Hardworking	.54
Friendly	.56
Selfless	.57
Principled	.52
Eigenvalue	4.14
Ω	.87

untruthful/truthful, not hardworking/hardworking, and principled/unprincipled. The correlation between the two scales was .60. This suggests that care and justice are two facets of an underlying phenomenon: *morality*. From an identity perspective, a care identity and a justice identity are very close in semantic space, such that measuring one identity would capture important meanings in the other. Measuring both justice and care thus provides a more complete and accurate measure of individual morality.

Because identity meanings should correspond to behavior meanings, we also examined whether behaviors in the scenarios were differently associated with the care and justice identities. Both identities predicted behavior equally well in half of the scenarios. In the other half, the care identity was a slightly better predictor, but no clear pattern emerged for why this occurred.[7] Taken together, these analyses suggest that care and justice are empirically inseparable. Future research should examine whether a care identity influences behaviors that are distinguishable from a justice identity as this is a limitation of the current study. In this study, we used the factor structure from the first unrotated factor. Table 2 presents
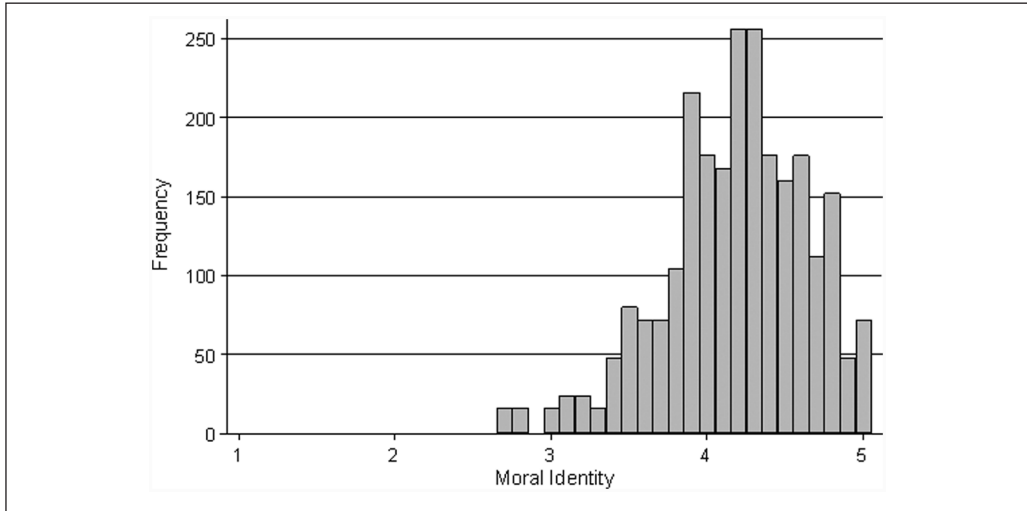
Figure 2. Histogram of Moral Identity Scores

factor loadings. We reverse coded negatively worded characteristics and summed items with a high score representing a more moral compared to less moral identity. For the analysis, we standardized the scale (mean = 0; standard deviation = 1).

In Figure 2, we provide a histogram of the moral identity scores in the original 1 to 5 metric units. Most people have a moral identity above the midpoint of the scale; that is, most people identify themselves as relatively good or moral individuals. Even the lowest moral identity scores are at least at the midpoint of the moral–immoral dimension. Throughout our analyses, having a more moral or less moral identity is thus relative. Respondents with a lower score are by no means immoral but simply lower on this scale compared to others in the sample.

Finally, we examined whether individuals in our sample identified the 12 bipolar items as characteristic of morality. In the second survey, respondents were asked to rate each of the characteristics in terms of how moral they thought each item was, however they defined morality. Response categories ranged from Extremely Immoral (–5) to Neither Immoral nor Moral (0) to Extremely Moral

(+5). We transformed these response categories into a 0 to 10 scale (0 = Extremely Immoral to 10 = Extremely Moral). We reverse coded negatively worded characteristics. The mean was high (mean = 7.52; standard deviation = 1.22); thus, respondents identified these items as strongly characterizing morality.

