

**MORAL INDIVIDUALISM IN SOUTH AFRICAN
EMERGING ADULTS**

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MORAL INDIVIDUALISM IN SOUTH AFRICAN EMERGING ADULTS

By

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ABSTRACT

The intention of this study was to explore moral individualism in South African emerging adults. This was done by examining emerging adults' ability to identify moral issue, the propensity for moral individualism among emerging adults, identifying moral individualism's impact on emerging adult's moral judgments of others and exploring future implications of moral individualism for organisations.

This was a qualitative study and data was obtained by conducting focus group discussions. Four focus groups of five to seven people were conducted. Twenty participants participated in total and these groups were conducted until data saturation was reached. These focus groups consisted of prospective professionals studying towards a qualification. These individuals were between the ages of eighteen and twenty-three. Data collected from these focus groups was analysed using thematic analysis.

The findings of this study suggest that, although participants exhibit elements of moral individualism, many of their views, specifically views on moral judgements of others, do not align with the framework presented by moral individualism. This suggests that although individual moral frameworks play a role in how individuals interact with organisations, this is not done from a moral individualist frame work.

Key words: Moral relativity, moral development, ethical organisational culture.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Chapter preview

This study aims to examine moral individualism's effect on emerging adults in South Africa. This will be done by examining emerging adults' ability to identify moral issues, their propensity for moral individualism, the impact of moral individualism on their moral judgements and potential effects moral individualism may have on organisations.

This chapter will explore the theoretical background of this study, define the problem statement, state the objective of the study, outline the methodology followed and layout the rest of the document.

1.2. Background

1.2.1. Moral individualism and moral relativity.

Moral individualism is the idea that morality is determined by individual choice rather than universal law (Prado, 2013). From this perspective, it is up to individuals to decide for themselves what is wrong or right (Scanlon, 2016). This judgement is seen as being a personal judgement that cannot be applied to others, as others may have differing moral views (Mack, 1993). Actions perceived as correct by the moral agent must be accepted without judgement as they are presumed to be morally acceptable from the agent's perspective (Mack, 1993).

Moral relativism closely relates to moral individualism. Moral relativism is the belief that more than one truth exists in all circumstances (Harman, 1975). According to this theory, truth or justification of moral judgments is not absolute, but is created relative to some group of persons (Gowans, 2010). The same situation may be judged differently by two different groups, with both being correct, at least from their own perspectives. With an increased prevalence of moral individualism, judgements of what is right and wrong will exist not only between different cultural groups but between individuals as well (Tännsjö, 2007; Smith, Christoffersen, Davidson, & Herzog, 2011).

1.2.2. Moral judgement and ethical decision making.

Moral judgement is the level at which individuals see an action as morally acceptable (Jones & Ryan, 1998). Individual moral judgment is key to ensuring that ethical decisions are made as there is a direct relationship between judgement concerning an action and the intention to perform said action (Tan, 2002). An ethical decision is defined as “a decision that is both legal and morally acceptable to the larger community” (Jones, 1991, p.367). However, as moral individualism becomes more prevalent, ethical decisions will be based on what is morally acceptable to individuals rather than communities (Smith et al., 2011).

1.2.3. Emerging adults and morality

Emerging adulthood is the period between adolescence and adulthood, generally between the ages of eighteen and twenty-three (Arnett & Jensen, 2002). An increase in people entering into higher education and thus postponing marriage and having children, changes the life-course of people in industrialised society (Swanson, 2016). These changes have led to a postponement of the traditional role transitions from individual's late teens and early twenties to their middle to late twenties (Arnett, 2009). Individuals in this group represent those who are entering or about to enter the workforce, but are still developing and exploring future careers (Arnett, 2009). Emerging adults entering the workforce may impact the dynamic of the workforce as changing morale structures and perspectives may have larger organisational repercussions.

1.2.4. Implications for organisations

Creating and maintaining an ethical organisational culture has become a key focus for many organisations. These cultures aim to create high ethical standards among their members and focus on long-term perspectives, through implement policies and programs aimed at developing ethical behaviour within their members (Robinson & Judge, 2013; Trevino, Weaver & Reynolds, 2006). These may include both formal elements and informational elements. However, both will require a certain amount of buy-in from employees (Robinson & Judge, 2013). As moral individualism becomes more prevalent in the workforce, aligning organisational ethics and individual moral frameworks will become increasingly difficult, if not impossible, and this buy-in may be more difficult to achieve.

1.3.Problem Statement

Creating and maintaining an ethical organisational culture has become a key priority and point of pride for many organisations. In order to achieve this culture, buy-in is needed from all of an organisation's members. This makes understanding employee's moral positioning and engagement with moral issues increasingly important. As moral individualism becomes more prevalent, this may become more difficult.

Moral individualism suggests that moral decisions are a matter of personal preference. Individuals are seen as within their rights to act without moral judgement from others, as it is up to themselves to decide what actions are acceptable (Mack, 1993). This may present major problems within organisations, as attempts to align individual morals and organisational ethics become increasingly difficult. Therefore, employees may feel they are within their rights to act in ways they deem correct even if these actions go against organisational interests or guidelines.

This is particularly problematic when examining those coming into organisations, particularly emerging adults beginning or preparing to enter the workforce. Their individualised moral views may impact not only how they work, but the types of organisations they seek out to work for. This group may also be less receptive to organisational attempts to impose ethical programs and policies, believing instead they have the right to act in line with their own beliefs without judgement.

1.4.Statements of Objectives

The main objective of this study is to explore moral individualism in South African emerging adults. This was achieved by conducting focus groups discussions exploring these issues with participants. In order to achieve this a number of secondary objectives have been identified. These include:

- Examining emerging adult's ability to identify moral issues.
- Examining propensity for moral individualism among emerging adults.
- Identifying moral individualism's impact on emerging adult's moral judgements of others.
- Exploring future implications for the workplace.

1.5.Methodology to be Followed

This study was a qualitative, exploratory study which made use of a phenomenological research design. This method was chosen as it best-encapsulated concepts of individualised morality. Moral individualism emphasises morality as a matter of individual decision (Prado, 2013). A research design that accounts for individual's perspective is of great importance (Mangi, 2017). This study will make use of thematic analysis of focus group discussions in order to gain a better understanding of moral individualism among its participating emerging adults.

1.6.Conclusion

This chapter provides a brief summary of the study and an introduction into moral individualism and its possible effects. A brief overview of the background to the study, the problem statement, as well as the statements of objectives as well as the methodology to be followed, were also provided.

The following chapter will provide a more extensive overview of the literature surrounding moral individualism. Chapter three will provide a detailed account of the methodology of this study. This will be followed by chapter four, which provides an outline of the study's findings and chapter five, a discussion of the results. Finally, chapter six will conclude the study and address recommendations for future research and the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter Preview

Morality is a much debated and complex issue. The first section of this chapter will focus on the existing moral theory in which moral individualism is situated, as well as how it impacts and informs various areas of morality. This will include an examination of the theory of moral relativism, which is closely aligned to moral individualism, as well as the theory of moral individualism and its critiques. The second section of this chapter will then move on to moral individualism's impact on moral judgement and ethical decision-making as well as theories of moral development, specifically Kohlberg (1973). The third section of this chapter will examine morality and emerging adults, defining the concept of emerging adulthood as well as examining research done on moral individualism with in this group. The final section of this chapter will examine moral individualism impact on organisations.

2.2.Moral Theory

2.2.1. Moral relativism

Moral relativism is the doctrine that more than one truth about certain moral cases exist (Mangi, 2017). Moral relativism also states that the “truth or justification of moral judgments is not absolute, but relative to some group of persons” (Gowans, 2010, p.1). Moral relativism comes in three forms. Firstly, *Semantic* moral relativism, which argues that when individuals pass moral judgements, they make implicit reference to some system of morality, usually their own (Tännsjö, 2007). Statements of what is right or wrong are seen as circular, as these actions are judged through the specific the moral framework adhered to by the individual and can only be deemed right or wrong from within this framework (Tännsjö, 2007). This is the form most closely associate with moral individualism.

Secondly, *epistemic* moral relativism purports that certain moral judgements are dependent on the culture in which the moral agent is situated (Tännsjö, 2007). Views of wrong and right may vary, as actions considered acceptable by one culture may be seen as reprehensible by another (Tännsjö, 2007). Both groups may have valid reasoning and be fully informed about

the facts of the issue, yet still hold opposing views (Tännsjö, 2007). Culturally based conceptions of self will also strongly influence individual's moral frameworks (Vauclair & Fischer, 2011). This is due to the fact that moral agency and a sense of moral identity are crucial to our conception of what it means to be a person (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2009).

According to Vauclair and Fischer (2011, p.646) "Moral discourses are related to culturally based conceptions of the self in terms of whether individuals regard themselves as 'independent' from or 'interdependent' with others." The extent to which others are included in the definition of the self is seen as central to an individual's moral frameworks, but will vary between cultures, affecting their moral relativity (Brewer & Chen, 2007). Societies that regard the individual as independent from social groups will generally adopt relative moral discourses that emphasise autonomy and individual choice (Vauclair & Fischer, 2011; Harman, 1975). What is considered morally right is thus dependent on whether actions will affect the individual rights of others (Vauclair & Fischer, 2011). This cultural conception of the self is labelled ethic of *autonomy* or *rights-based morality* and are dominant in western discourse (Vauclair & Fischer, 2011).

In societies that emphasise community, individuals perceive themselves as interconnected with the social group (Vauclair & Fischer, 2011). What is morally right or wrong is judged in regard to individual's interpersonal duties, social roles and obligations (Vauclair & Fischer, 2011). Individual decisions stem from social obligations and social consideration of others (Brewer & Chen, 2007). This cultural conception of self is labelled *ethic of community* or *duty-based morality* and are largely dominant in collectivistic oriented cultures such as Asian cultures (Vauclair & Fischer, 2011).

Finally, *ontological* moral reasoning, which puts forward that despite groups holding conflicting moral judgements on an action, both may be 'correct' (Tännsjö, 2007). According to Tännsjö (2007, p.125), "neither of them make judgements with any implicit reference to any system of norms. They both use their moral vocabulary in an absolute sense." Both can be, in an absolute sense, 'right' in their judgements, as they inhabit different, socially constructed, moral universes with varied views on the same action (Tännsjö, 2007; Gowans, 2010). This means that differences in moral judgements of what is right and wrong exist not only between different cultural groups but between individuals as well (Tännsjö, 2007; Smith et, al., 2011).

2.2.2. Moral individualism

Moral individualism is closely linked to moral relativism. Moral individualism emphasises morality as a matter of individual decision and personal choice, which will vary among individuals (Smith et al., 2011, Mack, 1993). From this perspective, morality becomes "about how individuals judge their own actions and not about the consequences of those actions for others and how others judge those actions" (Prado, 2013, p.472). What individuals deem to be right or wrong is seen as a personal judgement or a matter of individual taste, rather than prescribed by a universal or communal law (Smith, et al., 2011; Brooks, 2011).

Moral individualism emphasises refraining from judging the moral actions of others, as individuals must be aware that their moral views may not be the moral views of other people (Mack, 1993). Moral individualism argues that any act that is judged as morally right by a moral agent must be seen as acceptable, at least from that agent's position. (Scanlon, 2016; Smith et al., 2011; Brooks, 2011). This means that individuals are put into a position of having to accept that an act is morally right from the agent's point of view even if the act in question is a heinous act against a person or humanity. According to Prado (2013, p.472)

The moral rightness or wrongness of an act being determined by its agent's judgment is taken as basic and obvious. As for acceptance of an act as right for its agent even though thought wrong by oneself or another, this follows from relativization of morality to individuals since no one other than the agent can judge the act right or wrong. All that those other than the agent can do is judge that the act is right or wrong for each of them.

A source of criticism of moral individualism is that the creation of multiple moralities, unique to each individual, requires the reconfiguration of traditional understanding of morality (Prado, 2013). This traditional understanding emphasises the controlling of the conduct of people according to principles that apply to all (Prado, 2013). From a moral individualism perspective, although morality still governs people's conduct, individuals are governed by their own principles and thus morality is no longer reciprocal (Prado, 2013). Individuals are left with no moral recourse regarding their treatment and the treatment of others, as morality applies only with regard to individual actions and individuals' perceptions of right and wrong (Prado, 2013).

Furthermore, if morality is a personal choice it is then possible for morality to change over time as individual's choices change (Prado, 2013; Smith et al. 2011). Individuals may judge something as moral or immoral at one time, but, change their mind at a later point (Prado,

2013). This may continue to change as people reinvent themselves, experience perceptual shifts and acquire new beliefs or discard old ones (Prado, 2013). Individual judgement may also change to serve personal interests as external circumstances change and individuals forget previous thought and feelings on a topic (Smith et al., 2011). Thus, according to Prado (2013, p.473), moral individualism allows “only persuasion, social pressure, legal structures, intimidation, and ultimately force as legitimate modes of social governance”. A reliance on morality as a prescriptive and proscriptive determinant of social behaviour is no longer possible as morality will vary so widely among individuals (Prado, 2013; Smith et al., 2011).

The increased interest in individual morality can be explained in a number of ways. Prado (2013) identifies the most prominent cause as a reaction to developments in contemporary life jeopardizing true individuality. These developments include a burgeoning population as well as the erosion, rather than promotion, of individualism created by the media, commercialisation and increased importance of social media (Prado, 2013). A marked trend of the prioritisation of individualism is visible in multiple areas of modern society and it is not surprising that this has encroached into the sphere of morality (Prado, 2013).

2.3. Moral Judgement and Ethical Decision Making

This relativity has a number of implications for how individuals make and accept moral judgements and decisions. Moral judgement is the level to which individuals see an action as morally acceptable (Ratnasingam & Ponnu, 2008). Individual moral judgment is key to ensuring ethical decisions are made, as there is a direct relationship between judgement concerning an action and intention to perform said action (Tan, 2002).

However, the Self Model of moral action suggests that structures of morality are only indirectly related to moral action, as they are used to make sense of the moral landscape, but, do not necessarily result in moral action (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2009). The Self Model argues that action is more likely to follow moral judgement when moral situations are seen as important and central to personal identity (Hardy & Carlo, 2011). According to Narvaez and Lapsley (2009, p.243) “after one makes a moral judgment one must next filter this judgment through a second set of calculations that speaks to the issue of whether the self is responsible”. These calculations determine whether the extent to which a moral action is considered essential to maintain the individual’s sense of self and will vary across individuals (Hardy & Carlo, 2011).

Individuals must assess whether acting in a particular way is necessary for their self-understanding and whether failing to act on moral notions or rationalising excuses about inaction would undermine their personhood (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2009). In other words, does failing to commit the moral action in question impact the way the moral agent view themselves and their integrity and character (Hardy & Carlo, 2011). This model focuses on individual morality and incorporates this into the moral judgement on individuals.

Moral individualism makes moral identity increasingly important to the understanding of moral judgement. As moral individualism becomes more prevalent, moral judgments and ethical decisions will begin to be based on what is morally acceptable to individuals rather than communities (Smith, et al., 2011). One of the key features of moral individualism's is the personalization of morality which results in unqualified non-judgmentalism (Brooks, 2011). According to Brooks (2011, p.1) "if morality is a personal choice, no one can make moral judgments about anyone else's moral choices". This means that moral individualism insulates moral acts from others' moral judgments and in doing so it makes questioning and criticising the moralities of others which determine how they act almost impossible (Prado, 2013).

Moral judgement is a key element of ethical decision-making. There are a number of models of ethical decision-making. Three classic models include Rest's (as cited in Ratnasingam & Ponnu, 2008) four component model, Jones' (1991) and Trevino's (1986) Person-Situation interactionists model. These models form the basis of most modern decision-making models and provide a clear grounding in ethical decision-making.

Rest's (as cited in Ratnasingam & Ponnu, 2008) four component model forms the basis of several decision-making models. It comprises of four chronological stages of ethical decision-making; identifying a moral issue, making a moral judgment about said issue, establishing moral intent to act on the judgement made, and implementing moral actions (Tan, 2002). These stages remain appropriate when conceptualising individualised moral decision-making, however, moral judgments made will vary between individuals thus leading to varied moral intent and actions (Smith, et al., 2011).

Jones' (1991) issue-contingent model proposes that characteristics of the issue at stake, or moral intensity, is the key focus of ethical decisions. Moral intensity is "a construct that captures the extent of the issue-related moral imperative in a situation" and directly influences intent to perform an action (Jones, 1991, p.373). This model recognises that moral intensity will vary

according to the issue, but not according to the individual characteristics of the decision maker (Ratnasingam & Ponnu, 2008). From a moral individualism prospect, moral intensity will have a variation of intensity not only among individual's situations, but between individual moral agents as well.

Trevino's (1986) interactionists' model combines individual variables, mainly level of moral development in terms of Kohlberg's theory of cognitive moral development, with situational variables to explain and predict the ethical decision-making behaviour of individuals in organisations. The individual makes ethical decisions based on cognitions determined by his or her cognitive moral development stage, which dictates how individuals think about ethical dilemmas and the moral judgements they make (Trevino, 1986). However, this does not fully explain or predict ethical decision-making behaviour and additional individual and situational variables must be considered (Trevino, 1986). Trevino (1986) identifies three individual variables, namely ego strength, field dependence, and locus of control, as well as situational variables arising from the immediate job context and the broader organisational culture.

Moral individualism's will have a clear impact on ethical decision-making models. The increasingly personal nature of moral judgement, as well as individualised views of morality, may lead to models that do not incorporate individual's personal morality such as Jones' (1991) issue-contingent model becoming inappropriate to use.

