**ORIGINAL PAPER**

# Emotions and Ethical Decision Making at Work: Organizational Norms, Emotional Dogs, and the Rational Tales They Tell Themselves and Others

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## Abstract

Organizations have become essential institutions that facilitate the vital coordination and cooperation necessary to create value across societies. Recent research within moral psychology and behavioral ethics indicates that emotions play a pivotal role in promoting ethical decision making. The theory developed here maintains that most organizations retain norms that disfavor the experience and expression of many strong emotions while at work. This dynamic inhibits individual's ability to generate moral intuitions and reason about ethical issues they encounter. This occurs as individuals utilize specific emotion regulation mechanisms that stifle the experience and expression of emotion in organizational decision making. Over time, individuals fail to register emotion within organizational decision processes, which increases the prevalence of amoral decision making. Organizational emotion norms also influence the chronic accessibility of specific moral foundations that effect the contents of both moral intuitions that do occur, as well as deliberate reasoning that generates moral judgments.

**Keywords** Ethical decision making · Moral intuition · Moral awareness · Emotion · Emotional regulation

## Introduction

A 2009 Marist College Institute for Public Opinion poll surveyed both the American public and a subsample of business executives regarding a number of business ethics issues. This survey found that 72% of Americans and 56% of the business executive respondents believe that individuals apply a different set of ethical standards at work compared to their private lives. Anecdotally, some of the most notorious corporate wrongdoers exhibited exemplary behavior outside of the workplace. Worldcom's CEO Bernard Ebbers was a pillar of his local church and lauded for his charitable work in his local community—he even taught Sunday school. Enron's Andy Fastow coached little league. However, these charitable and altruistic deeds stand in stark contrast to the massive financial frauds these individuals perpetrated at their respective companies. As another example, NIKE's cofounder and former Chairman Phil Knight recently announced that he

intends to donate his $25BB fortune to various charities, yet NIKE has persistently refused to ensure that workers that produce NIKE products around the world receive a living wage (Goldberg 2016). On a more personal level, most of us would never consider stealing something from a family member, neighbor, acquaintance, or even a total stranger. However, the vast literature on workplace theft indicates that a significant number of people lose their aversion to theft in regard to workplace supplies and company property (See Wimbush and Dalton 1997; Greenberg 1990; Hollinger and Clark 1983). This paper delves into this troubling and confusing question of why individuals appear less ethically sensitive at work relative to other contexts of their lives.

The paper examines this question through exploring the importance of emotion within ethical decision making and how the work context influences individuals' emotional experience and expression. Through this approach, the paper makes several contributions. First, it provides an analysis of how individual decision-making processes interact with the organizational context to map specific mechanisms that impact ethical decision making at work. In this regard, the paper adds to the growing literature that moves beyond pure reason-based models to examine how emotion and emotional regulation influence ethical decision making. Most notably,

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the model elaborates upon Haidt's (2001) social intuitionist perspective to theorize how the discrete emotion regulation mechanisms of situation selection, reappraisal, and expressive suppression can influence an individual's ability to generate moral intuitions and morally reason when at work. Finally, this research also theorizes how the work setting can alter the experience of some emotions which in turn chronically alters the accessibility of discrete moral foundations within organizational life.

The paper presents its arguments in the following manner. First, a definition of emotion is set forth. Thereafter, the literature on dual processing and human cognition is developed. Specifically, the paper examines how preconscious Type 1 and conscious Type 2 cognitive processes relate to ethical decision making. Next, the paper explores how organizations normatively treat emotion as it relates to organizational decision making. Thereafter, this paper outlines a process model that relates how organizational norms impact emotion's essential role in the creation of moral intuitions and moral awareness among individual decision makers. This model emphasizes the role that the emotional regulation mechanisms of situation selection, reappraisal, and expressive suppression play within organizational ethical decision making. Finally, some practical implications of the model and areas for future research are discussed.