Moral Identity Discrepancy

The moral identity discrepancy measure compares individuals' moral identity standard with how they think others see them (i.e., reflected appraisals) along the morality dimension to determine the degree of difference (Burke and Stets 2009). Operationally, this is individuals' moral identity standard minus how moral they think others see them in each situation. After individuals reported how they behaved and felt in each scenario, they reported how much they thought others saw them as being likeable, intelligent, moral, dominant, spiritual, attractive, reliable, loving, and competitive (from "Not at all" to "Very Much" [coded 0 to 6]). Responses to how they thought others saw them in moral terms served as the reflected appraisals measure. Other characteristics were filler items to mask our interest in the moral dimension. We

standardized the moral identity measure and the reflected appraisal measure for each situation. Then, we subtracted participants' standardized reflected appraisals measure for each situation from their standardized moral identity measure. We squared each value so that a departure from zero in either a negative or positive direction meant an increased discrepancy.[8]

Moral Behavior

For moral behavior, we used respondents' reports of their conduct in each of the eight situations. We coded this 0 to 1, with 1 reflecting moral behavior, and 0 reflecting immoral behavior. Across the scenarios in the Appendix, we coded the following behaviors as 0: copied a student's answers (#1), drove home drunk (#2), took an item (#3), did not provide a donation (#4), let a student copy one's answers (#5), let one's friend drive home drunk (#6), did not return a lost item (#7), and did not return money to the cashier (#8). We coded the alternative to each of the above behaviors as 1.

Moral Emotions

After participants reported how they behaved in each situation, they reported how they felt. The survey listed the following six emotions: happy, fearful, angry, sad, shameful, and guilty. Happiness, fear, anger, and sadness are four primary emotions, and shame and guilt are two critical secondary, moral emotions (Tangney et al. 2007; Turner and Stets 2006). Response categories for each emotion ranged from "Not at all" to "Very Intense" (coded 0 to 6). We focus on the moral emotions of guilt and shame. The correlation between respondents' guilt and shame was high ($r = .90$, $p < .01$). We thus summed the two items with a higher score measuring more intense moral emotions.[9]

Situation Meanings: Moral Meanings and Feeling Rules

In the second survey, respondents were asked to think about each scenario and indicate the extent to which they saw the situation as morally meaningful. Half the scenarios were worded in terms of doing the bad action, and the other half were worded in terms of doing the good action. Response categories ranged from "Extremely Immoral" to "Extremely Moral" (coded –5 to 5). When respondents evaluated good actions as extremely moral (+5) or bad actions as extremely immoral (–5), we took the absolute value of this variable to capture the potency of the moral imperative. A high absolute value represents a situation that had very high moral relevance. A low absolute value represents a situation that is neither moral nor immoral, that is, morality is not relevant in the situation. We coded the variable from 0 (morality is not relevant) to 5 (morality is highly relevant).[10]

Respondents were presented these scenarios and asked to identify how someone ought to feel following particular actions. Again, half the scenarios were worded in terms of doing the bad action, and the other half were worded in terms of doing the good action. We used the previously described six emotion measures. We examine individuals' responses to guilt and shame. This measure operationalizes emotion norms in a situation because individuals reported the degree to which people *should* feel guilt and shame following a bad or immoral behavior. The correlation between guilt and shame was high ($r = .95$, $p < .01$). We summed the two items to create an overall emotions norm variable.

ANALYSIS

Because participants' moral behavior in the survey is coded 0/1, we estimate this equation using logistic regression. We provide the odds ratio for a one-unit change in the independent variable. We estimate moral behavior to be a function of a higher score on moral identity (Hypothesis 1), reports of moral framing rules (Hypothesis 3), and reports of moral feeling rules (Hypothesis 4). Because the moral emotion variable is continuous, we estimate this equation using ordinary least squares regression. We anticipate that individuals will be more likely to report guilt and shame when they experience a moral identity discrepancy

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges of Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Sex	.33	.47	0	1
Moral Identity	.00	1.00	−3.38	1.83
Moral Behavior	.66	.47	0	1
Moral Emotions	.00	1.00	−.67	2.79
Moral Identity Discrepancy	.00	1.00	−.69	7.23
Moral Meanings	.00	1.00	−1.81	1.12
Feeling Rules	.00	1.00	−1.22	1.24

(Hypothesis 2), define a situation as moral but behave immorally (moral behavior × meanings) (Hypothesis 5), and when they think people should experience moral emotions for immoral behavior and behave immorally (moral behavior × feeling rules) (Hypothesis 6).

The unit of analysis in this study is an individual's response to each scenario. Because participants could respond to eight different scenarios, there are eight responses per person, or a possible 2,952 responses. In standard regression models, errors for individuals are assumed to be uncorrelated. Because individuals are responding to multiple scenarios, errors for these scenarios are assumed to be correlated. In our estimation procedure, we used the cluster option in Stata to take into account these correlated errors.