2.4.Moral Development

Despite being developed over forty years ago, Kohlberg's (1973) theory of moral development remains of great importance to the study of morality. Kohlberg's theory empirically explores the acquisition of morals by examining the way individuals solve problems (Kohlberg, 1973). This theory identifies three clear phases of patterns employed by individuals to solve problems, each subdivided into two distinct stages (Kohlberg, 1973). These stages are consecutive and individuals must pass through each stage before reaching full moral development (Kohlberg, 1973). The first phase of moral development is that of a Pre-conventional Level (Kohlberg, 1973). At this early stage, children base moral decisions in response to cultural rules and what has been branded as good or bad behaviours through reward or punishment (Kohlberg, 1973).

This stage is divided into stage 1, punishment-and-obedience orientation and stage 2, the instrumental-relativist orientation (Kohlberg, 1973). The punishment and obedience stage is

characterised by unquestioning compliance with authority figures in order to avoid punishment, not because they are seen as morally superior (Kohlberg, 1973). The second stage sees morally right actions as those that satisfy one's own needs and occasionally the needs of others (Kohlberg, 1973). Although elements of fairness, reciprocity and of equal sharing are present, reciprocity is seen as a means of self-gain. According to Kohlberg (1973, p.631) reciprocity is "a matter of 'you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours', not of loyalty, gratitude, or justice".

The second phase is that of the Conventional Level which places high inherent value on conforming to the expectations of the individual's family, group or nation (Kohlberg, 1973). This phase comprises of stage 3: The interpersonal concordance or "good boy-nice girl" orientation and stage 4: The "law and order" orientation (Kohlberg, 1973). The interpersonal concordance orientation sees 'good' behaviour as that which is pleasing or helpful to others and is approved by them (Kohlberg, 1973). Behaviours are judged by intention and being 'nice' is how one gains approval (Kohlberg, 1973). Stage 4 emphasises the importance of authority, fixed rules, and the maintenance of the social order and the right behaviour is seen as that which shows respect for authority and maintains social order for its own sake (Kohlberg, 1973).

The third phase is the Post Conventional, Autonomous, or Principled Level and most reflect the ideas of moral individualism (Kohlberg, 1973). By this phase, individuals place a large deal of effort to develop definitions and principles of morality that are separate from authority of the groups and individuals' group memberships (Kohlberg, 1973). This phase comprises of stage 5: The social-contract legalistic orientation and stage 6: the universal-ethical-principle orientation (Kohlberg, 1973). The social-contract legalistic orientation sees correct actions as those that encompass general individual rights, and standards which have been critically examined and agreed upon by the whole society (Kohlberg, 1973). This stage emphasises awareness of the relativism of personal values and opinions and thus places emphasis upon procedural policies to ensure agreement, much like those provided by organisational codes of conduct (Kohlberg, 1973). Thus what is right is seen as a matter of personal values or opinions and although set laws exist and must be obeyed, these are open to adaption and evolution (Kohlberg, 1973). The universal-ethical-principle orientation argues that what is right is decided according to self-chosen ethical principles which appeal to logical comprehensiveness, universality, and consistency (Kohlberg, 1973). These principles are abstract and principled,

but, tend towards being based on universal principles of justice, reciprocity, equality of human rights and of respect for the dignity of people as individual persons (Kohlberg, 1973).

2.5. Emerging Adults and Morality

Emerging adulthood can be defined as the bridging period between adolescence and adulthood, generally between the ages of eighteen and twenty-three (Arnett & Jensen, 2002; Smith et al., 2011). This period has become prominent in the life-course of people in industrialised society over the past half-century (Arnett & Jensen, 2002). It is seen as being in part, the result of increases in median ages of marriage and first birth and higher rates of participation in tertiary education (Arnett & Jensen, 2002; Swanson, 2016). These changes have led to a postponement of several role transitions from individual's late teens and early twenties to their middle to late twenties (Arnett & Jensen, 2002). Individuals in this group represent those who are entering or about to enter the workforce, as well as those who have entered but are still developing and exploring future careers (Arnett, 2009). According to Eisenberg, Hofer, Sulik and Liew, (2013, p.3) a large proportion of this change is due to the college experience which is "expected to foster the growth of moral reasoning, because of opportunities for engaging in complex, abstract thinking and perspective taking." Emerging adulthood is a time of continuing growth towards maturity and it is possible that dealing with the pragmatic issues of earning a living and becoming increasingly independent has an effect on individual's moral views (Eisenberg et al., 2013)

Smith et al.'s (2011) study conducted telephonic interviews with emerging adults around the United States. This study yielded many interesting insights into the moral mind-set of this group. Firstly, the study noted a clear shift to moral individualism with 60% of the emerging adults interviewed expressing a highly individualistic approach to morality, with many respondents identifying morality as a personal choice and matter of individual decision (Smith et al., 2011). Respondents also emphasised the judgement of others as not being their place, with even those who see the behaviour of others as wrong believing they should keep their opinion to themselves (Smith, et al., 2011). Smith et al. (2011) uses these findings to argue that moral individualism is seen as preferable as it negates having to find social agreement on matters of morality and thus avoid conflict.

Secondly, Smith et al. (2011) found that 66% of emerging adults were unable to engage with the studies questions about moral dilemmas in their own lives. This number includes 33% of respondents who could not identify moral dilemmas or difficult moral situations they had personally faced in recent years; 30% who identified examples that were decided not to be moral dilemmas and 3% who declined to answer the question (Smith, et al., 2011; Brooks, 2011). This not to say that those interviewed are immoral or amoral, but rather displays a lack of moral education and do not have the language and understanding to engage with issues of morality (Smith et al., 2011; Brooks, 2011).

Thirdly, this study found many emerging adults distinguish immoral acts as those which may possibly hurt others (Smith, et al., 2011). However, this definition is problematic as their concern is strongly influenced by individualistic views (Smith, et al., 2011). This is made clear by the fact that the risk of causing harm to others is only addressed on an individual level (Smith, et al., 2011). Emerging adults often do not see the larger social implications of their actions and may see only actions that directly hurt specific individual persons as wrong, as opposed to cheating or stealing from an organisation (Smith, et al., 2011). In addition to this 34% of emerging adults interviewed agreed that it was acceptable to break moral rules if they felt they could get away with it (Smith, et al., 2011; Brooks, 2011).

2.6. Implications for Organisations

The development and implementation of an ethical organisational culture has become a key focus for organisations. According to Robinson and Judge (2013, p.512), organisational culture refers to "a system of shared meaning held by members that distinguishes the organisation from other organisations." It is thus of great importance that an organisation's culture is one that shapes high ethical standards among its while still focussing on long-term perspectives, balancing the rights of employees, stockholders, their community and other stakeholders (Robinson & Judge, 2013).

Ethical organisational cultures focus not only on what goals are being achieved, but how these goals are achieved (Kangas, Muotka, Huhtala, Makikangas & Feldt, 2015). It is also important for organisations to make efforts to implement policies and programs aimed at developing ethical behaviour within their members (Trevino, Weaver & Reynolds, 2006; Kangas et al., 2015). Methods to develop organisation's ethical infrastructure can be formal elements, such

as ethics codes and policies, communications, training, monitoring systems, sanctions, and rewards and attention, as well as informal elements, such as maintaining an ethical climate and organisational culture (Trevino et al., 2006). Both formal and informal elements will be affected by increased moral individualism and thus organisations must be aware of and constantly reacting to possible implications.

Moral Individualism has a major impact on the amount of influence outside pressures have on individual's actions and beliefs (Prado, 2013). Relying on the morality of employees in the organisational setting becomes impossible, as each will have their own unique moral viewpoint (Prado, 2013). In order to regularize moral behaviour education and training may be used to increase individuals' awareness of moral issues central to the organisations ethical framework and associated ethical expectations in order to decrease unethical behaviour (Warren, Gasper & Laufer, 2015). Formal ethics training acts as a form of social learning and enables employees to identify moral dilemmas, offer appropriate models of ethical behaviour, and institute reinforcements to promote the modelled behaviour (Warren, et al., 2015).

Ethical training programs can be divided into value orientated programs and compliance-oriented programs. Values-oriented programs emphasise the importance of core values when addressing ethical dilemmas, while compliance-oriented programs emphasise the importance of organisational codes and legal restriction (Warren, et al., 2015). The aim of these programs should be to create an ethical organisational climate and culture, increase organisational commitment through encouraging employees to buy-in to organisational ethical views, improve organisational citizenship behaviour and improve quality of work life through creating a more ethics focused way of working (Beerli, Dayan, Vigoda-Gadot & Werner). These programs may not unify individual moral views, but they make the ethical framework and the expectations of the organisation clear to employees who are then expected to behave accordingly. This may be increasingly important as moral individualism becomes more prevalent.

Another important tool of ethical cultures that may be impacted by moral individualism is whistle-blowing. Whistle-blowing is the sharing of information by members of an organisation regarding illegal, immoral, or illegitimate practices conducted within an organisation, to persons internal or external to the organisation that may be able to prohibit this action (Lowry, Moody, Galletta & Vance, 2013). As moral individualism, which emphasises not judging the moral actions of others, becomes more prominent instances of whistle-blowing may be affected

(Smith, et al., 2011). Employees may feel it is not their place to judge or report the actions of others as they see these individuals as doing what they think is right (Smith, et al., 2011). Individuals may also be more unlikely to engage in unethical behaviour as they feel they are likely to be able to get away with it (Smith, et al., 2011). This unethical behaviour may have many negative consequences for organisations such as customer boycotts, fines, lawsuits, and government regulation of an organisation's practices (Robinson & Judge, 2013). These consequences serve to further emphasise the importance of ensuring organisations and their employees perform ethically.

2.7. Conclusion

This chapter has positioned moral individualism within a larger moral theoretical framework, particularly in regard to moral development, moral judgement and ethical decision-making as well as moral relativism. This chapter has also outlined the concept of emerging adulthood and reflected on the research linking this stage and moral individualism as well examining the possible impact that moral individualism may place on the organisation.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Chapter Preview

The previous chapter gave a theoretical overview of moral individualism. The purpose of this study is to examine moral individualism in South African emerging adults. This study is explorative in nature and requires the use of a research design and processes that will best enable the researchers to achieve this. The methodology of this exploration will be detailed in this chapter.

This chapter include the problem statement of the study, the aims of the study, a discussion on the research design, participants, sampling techniques, data collection and processing methods, as well as a discussion on the methods of data analysis, issues of validity and reliability and ethical considerations of the study.

3.2.Problem Statement

This study is an exploration of moral individualism in South African emerging adults. As detailed in chapter, one moral individualism views individuals as having the right to act without moral judgement from others, provided they deem their own actions as acceptable (Mack, 1993). This results in a misalignment between organisational ethics and individual morals. This misalignment may result in employees acting in a manner they deem correct, despite organisational guidelines. This may be particularly problematic among emerging adults entering the workplace. Individualised moral views may impact the work styles of employees as well as the types of organisations where they would seek employment. This may also affect their receptiveness to organisational ethics programs and policies

3.3. Aims

This study has a number of aims. These include:

- Examining emerging adult's ability to identify moral issues
- Examining propensity for moral individualism among emerging adults

- Identifying moral individualism's impact on emerging adults' moral judgements of others
- Exploring future implications for the workplace

3.4. Research Design

This study was a qualitative, exploratory study which made use of a phenomenological research design. Phenomenology is concerned with the question of how individuals make sense of the world around them and emphasises the importance of being aware of perceptions, perspective and understanding (van Manen, 2017). From a phenomenological perspective a person's behaviour is seen as being a product of how individuals interpret the world (Bryman, 2012). Thus, phenomenological design attempts to see things from the individual's point of view (Bryman, 2012). This design is most suitable as it best encapsulated the concepts of individualised morality. Moral individualism emphasises morality as a matter of individual decision, therefore, it is important to use a research design that takes the individual's perspective into account.

3.5. Participants

This study made use of twenty participants studying towards a qualification, of all genders, between the ages of eighteen and twenty-three. This group was chosen as they fall into the age range of emerging adults and are more likely to enter positions that require ethical decisions to be made (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2017). Participants were not compensated for their participation. However, snacks were provided during focus groups acting as an incentive for prospective professionals to participate. Participants may also benefit from being involved in academic research first hand as they get an opportunity to engage with the research process and gain a clearer understanding of how it works (Enis, Cox & Stafford, 2011). All participants were required to sign consent forms (see Appendix C)

3.6. Sampling Techniques

The participants sampled in this study were obtained through convenience sampling and snowballing. Convenience sampling is “a non-probability sampling technique that attempts to obtain a sample of convenient elements” (Malhotra & Birks, 2012, p.363). Snowballing can be defined as “One subject gives the researcher the name of another subject, who in turn provides the name of a third, and so on” (Vogt, 1999, p.45). This was done by approaching individuals who met participant requirements and requesting they in turn bring other candidates to the focus groups. This method was used as it allowed for a randomised sample of the existing potential data pool of participants and thus, more generalisable results.

3.7.Data Collection and Processing

This study used focus groups for data collection. Focus groups were most appropriate as they allow for a wider number of participants to be interviewed at once, broadening the data pool (Bryman, 2012). Focus groups allow for the exploration of the dynamic between individual participants as a mirror to wider social normalising of behaviours (Malhotra & Birks, 2012). Focus group interviews were semi structured, making use of talking point to prompt discussion, but no fixed interview questions. These talking points are provided (see Appendix B).

This study made use of focus groups comprising of five to seven people and continued until data saturation was reached. These group interviews lasted between 45-80 minutes and were recorded and transcribed to allow for further analysis. Participants were required to give written consent for these audio-recordings and were clearly informed on their use and access. Consent forms will be kept and safely stored by the researcher. A copy of this tape recording consent form is provided (see Appendix D)

3.8.Data Analyses

Thematic Analysis was used to analyse data collected in this study. Despite being widely used, thematic analysis is often criticized as having no clear consensus on the boundaries and methods of thematic analysis (Terry, Hayfield, Cark & Braun, 2017). According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p.79), Thematic analysis entails "identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail.

However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic.” It is important to note that this is not a linear but rather a recursive process, where the researcher moves back and forth between stages as needed (Terry et al., 2017).

Braun and Clarke (2006) go on to identify six phases of thematic analysis. Phase one, entails familiarising yourself with your data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Researchers must immerse themselves in the data in order to become familiar with the depth and breadth of the content they wish to analyse (Terry et al., 2017). This generally involves repeated reading of the data, as well as reading the data in an active way, searching for meanings, patterns and so on (Terry et al., 2017). Phase two, focuses on generating initial codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Codes are distinguishing features of the data and refer to “the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon” (Boyatzis, 1998, p.63). The coding process is an important part of analysis as it is a key tool for organising data into meaningful groups (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Phase three, requires searching for themes and is a broader stage of analysis, where wider themes rather than just codes are explored (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This phase involves organizing codes into potential themes and pulling together relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes in order to form overarching themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Phase four, reviewing themes, involves refining themes identified in the previous phase (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This will allow researchers to eliminate themes that lack evidence or are too varied, as well as merge themes that overlap or separate themes that need to be broken down (Terry et al., 2017). Phase five entails the defining and naming of themes. This is done by identifying the essence of what each theme is about and deciding on what aspect of the data each theme captures (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes must address a specific set of data and must be organised to create a coherent and internally consistent account, with accompanying narrative (Terry et al., 2017). These themes must identify what is interesting about the data extracted and why these findings are important (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Lastly, phase six, producing the report, requires final analysis and write-up of the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The task of the write-up of a thematic analysis is “to tell the complicated story of your data in a way which convinces the reader of the merit and validity of your analysis” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.23). This final stage of thematic analysis should provide a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive, and interesting account of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis

was most appropriate for an explorative study such as this due to its flexibility and ability to explore themes that may not have been expected to emerge from the focus group discussion.

3.9. Validity and Reliability

Due to its qualitative nature, traditional ideas of validity and reliability are not appropriate methods of evaluating this study (Bryman, 2012). Instead, the concept of Trustworthiness will be used. Trustworthiness is made up of four criteria namely credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Bryman, 2012). In this study, credibility was maintained by strictly adhering to ethical guidelines as well as providing a clear and detailed methodology for the collection and analysis of data in the study. Secondly, transferability was insured by making certain that the study was as detailed and rich an account as possible in both the collection and reporting of data. Thirdly, dependability was obtained by providing solid evidence that the theoretical inferences made are solid and suitable, by grounding the study in existing academic literature. Lastly, confirmability was evident as a clear and transparent account of the methodology and implantation of the study are provided in order to ensure that there was been no bias created by the researcher.

3.10. Ethical Considerations

A number of ethical issues had to be considered in this study. Firstly, due to the nature of focus group discussions, anonymity is practically impossible. Confidentiality had to be ensured, not only between the researcher and participants but between participant groups. It was made clear to participants that information shared by fellow participant was private and not to be discussed outside the group. Secondly, as individual morals may be seen as a sensitive issue, informed consent becomes increasingly important. This study made sure participants had a clear understanding of the parameters of the research and all participation was voluntary. Participants were also given the opportunity to pull out at any time, including retroactively, although no participants chose to do so. Lastly, ownership of data may become an ethical concern, due to the sensitive nature of the information shared. It was made clear to participants that data collected in this study will be used for academic purposes only and any information given will remain confidential. It was also made clear that participants will be represented in

such a way that information shared cannot be traced back to them. Ethical clearance was received by the relevant university authorities (See Appendix E)

3.11. Conclusion

This study was an exploration of moral individualism in South African emerging adults. This study aimed to examine emerging adult's ability to identify moral issues, examine propensity for moral individualism among emerging adults, identify moral individualism's impact on emerging adult's moral judgements of others and explore future implications for the workplace. This study was a qualitative, exploratory study which made use of a phenomenological research design. This study was conducted among prospective professionals of all genders between the ages of eighteen to twenty-three obtained through convenience sampling. Data was collected using focus groups comprising of five to seven people and lasting 45-60 minutes. These focus groups were recorded and transcribed and analysed using the six stages of thematic data analysis. Trustworthiness, consisting of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, was used rather than traditional validity and reliability in reflecting on the study. All of the elements of Trustworthiness were found to be present in the study. Ethical issues such as anonymity, confidentiality and ownership of data were also addressed. The next chapter will give an overview of the themes of that emerged from the focus groups.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1.Chapter Preview

This chapter will explore the various dominant themes that emerged during groups discussions. These themes will be divided into two main sections, general themes of morality and themes of morality in the organisational context. General themes around morality include identifying examples of moral issues, determining what makes a moral issue, identifying the basis of an individuals' moral foundation, expanding individual moral views and making moral judgements about others. Moral themes in the organisational context will discuss the importance of aligned individual moral views and organisations ethics, reporting unethical behaviour and finally, awareness of organisational ethics. A comprehensive list of extracts from the focus groups supporting each theme can be found attached (See Appendix A).