## Emotion Defined

The role that emotion plays within ethical decision making represents a critical consideration for the model set forth in the pages that follow. Interestingly, while almost all individuals have direct experience with emotions, a clear and concise definition of the construct has proven elusive (Kleinginna and Kleinginna 1981). Consistent with Ashforth and Humphrey (1995), emotion is defined here as "a subjective feeling state" that results as stimuli trigger physiological arousal that can be both instinctive but also reflect subjective interpretations and social influence depending on the context (p. 99). Emotions, as subjective states, are transient feelings directed at some target that carry the potential to disrupt and direct other cognitive functions (Schwarz and Clore 2007). The existence of a target or object of emotion is significant as this factor represents an important way to distinguish emotions from moods (Roeser 2006; de Sousa 1990). In addition, emotions vary along numerous dimensions that include intensity, valence, and duration, representing adaptive responses to stimuli individuals encounter (Scherer 1984). As a result of their prevalence and power, emotions exert considerable influence on a great deal of human experience, judgment, and behavior, including ethical decision making (Haidt 2001).

The model that follows embraces the position that emotion is essential for effective decision making across a variety of domains that include moral choice (Damasio 1994). In this regard, emotions drive generalized positive or negative affective states to trigger preconscious intuitive judgments (Haidt 2001).[1] Emotions enable these intuitions through individuals' innate "preparedness" to learn emotional responses coupled with accumulated emotional experiences (Haidt and Joseph 2004, p. 58). Emotional learning is socially situated which makes contextual cues very significant as individuals mature. Additionally, people continue to learn over time which enables emotionally salient events to feedback onto subsequent emotional experiences (and the corresponding intuitions that result) (Epstein 2003). Beyond intuition, emotions as applied here are also essential within controlled, rational thinking. Most significantly for our purposes, emotions signal values and beliefs within rational deliberation and can be weighted within the rational calculus individuals apply as they actively think and choose (de Sousa 1990). As an example of this last point, if my young child asks to climb to the top of the monkey bars I am likely to experience multiple emotions such as pride in their independence and fear for their safety. A reasoned response involves weighting these two emotional perspectives to arrive at an appropriate contextualized judgment.

Individuals' emotional experience and the expression of emotion present some unique issues in organizational contexts (Elfenbein 2007). In this regard, discrete literatures have developed that explore the effects of emotional requirements associated with job requirements ('emotion work') (Fineman 2003, 2006), job satisfaction (Locke 1976), as well as research that explores how individuals experience and express specific emotions while at work (see Boudens 2005; Basch and Fischer 2000; Lerner and Keltner 2000). A full discussion of how all emotions might impact ethical decision making on the job is well beyond the scope of this paper. As a result, the theory here focuses on the experience and expression of emotions that are often organizationally disfavored such as excessive anger (Schnall et al. 2008; Wheatley and Haidt 2005).

Anger is defined as "an emotion that involves an appraisal of responsibility for wrongdoing by another person or entity

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[1] Affect is distinct from, and broader than, emotion. Affective states reflect a combination of "attitudes, moods and emotions" that can influence judgment and actions (Gross 2010, p. 212). As Gross notes, attitudes represent more stable beliefs while moods are generalized feeling states that lack a specific target. Although attitudes and moods could also influence positive or negative affective states, the focus within this manuscript is on the specific impact of emotions in driving specific affective states that stimulate intuition. I am thankful to one of the anonymous reviewers for pointing out the need for clarity on this point.

and often includes the goal of correcting the perceived wrong" (Gibson and Callister 2010, p. 68). Anger is typically a negative emotion that can create considerable conflict within organizations. Therefore organizations are likely to exhibit defined norms about how constituent members should experience, limit, and express this emotion at work. Anger is also a highly relevant consideration for models of ethical decision making within organizations. As just one example, Smith-Crowe and Warren (2014) theorize that anger is very significant in stopping the spread of unethical behavior within organizational populations.