We controlled for several key background characteristics that might influence moral behavior and moral emotions, including respondents' sex, race/ethnicity, age, and income. We estimated the main effects of these demographic factors as well as their interaction effects. Across the moral behavior and moral emotions equations, sex was the only variable of significance, and it was only significant for the moral emotions equation.[11] Therefore, we present findings with sex (coded 0 for female and 1 for male) included in this equation.

RESULTS

Table 3 presents means and standard deviations for the variables. Most variables have been standardized (mean = 0; standard deviation = 1). More women (67 percent) than men

(33 percent) participated. While the gender distribution is different from the university from which this sample is drawn (52 percent women, 48 percent men), other characteristics of our sample are similar to the university population. For example, respondents are ethnically diverse (13 percent White, 33 percent Latino/Chicano, 29 percent Asian, and 25 percent other) as is the university population (17 percent White, 29 percent Latino/Chicano, 40 percent Asian, and 14 percent other). Average age in this sample is 21, which is the average age of students at this university. Average parental income is $35,000 to $49,000, which is somewhat lower than the average university student ($48,000 to $96,000).

Table 4 presents zero-order correlations of the variables. To correct for individuals' responses to multiple scenarios, we use bonferroni significance levels. Table 4 shows that moral behavior is associated with a high score on moral identity ($r = .14$, $p < .05$) and a low score on moral emotions of shame and guilt ($r = −.58$, $p < .05$). Moral emotions also are positively related to a discrepancy between people's moral identity standard and how they think others see them along the morality dimension ($r = .30$, $p < .05$). Not all people with a high score on moral identity defined situations as containing moral meanings ($r = .15$, $p < .05$). A great deal of individual variation exists in interpreting situations as containing moral meanings. However, when situations are defined as containing moral meanings, individuals are more likely to behave morally ($r = .24$, $p < .05$).

Table 4. Correlations among Variables

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
(1) Sex	1.00						
(2) Moral Identity	−.10	1.00					
(3) Moral Behavior	−.07	.14*	1.00				
(4) Moral Emotions	−.03	−.07	−.58*	1.00			
(5) Moral Identity Discrepancy	.05	−.09	−.25*	.30*	1.00		
(6) Moral Meanings	−.04	.15*	.24*	−.10	−.04	1.00	
(7) Feeling Rules	−.07	.04	.11*	.12*	.01	.14*	1.00

*$p \leq .05$; **$p \leq .01$ (two-tailed tests).

Table 5. Logistic and OLS Regression Analyses of Moral Processes on Moral Behavior and Moral Emotions ($N = 369$)

	Dependent Variables	
	Moral Behavior	Moral Emotions
Independent Variables	Odds Ratio	β
Sex		−.35*
Moral Identity	1.28**	.02
Moral Behavior		−.43**
Moral Identity Discrepancy		.13**
Moral Meanings	1.61**	.18**
Feeling Rules	1.19**	.42**
Moral Behavior × Moral Meanings		−.32**
Moral Behavior × Feeling Rules		−.27**
Sex × Feeling Rules		−.08*
Sex × Moral Behavior		.31**
R^2	.06**	.45**

*$p \leq .05$; **$p \leq .01$ (two-tailed tests).

Table 5 presents analyses for our hypotheses. In column 1, the moral identity is positively associated with enacting moral behavior (odds ratio = 1.28, $p < .01$). The odds of doing a good thing increase 28 percent for a one standard deviation increase in moral identity. This supports Hypothesis 1 and is consistent with the idea that meanings in one's identity standard influence behavior that implies the same meaning. Furthermore, and independently, interpreting situations as containing moral meanings increases the odds of behaving morally by at least 60 percent (odds ratio = 1.61, $p < .01$)

(Hypothesis 3). Finally, a one standard deviation increase in being aware of the feeling rules of moral situations increases the odds of behaving morally by almost 20 percent (odds ratio = 1.19, $p < .01$) (Hypothesis 4). In general, identity meanings and situation meanings significantly and independently relate to moral behavior.

Column 2 of Table 5 presents results for reports of guilt and shame.[12] The moral identity is not associated with moral emotions directly; however, there is an indirect association by way of moral behavior. Thus, a mediation model is

Table 6. Means of Moral Emotions by Moral Behavior and Moral Meanings

	Moral Behavior	
Moral Meanings	No	Yes
0	.46	−.28
1	.58	−.28
2	.82	−.38
3	.94	−.38
4	1.05	−.47
5	1.13	−.49

operating. The moral identity is related to moral behavior, and moral behavior, in turn, is linked to moral emotions. We also find that a discrepancy in the moral identity is related to an increase in reports of moral emotions ($\beta = .13$, $p < .01$) (Hypothesis 2).