4.2.General Themes of Morality

This chapter will first examine more general themes of morality brought forward during the group discussions. These themes include identifying examples of moral issues, determining what makes a moral issue, identifying the basis of an individuals' moral foundation, expanding individual moral views and making moral judgements about others.

4.2.1. Identifying examples of moral issues.

The vast majority of participant groups were able to identify examples of moral issues in their lives. In addition to this, most participant groups were able to debate issues brought forward by other group members. Two major themes emerge when examining the examples brought forward by the groups. The scope of individual moral issue is seen either at an individual or at societal level. While both centre around the action of individuals, individual-level moral issues look at the impact of actions on an individual. Societal level moral issues look at individual actions in relation to larger societal impacts.

4.2.1.1. Individual-level moral issues.

Examples of individual-level moral issues appear to occur on a smaller scale and centre around the person directly. These include peer pressure to partake in certain activities, dealing with possible personal repercussions of their actions as well as determining personal boundaries in morally ambiguous situations.

I decided to shoplift that one time, when I was drunk and the chocolates looked really nice. I went back, bought one and then snuck it on the shelf... I was peer pressured into stealing the chocolate and then went back individually and undid it. (1:20)

I know right now, busy happening, of a married couple that the wife is cheating and I can't say anything about it because I've basically been banned from saying anything about it or bad things will happen to me (01:25)

I was at my friend's house and he had these imported sweets from Germany and I really love them, they're my favourite sweets, and he was like just take a few from the bag and then I was like, I can take three or I can take ten or maybe I can take like half the bag. But where is the limit where it would be wrong to take five but it's ok to take three when I'm still taking his sweets anyways (1:02).

A particularly interesting example emerged during one group discussions regarding participant who's significant other had recently become a member of a tutorial group (colloquially referred to as *tutlings*) they were heading.

I tutor Latin and this year my boyfriend is one of my tutlings and until I became the tutor, which was only a week or two ago, I had been helping him with his Latin homework and I still want to help him with his Latin homework but I also mark it. So I'm withdrawing from the first activity because it's cheating (1:50).

This example led to a debate among the group members as to whether or not helping in this situation should be considered cheating. Some argued that as long as the participant's partner was learning and the assignments do not make up the bulk of their mark for the course they should not be penalised for making use their partner's expertise. Others argue that, as other members of their tutorial group do not have the same level of access to the tutor and their knowledge and skills, continuing to assist their partner would be unfair. Although these group

members may have different positions on the issue both can agree that it is a moral dilemma and are able to discuss their opposing views.

4.2.1.2.Social level moral issue.

Social level moral issues occur when individual moral actions contribute to larger societal issue. These actions indirectly influence society and are seen as contributing to larger moral forces than just those faced by the individual. Examples of these include individual rights to freedom of speech, choosing to live a more environmentally friendly lifestyle and choosing to act in a way that has the potential to harm others.

Currently, the biggest moral issue is Freedom of speech. How far does it extend and what does it extend to? (0:41)

Recently I have stopped eating meat... originally it was out of kind of environmental concern... meat is much less efficiently produced than the things that can feed both meat and me. So eating vegetables uses less water, uses less land, uses less energy and is more environmentally conscious that's the thing that drove me to it at first but after making the decision it's actually because life is valuable (4:50)

When you're at a parking lot do you give the car guard money. And it's like do you give him money, because like do something worthwhile in the short term or do you not give him money to discourage the whole idea of paying someone to park somewhere that they don't pay rent for or have a right over really (2:26)

I think there are things that we would consider immoral actions even though there is no harm that's done to a person...So we think there's something morally reprehensible about drunken driving even if you don't kill anyone when you're driving (8:50)

A particularly interesting example brought up during a discussion group was that of illegally downloading media. Although the group generally agreed that they all took part in this behaviour, there were varying views on its moral impact. Although pirating media is seen as being in many ways the same as theft, it is not viewed as harshly. Piracy is seen as having an effect only on large corporations, who don't really suffer from these losses. Although individual actions have an impact, they are not seen as having a moral impact and are thus acceptable.

So it's immoral to torrent films. Right? They're created and we buy them and we sell them, but when I torrent a film no one is really suffering, they're losing money, but they're not suffering when I download things (10:18)

In terms of torrenting and pirating stuff, you're not going to see the consequence of that the consequence to a single individual is very much less than to a giant corporation (10:24)

I don't feel bad if I'm pirating from someone who is rich already but if it was like a small indie band I would feel dreadful (11:06)

4.2.2. What Makes a Moral Issue?

During group discussions various elements of what makes a moral issue emerged. This included harm, conflict, moral ambiguity and individual variations of morality.

4.2.2.1. Action that may negatively impact others.

For many participants, a moral issue is one where their actions may pose a risk of harm to others. The specific elements of how participants conceptualise harm will be discussed further in a later theme, however, it is clear that the negative impact a decision may have on others is a key theme in what makes an issue a moral issue. *"I think that a moral decision centres around harm. Like does this decision harm another person, or thing, like does this decision cause harm" (8:34)*. The magnitude of harm was another deciding factor in terms of moral issues. The more harm surrounding an issue the more the more morally important it becomes. *"I think the more harmful the more morally reprehensible, there's like a scale" (30:00)*

However, it is not just tangible harmful consequences that must be considered. The potential or possibility for harm is another key element of moral issues. *"I think there are things that we would consider immoral actions even though there is no harm that's done to a person" (8:50)*. This led to a discussion on drunken driving which the group deemed a moral issue. The group decided that whether or not a drunken driver actually injures someone, there is still a risk of harm to others which makes the action immoral.

4.2.2.2. An issue that is ambiguous and creates inner conflict.

Another key factor of moral issues is the creation of conflict. A situation is deemed a moral issue when it creates conflict within individuals. Moral issues are seen as those which challenge or clash with your existing beliefs. *“When it conflicts with your morals. Like your core values that make you, you, that you will never change” (1:20) “It (a moral issue) least challenges it. What you believe is good, it might challenge that idea” (1:40)*

Moral issues are seen as ambiguous with no clear single, correct answer. They are conceptualised as complex, multifaceted, situations which can be approached from a number of different perspectives. The theme of grey areas became prominent in the group discussions. Moral issues are not seen as static decisions made between right and wrong, but intricate and nuanced situations, where any decision made may have both positive and negative outcomes. They require careful thought and may require compromise.

I think any moral issue is a question that you have to take more than a second to answer. Where there's a distinct grey area between right and wrong, like both can be easily argued but then which one do you choose then they can both work (4:26)

I think we try to make things black and white when they're not. And then it's not grey either it's black white and grey that's what I've also realised. There are things that are finite there are things that, stay the same, there are things that are finite and there are certain things that can be debated, it doesn't mean that they can't coexist (22:20)

There's also the possibility of choosing maybe a compromising option it's not always left or right, tell the secret or don't tell the secret... So there are many, many options, there are many ways to respond to a moral dilemma rather than, not just do or don't. I think the most difficult moral dilemmas are when you have two different moral systems conflicting (13:03)

4.2.2.3. Moral issues vary between people.

It is generally agreed by all groups that the importance placed on moral issues will vary between individuals. Moral issues are, to a large extent, seen as being personal as well as being dependent on individual views, contexts and preferences. Some may see a something as an important moral issue while others do not. *“Based on what you think is right or wrong and it's not the same for everyone” (3:16) “Each person has their own set of like standards” (5:16)*

The varying importance placed on moral issues means that individuals may be willing to compromise on moral issues they view as less important, or not worth the effort of trying to enforce.

The important difference between big moral issues and small moral issues is when you will back down. So on a small moral issue, say you want to fight on the principle of the thing but the other person just keeps berating you, sometimes you'll just go, it's not a big thing. It's not worth it and for your own benefit, you will withdraw. (7:14).

4.2.3. Moral foundation and expanding views.

The factors influencing the development of individuals moral views was another prominent theme. These influences include initial influences such as parental views and upbringing as well as later factors that expand and amend these views.

4.2.3.1. Individual moral foundations.

The theme of a moral foundation was clearly visible among all participant groups. This foundation is created by a number of factors but is seen as providing a basic structure for individual's moral frameworks. As individuals grow and develop morally certain aspects of this foundation will remain unchained and vital to a person's moral identity.

You have, like, maybe three or four core things that you will always keep, because that is what makes you, you, but then the other little things abound it change all the time, maybe even month to month or year to year, but the core things that make you, you, generally don't change (7:57)

One's initial understanding of moral issues is seen by participants as the product of one's environment. *"What you see other people around you are viewing as right or wrong, becomes +the thing you think is right or wrong... I wonder if you don't absorb the morality of people around you" (17:38).* The influence of this is seen as unavoidable, fundamentally shaping our understanding of morality. *"I feel like it's how you were raised, a large part of it, like, you're basically enculturated from the moment you're born and you've been hammered with ethics" (14:23).* The influence of parents and religion and upbringing are seen as particularly important. These two factors provide the basis of individual's moral foundations for most people. *"Individuals in groups that will decide based on their religion or how they're raised.*

In your household generally, people have the same morals" (7:30). This foundation seems to have a clear impact on individuals, whether they stick to these ideas or reject them later on. This will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

4.2.3.2.Expansion of moral viewpoint.

Although participant groups agreed that individual's initial moral framework is shaped largely by their upbringing, these ideas do not remain static. Exposure to new experiences, moving away from parental controls and a desire to develop are all seen as influencing individual's expansion, adaption or rejection of previous moral frameworks.

4.2.3.2.1. Exposure to new influences.

Participant groups identified exposure to new people, new experiences and new ideas as a key influence in changing their existing moral views. For most coming into a tertiary educational setting allowed them to be exposed to new people and things that they may not have previously encountered. One such example was one participant's experiences in a Catholic school.

I went to a Catholic school, and I went to a Catholic school from primary school all the way to matric so I found that those ideas and stuff very much influenced me until I came to varsity I was very much if the bible says it's wrong then it's wrong until about nineteen, well actually until the beginning of first years when I actually met gay people and was like, you're just normal though... (17:11)

Exposure, however, is not the only factor. These experiences must be deemed as meaningful by individuals in order to have a visible impact. These experiences may not have the same impact on everyone and may not shape their moral viewpoints in the same way.

In my opinion, it is the weight that you give to those certain instances in your life because everyone like for example you listening to some certain speech or reading some book is going to, may have a massive outcome, a massively different outcome to me reading the exact same book. It's the weight that you put on each of those sort of instances (11:30)

4.2.3.2.2. Decreasing parental authority.

The theme of diminishing parental authority was prominent in groups discussions. Most participant groups agreed that as they get older and increasingly independent, the control of their parents over their moral viewpoints diminishes. *"I think it's how you are raised at first*

and then at a certain point it you start making decisions or judgements on your own of what is right or wrong as you grow up” (9:11).

As individuals take more responsibility and authority over their own lives, aligning moral frameworks with those of parents and other authoritative figures is seen as less important than one's own understanding of an issue.

I'd say the strongest factor that influences us though is probably, maybe, our initial understanding of authority. We prescribe to the moralities of the people who hold authority over us. It starts with our parents and with our schooling and with that sort of thing and because, because, you know, there is an authority to it, they have a power over us to tell us what I'm doing is wrong, what I'm doing is right, ja, I don't know maybe that. Then when you start to get to an age when you start questioning the systems of authority that govern you... or start having to take authority over yourself you start coming to your own conclusions (18:34)

This may result in a complete rejection of the moral framework of one's parents as individuals gain more authority over their lives. One example given by a participant group was that of individuals raised in fundamentalist Christian homes who grow up to reject their religious affiliation entirely. This rejection is still viewed a reaction to their upbringing, illustrating the power of an individual's moral foundation. *“Either way it has an effect, but it has the opposite, it's still there” (14:54).*

Total rejection of parental moral views needs not always be the case. For most participant groups moral frameworks may be adapted to better align with the views of individuals. Rather than rejecting foundational moral frameworks completely, individuals have the ability to take the core values of these moral views and reshape them to better reflect their current views.

So they told me, respect thy neighbour. Maybe to them respect thy neighbour doesn't include people with a different skin pigmentation but to me that does. So the core moral ideas are still there but I've just adapted them (21:00)

The continued authority of parents over young adult's moral views may vary greatly between individuals. The ability to make one's own decisions is seen as being dependent on one's level of independence. With greater independence consequences of displaying moral views that disagree with one's parents are decreased, and thus these disagreements are more likely to

occur. However, parents may still have a major influence over their child's actions and judgements.

My mom makes 50% of my decisions for me... and even know If I do something wrong I won't do it, not because I think it's bad but because I still live at home and my mom will probably (expletive) on my head (5:18)

4.2.3.2.3. Adaptability and desire to develop.

Another theme contributing to the expansion of moral viewpoints is the desire for development. Emerging adults are seen as having a desire to take control of their moral development and seek out experiences and views that challenge their existing moral foundation.

Social programs and social systems will inform your morality to a certain extent but you can also then reach a point perhaps where you are older, where you start to decide and are exposed to and you then take charge of your moral development (16:00)

Young adults are also seen as being more open to new views and see their own moral viewpoint as more malleable. However, moral views do not necessarily become set past a certain age. The possibility for development is continuously available, it is just seen as more likely to occur among young people. *"I think at this stage our views might be a bit more flexible than later but there's still room for change, it just might take a bit more" (18:21)*

4.2.4. Making moral judgements about others.

Most participants seem to see making moral judgements about others as instinctual and inevitable. This does not, however, mean that participants feel their judgements should be acted upon. Situational context and personal viewpoints are seen as essential information on which judgments are based.

4.2.4.1. The inevitability of making judgements.

Whether individuals have the right to judge others or not, participant groups see these judgements as inevitable and natural. *"You don't have the right but you still do" (18:54).* Making judgements about others is seen as part of being human, inescapable and expected.

Everyone has a brain, everyone can make judgements about people around them you know, I think it's natural for everyone to do that if you see something you don't like you naturally form that judgement in your head (27:53)

Making judgements about others is also seen as something out of the control of the individual. Judgements about other are made constantly whether the individual is aware of them or not.

I don't think it's possible not to judge someone, like, I think that, and it's not just me that's thinking that, that we make decisions, unconscious decisions based on contextual social learned behaviours and so obviously we judge people all the time. Like not necessarily consciously and not necessarily in a way that we are aware of (27:00).

4.2.4.2.Judgement and action.

Although moral judgements are seen as inevitable, participant groups view making judgements and acting on their judgements as separate. *"Anyone's allowed to have judgements about anyone else it's what you do with the judgements that's the problem" (28:04).* This emphasis on individual's sphere of influence is seen as having a clear effect on moral judgement and any resulting actions.

Individual's moral judgements are viewed as being from their individual perspectives rather than an absolutist sense.

I have the right, as an existential being to judge to judge everything else according to myself. I can only define what I see as good or bad moralistically by looking at other people and thinking is that what I would have done so I judge everyone based on that because I have to too conduct whether I think that's right. And saying that you can't judge someone, you have personal feelings towards things no matter what you do, and that drives your actions. So I judge everything and everyone in my own personal sphere (40:19)

This means that individual judgements are not seen as necessarily resulting in action. Although individuals may view something as right or wrong, they do not feel their opinion should have any impact outside of their own assessment of the situation.

I think we are all able to judge people from our perspective because we hold a succinct account of moral norms, it doesn't mean it can extent outside of that. We can't do anything, aside from placing our judgements, it's not enough for our judgement to

create some action against this person... So I can judge them but that judgment is contingent on being my personal judgement it doesn't mean anything outside of that, I don't think. It can't mean anything outside of that (26:14)

This assumption leads to an expectation of reciprocity. If individual's see their moral judgements as being only applicable to themselves. It assumed that others will treat them in the same fashion despite the judgements they may hold. *"Veganism is a good decision for you don't tell me how to live" (36:33). "I respect your decision not to drink, respect my decision to drink" (37:20)*

Moral judgements are seen as only governing individual's actions, although, most participant groups found this does not generally extend to the actions of others. Although judging others is seen as a benign act, there are instances where participant groups agree that action must be taken. However, this is strongly dependent on their perceived influence.

I think that my moral judgement should only extent so far as my actions but then I would also feel obligated to intervene if I was seeing a situation where harm was occurring and I felt like I could do something about it (13:27)

4.2.4.3.Moral judgements are based on context.

Contextual factors surrounding moral judgements were a key theme throughout the participant groups. The context in which an action takes place determines the severity of the judgement attached to it. *"I feel like most moral judgements are situational" (32:00)*. There are a number of contextual factors that impact moral judgements. These will be discussed in more detail during this section.

4.2.4.3.1. Using context to make moral judgements.

The context surrounding an action is as seen crucial in the judgment of moral actions. *"It's very dependent on the situation, how harsh you can be" (34:00)*. In a context where the action seems to be appropriate, individuals are more forgiving and less likely to judge perpetrators harshly, even if they judge their actions as morally wrong. This is seen in one participants description of their experience of being burgled.