## Dual Processing and Human Cognition

Dual processing accounts hold that human cognition exhibits two distinct types of processing as individuals think and make decisions (Evans and Stanovich 2013; Kahneman 2011; Evans 2003, 2008; Greene et al. 2001). First, a great deal of cognition is driven by fast, automatic processes, referred to as "Type 1" processes, that are both instinctive and intuitive (Evans 2011). These processes operate quickly and without conscious awareness (Thompson 2009; Haidt 2001). Type 1 processes frequently generate affect-laden responses that drive judgment and behavior (Zajonc 1980). While Type 1 processes influence thinking considerably, individuals remain capable of more deliberate and involved reasoning, referred to as "Type 2" processing (Evans and Stanovich 2013). When utilizing Type 2 processes, individuals engage in focused cognitive effort to actively evaluate problems, weigh evidence, and make rational decisions (Evans 2011; Kahneman 2011; Simon 1979). Such deliberate and active reasoning requires considerably greater cognitive effort, focus, and time relative to Type 1 processing (Mauss et al. 2007b; Simon 1979). Recent research also stresses that Type 2 processing places meaningful demands on access to working memory. In contrast, Type 1 processes "do not require "controlled attention," which is another way of saying that they make minimal demands on working memory resources" (Evans and Stanovich 2013, p. 236).

Type 1 processing is essential to functioning because individuals face real limitations on their cognitive capabilities (Simon 1947). This form of processing allows people to conserve their limited cognitive resources and focus thought selectively where deeper consideration is advisable, desired, or necessary. In this way, the automatic application of Type 1 processing coupled with more selective application of Type 2 processing is largely adaptive and consistent with evolutionary accounts of human cognitive development (Evans 2011). However, due to its speed and primacy, Type 1 processing exerts a powerful influence on judgments (Thompson 2013). Individuals can find it very challenging to reverse or revise an initial intuitive assessment, even where

extensive rational deliberation eventually occurs (Haidt 2001; Reber 1993).

While many dual processing theories share a number of similarities, meaningful differences exist across the various dual processing accounts (Evans and Stanovich 2013). Some key differences include the extent to which the distinct types of processes amount to qualitatively discrete formal cognitive systems, which processes are more objectively reliable, and how the two types of processes interrelate (See Evans 2011). Furthermore, some researchers still question whether human cognition truly reflects two qualitatively distinct types of thinking (See Kruglanski and Gigerenzer 2011; Osman 2004). In the pages that follow, the model set forth will treat Type 1 and Type 2 thinking as qualitatively distinct types of processes and adopt a default-interventionist approach to how these processes initially interact (See Evans 2007). Default-interventionist models of cognition hold that "Type 1 processing produces a rapid and intuitive default response, which may or may not be intervened upon by subsequent Type 2 reasoning which is slower and deliberate in nature" (Evans 2011, p. 93; Kahneman and Frederick 2002). Default-interventionist approaches stand in contrast to parallel competitive dual processing models that maintain Type 1 and Type 2 processes "operate in parallel, and, in the event of conflicts between them, literally compete for control of thinking and behavior" (Hodgkinson and Sadler-Smith 2018, p. 477).

When Type 2 intervention occurs, it is conditioned upon individuals retaining sufficient time and cognitive processing capacity to allow for more effortful thinking. In this way, intervention is a function of both subjective and contextual factors (Haidt 2001). In addition, I posit that intervention results where individuals fail to generate either a sufficient "Feeling of Rightness" (Thompson 2009) or "Feeling of Appropriateness" (March 1995) regarding their intuitive assessments. Thompson (2009) indicates that the Feeling of Rightness involves individuals' impressions that their intuitive response "is correct" (p. 175). A stronger Feeling of Rightness is generally positively associated with the fluency of the initial intuitive response (Thompson 2013). To this notion of rightness, I add the idea that Feelings of Appropriateness are also relevant to Type 2 intervention. Feelings of Appropriateness are driven by individual identity, consistency, role, and relational considerations (March 1995). In some situations, appropriateness considerations trigger Type 2 intervention even though the intuitive response is objectively "correct." Appropriateness concerns are highly situated, and the propensity for Type 2 intervention on appropriateness grounds will therefore be dependent on the context.