When individuals define a situation in moral terms and engage in moral behavior, we see a decrease in reports of guilt and shame ($\beta = [.18] + [−.32] = −.14$, $p < .01$) (Hypothesis 5). Table 6 shows the interaction more clearly. Among respondents who defined a situation with strong moral meanings, there is a large difference in the experience of moral emotions given moral and immoral behavior. Respondents who acted immorally when the situation was defined as having strong moral meanings had a large increase in the average level of moral emotions, while those who acted morally had a strong reduction in the average level of moral emotions. This difference diminishes as the perceived level of moral meanings in the situation diminishes. Even at the lowest level of moral meanings, where respondents did not view the situation in moral terms, there is still a significant difference in the level of moral emotions between respondents who did and did not engage in moral behavior. We must remember, however, that almost all respondents have a level of moral identity above the midpoint on the scale. This is apparently enough to make individuals feel bad for behaving immorally even in situations not seen to have strong moral significance.

Results in Table 5 also reveal that when individuals engage in bad behavior, and they report that people should feel guilt and shame for immoral behavior, it is associated with an increase in reports of moral emotions ($\beta = .42$, $p < .01$) (Hypothesis 6). When individuals enact good behavior, this feeling rule is associated with a decrease in reports of moral emotions ($\beta = [.42] + [−.27] = .15$, $p < .01$). Thus, it is not only morally charged situations combined with moral behavior that is linked to reduced reports of moral emotions, but also the feeling rules associated with these situations that, when combined with moral behavior, are related to a decline in reports of moral emotions.

We highlight additional findings in our moral emotions equation. First, reports of good behavior are negatively associated with reports of guilt and shame ($\beta = −.43$, $p < .01$). We also find two significant sex interaction effects: sex × feeling rules and sex × moral behavior. The first interaction indicates that when considering the degree to which one should feel bad for immoral behaviors, men are less likely than women to report moral emotions for average levels in feeling rules ($\beta = −.35$, $p < .01$). For one standard deviation increase in feeling rules, women report more moral emotions than do men ($\beta = .42$ [women] versus $\beta = [−.35] + [.42] + [−.07] = 0$ [men]). Feeling rules are thus related more to women's than to men's reports of moral emotions. The second interaction reveals that men are less likely than women to report moral emotions for immoral behavior ($\beta = −.35$, $p < .01$). We find no gender differences in reports of moral emotions for enacting moral behavior ($\beta = [−.35] + [−.43] + [.31] = −.47$ [men] and $\beta = −.43$ [women]).

In general, our hypotheses are supported. Consistent with identity theory, the moral identity is positively associated with moral conduct. Additionally, situations imbued with moral meanings along the cognitive and affective dimensions are associated with enactment of moral behavior. We find that reports of moral emotions are less likely to occur when individuals engage in moral

behavior, interpret a situation as morally meaningful, and are attentive to emotion norms that shore up negative emotions for immoral behavior. Additionally, reports of moral emotions are positively related to identity non-verification. These moral emotions emerge not only when individuals claim a relatively high moral identity and then perceive that others do not agree that they are behaving in a good manner, but also when individuals claim a relatively low moral identity and find that others do not view their behavior as bad. Both ends of the identity meaning continuum may be inconsistent.

DISCUSSION

Studying the moral self is opportune given the unregulated practices of stock brokers, investment advisors, and mortgage lenders whose behavior facilitated the recent economic recession in the United States. The cost of their irresponsible practices has touched the lives of many innocent victims, as witnessed in the loss of individuals' retirement savings, homes, and jobs. The fact that a few greedy actors have the potential to damage the lives of many (as evidenced in the Bernie Madoff case) brings issues of right and wrong, good and bad, and just and unjust to public awareness. To understand the illicit behavior of some, we need to study the moral dimension of the self and what makes some individuals more dishonest than others within and across situations.

Identity theory provides an explanation for understanding this variability—variability that was not discussed by Durkheim, Goffman, or Collins. While psychologists address this individual variability, they lack an integrated theory that identity theory provides, which brings together moral cognition, moral behavior, moral emotions, and situation meanings. Moral cognition is the control of perceptions in a situation to match internal moral identity meanings. Moral behavior is action in the service of moral identity meanings. Moral emotions are feelings following the lack of verification of one's moral identity. Situation

meanings are the cultural milieu in which the moral identity process operates.