I was burgled once but I forgave it because I assumed the people who had done it were in great need but then I later managed to see them and it turned out, that like their clothes cost more than the items they had stolen from me and in that case my moral outrage was exponential. So I think in those kind of cases often pure or innocent need can very much decide which kind of moral judgement is appropriate (32:50).

4.2.4.3.2. Judging others by what you would do.

A key element of moral judgement is the ability to empathise with someone and the situation that they are in. The ability to place oneself in a particular context, in order to gain a better understanding of the reason they have made certain decisions, is seen as a key element of moral judgement. Moral judgement is seen as being required when the actions of others would not be in line with what the participant would do given the same set of circumstances.

I think you sort of place yourself in their situation and then see what you think you would have done in the situation, like externally, and you don't have the right to do it you just do it, then whether their action matches yours means you sort of judge them (19:16)

However, this emphasis on putting yourself in other people's shoes may prove problematic as a different individual will place different value on various moral issues. “Some people hold things more dear to themselves” (22:40).

4.2.4.4. Proximity and severity of harm.

The concept of harm is a major theme during discussion groups. Harm is seen as a major contextual factor for moral judgements, and a number of factors play a role in its impact.

4.2.4.4.1. Perception of harm.

The degree of harm is seen as important contextual factors of moral judgements. The impact of an individual's actions on others is extremely important. If actions are seen as having a minimal impact on others they are deemed less serious and thus less harshly judged. *You measure it according to the sort of result the output is going to have, like if it's something small and not particularly life threatening then I think it will be judged accordingly (6:00).*

Individual's perceptions the degree of harm may also be affected how they view the negative impact of their actions when compared to other sources of harm. When possible harm caused

by an individual is compared to more influential sources, individuals see their own harmful behaviour as having a smaller impact which impacts the severity of their moral judgements.

China is pouring tons of acid in the drains, industrials are polluting all the rivers. Me pouring extremely dilute hydrochloric acid down the drain is not affecting that many people. It's just a drop in the ocean (17:26)

4.2.4.4.2. Proximity and Awareness of harm caused.

The visibility of harm plays a vital role in individual's moral judgements. If the negative impact of their actions is not visible, or not directly visible, to individuals the context in which they make moral judgements will be affected. An example given by participant groups was buying products that may have been produced unethically. Although individuals may purchase the product they may be unaware or deliberately ignore of the harm caused during its production. *It's like buying a pair of (brand) shoes, you only see shoes, where did they come from, oh goodness knows but you still buy the shoes (26:43).* Individuals who are unaware of potential harm are less severely judged. These individuals are seen as not having all the relevant information on a given situation, and thus not responsible for harm caused by their actions.

Let's say, that someone in our group was a recovering alcoholic and I offer them a beer and I know they're a recovering alcoholic, I'm an (expletive), but if I don't know, then I don't think I can be held accountable for it, for a decision I don't perceive any harm in

However, once an individual becomes aware of the harm caused by their actions, it is expected of them to change their behaviour. Failing to do this may increase the severity of moral judgement of their actions, as they continued with harmful behaviour despite knowing that this harm was being done.

Ok but now you do (know). Ok so you've not seen the harm but, because that what seeing it it's becoming aware of the event of when, the thing happening, so now I've not seen it but I've heard it so it's more deplorable then for me to continue

4.2.4.4.3. Who is affected.

Who is harmed by individual's actions is also seen as a key factor in the severity of moral judgements. If individuals are harmed rather than larger communities or institutions, then actions are judged more severely. *If it's a person, I don't really know or the broader society or*

community I probably wouldn't care but if I know if do this it's going to hurt participant I then I wouldn't (11:58).

One example of the importance of who is seen when discussing pirating media. According to participants, who you are illegally downloading from is seen as making a difference in the severity of their judgements. Pirating from established artists is viewed less harshly than that of smaller, less financially successful, artists. *I don't feel bad if I'm pirating from someone who is rich already but if it was like a small indie band I would feel dreadful (11:06)*

Illegally downloading media is also seen as impacting only large corporations, rather than individual artists. Any losses faced by these organisations are not considered to be real harm, but rather, just small financial losses to wealthy companies. These organisations are not seen as being heavily impacted and thus potential harm does not need to be considered.

Don't we rather apply to our immediate life and our immediate situation so when you see it in front of you, whereas in terms of torrenting and pirating stuff, you're not going to see the consequence of that the consequence to a single individual is very much less than to a giant corporation (10:24)

So it's immoral to torrent films. Right? They're created and we buy them and we sell them, but when I torrent a film no one is really suffering, they're losing money, but they're not suffering when I download things

4.2.4.5. Basic universal wrongs.

Although participant groups agree that moral judgements must be made with consideration of their context this is not always the case. A very select group of actions were identified as being considered to be wrong in all contexts. *Some things on the upper end of crime that I feel are absolutely always wrong (23:30)*

There are like certain acts that are prohibited in all societies based on morals, so like murder, rape that sort of thing, but there are somethings that the law won't regulate because it's different for each person (04:32)

4.3. Morality in the organisational context

This section will explore moral themes in the organisational context, specifically. These include discussions around the importance of aligned individual moral views and organisations ethics, reporting unethical behaviour as well as, awareness of organisational ethics.

4.3.1. Importance of aligned individual moral views and organisations ethics.

Alignment of individual morals and organisational ethics was a key theme during discussion groups. Areas of discussions around this theme included preferences and benefits of individual and organisational alignment, leaving organisations that create moral conflict and staying in organisations where individual morals and organisational ethics do not align.

4.3.1.1. Preference and benefits.

Most participant groups agreed that working for an organisation whose organisational ethics aligned with their own morals was a definite drawing point for the organisation, particularly in recruitment situations. When deciding between organisations, those with organisational ethics that align were seen as highly preferable. Some even go as far as proclaiming that they would be willing to take less financially lucrative positions to work in organisations they align with morally. *I would be willing to get paid less for a company that I agreed with more (44:56)*

In a recruitment situation where I was being offered a very similar situation of benefits from all three, all three gave me a car because that's like the standard all three give me dental because that's like the standard... if I found myself in that situation then the company that best aligned with my morality is the company that I would choose (42:59)

Working for an organisation that individuals align with morally is seen as important to those who desire meaning from their work. These individuals see working for such organisations as key to being happy in their work, providing them with a feeling of purpose and greater motivation to perform in their work role.

Some people see going to work as a job, like it's a way to put food on your table and stuff like that but some other people, like for me my work has to have a purpose, like I have to be happy with what I'm doing every day because you spend so much time doing it (32:20)

I think your job performance will also be better if you work for a company that has the same morals as you because it's something you believe in. So like if you work for a company and their morals are different, you won't put everything into it because it's not something you believe in but if you work for a company with the same morals you'll put everything into it because you also believe in it and you want to make a difference (37:02)

4.3.1.2. Leaving the organisation.

When individual morals and organisational ethics do not align, most participant groups agreed that they would desire to leave the organisation. *I also feel like I would always be wanting a way out. If I worked for a company that I thought was morally reprehensible (47:35).* Working for these types of organisations is seen as having a negative impact on individual well-being. *In certain aspects, your morals do need to line up because then you'll be corrupting yourself. Either you become corrupted by them or you just become blind to the corruption, it'll definitely corrupt you in some way (52:58)*

One example discussed was a participant's experience working for a local restaurant. The participant was initially highly involved and dedicated to the business, but when they began to realise the ethics of the owners and management did not match their own they decided to leave.

I poured myself into (local restaurant) as a business. I was working extra hours because I wanted to, I was helping doing the cash ups because I wanted to, I became invested and I wanted this company to succeed but then things started coming out of the woodwork, horrible practices when it comes to hiring waitresses, waiters and waitresses, literally attractive yes, unattractive no, that was something that was literally in the hiring process... so the minute this stuff came to my attention and I stated being personally (expletive) around by the company, or you know the business, I immediately found another way out and I'm now doing all sorts of other jobs (47:55)

4.3.1.3. Staying in morally misaligned organisation.

Leaving organisations for moral reasons is not always possible for various reasons. Dependency is seen as being a key reason for staying with an organisation, however, possible positive influence on organisations is also a possibility.

4.3.1.3.1. Dependency on work.

Desperation for work is seen as a key reason for staying in an organisation that the individual does not morally align with. *Your morals aren't going to pay the bills (47:00). If your desperation to have a job out ways your disagreement with their ethics, then you're still going to take the job (45:18).* The need to support oneself and one's family is seen in many cases as overriding any moral concerns individuals may have. It is sometimes seen as necessary to look the other way or ignore problematic areas in order to maintain one's own survival, especially when financial compensation is key.

There are just some times when you keep your mouth shut and you do your job and it's not your life, it's not like you're doing that, you do your job, you keep your mouth shut and you go home because like what's the effort worth, you need that job (27:18)

I might be someone going into an office space after looking for work for like nine months and this is the first job I get offered and I see a clause, that they test on animals and I have the chance to be like I'm out because this violates my morals but at the same time I can't pay rent. And I realise by making that statement that there's a price tag on my morality (41:14)

Despite this need, most participant groups agreed that if organisations displayed or engaged in behaviours of beliefs that they disagreed with strongly enough they would leave the organisation despite their need. *We'll overlook most things when we are in desperate need for the money but there are still certain moral values that I hold that I think I would value over that (01:06:08). I think it depends on how strongly you feel about something, because I personally, like if I knew a company has practices that really didn't sit well with me I wouldn't work for them (24:35).* This does not mean, however, that there are moral judgements placed on those who do not, or cannot, leave their organisations for moral reasons. *I might be willing to say that I would prefer to work for it but we don't know whether we can make any judgement on a person for making what decision they do (46:06).*

4.3.1.3.2. Change from within.

Another reason given by participant groups for not leaving misaligned organisations is the possibility that they may be able to create changes from within the organisation. They see staying in these organisations as an opportunity to alter policies and practices they do not agree by using their influence within the company.

I think it is important but I wouldn't necessarily get out of an employment situation if there was a conflict because firstly, you would need a job, and secondly, I could just do the best with what I have... There might be someone who completely agrees with company policy and acts completely within that vain where I might be able to make small allowances that someone else might not (52:48)

You as a perspective employee with your own set of morals, could go into a company that doesn't have the same set as yours to try and change it because when you're talking about the top 10% of people you're talking about your managers, your head designers, head scientists, your all of them that have more pull in what happens in the company than the actual owners of the company themselves because they decide the practices that are there after introduced or changed or altered. (37:50)

4.3.2. Reporting unethical behaviour

The issue of reporting unethical behaviour is a major theme in the group discussions. The magnitude of the issue, repercussions for the individual and the possibility of outside pressure on organisations all play an important role in individuals reporting ethical or moral issues.

4.3.2.1. Magnitude of issue at hand.

How important an individual views an issue as being, plays a key role in whether they will report unethical behaviour or not. Smaller infractions are viewed with more leeway than larger issues. *Small things don't report because it makes no difference but the big things report them (51:22). It's all about severity of things because like you're not going to cause a company to close down unless it's justified because it's so horrible. (51:48)*

An example of this emerging from group discussions was a co-worker stealing coffee creamer from the break room, as opposed to embezzling money from the company. Most said they would turn a blind eye to the coffee creamer, but would definitely report the embezzling co-worker. It was agreed that while both of these are forms of theft, their differing levels of severity are the determining factor in reporting their actions.

The severity of issues is not only seen from an organisational stand, but at a personal level as well. If issues are deemed by individuals as not affecting them enough on a personal level, they are less likely to report behaviour they see as immoral. However, if this issue begins to

affect them more substantially than they may report it at a later stage. One example of this was a participant who had taken a position at their university library.

I've been in the position where, so last year, when we were going, I got a job as a student assistant in the library and we were undergoing training and all the people training me were women and they were very explicit about dress codes but it was very sexist in the way those dress codes were delivered so it was very, so woman, very specifically talking to ladies and I was made to feel ashamed about my dress, I was made to feel ashamed about showing your legs because it would quote "distract people" So I find that, like deeply problematic but I've never reported them because I don't think I can... and it's not an explicit code but there's no one there with visible tattoos and visible facial, visible piercings and I morally don't think that's a relevant hiring practice like tattoos, facial piercings, what you wear, I don't think that's relevant in hiring someone but I work for a place that clearly does. But like, I'm weighing up the kind of harm, because it doesn't kill me to cover my knees every day and like, I kind of let it go but if there was some, I like to think that if there were some, if I was one of my managers specifically bullying someone for something they were wearing, I would like to act up on that (54:40)

4.3.2.2.Repercussions and authority.

The possible consequences for the individual is a key factor in whether ethical issues are reported. Fear of retaliation, hostile work environments and levels of impact all play a role. If individuals feel they are likely to experience negative consequences from co-workers, they are less likely to report issues they have.

At the moment I'm dealing with a racist person in my department and if I didn't worry about the fact that I was going to face harsh repercussions from the department, be ousted from them I would have reported him (10:01:30)

If I rat on this person is it really worth the bad work environment, like I know I have to go to work with this person every single day after that and maybe they don't know it's me but I would say is what they're doing really that bad, is it worth it (29:58)

Individuals may also feel that they are not in a strong enough position to report ethical issues. Many may feel that if they report an issue it becomes their responsibility, which they may not

feel they are not in a position to take on. This may lead to individuals looking to someone they perceive as being in a better position to address the issue to take responsibility.

There are instances that I've experienced with him (a professor in their department) but it's not enough to build a case and so I just keep quiet because it's not like I would be telling anyone anything they didn't know, they know, everyone knows that this person is like this but by reporting it I would be formalising this thing that everyone already knows and then it's on me... and particularly that there are senior people who know this as well, so isn't it their job, there are other people to fight in a stronger position (01:02:00)

4.3.2.3. Creating outside pressures.

The ability to create outside pressure on organisations to change unethical behaviours is seen as key. If the consumer base of organisations, or at least a portion of it, is seen by an individual as having the same or similar moral outlook then, making consumers aware of ethical issues in an organisation is seen as a key method of creating outside pressures.

If they have the same kind of consumer base that has the same morals as me and I think that this company is doing something wrong and there is a way of alerting the consumer base to this wrong thing then I think you should do it, but also I would want to do it anonymously (1:06:20)

If a business has a CEO that makes some kind of incredibly sexist or racist, or whatever phobic remarks then as a customer base or a certain amount of the customer base, expresses a moral judgement and then refuses to participate in that store you then a very real sort of have a repercussion (27:30)

There are a multitude of ways in which these issues can be made available publically and anonymously. Examples discussed include contacting ethical watchdog organisations, as well as other more freely available platforms such as Twitter. The power of circulating even rumours about organisational wrongdoings is seen as a key method of making information known to the public who have a direct impact on organisational success.

4.3.3. Awareness of organisational ethics.

It is seen as the individual's responsibility to ensure they are aware of any organisational ethical issues that may conflict with their own moral views. *It's also about your own due diligence. You've got to know what you're getting yourself into (33:56).* Individuals who are aware of policies or practise that they may not agree but go into an organisation regardless are seen as being responsible for their decision. They had a clear understanding of what was expected of them from the beginning of their employment, and thus agree to conduct themselves in line with those same policies and practices. If these policies and practices are not made clear, and are only presented as issues arise, then individuals are seen as having the right to act within their own moral framework.

I think if the company policy has been made clear to you before that point and you have kind of gone with it or accepted it then you are also morally obligated to continue with that decision. If it's something that's suddenly sprung on you, you see this whole dilemma and you think 'oh gosh' and then the company says no we have xyz policy, in that case, I think you're quite justified in going forth with your preferred action. If you knew about policy XYZ, you didn't investigate it, you didn't attempt to change it, you didn't bring up anything about it, and now there's a moral dilemma and now that policy isn't benefitting you then I think it's not as justified (38:22)

4.4. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed all the themes that became prominent during group discussions. These included themes of morality both inside and outside the organisation. General moral issues discussed included, identifying examples of moral issues, examining what makes a moral issue, examining moral foundation and expanding views, as well as moral judgements about others. Moral issues within organisations included the importance of aligned individual moral views and organisations ethics, reporting unethical behaviour and awareness of organisational ethics.

The next chapter will examine and discuss these themes in the context of the theory or moral individualism and explore how these findings align with the research aims.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1. Chapter Preview

The findings of the previous chapter provide an overview of the major themes emerging from the focus group discussions. This chapter will examine these themes and discuss the findings with regard to the aims of this study and how they align with, or contradict, the theoretical framework of moral individualism. This chapter will examine the participant's ability to identify moral issues, their propensity for moral individualism, the impact of moral individualism on their moral judgements and lastly, possible effect this may have on the organisation.

5.2. Examining Emerging Adult's Ability to Identify Moral Issues

By in large, participants were able to identify examples moral issues. Most participant groups were able to identify moral issues in their own lives, as well as implications of the larger issues to which their actions may contribute. Several examples were discussed, including becoming a vegetarian, driving while under the influence and illegally downloading media. These issues centred around how individual's actions contribute to moral issues on a societal level. The perceived harm caused by these actions, who will be affected and the scale of these actions are key elements in how moral actions are viewed. In the case of drunk driving even the possibility that one's actions may cause another person harm is enough to make the action reprehensible. However, illegally downloading media is seen as acceptable as the losses to large media organisations are not seen as causing real harm. This example reflects Smith et al (2011) assertion that emerging adults may not always see the larger social implications of their actions, instead focusing on actions that directly impact an individual, as opposed to cheating or stealing from an organisation (Smith, et al., 2011). This demonstrates that participants can engage with moral issues not only in their own lives but outside their immediate sphere as well. However, the perceived consequences of their actions play an important role in their judgment of these actions. It is not only the ability to identify moral issues, but how these moral issues and individual impacts are perceived, that will impact individual moral viewpoints.

5.3. Examining the Propensity for Moral Individualism Among Emerging Adults

Although the participants sampled displayed some elements of moral individualism, they do not entirely embody this moral framework. Participant groups displayed elements of moral individualism, however, there were certain areas, specifically relating to the judgment of others where their views clearly diverged.