The moral identity standard locates individuals along a range of meanings from low to high. Wherever individuals are located on this continuum, they act with the goal of verifying their identity meanings. We found that individuals with a high moral identity score were more likely to behave morally, while those with a low moral identity score were less likely to behave morally. However, it is not simply moral identity meanings that guide behavior, but the relationship between these meanings and the perceived meanings of who one is in a situation. What is crucial is that there is a match in the two sets of meanings. Respondents who received feedback from others that did not verify their moral identity standard were more likely to report guilt and shame than those whose identities were verified.

In identity theory, it does not matter whether identity non-verification is due to individuals failing to live up to their identity standard or exceeding their identity standard. In either case, individuals see they are not morally acceptable given the standard they have set for themselves. Exceeding one's moral standard may generate the view that one is a moral fraud, while failing to meet a moral standard may result in feeling morally inadequate. Both situations will be associated with feelings of shame for not meeting one's standard and guilt for having enacted behavior inconsistent in meaning with the moral identity.

Individuals' identities are enacted within situations that carry their own shared meanings about how to behave and feel. Individuals interpret the cultural context in ways that make their identities and their surroundings meaningful to them. We found that when individuals defined situations as morally meaningful, both cognitively and affectively, these definitions were associated with acting morally; when respondents behaved immorally, they were more likely to feel guilt and shame. Actions and feelings are thus embedded in particular frames that provide additional meanings relevant to one's identity. Internal identity meanings and external cultural meanings coalesce to

influence moral action and feelings within and across situations.

The fact that the results reveal that the identity process operates similarly across key demographic variables such as race, age, and income suggests that identity theory is a general theory of action. However, we did find a significant difference between men and women regarding their experience of moral emotions. Women were more likely than men to report guilt and shame when behaving immorally. Research does reveal that women have a tendency to report guilt and shame more than men (Tangney and Dearing 2002a). Women's greater vulnerability to feelings of guilt and shame may be due to their traditional gender roles of caring for others or their tendency to be more interpersonally oriented than men (Brody and Hall 2008). We also found that feeling rules of a situation were more likely to be associated with women's reports of guilt and shame. Given women's tendency to be interpersonally oriented, women may be more likely than men to take into account a situation's feeling rules so as not to disrupt social relationships. Explanations for these sex differences are speculative; future research needs to investigate them more closely.

There are shortcomings to this research. Data are cross-sectional so we do not know how the identity process unfolds in real time. For example, according to identity theory, if people repeatedly experience identity non-verification, they may change their behavior (output) or their perceptions of self-in-situation meanings (input) to achieve verification. However, while one or both of these are occurring, changes in one's identity standard are also happening, although at a much slower rate (Burke and Stets 2009). Future research is needed to examine how individuals respond to moral identity disruptions, including how moral identity meanings may change over time.

Another shortcoming is that we did not examine how others in a situation may influence how an interaction is framed. In the case of morality, others may augment or reduce a situation's moral meanings. For example, our findings reveal that behaving immorally when a situation is defined as morally relevant is associated with guilt and shame. However, these feelings may be tempered if important others (e.g., family and friends) define the situation in other, non-moral terms. High status others may also be influential in how a situation is defined, making moral meanings more or less relevant. The nature and degree of influence others have in framing situations as moral is an important avenue for future research.

Future work should also study other meanings of the moral person than justice and care. Morality may entail a focus on community, loyalty, and respect for others. These meanings underscore ideas of interdependence, cohesiveness, and attachment to groups. When individuals do not adhere to moral codes, identity non-verification may produce feelings of guilt and shame in the violator, but group members may also feel moral emotions of anger, contempt, or disgust (Haidt 2003). Because identities exist in mutually verifying contexts with each actor attempting to verify the identity of the other (Burke and Stets 2009), immoral behavior by one person will likely disrupt other group members' identity verification. In turn, this can lead to negative feelings in other group members, such as anger or disgust. Empirical research is needed regarding these interpersonal and emotional dynamics.

Finally, more research is needed to identify the source of moral identity meanings. Exposure to particular social contexts and individuals may encourage a higher moral identity. For example, when parents are involved in their children's lives, their children are more likely to recognize moral values (Hardy, Padilla-Walker, and Carlo 2008). Schools can also sensitize individuals to moral meanings by providing an atmosphere that fosters justice, virtue, and volunteering (Atkins, Hart, and Donnelly 2004). Religious traditions that promote reflection on moral issues and foster charitable work also help individuals recognize moral meanings (Hart and Atkins 2004).