As previously discussed moral individualism places morality as a matter of individual preference, varying among individuals (Smith, et al., 2011). This part of the theory is reflected in the findings. Individuals are seen as having their own moral viewpoints that develop over time. Although individuals may initially hold the moral views instilled in them by their upbringing, over time these views are adapted and developed to form the individual's own unique moral identity. This identity is seen as a mixture of selected parts of individual's moral foundations amended and added to over time by emerging adult's increasing exposure to new influences, decreasing parental authority, and a desire to develop.

However, there are instances where this unique moral viewpoint is trumped by certain universal laws. From the perspective of pure moral individualism, individuals must accept that an act is morally right from the agent's point of view. The findings highlight a general belief that, although morality is up to individuals, there are certain basic universal wrongs and moral actions that are wrong in all contexts. However, these are only applicable to a very select number of issues. Examples such as rape and murder (when not in self-defence) are considered by participants as morally wrong in all contexts, no matter what the moral view of the person conducting those activities.

Moral individualism also emphasises the importance of individuals refraining from the judgement of others. Right and wrong are seen as personal judgements, or matters of individual tastes, rather than being prescribed by a universal law (Smith, et al., 2011; Brooks, 2011). However, this is not reflected in the findings. Making moral judgements about others are seen as inevitable and natural. Moral judgements are not condemned by participant groups, rather it is actions resulting from these judgements that are scrutinised. Most feel that although they are within their rights to judge others for actions they deem morally wrong, they do not necessarily have the right or authority to take action based on their views. However, in instances where a moral agent's actions pose a risk of harm to themselves or others, participants feel they have the right to intervene where they possible. Who is affected, the proximity of

harm, awareness of the moral agent of harm caused and individual perceptions of harm are seen as all playing a role in the context in which moral judgements of individuals are made and when individuals can acceptably intervene. The impact of this on emerging adult's moral judgement of others will be further discussed in the next section.

Although participants showed only a partial propensity for moral individualism, their views may better align with those of moral relativism. Relativism is the doctrine that more than one truth about certain moral cases exists (West, 2016). The findings show several themes that display various elements of moral relativism. These include emphasis of the findings on the ambiguity of morality and the importance of contextual elements in moral judgements. Moral issues are seen as ambiguous, complex, multifaceted, situations which can be approached from a number of different perspectives. These are not didactic decisions made between right and wrong but intricate and nuanced with both positive and negative outcomes. These decisions will vary between people with varying moral foundations, individual views, contexts and preferences.

5.4. Identifying Moral Individualism's Impact on Emerging Adult's Moral Judgements of Others

Moral individualism does not seem to have an impact on the moral judgments of participating emerging adults. From the perspective of moral individualism making judgement about others is seen as an impossibility (Prado, 2013; Brooks, 2011). As morality is viewed as a personal choice, if actions are seen as morally right by the individual performing them others have no right to judge them (Prado, 2013). This is not reflected in the findings. Judging the actions of others is seen as inevitable and a fundamental part of individual consciousness. Whether or not individuals have the right to judge these actions is seen as irrelevant. Making judgements is seen as something that occurs almost subconsciously in the mind of the individual and cannot be avoided.

However, this does not mean that moral judgments are made without any restrictions. The context of the action being judged is seen as an important consideration in making moral judgements. The degree of severity of judgement is seen as being dependent on the unique factors of each situation being judged by the individual. The most dominant contextual factor is harm. The individual's perspective on perceived harm, proximity and severity of harmful

impacts, awareness of harm caused by the actions as well as the who is impacted by any possible harm all play a role in the severity of moral judgements.

Although participants see themselves as being 'allowed' to judge others they do not feel that their judgements necessarily need to be acted upon. A separation exists between making a moral judgment about someone's behaviour and acting on this judgement. Judgements are seen as being made from an individual perspective and, therefore, can be used to govern the individual's own actions, but not the actions of others.

This does not mean, however, that individuals will not act on their moral judgements of others. There are instances where the individuals may be compelled to act against actions they see as wrong or harmful. These instances depend heavily on the context of the action, as well as the individual's perceived influence over the matter. If participants view an action as harmful, and feel they can do something to stop said harm, they will be more inclined to act upon their moral judgements. For example, one participant told the story of reporting a university tutor she thought was treating a fellow classmate unfairly. The tutor was being "*harsh and mean*" to a particular student and the participant brought up the issue with their department head. The participant identified this behaviour as harmful and acted upon their judgement in order to end the perceived harm.

The findings suggest that participants demonstrate the self-model of moral action. In this model, structures of morality and moral actions are indirectly related as structures are used to gain a better understanding of the moral landscape but do not result in moral action (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2009). Personal identity is a key factor in moral action as individuals will only act on their moral judgments if it is central to how they see themselves and if failing to act will lead to guilt (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2009). This is clearly reflected in participant's views on the unique value individuals place on specific morals, when they are willing to compromise on their ideals and the emphasis on the contextual factors at play. Morality is seen as deeply personal with each individual having a specific point where they feel they must intervene. This may be hindered by external factors. They may refrain from intervening due to fear of retaliation, feeling they do not have the necessary authority and other personal ramifications. This will be discussed more in the next section, specifically in the organisational context.

5.5.Exploring Future Implications for The Workplace

There are a number of ways in which moral individualism may influence the workplace these include. These include a need for ethical compliance and ethics training, organisational commitment and ethical culture as well as the reporting of unethical behaviour.

5.5.1. Ethical compliance and ethical training.

There are a number of benefits to aligning individual moral views and organisational ethics. However, this alignment is seen by most as a luxury. Although participants would prefer to have this alignment, it is not a necessity. For many the need for employment is often seen as overriding moral concerns about their work.

As of July 2017 the South Africa unemployment rate was stood at 27.7% (Trading Economics, 2017). In an economy where employment is often difficult to find, participants who are just entering the job market may see it as necessary to put moral issues with an organisation aside to secure a job. This means that employees may be indirectly pressured into complying with organisations ethics they do not believe in. Individual moral views are seen as taking a back seat to organisational ethics and although they may not agree, employees will act in accordance with them.

An employee's willingness to comply organisational ethical guidelines is largely impacted by their knowledge of these ethical expectations. Participants are more willing to follow company ethical policies if they are aware of them when entering into the organisation. They may not personally believe in the organisation's policies, but by choosing to join the organisation, they agree to act in line with them. However, if employees are not aware of ethical codes that conflict with their own and a situation arises where these are tested, participants are as being within their rights to act according to their own beliefs.

Organisational ethical frameworks and principles must be made clear through training and development programs, on-boarding programs for new employees, character education programs, codes of conduct, ethical guidelines and other such documents which serve to communicate the organisations' ethical positions. Even if employees do not adopt these beliefs they must be made aware of them and, should they choose to enter into the organisation, agree to act in accordance with them. If employees are unable to do this, then there may be no choice but for them to leave the organisation. These expectations are often not explicitly stated, but rather the tacit psychological contract between employees and organisations. This is why it is

vital that organisations are transparent about their ethical frameworks and expectations so employees are able to make an informed decision and can enter into this contract willingly.

5.5.2. Commitment and Ethical Organisational Culture

There are many benefits to the alignment of individual moral views and organisational ethics. Examples of these brought forward in the group discussions include, improved productivity, fulfilling a desire for meaningful work and, most prominently, greater organisational commitment. When participants feel their ethics align with those of their organisation, they are more likely to commit themselves to it and go beyond what is expected of them in their work roles. Some participants even claimed they would be willing to take less financially lucrative jobs to work for an organisation they aligned with morally. Moral and ethical alignment is seen as being most important attempting to recruit top talent and placing people in leadership positions. Top talent will be more likely to enter, and remain, in an organisation that aligns with their moral values, especially if they desire a sense of meaning and purpose in their work. This commitment will also decrease the likelihood that they will be poached by other organisations, as a personal investment in the organisation is developed.

This may have a large impact on ethical organisational cultures. Commitment from leadership and those in higher positions is vital to an ethical culture's success. It may be possible to enforce the rules of the organisational culture through compliance, but in order for ethical culture to survive and thrive commitment from those in positions of power is key. Commitment of those in positions of authority to the organisations ethics framework and goals needs to be visible to members of the organisation (Trevino et al., 2006). This includes being positive role models, communicating clear ethical expectations, and visibly reward those who behave ethically as well as punishing those who do not (Robinson and Judge, 2013). Commitment to the organisations ethical framework should be taken into consideration when promoting employees and bringing in new leadership, as those at higher level of the organisations may need to act as ethical champions for others to commit or comply.

5.5.3. Reporting unethical behaviour

Another major impact of increasing moral individualism was a decrease in the reporting of unethical behaviour. As moral individualism emphasises refraining from judging the moral actions of others, the prominent propensity for whistle-blowing may be affected (Smith, et al., 2011). As the findings show, participants still make moral judgements about the actions of others. It is not a lack of judgment that determines reporting, but rather, external and internal factors of the employee. Three main factors include the perceived magnitude of the issue, repercussions for the individual and the impact of outside pressure on the organisation. Firstly, if the issue at hand is not seen as being important enough, then it is unlikely that employees will report it. The importance of the issue may vary between individual, and what is seen as minor by the individual may have larger unseen consequences to the organisation. However, if ethical guides and training are clear and highlight the issues the organisations see as priorities people may be more willing come forward.

Secondly, if participants feel that reporting ethical issues will make their working environment unpleasant, have negative consequences on their career prospect or fear they will not be taken seriously they will be less likely to report. Thus organisations need to create channels through which employees at all levels can bring up issues they have identified, safely and anonymously. It may be necessary to create an ethics line or appoint ethics officers who will be able to look into and address complaints.

Thirdly, if reporting the issue to external sources will create outside pressure, participants will be more likely to report, especially if they have the ability to do so anonymously. This can have many negative consequences for an organisation such as boycotts and negative rumours that may be difficult to put an end to (Robinson & Judge, 2013). For this reason, a culture of openness and transparency is of paramount importance. If an organisations policies, practices, codes of conduct, ethical guidelines etc. are freely available the organisation will have nothing to hide. It is also important as mentioned previously that employees feel they can bring up ethical issues to the organisation first, rather than reporting externally.

5.6.Conclusion

It is clear that although participants display some elements of moral individualism, they do not fully encompass this theory. The acceptability of making moral judgements is a key

differentiating factor. Making moral judgements about the actions of others is seen as inevitable and natural. However, participants believe they do not necessarily have the right to act upon these judgements. Participant will act on moral judgements only when they identify a risk of these actions causing harm to themselves or others and feel it is within their power to intervene. This means that, although an individual's moral framework may impact their how they engage with the organisations, this is not necessarily done on the basis of moral individualism but rather other situational factors.

Although the alignment of individual morals and organisational ethics has many advantages, it may not always be necessary for an organisation to function. Individuals will in many cases comply with organisational guidelines and put aside their personal views as a condition of employment. However, individuals need to be clearly informed as to what is expected of them ethically, in order for employees to make an informed choice. It is up to the organisation to provide, create and maintain an ethical culture that makes their positions clear to all stakeholders and provide clear, safe, channels for employee feedback on moral issues. This also highlights the need for clear ethical guidelines and ethical training, especially for those entering into the organisation.

The next chapter will conclude the study as well as examining its limitations and areas for future research.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1.Chapter Review

Chapter 1 gave a brief preview of the study and context of the research, while Chapter 2 provided a literary context for the study. The overall purpose of this research was to explore moral individualism in South African emerging adults. This was achieved by conducting focus group discussions and analysed using thematic analysis, details of which can be found in Chapter 3. The main themes arising from these focus group discussions can be found in Chapter 4 and a discussion on these themes in Chapter 5.

This chapter will provide a summary of the main focus of the study and the issues that emerged from its findings.

6.2.Conclusion

Moral individualism may still have an impact on organisations and the alignment of organisational ethics and the moral views of emerging adults. However, these findings show that participants do not embody all the views of moral individualism, most specifically in regard to moral judgements. Making moral judgments about others is seen as inevitable. It is not an unwillingness to judge others that may lead to individuals refraining from taking action, but rather a consideration of situational factors. Moral views are constructed as highly personal with majority of moral decisions being seen as up to the individual's discretion. There are a small number of actions that are viewed as morally wrong in all contexts, but most are seen as contextual. Factors including the perceived magnitude of the issue, context of the actor, the harm caused by the action, perceived authority and agency over the situation and risk faced by the individual by challenging the actions of the other all play a role in how the actions of a moral agent are judged and whether or not individuals feel they have a right to intervene. The views of participants seem to more accurately align with moral relativism which will also impact the organisation.

This study showed that although individual morals and organisational ethics may not always align, there are instances where this can be overlooked by perspective employees. Ethical alignment has clear benefits such as influence employee satisfaction, turnover and the top talent an organisation is able to attract, leading to improved performance. However, these are not equally important at all levels of the organisation. There are many situations where ethical compliance is more achievable and of greater use than ethical commitment created by ethical alignment. Dependency on work is a dominant factor in employment decisions and most participants were willing to work for an organisation they did not align with morally out of necessity. Working for an organisation like this, however, was seen as the choice made by individuals.

Participants were willing to comply with the organisational principles, However, they believed these principles needed to be clearly communicated in order for them to make an informed decision. The choice to stay in a misaligned organisation or leave must be an informed one. This makes the communication of ethical guidelines and policy and ethical training of even greater importance. Organisations must make their ethical standpoints clear in order for employees to make their own decisions about their place in the organisation. Ethical transparency is key for organisations attempting to develop and maintain an ethical organisational culture. However, while this culture may rely on commitment from leadership and those in senior positions, it is still able to function with only compliance from other levels of the organisation.

6.3.Limitations

There are a number of limitations to this study. Firstly, the sample size and composition of participants. Due to the nature of the study, these findings do not definitively prove the propensity for moral individualism among all South African Emerging Adults. This is only a very small sample of South African Emerging Adults and does not account for those already in the working world. Although this study used a relatively small sample size the focus groups reached data saturation after the fourth group interview. However, this saturation may be due to the researcher missing certain findings due to inexperience. Secondly, the use of thematic analysis. Due to its qualitative nature results can only be applied to the individuals sampled and, although they represent the major themes that repeatedly emerged from the group

discussions of this study, there are other prominent factors that may not have arisen in conversations. This means that these results should not be directly extrapolated to other groups but rather used as an insight into a specific group.

6.4.Suggestions for future research

There are a number of areas of this study that may be further researched. Firstly, further research may be needed to determine the propensity for moral individualism in a larger sample pool of South African emerging adults. A wider more diverse sample will allow for a clearer idea of moral individualism and its impact on South African emerging adults. Secondly, including emerging adults already entered into their prospective fields rather than still studying towards them may provide a clearer idea of the impact of organisations in shaping individuals moral framework and propensity for moral individualism.

Thirdly, Further research into communicating organisational ethics may prove beneficial. Developing new and more suitable ways to clearly state an organisations ethical orientation and create a culture of ethical transparency. Fourthly, further research into moral relativism's impact on employee behaviour may prove beneficial. A better understanding of what shapes an individual's relative view of moral issues may help organisations better communicate their ethical positions. It may also be beneficial to examine the role of culture in moral relativism, particularly in South Africa due to our diverse range of cultures.

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APPENDIX A: Full Table of Findings

This table provides a comprehensive overview of all instances of various themes emerging in group discussion.

<u>Full Findings</u>	
Examples of moral issues	
Individual level issues	<p>I was at my friend's house and he had these imported sweets from Germany and I really love them, they're my favourite sweets, and he was like just take a few from the bag and then I was like yoh, I can take three or I can take ten or maybe I can take like half the bag. But where is the limit where it would be wrong to take five but it's ok to take three when I'm still taking his sweets anyways (Group 1; 1:02).</p> <p>Participant 1: I tutor Latin and uh this year my boyfriend is one of my tutlings and uh until I became the tutor, which was only a week or two ago, I had been helping him with his Latin homework and I still want to help him with his Latin homework but I also mark it. So I'm withdrawing from the first activity, because it's cheating (Group 1; 1:50).</p> <p>Participant 2: But isn't the main purpose of the tut group to learn and not to be evaluated and the evaluation is just a reference to how well you've learnt? (Group 1; 2:15).</p> <p>Participant 1: True, the marking... the marks we get from the homework don't count very much but uh, in the same vain it, me helping with homework is a resource that the other tutlings don't have access to, partially because they've never approached me (Group 1; 2:24).</p> <p>Participant 3: I can understand that part of the moral dilemma because technically it is part of a service you are being paid to do, is to help people, but the only, the moral issue comes in that your boyfriend has constant access to that even though he might have asked you or you may have offered your help it still something the others don't have access to or that degree of access (Group 1; 2:43).</p>

	<p>Participant 2: But if you look at it that way I don't entirely agree because your partner is a resource that you have available to you and they will probably... the only issue is not how approachable you can be and how much you can help but the making of the tuts, that's the only thing in question here. Because you can't really penalise someone for having a boyfriend or girlfriend who's good in a specific subject because that's just, it's convenient (Group 1; 3:25)</p> <p>Participant 1: I suppose in high school I didn't have any relatives who spoke Afrikaans and everyone else did, so that wasn't something they were penalised for so I guess you could... but the issue is that I am both the relative and the teacher (Group 1; 3:50)</p> <p>I decided to shoplift that one time, when I was drunk and the chocolates looked really nice. I went back, bought one and then snuck it on the shelf... I was peer pressured into stealing the chocolate and then went back individually and undid it. (Group 2; 1:20)</p> <p>I know right now, busy happening, of a married couple that the wife is cheating and I can't say anything about it because I've basically been banned from saying anything about it or bad things will happen to me (Group 3; 01:25)</p> <p>Like borrow/stealing toilet paper from your housemate, it doesn't like carry as much weight as other more serious things (Group 4; 19:00)</p>
Social level issues	<p>Currently the biggest moral issue is Freedom of speech. How far does it extend and what does it extend to (Group1; 0:41)</p> <p>Another thing, so recently I have stopped eating meat... originally it was out of kind of environmental concern... meat is much less efficiently produced than the things that can feed both meat and me. So eating vegetables uses less water, uses less land, uses less energy and is more environmentally conscious that's the thing that drove me to it at first but after making the decision it's actually because life is valuable. Like ja,</p>

	<p>experiencing life, or not experiencing life, I don't, I can live without eating meat and killing another thing for my taste preferences seems rough (Group 2; 4:50)</p> <p>So we think there's something morally reprehensible about drunken driving even if you don't kill anyone when you're driving in that sense (Group 2; 8:50)</p> <p>It's immoral to torrent films. Right? They're created and we buy them and we sell them, but when I torrent a film no one is really suffering, they're losing money, but they're not suffering when I download things (Group 2: 10:24).</p> <p>When you're at a parking lot do you give the car guard money. And it's like do you give him money, because like do something worthwhile in the short term or do you not give him money to discourage the whole idea of paying someone to park somewhere that they don't pay rent for or have a right over really (Group 3; 2:26)</p>
What makes a moral issue	
Negative impact on others	<p>Depends on what you are basing your morality on. So for some people that's going to be religious, basically the Bible says this therefore that is wrong. Or I think what happens more naturally is just what's best for the community and for humanity is general, so in a way, for example destroying the environment would be immoral because you are screwing it up for the rest of them (Group 2; 7:30)</p> <p>Basically do whatever you like but as soon as that infringes on someone else's morality, I mean someone else's freedom to also do whatever they like that's a moral, I think. (Group 2; 7:40)</p>
Ambiguity and conflict	<p>When it conflicts with your morals. Like your core values that make you, you, that you will never change (Group 4; 1:20)</p>

	<p>it (a moral issue) least challenges it. What you believe is good, it might challenge that idea (Group 4; 1:40)</p> <p>There's also the possibility of choosing maybe a compromising option it's not always left or right, tell the secret or don't tell the secret... So there are many many option in, there are many ways to respond to a moral dilemma rather than, not just do or don't. I think the most difficult moral dilemmas are when you have two different moral systems conflicting (Group 1; 13:03)</p> <p>I don't think you can really quite make the moral judgement because deciding which is the lesser of two evils can be so ambiguous (Group 1; 30:40)</p> <p>Not because of the greater effect but rather how it affects you, and I'm not going to start talking about sin or whatever, but the moral ambiguity of what it could or couldn't be keeps me up at night, and I like my sleep. So it's a personal, if I'm unsure about something it torments me for quite a bit (Group 1; 9:20)</p> <p>For me, I think any moral issue is a question that you have to take more than a second to answer. Where there's a distinct grey area between right and wrong, like both can be easily argued but then which one do you choose then they can both work (Group 3; 4:26)</p> <p>I think we try to make things black and white when they're not. And then it's not grey either it's black white and grey that's what I've also realised. There are things that are finite there are things that, stay the same, there are things that are finite and there are certain things that can be debated, it doesn't mean that they can't coexist (Group 4; 22:20)</p> <p>Judgement can over power. Judgement is at the top, it's analytically looking down at the decision and which one is more favourable to like a</p>
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	<p>good outcome. Then you obviously make bad decisions and when you make a bad decision then you feel bad and you feel guilt and then you stay up at night. And then there are times when you can make either decision and no decision is the right one and each decision is shrouded in uncertainty (Group 1; 12:33)</p>
Variation between people	<p>In smaller cases when it's one on one it's very dependent on you but as you get bigger and bigger in society it's more about the will of the people than the individual (Group 1; 14:10)</p> <p>Based on what you think is right or wrong and it's not the same for everyone (Group 4; 3:16)</p> <p>Each person has their own set of like standards (Group 4; 5:16)</p> <p>When it comes to moral issues it's very subjective obviously and it comes down to you, well most people I found have a code, live according to some kind of code, be it religion be it whatever. Ja I think that everyone, sort of, when they don't know what's happening or when they don't have a certain thing they look to a certain measure be it whatever, like ok I don't know how to respond in this sort of situation, what according to what I've known from previous experience whatever it may be, what do I do now? (Group 3; 3:39)</p> <p>The severity of the moral judgement should be held in regard to how it affects society in general because it's not because it's not on an individual basis that morals should be judged it should be judged on the reaction of the environment... I don't think one person can suppose their morals on someone else and allowing people individual moralistic viewpoints will often push people to that (Group 1; 5:17)</p>
Moral foundations and expanding views	

<p>Individual moral foundations</p>	<p>Doesn't that raise the possibility that morality is contextual? So what you see other people around you are viewing as right or wrong, becomes the thing you think is right or wrong... I wonder if you don't absorb the morality of people around you (Group 4; 17:38)</p> <p>We have individuals in groups that will decide based on their religion or how they're raised. In your household generally people have the same morals (Group 3; 7:30)</p> <p>I think the big thing in most people's lives is their religion, so like you know the difference between right or wrong based on from to church or whatever the Bible says. That's for most people, but even those who don't have religion still generally know what's right and what's wrong (8:16)</p> <p>I'm atheist and just because I don't go to church, or have some fixed religion I can still make the decision of giving the car guard money or (an example of a moral issue discussed previously) decisions like that, it doesn't affect you (Group 3; 8:40)</p> <p>For me it's more how you grow up, which religion could be a big part of that but it's not and there's other factors (9:00)</p> <p>It's also based a lot on what society thinks of you, so if you want to be accepted you don't (expletive) up (Group 4; 9:24)</p> <p>I think it depends on the person, there's a lot of people that will be set in their way and be like that is it this is who I am, if you don't like it deal with it and then there's people who will be like this point of view is better than the one I have so maybe let me take on this point of view (Group 3; 18:00)</p> <p>I think you have like maybe three or four core things that you will always keep, because that is what makes you, you, but then the other little things abound it change all the time, maybe even month to month or year to year,</p>
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	<p>but the core things that make you, you, generally don't change (Group 4; 7:57)</p> <p>I think that people who have found their individuality judge on the individual, I think the people who don't know who they are judge on the crowd... People who are more confident in who they are, what they're becoming, they'll tend to be more individual in their judgements but whereas someone who's a little bit less, I don't like to say insecure in who they are, but that's pretty much what it is, they'll lean more to following what the crowd has said instead of thinking for themselves because I feel like they don't value their opinion or what they think to the extent of someone that's, of someone else (Group 3; 20:07)</p>
Expansion of moral viewpoints-exposure to new influences	<p>You're upbringing, cultural environment, the things you are exposed to in the world, education. I went to a catholic school, and I went to a catholic school from primary school all the way to matric so I found that those ideas and stuff very much influenced me until I came to varsity I was very much if the bible says it's wrong then it's wrong until about nineteen, well actually until the beginning of first years when I actually met gay people and was like, you're just normal though... (Group 2; 17:11)</p> <p>You definitely can unlearn certain things (Group 3; 18:30)</p> <p>I think it depends on how what you experience shift your actual moral views, so if you, if say a certain teaching, gives you, changes your moral perspective then that has equal power to something else that changes your moral perspective (Group 3; 11:06)</p> <p>in my opinion it is the weight that you give to those certain instances in your life because everyone like for example but you listening to some certain speech or reading some book is going to, may have a massive outcome, a massively different outcome to me reading the exact same book. It's the weight that you put on each of those sort of instances (Group 3; 11:30)</p>

	<p>I think, I stand with what I said, people don't change, unless something, and when they do change it is because they subconsciously decided to. The reason people come to certain decision... if you go seeking something it's because you are looking for an answer, you can't, if someone comes up to you and starts telling you about seeming you're just not going to listen, you have to be willing to listen first (Group 3; 17:00)</p> <p>I think at this stage our views might be a bit more flexible than later but there's still room for change, it just might take a bit more (Group 3; 18:21)</p> <p>for myself with experience speaking to older people, when people get older it tends to get more fixed in what you view, I've noticed a lot of older people, like elderly people, are very fixed like you can't argue with them because they're just right in whatever they think (Group 3; 15:00)</p> <p>the experiences you've been through (Group 4; 6:10)</p> <p>probably who you associate with, like friends (Group 4; 6:15)</p> <p>And location as well, things will vary according to where you are (Group 4; 6:20)</p>
Decreasing parental authority	<p>I think it's how you are raised at first and then at a certain point it you start making decisions or judgements on your own of what is right or wrong as you grow up (Group 3; 9:11)</p> <p>Not a chance, my mom makes 50% of my decisions for me... and even know If I do something wrong I won't do it, not because I think it's bad but because I still live at home and my mom will probably (expletive) on my head (Group 4; 5:18)</p> <p>I'd say the strongest factor that influences us though is probably, maybe, our initial understanding of authority. We, we, prescribe to the moralities</p>

	<p>of the people who hold authority over us. It starts with our parents and with our schooling and with that sort of thing and because, because, you know, there is an authority to it, they have a power over us to tell us what I'm doing is wrong, what I'm doing is right, ja, I don't know maybe that. Then when you start to get to an age when you start questioning the systems of authority that govern you... or start having to take authority over yourself you start coming to your own conclusions (Group 2; 18:34)</p> <p>Participant 1: A large part of my moral basis is what my parents taught me. A large, the vast majority of the moral decisions I make I feel are based off the kind of principles they taught</p> <p>Participant 2: But have you augmented them in any way?</p> <p>Participant 3: Well ja, so they told me, don't, respect thy neighbour. Maybe to them respect thy neighbour doesn't include people with a different skin pigmentation but to me that does. So the core moral ideas are still there but I've just adapted them to you know, I don't know not be an [expletive] I guess. But to also, suit my own views in a way. Certain things about treating other people, responsibility for myself, uh, how I should go about doing things in particular situations that the right thing to go about doing things in those situations, that has stuck with me, even though I don't agree with my parents anymore on a lot of issues a lot of what they taught me is still the basis of my morality I would say. (Group 2; 21:00)</p> <p>I think, for me, personally, a lot of it has to do with upbringing, basically I would say until late into your teens, it's pretty much, your parents are going to affect you your whole life, the way they brought you up is going to affect you your whole life but then there's a certain decision that's made where you break away from, where you realise your parents actually weren't perfect that they didn't bring you up perfectly and that there are actually better ways and you start sort of shaping your own identity around that. I think, for me, obviously that religion has become a very sort of important moral guide but it's based on logic as well (Group 3; 9:42)</p>
	<p>Making judgements about others</p>

Inevitability	<p>If it's based on your own personal preference of what you think is wrong, I don't think you can judge anyone (Group 3; 27:29)</p> <p>I think you can because no matter how complex the situation is there are certain facts that can be extracted...These are complex things but if you boil it down, the matter, what it comes down to is that someone was hurt, someone has been terrorised, a complete innocent as a result of your action, so no matter what the other complex issues are that is something than can be looked at and can be judged (Group 3; 27:40)</p> <p>Well the thing is the way I see it, I have the right, as an existential being to judge to judge everything else according to myself. I can only define what I see as good or bad moralistically by looking at other people and thinking is that what I would have done so I judge everyone based on that because I have to too conduct whether I think that's right. And saying that you can't judge someone, you have personal feelings towards things no matter what you do, and that drives your actions. So I judge everything and everyone in my own personal sphere (Group 1; 40:19)</p> <p>Participant 1: I try my best not to</p> <p>Participant 2: No if you encounter someone who's being racist you don't go well tell me your stories. No, like we assume, particularly in South Africa that by now you must be aware of the fact that all human beings are and so if you choose to continue these views you in turn choose to continue in a way that goes counter to information that you know comes from the other side so I'm allowed to judge you. If someone has never encountered a trans person in their life and this idea is coming very new to them and they find it very strange that's a different case where they're not had time to talk through the issues or to encounter someone or to be sort of, notions around it that's very different but if you live in a society like ours where we have a legacy like ours and we have a very recent history like ours and you continue to act in a particular way I feel entitled to judge you and to give you [expletive] for your views (Group 2; 25:00)</p>
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	<p>I don't think it's possible not to judge someone, like, I think that, and it's not just me that's thinking that, that we make decisions, unconscious decisions based on contextual social learned behaviours and so obviously we judge people all the time. Like not necessarily consciously and not necessarily in a way that we are aware of (Group 2; 27:00).</p> <p>You don't have the right but you still do, you still end up, you'll sit there and be like you know you probably shouldn't wear that shirt because your boobs hang out to much, because you personally feel your boobs shouldn't hang out for instance, but then for that person they're completely comfortable with that kind of exposure (Group 4; 18:54)</p> <p>Participant 1: it's like (brand) cosmetics that tests on animals so I refuse to buy mac</p> <p>Participant 2: But do you judge other people for buying (brand)</p> <p>Participant 1: A certain type of person buys mac</p> <p>Participant 2. So yes</p> <p>Participant 1: They're probably the meanest people ever (Group 3; 21:10)</p> <p>Everyone has a brain, everyone can make judgements about people around them you know, I think it's natural for everyone to do that if you see something you don't like you naturally form that judgement in your head (Group 4; 27:53)</p>
Judgements and actions	<p>Anyone's allowed to have judgements about anyone else it's what you do with the judgements that's the problem (Group 4; 28:04)</p> <p>I think it all depends on what you mean by the term by the term judge because judging for me is just looking down on someone but not actually acting on it (Group 1; 27:00)</p> <p>Personally, I believe, ok my cousin had a kid, she was sixteen, really not in any position to be having kids... I can judge her for being sixteen and pregnant and stuff, I can, I feel like I can judge her for not taking very good</p>

	<p>care of this child because you now chose to have a child, but now the child teeth are rotting, he's coming over to my gran who looked after him in clothes that go sent home in the day before, you know just not taking care of it. You have to think about responsibility, if you're going to, so it's sort of, I can judge her for not taking responsibility over her own life because it has an effect on someone else... I feel like you can't help judge someone because it could have been avoided (Group 1; 25:31)</p> <p>I think there is a difference between saying I have the right to judge someone in like an absolutist sense or I have a right to judge from my perspectives. So I think we are all able to judge people from our perspective because we hold a succinct account of moral norms, it doesn't mean it can extent outside of that. We can't do anything, aside from placing our judgements, it's not enough for our judgement to create some action against this person... So I can judge them but that judgment is contingent on being my personal judgement it doesn't mean anything outside of that, I don't think. It can't mean anything outside of that (Group 2; 26:14)</p> <p>To me judging them is not going to make any difference to anything, it's going to bring no result. There's no physical change... they don't know that you're judging either, only you know and no positive result is going to come from it so that's my sort of outlook on it, like if there's no sort of actual result then it's pretty much a useless activity (Group 3; 28:28)</p> <p>the act itself is going to bring no change so the act is null (Group 3; 29:20)</p> <p>I think you can judge other people's actions, not the person, but their actions... You can judge what they're going, you can say that's a really wrong thing to do, if you think it's a wrong thing to do but you can't be but like oh this is such a (expletive) thing they did they are so (expletive) (Group 4; 13:05)</p>
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Context	<p>Participant 1: Discernment is based on evidence judgement is based on how you feel</p> <p>Participant 1: But you had to judge that guy was doing something wrong</p> <p>Participant 1: Well I discern because of social norms...</p> <p>Participant 2: So it's not your own personal preference in that situation it's what you believe the world would want you to do? (Group 1; 29:17)</p> <p>I think you sort of place yourself in their situation and then see what you think you would have done in the situation, like externally, you don't have the right to do it you just do it, then whether their action matches yours you sort of judge them (Group 3; 19:16)</p> <p>I feel like most moral judgements are situational (Group 1; 32:00)</p> <p>I was burgled once but I, forgave it because I assumed the people who had done it were in great need but then I later managed to see them and it turned out, that like their clothes cost more than the items they had stolen from me and in that case my moral outrage was exponential. So I think in those kind of cases often pure or innocent need can very much decide which kind of moral judgement is appropriate (Group 1; 32:50).</p> <p>It's very dependent on the situation, how harsh you can be (Group 1; 34:00)</p> <p>Fundamentally it's about how fair things are. That, ultimately is the most basic thing when it comes to morals. Like is it fair on another person, like you can also have religious morals and stuff like that but in theory like whether it's fair to your friend to take the sweets, whether it's fair for other tutlings to not have the same resources, (Group 1; 4:30)</p> <p>it depends on how strong you feel about it (Group 4; 10:19)</p> <p>If you believe that it overrides then you will just do whatever you want to do (Group 4; 10:20)</p>
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	<p>Depending on the consequences, like if I want to go and steal because I really believe it's the right thing because that deserve and I shouldn't have to pay for it and the consequence is that I could go to jail my own beliefs underneath because the risk is to high (Group 4; 10:28)</p> <p>Not in every situation it's wrong, so it's generally wrong but I would let it slide if it was for a reason (Group 4; 15:00)</p> <p>For you, like you used the example of throwing something out the window, I will judge somebody that does that even though it's not such a great impact, to me (Group 4; 22:10)</p> <p>Some people hold things more dear to themselves (Group 4; 22:40)</p>
Harm	<p>you measure it according to the sort of result the output is going to have, like if it's something small and not particularly life then I think it will be judged accordingly (Group 3; 6:00)</p> <p>If one of your decisions involves causing physical pain, then clearly no (Group 3; 6:30)</p> <p>everything you do that is bad will always have a consequence, because that's what makes it bad but everything has different levels of badness based on what you believe is wrong or right (Group 1; 25:40)</p> <p>But that's the whole thing of saying you don't have control over what china is doing but you have control over what you are doing (Group 1; 18:40)</p> <p>I feel like I can apply law right now, and I'm going to do it, ok so they were say there are like certain acts that are prohibited in all societies based on morals, so like murder, rape that sort of thing, but there are somethings</p>

	<p>that the law won't regulate because it's different for each person (Group 4; 04:32)</p> <p>I think that my moral judgement should only extent so far as my actions but then I would also feel obligated to intervene if I was seeing a situation where harm was occurring and I felt like I could do something about it (Group 2; 13:27)</p> <p>I think that a moral decision centres around harm. Like does this decision arm another person, or thing, like does this decision cause harm (Group 2; 8:34).</p> <p>Like borrow/stealing toilet paper from your housemate, it doesn't like carry as much weight as other more serious things (Group 4; 19:00)</p> <p>Something being immoral, like the reason would be because it has effects or consequences, like somethings not immoral just for the sake of it being immoral, it only would be deemed that way because it has a consequence and so the more serious the consequence the more people would more frown upon the thing, so like murder vs stealing toilet paper from your housemates, so there are levels (Group 4; 21:11)</p>
Perception of harm	<p>But it is really interesting if we're talking about the severity of moral decisions, something we acknowledge differs, to think about when you believe your moral decision actually has no literal outcome on anything else, is a drop in the ocean, then we all go yes it's the principle of the thing but that is what a moral dilemma is (Group 1; 18:47)</p> <p>By adding an oil drop and saying I's not going to make a difference you are making a huge difference because everyone else has the same mentality as that (Group 1; 19:38)</p> <p>It just depends on how severe the consequence would be, whether or not it would be worth it (leaving an organisation) (Group 1; 39:03)</p>

Participant 3: I think there are things that we would consider immoral actions even though there is no harm that's done to a person

Participant 2: Like an example

Participant 3: So we think there's something morally reprehensible about drunken driving even if you don't kill anyone when you're driving in that sense (Group 2; 8:50)

Participant 1: But it's so likely to cause harm

Participant 2: Ja. Because the problem with that, in that, the reason that drunken driving is amoral is because it has the possibility for harm.