In advancing the sociology of morality, we have constructed an argument that is different from the perspectives of Durkheim, Goffman, Collins, and Weber. Rather than seeing moral action and emotions as emerging from cultural expectations in interaction or from individuals' internal meanings about morality, both internal meanings and situation meanings are the source of moral behavior and feelings. Individual variability in moral behavior and feelings results from the complex interplay between variation in internal moral identity meanings people seek to verify and variation in definitions of moral meanings embedded in a situation. Thus, the control system approach of identity theory in sociology becomes an important way to understand moral action and moral emotions.

APPENDIX

Scenarios

1. "You have the opportunity to copy another student's answers during an exam." You "did not copy the student's answers" or "copied the student's answers."
2. "You are drunk and need to drive home." You "did not drive myself home" or "drove myself home."
3. "You have the opportunity to take an item (for example, merchandise, money etc.) that doesn't belong to you." You "did not take the item" or "took the item."
4. "You are asked to donate to a charity." You "did not provide a donation" or you "provided a donation."
5. "You have the opportunity to allow another student to copy your answers during an exam." You "did not let the student copy your answers" or "let the student copy your answers."
6. "A friend of yours is drunk and wants to drive home." You "did not let your friend drive home" or "let your friend drive home."
7. "You find an item that does not belong to you (for example, a cell phone, a wallet, a book and so forth)." You "did not return the lost item" or "returned the lost item."
8. "A cashier returns more money to you than what is owed." You "did not return the money" or "returned the money."

Notes

1. Other scholars claim that we need to focus more on naturalistic conceptions of morality that are rooted in everyday understandings and experiences (Walker and Pitts 1998; Walker et al. 1995).
2. Independent of others' reactions, individuals may evaluate whether they are behaving in a manner consistent with their identity meanings (Burke 2006). This is the self-appraisal process. Future research needs to examine this as an alternative source of identity discrepancy.
3. Behavior change is not the only way identity verification may occur. Individuals might also engage in cognitive strategies to change meanings in a situation. For example, individuals can use psychosocial maneuvers to disengage from immoral behavior such as reconstructing the conduct so that it is not viewed as immoral, minimizing one's role in the behavior, minimizing consequences of the action, or blaming the victim (Bandura 1999).
4. One might expect shame to be about public transgressions and guilt to involve private transgressions, but research fails to support this distinction (Tangney et al. 2007). Shame and guilt are equally public in terms of others being present and aware of one's transgression. What is different is that following the transgression, shameful individuals focus on how others evaluate them; guilty people are concerned with how their behavior might have harmed another (Tangney et al. 2007). In shame, individuals are self-focused; in guilt, they are other-focused.
5. In self-discrepancy theory, a discrepancy between attributes a person actually possesses and the ideal state that a close other hopes the person attains influences shame, while a discrepancy between a person's actual state (from her own viewpoint) and the state the person feels she ought to attain influences guilt (Higgins 1987). However, when this is tested, these

specific self-discrepancies are not differentially related to shame and guilt (Tangney et al. 1998).

6. Future research should examine other moral emotions such as the other-condemning emotions of anger and disgust, the other-suffering emotion of compassion, and positive emotions that emerge from good deeds such as elevation and gratitude (Haidt 2003).

7. These results are available upon request.

8. Squaring the value reflects the identity theory assumption that the emotional outcome to an identity discrepancy is curvilinear rather than linear (Burke and Harrod 2005). In a separate analysis, we examined whether there was a linear relationship between moral identity discrepancy and guilt and shame. The findings were not significant. Results are available upon request.

9. We ran separate analyses of guilt and shame to investigate whether the identity process operated differently for these two emotions. Across all equations, results were not statistically different. Results are available upon request.

10. In a separate analysis, we examined whether the relationship between moral meanings that run from good to bad (rather than relevant/present to not relevant/absent) were associated with moral behavior or moral emotions. Findings were not significant and are available upon request.

11. Effects of race, age, and income were nonsignificant and are available upon request.

12. We examined ethnic variations in reports of guilt and shame because there is evidence that Western cultures are more guilt-based and Eastern cultures are more shame-based (Markus and Kitayama 1991). We found no significant racial differences in reports of guilt or shame. Results are available upon request.

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