I wouldn't steal from someone, I would consider stealing immoral um, and theft can be understood as a loss of value right? You've taken something valuable and in that way pirating, and I'm not saying I don't pirate, everyone pirates... It is like taking value away from something, it is theft in that sense (Group 2; 10:00)

I don't think consequences are the only thing that's important though, so there's a big debate in philosophy now between consequentialism and deontology, deontology is that it's not the consequences that are important it is the intention behind the action, so it doesn't matter whether or not, if you intended to kill someone and through some bad luck you didn't end up doing it right, it still considers that deplorable action (Group 2; 32:40)

Participant 1: We all know that there's that rare earth metal thing in the battery in your phone that is directly responsible for destabilising the Congo right?

Participant 2: Cobalt

Participant 1: Cobalt, whatever. We still all have phones. In fact, the decision not to have a phone is much more difficult than the decision not to buy Mylar makeup right? So I can very easily avoid that make up in my life because I actually don't wear a lot of makeup. I don't know how I would live my life without batteries (Group 2; 34:00)

	<p>It's the same as veganism, kind of, getting on that high horse about not using dairy because of the way dairy cows are treated so cruelly but also vegan substitutes are very expensive and I think it is very much a privileged decision to decide to be a vegan to some extent (Group 2; 36:33)</p> <p>Let's say beating someone up and selling them drugs. So in both of those cases in some views of the world you are causing that person harm but consent is a big factor for me (Group 2; 30:36)</p> <p>The important difference between big moral issues and small moral issues is when you will back down. So on a small moral issue, say you want to fight on the principle of the thing but the other person just keeps berating you, sometimes you'll just go, it's not a big thing. It's not worth it and for your own benefit you will withdraw. Whereas with a bigger issue where a decision like that could hold hundreds of lives in the balance that's when it becomes more severe (Group 1; 7:14).</p>
Proximity and awareness	<p>We're working with acid solution and you're meant to throw the acid solution in the special bin and not down the drain then (participant 1) said no (participant 2), you must throw it in the special bin. But then I was just like, drain cleaner is acid but she said no the instructors and stuff said we must throw it in the correct bin but I was like drain cleaner is acid, China is pouring tons of acid in the drains, industrials are polluting all the rivers. Me pouring extremely dilute hydrochloric acid down the drain is not effecting that many people. It's just a drop in the ocean, I don't really care. My views overpowered what the university thought I should be doing which is the morally correct thing let's save the environment etcetera, etcetera, but I was like the environment is stuffed anyway so let's throw it down there (Group 1; 17:26)</p> <p>Ja exactly and so that's something so like in attempted murder there may not even be any consequences or the person might not have even noticed, they might not have suffered any trauma as a result of that, they might not</p>

	<p>even have known unless someone else had seen that this was the case, so there's no harm to them being done there so there's no consequences (Group 2; 35:00)</p> <p>If you get something from KFC and they ask you to add R5 for hope, then usually the moral thing to do is to say yes because its R5 to feed children but a lot of people will just say no because they don't see the children, they are not physically there, it's happening far away so they don't care about it so they just say no (Group 3; 26:18)</p> <p>It's like buying a pair of (brand) shoes, you only see shoes, where did they come from, oh goodness knows but you still but the shoes (Group 3; 26:43)</p> <p>I think people can accept risks for themselves much easier than they can accept others. I think if I knew my actions would affect another person more than it would affect me I would definitely consider it more (Group 4; 11:15)</p> <p>Participant 1: if you're sitting with a group of people and you take out a beer and without knowing it someone there had suffered a childhood that's been affected by alcoholism and by drinking it you've now invoked that and caused them harm</p> <p>Participant 2: I didn't know that though</p> <p>Participant 1: Exactly</p> <p>Participant 2: So the thing is, if I, let's say that someone in our group was a recovering alcoholic and I offer them a beer and I know they're a recovering alcoholic, I'm a (expletive), but if I don't know then I don't think I can be held accountable for it, for a decision I don't perceive any harm in (Group 3; 37:20)</p>
Who is effected	<p>I feel like if it affects me the worst then I'm not going to do it but if it effects someone else bad and doesn't really affect me then I don't care (Group 4; 11:28)</p>

	<p>If it's a person I don't really know or the broader society or community I probably wouldn't care but if I know if do this to participant x then I wouldn't (Group 4; 11:58)</p> <p>How negatively the other person involved's life will be effected (Group 3; 5:37)</p> <p>Don't we rather apply to our immediate life and out immediate situation so when you see it in front of you, where as in terms of torrenting and pirating stuff, you're not going to see the consequence of that the consequence to a single individual is very much less that to a giant corporation (Group 2; 10:24)</p> <p>I don't feel bad if I'm pirating from someone who is rich already but if it was like a small indie band I would feel dreadful (Group 2; 11:06)</p> <p>There's a big trend of people supporting businesses that doesn't test on animals, but then this is happening. So they might not test on animals, but their products are being mined by six-year-old children (Group 2; 36:00)</p> <p>Participant 1: I don't know if you guys have heard of the slavery footprint website? Ok so you go there and it tells you how many slaves in the world you own. And there was an interview with a guy and he said what's the worst thing you could possibly buy, in terms of slavery footprint and anything that contains mylar which is that shiny stuff you put in makeup, that's mind by six-year-old girls in say, northern India who don't live past like eighteen years old basically. So that's something we don't see at all, there's no harm there but it's a deplorable moral action to buy shimmery make up, well I think it is</p> <p>Participant 2: But you don't necessarily know about it</p> <p>Participant 1: Ok but now you do. Ok so you've not seen the harm but, because that what seeing it it's becoming aware of the event of whet, the</p>
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	<p>thing happening, so now I've not seen it but I've heard it so it's more deplorable then for me to continue that make up (Group 2; 34:30)</p> <p>I think people think that, like for example like gay marriage or something like that or like abortions, people will go and protest outside the abortion clinics and they will like chase people away and stuff because they believe their opinion is better (Group 4; 8:53)</p>
Basic universal morals	<p>There is universal morals. They are based on you and how they affect the people around you so you have to balance how does a making a decision affect you and how does it affect the people around you. Because then you can say, when you are faced with a moral dilemma you then analyse this and say does this me and who else does this effect (Group 1; 11:44)</p> <p>The thing is that we seem to have come to terms with the fact that morals are imposed on us from the outside and that they come from ourselves. So the question that there's universal morals that someone can have, don't kill people, don't do this, don't do that, is kind of irrelevant because we get our morals from ourselves anyways. So yes there can be universal morals but they will always be our own personal morals that, in the past questions that you've asked our judgement can over power and say this is actually the better thing... so there can be universal morals but they don't always need to be upheld (Group 1; 30:55)</p> <p>I can't even think of a non-moralistic statement that I can get behind that is true in all contexts (Group 2; 29:00)</p> <p>Rape is universally wrong... (general agreement) but then murder for example, if it's done in self-defence (Group 2; 29:10)</p> <p>Participant 1: We can very clearly, there's a very clearly, just in the actual word used for them, there's a very clear moral difference when you say Murder and when you say euthanasia you're dealing with death in both senses but you're dealing with</p>

	<p>Participant 2: You're dealing with consent</p> <p>Participant 1: You're dealing with consent yes</p> <p>Participant2: and there's no consent ever in rape</p> <p>Participant 1: But somethings I wold say are universally morally applicable (Group 2; 29:30)</p> <p>some things on the upper end of crime that I feel are absolutely always wrong (Group 3; 23:30)</p>
<u>Morality in the organisational context</u>	
Importance of individual and organisational alignment	
Preference and benefits	<p>I think it would be quite important, especially if you work closely with people (Group 1; 52:17)</p> <p>If I had a skill that three companies were interested in... of those three companies. If they equally want my labour then and one of them goes against my morals and the other two don't, I'm not even going to consider the one that does (Group 2; 42:32)</p> <p>Participant 1: I would place a company that aligns with me morally over like money. So</p> <p>Participant 2: I was just about to ask that, but not just money, because one things money but another thing is benefits for you or your family</p> <p>Participant 1: The thing is if it met my basic like, if both companies met my basic needs but the Hitler company, of not the Hitler company, but the company that tests on animals pays me more and gives me a company car and lets me live in a fancy apartment I would like to think, that I would go with the company that I ethically agree with (Group 2; 42:59)</p> <p>My example I think was going more towards companies trying to win me, recruitment rather than me actually looking for the job which is a completely different situation obviously, if you are looking for a job obviously you are willing to sacrifice more because you're not being recruited but in a recruitment situation where I was being offered a very</p>

	<p>similar situation of benefits from all three, all three gave me a car because that's like the standard all three give me dental because that's like the standard... if I found myself in that situation then the company that best aligned with my morality is the company that I would choose (Group 2; 44:30)</p> <p>I'd prefer it. So I'm not saying I would never work somewhere that I ethically disagree with, I'm saying that I would really and truly prefer never to work somewhere I ethical disagree with (Group 2; 42:00)</p> <p>Participant 1: I would be willing to get paid less for a company that I agreed with more</p> <p>Participant2: Where you still get your basic needs covered?</p> <p>Participant 2: Yes... to the point that point that it doesn't like, I don't want to say, that it's not to my detriment. So instance, working at a company that produces Mylar products pays more than working at a company that, at a NGO but I could still work at the NGO and have a moderate lifestyle, I would like to think that I, I would choose a NGO (Group 2; 44:56)</p> <p>Some people see going to work as a job, like it's a way to put food on your table and stuff like that but some other people, like for me my work has to have a purpose, like I have to be happy with what I'm doing every day because you spend so much time doing it (Group 4; 32:20)</p> <p>I think your job performance will also be better if you work for a company that has the same morals as you because it's something you believe in. So like if you work for a company and their morals are different, you won't put everything into it because it's not something you believe in but if you work for a company with the same morals you'll put everything into it because you also believe in it and you want to make a difference (Group 4; 37:02)</p>
Leaving the organisation	<p>It depends on how much it's going to influence you because if you're going to be unhappy every day and it's going to become a very big issue in your life then it's probable not worth it (Group 4; 32:40)</p>

if you don't agree you should probably just move out, move to another company move to another state that agrees with it. Because ultimately your workplace is where you spend most of your time you need to be happy in your situation and not make everyone's lives difficult (Group 3; 32:53)

You must leave the company (Group 1; 38:00)

I think in that case you can't really the person in question making that policy decision so then if you're really so morally outraged by it then leaving the company is probably the best decision (Group 1; 39:46)

Morally if you don't agree with something, you shouldn't work in a company or for someone who does things you don't agree with because I'm sure there are companies out there that do suit all the things you agree with (Group 3; 33:40)

So let's say working in the lab they said when working with a super toxic chemical you could just throw it down the drain... then I would have an issue. So if every day you go there and you know you're polluting a river or whatever, you know, you'll feel bad and you wouldn't want to work there. So I think yes, in certain aspects your morals do need to line up because then you'll be corrupting yourself. Either you become corrupted by them or you just become blind to the corruption, it'll definitely corrupt you in some way (Group 1; 52:58)

I poured myself into (local restaurant) as a (expletive) business. I was working extra hours because I wanted to, I was helping doing the cash ups because I wanted to, I became invested and I wanted this company to succeed but then things started coming out of the woodwork, horrible practices when it comes to hiring waitresses, waiters and waitresses literally attractive yes, unattractive no, that was something that was literally in the hiring process... so the minute this stuff came to my attention and I stated being personally (expletive) around by the company,

	<p>or you know the business, I immediately found another way out and I'm now doing all sorts of other jobs (Group 2; 47:55)</p> <p>I just didn't want to be associated with those people (Group 2; 49:26)</p> <p>We would love to be 100% in line with our morals when it comes to our work place, but it's our work, it's our job it is like the main artery of our living so that being threatened is a really big thing, to any employee I think even if you are a skilled person, or a sought after person, you don't want to be unemployed because even if you are only unemployed for a week or two it's still a big thing as sought after as your skill set is, you don't know, you might leave the company and suddenly there's a dry spell for work for your particular field and then you're (in expletive)... or it might affect your future employment (Group 2; 58:14)</p> <p>At the very least it's going to affect your recommendations. I mean everyone wants to leave on good terms with their employers (59:00)</p> <p>We've spoken very cynically about how we need our jobs very deeply, and we'll overlook most things when we are in desperate need for the money but there are still certain moral values that I hold that I think I would value over that (Group 2; 01:06:08)</p> <p>Participant 1: I also feel like I would always be wanting a way out. If I worked for a company that I thought was morally reprehensible, I would...</p> <p>Participant 2: You would take the first option to leave</p> <p>Participant 1: Ja, temporarily. I wouldn't be committed to that company. I would be doing it because I have no other option (Group 2; 47:35)</p>
Staying in organisations	<p>I think it is important but I wouldn't necessarily get out of an employment situation if there was a conflict because firstly, you would need a job, and secondly, I could just do the best with what I have... There might be someone who completely agrees with company policy and acts completely within that vain where I might be able to make small allowances that someone else might not (Group 1; 52:48)</p>

You as a perspective employee with your own set of morals, could go into a company that doesn't have the same set as yours to try and change it because when you're talking about the top 10% of people you're talking about your managers, your head designers, head scientists, your all of them that have more pull in what happens in the company than the actual owners of the company themselves because they decide the practices that are there after introduced or changed or altered. So then again it goes back to what your role in the company would be and the contract you sign because if you're given the free will the people in the top tier of a company are given then it doesn't really matter because you will be able to over throw whatever's been done by the person before you in the role or whatever the companies policies were before that (Group 4; 37:50)

I think to a certain extent because now I'm thinking about that woman in America whose job it was to hand out marriage certificates but did not believe in same sex marriage and refused to hand out certificates. I think however much her moral code said this is wrong she was still being paid to hand out marriage certificates, so she could have been like, I don't like doing this but here you go, but she still had to be like, here you go. (Group 2; 38:40)

So I'm pro-choice, but I don't think that doctors should be forced to do abortion if they are pro-life, I think they are wrong, but I respect their decision not to be implicated in something they believe to be morally wrong, but I also thing that woman who wouldn't hand out marriage certificates is a (expletive), so I don't know how to reconcile those two points of view (Group 2; 40:15)

That you are in some respects trapped (Group 2; 39:53)

I might be someone going into an office space after looking for work for like nine months and this is the first job I get offered and I see a clause, that they test on animals and I have the chance to be like I'm out because

	<p>this violates my morals but at the same time I can't pay rent. And I realise by making that statement that there's a price tag on my morality (Group 2; 41:14)</p> <p>I might be willing to say that I would prefer to work for it but we don't know whether we can make any judgement on a person for making what decision they do (Group 2; 46:06)</p> <p>Your morals aren't going to pay the bills (Group 2; 47:00)</p> <p>I had this experience when I worked as a student assistant at one of the boarding schools. So when you sign your contract, you are signing into a Methodist school, so your signing into upholding Methodists values those kind of thing but I mean it was my food and my rent for the entire year. so I was in a position where I couldn't really question what was going because I went into it because I needed a place to stay I needed food to eat but it was the whole idea of the school conduct so are the kids dressed in an appropriate way but then again what is appropriate and it's a bigger issue than it is to a single school but how do you speak up against it when you're relying on it (Group 2; 59:19)</p> <p>If your desperation to have a job out ways your disagreement with their ethics then you're still going to take the job (Group 3; 45:18)</p> <p>I think it depends on how strongly you feel about something, because I personally, like if I knew a company has practices that really didn't sit well with me I wouldn't work for them unless I was 100% desperate (Group 4; 24:35)</p> <p>If I had a family to feed I would rather feed my family (Group 4; 25:00)</p> <p>I know it's bad but I need the job so I would just go with it (Group 4; 25:52)</p>
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	<p>I don't try to change who they are but I make it clear I don't agree with them (Group 2; 3:31)</p> <p>Because shutting up, it's not just about trying to change their minds it's also about indicating you don't find their view acceptable (Group 2; 3:46)</p>
Reporting unethical behaviour	
Magnitude of the issue	<p>The problem is when it's only unethical for you, or for a minority of people (Group 1; 49:35)</p> <p>Small things don't report because it makes no difference but the big things report them (Group 1; 51:22)</p> <p>It's all about severity of things because like you're not going to cause a company to close down unless it's justified because it's so horrible. (Group 1; 51:48)</p> <p>Just because I don't like the way they're doing something doesn't mean it's wrong and the you're like that rat as well (Group 4; 30:26)</p> <p>You can expose them but if it's not against the law or the company policy nothing will happen to them anyway (Group 1; 46:36).</p> <p>What about [instructor], the demonstrator in micros who's really mean to [classmate]. Would you report that? Although we did kind of report that actually. She was cruel to her so we reported it, even though she's not really doing anything wrong she's just being strict and harsh and mean (Group 1; 47:55)</p> <p>I've been in the position where, so last year, when we were going, I got a job as a student assistant in the library and we were undergoing training and all the people training me were women and they were very explicit about dress codes but it was very sexist in the way those dress codes were delivered so it was very, so woman, very specifically talking to ladies and</p>

	<p>I was made to feel ashamed about my dress, I was made to feel ashamed about showing your legs because it would quote “distract people” So I find that, like deeply problematic but I’ve never reported them because I don’t think I can... and it’s not an explicit code but there’s no one there with visible tattoos and visible facial, visible piercings and I morally don’t think that’s a relevant hiring practice like tattoos, facial piercings, what you wear, I don’t think that’s relevant in hiring someone but I work for a place that clearly does. But like, I’m weighing up the kind of harm, because it doesn’t kill me to cover my knees every day and like, I kind of let it go but if there was some, I like to think that if there were some, if I was one of my managers specifically bullying someone for something they were wearing, I would like to act up on that (Group 2; 54:40)</p> <p>So perhaps you won’t do it but you won’t do anything about someone else doing it because it’s your moral that it’s wrong to do that but if he doesn’t share it it’s up to him (Group 3; 42:40)</p>
Repercussions and authority	<p>The problem is though for that is if you get in trouble with your company for it and no one takes action from the ethical side (49:20)</p> <p>Maybe collect the opinions of your co-workers before you make the decision (Group 1; 51:51)</p> <p>If I found out the company that I worked for had a, this is going to be arbitrary, but had a section of the facility that I worked at where they were keeping animals to be tested on and I went and I took all those animals away from that place because I believe that they should not be tested on, I’m probably going to be arrested (Group 2; 29:15)</p> <p>I feel as if I have the right to act on it (their moral code) but I’m necessarily saying I would because I fear repercussion (Group 2; 39:40)</p> <p>That’s the big thing losing your job is also a big thing, I mean we rely so much on our income that, that loads of people, it’s guaranteed that there</p>

	<p>are hundreds and thousands of people who overlook things that happen in their workplace because they can't lose their job (Group 2; 39:50)</p> <p>If I could guarantee, there were no repercussions towards myself I would report my bosses (Group 2; 58:00)</p> <p>If I rat this person is it really worth the bad work environment, like I know I have to go to work with this person every single day after that and maybe they don't know it's me but I would say is what they're doing really that bad, is it worth it (Group 4; 29:58)</p> <p>I suppose what's quite important in that case is that the superior understand what is going on so that even if it's not illegal even if it's not something that can be punished for, if there is a situation where someone needs to be let go, someone needs to be replaced, this person does commit some act that is frowned upon in the company the superior has a background to what kind of unfavourable actions this person has been taking part in. So I think then it is quite important (Group 1; 48:16).</p> <p>At the moment I'm dealing with a racist person in my department and if I didn't worry about the fact that I was going to face harsh repercussions from the department, be ousted from them I would have reported him (Group 2; 01:01:30)</p> <p>There are instances that I've experienced with him (a professor in her department) but it's not enough to build a case and so I just keep quite because it's not like I would be telling anyone anything they didn't know, they know, everyone knows that this person is like this but by reporting it I would be formalising this thing that everyone already knows and then it's on me... and particularly that there are senior people who know this as well, so isn't it their job, there are other people to fight in a stronger position (Group 2; 01:02:00)</p>
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Not to sound like super, super cynical of, you know, business but companies exist to make a profit and certain individuals are of greater value to a company than another individual so as a desk jockey I am an asset of a less value than the guy, even if it's another desk jockey, even if he makes the exact same amount of money that make a month, but he's been working there for longer, he understands things better, that kind of thing. If the company decides that that is more valuable to them than me, then I'm always going to come off on the short end (Group 2; 1:03:20)

I assume that my company will value profit over me, over morals, I don't expect a company to be like, moral (Group 2; 1:04:16)

she didn't report it but she did leave because of that. So I'm not exactly sure, if it wouldn't have affected recommendation and that sort of thing I think she would have (Group 2; 1:04:37)

If I see something unethical happening in a business I think it is any single person's responsibility to report it, you know what I mean, I wouldn't just keep quiet, I think it comes down to desperation as well, if I was 100% desperate for a job I would probably keep quiet about it (Group 2; 28:26)

most people don't actually know what the steps are to reporting. Like my boss at the place I used to waitress at used to hit all the girl's bums and he was just super inappropriate and they didn't pay minimum wage and stuff, so for me I didn't need the job so I just quit but there were some people that literally lived of those tips and like, I didn't report it because where would I report it to, and like I's a student so it's not my be all and end all (Group 2; 29:00)

I think a lot of people are very scared, like whistle blowers and that, they're always very terrified, especially depending on how big the issue is, like people lose their jobs and they battle to get into other places and stuff like that (Group 2; 29:48)

<p>Creating outside pressure</p>	<p>I do believe that companies can be incentivised to act morally, so we've all been kind of agreeing that your company is going to choose money over you but if they have the same kind of consumer base that has the same morals as me and I think that this company is doing something wrong and there is a way of alerting the consumer base to this wrong thing then I think you should do it because they you, but also I would want to do it anonymously (Group 2; 1:06:20)</p> <p>Another good example is Edward Snowden, where um, I'm pretty sure everyone knows who Edwards Snowden is, he leaked documents from the NSA that sort of, he felt they were, it was basically sort of surveillance on US citizens and that sort of stuff and he leaked those documents to the press. That's just a good example of where I think it's beneficial, it's damaging but sometimes it needs to happen (Group 3; 31:13)</p> <p>We have like, individual judgements and not much happens outside of that but I think when we have a group, that collectively expresses a judgement outside of that's pretty similar, so for example if a business has a CEO that makes some kind of incredibly sexist or racist, or whatever phobic remarks then as a customer base or a certain amount of the customer base, expresses a moral judgement and then refuses to participate in that store you then a very real sort of have a repercussion and then in a sense a uniform expression of a judgement and then a set of moral ideals (Group 2; 27:30)</p> <p>If it's not illegal, then whoever you're going to tell about it, maybe a rumour about it, and then a lot of people will refuse to buy from that company some institution doing something about it because illegal. If you knew something a bit more was going to happen to discourage it, stop it, then you'd probably do it (Group 3; 40:00)</p> <p>but if people stop buying from the company then you stop making money and you lose your job (Group 3; 40:32)</p>
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	<p>Participant 1: I would make it known</p> <p>Participant 2: So you would tweet?</p> <p>Participant 1: I would tweet the (expletive) out of it. Ja, I would report it to a body that would the circulate it and make it known (Group 2; 01:05:26)</p> <p>I think it's easy to say that but in reality it's a lot harder to act out. I think when you see a guy that's getting a whole lot more money than you on commissions because he's screwing people over you're going to do something about it (Group 3; 43:00)</p>
Awareness of organisational ethics	
	<p>I think if the company policy has been made clear to you before that point and you have kind of gone with it or accepted it then you are also morally obligated to continue with that decision. If it's something that's suddenly sprung on you, you see this whole dilemma and you think 'oh gosh' and then the company says no we have xyz policy in that case I think you're quite justified in going forth with your preferred action. If you knew about policy xyz, you didn't investigate it, you didn't attempt to change it, you didn't bring up anything about it, and now there's a moral dilemma and now that policy isn't benefitting you then I think it's not as justified (Group 1; 38:22)</p> <p>Participant 1: this is on the basis that when I entered the company I knew that they were doing that and I chose to be in a space that challenged my views like that</p> <p>Participant 2: I can judge myself too</p> <p>Participant 1: I can still judge. I can still judge, maybe I won't voice that judgement for fear of losing my job but personally I could be like, wow I work for a (expletive) (Group 2; 47:16)</p> <p>this was something that I didn't know until the very end, it was the thing that was being done the last week of November, we wrapped up work the following week, so I didn't go into this job. (Group 2; 01:01:09)</p>

It's boiling down to an issue of transparency I guess. We go to companies and businesses and stuff like that for a service and I guess ja, I would feel more obligated if I felt it was me making sure the people using this company were fully aware of what they're getting into so they know, I know I am not morally ok with it but they are welcome to be morally ok with it but the thought of someone perhaps like me who came to the company not knowing about this stuff for example to prevent customers not knowing buying into the company and finding out later then going oh (expletive) I've been supporting a company for the last fifty years that tests on animals... Loads of big companies every single year send a large financial report email or booklet to all of their major clients, you know maybe it's a little ridiculous in that exact same form but there should be a similar sort of report back, it's easier to say like, this is our carbon footprint what we've been doing, what we've actually been doing because it's easy to say I'm a finance company I'm going to increase your stocks um, you know they're expected to how exactly how they're doing that, saying I'm a finance company there are my ethical guidelines they should be expected to show how they are achieving these guidelines (Group 2; 01:11:47)

It's also about your own due diligence. You've got to know what you're getting yourself into. (Group 3; 33:56)

No because you sign a contract. Generally, you would have to alter the contract before signing if you have ethical or religious for not agreeing with whatever is stipulated in the contract. So for example out in Uitenhage we have Seventh Day Adventists that do not work on Saturdays and we have Muslims that have to go off at 12 o'clock on a Friday, but that's in their individual contracts, they don't just leave. They don't just say well (expletive) the contract we don't have to be at work from 12:00 until 1:00 because we have mosque or I don't work on Saturday because I'm a Seventh Day Adventist, they had to stipulate before (Group 4; 23:06)

You know what you're getting into before you do it (Group 4; 25:48)

	<p>There are just some times when you keep your mouth shut and you do your job and it's not your life, it's not like you're doing that, you do your job, you keep your mouth shut and you go home because like what's the effort worth you need that job (Group 4; 27:18)</p>
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APPENDIX B: Focus groups discussion points

Discussion Guidelines

Aim

Examining emerging adult's ability to identify moral issues

Discussion points:

- Can you give an example of a moral issue you have had to deal with?
- What do you think makes an issue a moral issue?
- Do you think all moral issues carry the same weight?

Aims

Examining propensity for moral individualism among emerging adults

Discussion Points

- Do you think there are some universal rules for right and wrong that can be applied to everyone?
- If not, do you believe that moral views are decided by individuals?
 - If so what elements do you believe shape these codes?
 - Do you think some influences have more power than others over these codes?
- Do you think one trumps the other? For example, do you believe that individual moral views are more important than what their larger society deems morally correct.
 - Do you think this depends on the action at hand?

Aim

Identifying moral individualism's impact on emerging adult's moral judgements of others

Discussion Points

- Do you believe you have the right to judge the actions of others?
 - If so, do you think this judgement based on your individual moral beliefs or set universal ethics.

- Do you think that these moral judgements can be universal applied?
 - Do you think the same rules should apply for everyone in all situations?
- Do you think the consequences of individual actions play a role in the acceptability of the actions of others?

Aim

Exploring future implications for the workplace

Discussion Points

- Do you think you have the right to act against company policy or ethical code if your actions are in line with your own personal beliefs?
- Do you believe you have the right to make judgements against your employer for business practices you believe are unethical, even if they are not illegal?
- Would you report a fellow worker if you thought their methods of completing organisational goals were immoral, even if they were not technically illegal or against company policy?
- Would you report your company for a similar situation?

- As a potential employee how important to you is it that a company's organisational practices match up with your individual moral views?

APPENDIX C: Participant Consent Form
**AGREEMENT BETWEEN STUDENT RESEARCHER AND
RESEARCH PARTICIPANT**

I (participant's name) _____ agree to participate in the research project of Alison Geddie on Moral Individualism in South African Emerging Adults

I understand that:

1. The researcher is a student conducting the research as part of the requirements for a Masters degree at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. The researcher may be contacted on alisongeddie@yahoo.com (email). The research project has been approved by the relevant authorities, and is under the supervision of Prof Michelle Mey in the School of Industrial Psychology and Human Resources at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, who may be contacted on Michelle.mey@nmmu.ac.za (email).
2. The researcher aims to examine emerging adult's ability to identify moral issue, the propensity for moral individualism among emerging adults, identify moral individualism's impact on emerging adult's moral judgments of others and explore future implications for the workplace
3. My participation will involve focus groups of approximately 45-60 minutes in which my fellow participants and I will be asked to discuss various issues around morality.
4. I may be asked to answer questions of a personal nature, but I can choose not to answer any questions about aspects of my life which I am not willing to disclose.
5. I am invited to voice to the researcher any concerns I have about my participation in the study, or consequences I may experience as a result of my participation, and to have these addressed to my satisfaction.
6. I am free to withdraw from the study at any time – however I commit myself to full participation unless some unusual circumstances occur, or I have concerns about my participation which I did not originally anticipate.
7. The report on the project may contain information about my personal experiences, attitudes and behaviours, but that the report will be designed in such a way that it will not be possible to be identified by the general reader.

Signed on (Date):

Participant: _____ Researcher: _____

APPENDIX D: Tape recording consent form**USE OF TAPE RECORDINGS FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES**

—

PERMISSION AND RELEASE FORM

Participant name & Contact details (address, phone etc)	
Name of researcher & level of research (Honours/Masters/PhD)	Alison Geddie, Masters Industrial Psychology
Title of project	Moral individualism in South African Emerging Adults
Supervisor	Michelle Mey

Declaration (Please initial the blocks next to the relevant statements to confirm)		
1. My role in this study has been explained to me	verbally	
	in writing	
2. I agree to be interviewed and to allow tape- recordings to be made of said interviews		
3 I give permission for the tape recordings to be retained after the study for future research		
Signatures		
<i>Signature of participant</i>		<i>Date</i>
<i>Witnessed by researcher</i>		

APPENDIX E: Ethics Clearance



FORM E

ETHICS CLEARANCE FOR TREATISES/DISSERTATIONS/THESES*Please type or complete in black ink***FACULTY:** Business and Economics Sciences**SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT:** Industrial Psychology and Human Resources

I, (surname and initials of supervisor) Prof. Mey, M. the supervisor for (surname and initials of candidate) Geddie, A. S. (student number) 215126076 a candidate for the degree of Master of Arts Industrial Organisational Psychology with a treatise/dissertation/thesis entitled (full title of treatise/dissertation/thesis): Moral individualism in South African Emerging Adults considered the following ethics criteria (*please tick the appropriate block*):

	YES	NO
1. Is there any risk of harm, embarrassment of offence, however slight or temporary, to the participant, third parties or to the communities at large?		x
2. Is the study based on a research population defined as 'vulnerable' in terms of age, physical characteristics and/or disease status?		
2.1 Are subjects/participants/respondents of your study:		
(a) Children under the age of 18?		x
(b) NMMU staff?		x
(c) NMMU students?		x
(d) The elderly/persons over the age of 60?		x
(e) A sample from an institution (e.g. hospital/school)?		x
(f) Handicapped (e.g. mentally or physically)?		x
3. Does the data that will be collected require consent of an institutional authority for this study? (An institutional authority refers to an organisation that is established by government to protect vulnerable people)		x
3.1 Are you intending to access participant data from an existing, stored repository (e.g. school, institutional or university records)?		x
4. Will the participant's privacy, anonymity or confidentiality be compromised?		x
4.1 Are you administering a questionnaire/survey that:		
(a) Collects sensitive/identifiable data from participants?		x
(b) Does not guarantee the anonymity of the participant?		x
(c) Does not guarantee the confidentiality of the participant and the data?		x

- (d) Will offer an incentive to respondents to participate, i.e. a lucky draw or any other prize?
- (e) Will create doubt whether sample control measures are in place?
- (f) Will be distributed electronically via email (and requesting an email response)?

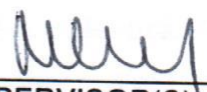
	x
	x
	x

Note:

- If your questionnaire **DOES NOT** request respondents' identification, is distributed electronically and you request respondents to return it *manually* (print out and deliver/mail); **AND** respondent anonymity can be guaranteed, your answer will be NO.
- If your questionnaire **DOES NOT** request respondents' identification, is *distributed via an email link and works through a web response system (e.g. the university survey system)*; **AND** respondent anonymity can be guaranteed, your answer will be NO.

Please note that if **ANY** of the questions above have been answered in the affirmative (**YES**) the student will need to complete the full ethics clearance form (REC-H application) and submit it with the relevant documentation to the Faculty RECH (Ethics) representative.


and hereby certify that the student has given his/her research ethical consideration and full ethics approval is not required.


SUPERVISOR(S)

09/03/2017
DATE


HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

9/3/17
DATE


STUDENT(S)

09/03/2017
DATE

Student(s) contact details (e.g. telephone number and email address):

Alison Geddie- alisongeddie@yahoo.com
0794756960

Please ensure that the research methodology section from the proposal is attached to this form.

Appendix f: Turn it in Originality Report

A. Geddie Masters Treatis			
ORIGINALITY REPORT			
6%	5%	1%	3%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS
PRIMARY SOURCES			
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Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 1992

Publication

21	Submitted to Manchester Metropolitan University Student Paper	<1%
22	www.sciedu.ca Internet Source	<1%
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24	Christin-Melanie Vauclair. "Do cultural values predict individuals' moral attitudes? A cross-cultural multilevel approach", European Journal of Social Psychology, 08/2011 Publication	<1%
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