Upon intervention the perspective applied here treats Type 1 and Type 2 processing as collaborative rather than competitive processes (Moore and Gino 2015). The premise advanced is that individuals exhibit an overriding motive to

be *effective* decision makers within their thinking and deciding. This broad concept of effectiveness reflects the fact that individuals at times are highly motivated to make an objectively correct decision, while in other contexts concerns such as uncertainty, relatedness, or group cohesion can lead them to target acceptable or appropriate decisions (Cyert and March 1963). Once intervention occurs, both reasoning and further intuitions can influence judgment as Type 1 and Type 2 processes interact collaboratively and iteratively to arrive at an effective decision (Pastötter et al. 2013). This collaboration among Type 1 and Type 2 reasoning can occur both sequentially and simultaneously (Epstein 2003). Neither form of processing is 'better' per se, as both Type I and Type 2 processes are "superior in some important ways and inferior in other important ways" (Epstein 2010, p. 304). However given their priority, the initial intuitions derived from Type 1 processes often influence the Type 2 processing that follows (Evans 2011; Epstein 2003).

Finally, it bears consideration that the approach here shares important elements with Epstein's (2003) Cognitive-Experiential Self-Theory of Personality ("CEST"), a dual processing account of human cognition that also relies heavily on emotion. Specifically, CEST theorizes that human cognition and behavior is a function of a preconscious experiential system driven by emotion along with a rational system that is slower and works via logical inference and abstraction. While my model mirrors a number of aspects of the CEST perspective, particularly once the intervention of Type 2 processes results, some key points of differentiation do exist. Most notably, Epstein (2003) maintains that the rational system (Type 2 processing) within CEST is emotionless and "affect-free" (p. 161). In the instant model, emotion is an element within both Type 1 and Type 2 processing. This difference represents a meaningful conceptual distinction. However, based upon the simultaneous interaction of the experiential and rational systems both models envision, the practical implications of this distinction appear much less significant. In some ways, it amounts to a philosophical difference regarding the boundaries of rationality, a question well beyond the scope of this paper. The key point is that any strict separations between emotion and pure reason "seem to be more theoretical ideals of Western culture than observed empirical facts" (Shrivast et al. 2017, p. 387).[2]

## Type 1 and Type 2 Ethical Decision Making Perspectives

Ethical decisions represent a specific category of human judgments that are "both legally and morally acceptable to the larger community" (Jones 1991, p. 3). Due to the influence of several notable moral philosophical traditions such as utilitarianism and deontology, the study of ethical decision making has historically stressed the role that reason plays within ethical choice. (Moore and Gino 2015; Sadler-Smith 2012). As a result, a great deal of influential research within ethical decision making has focused on the Type 2 deliberative reasoning processes (See Jones 1991; Rest 1986; Kohlberg 1969). In recent years, however, researchers have placed greater emphasis on how Type 1 processes influence ethical decision making (See Moore and Gino 2015; Sonenshein 2007; Reynolds 2006a; Haidt 2001). As noted in the preceding section, the default-interventionist perspective applied here maintains that both Type 1 and Type 2 processes are relevant within decision making, and this includes decisions with ethical dimensions.

In developing how Type 1 and Type 2 processing function in regard to ethical decision making, the process model set forth here extensively leverages Jonathan Haidt's social intuitionist perspective. Haidt (2001) argues that a substantial amount of our moral judgments result through an intuitive process in which moral sensitivity and judgment are driven by emotion. Intuitions "pop into consciousness without our being aware of the mental processes that led to them" through felt emotions that generate positive or negative affective states creating "feelings of approval or disapproval" (Haidt and Joseph 2004, p. 56). In this way many moral judgments represent aesthetic judgments that occur as intuitive responses to emotion-laden stimuli (Haidt 2008). As such, these judgments stem from Type 1 processes, and emotions "serve as internal guides" or signals that trigger the intuitive affective evaluation of moral problems (Damasio 1994, p. xv; Wilson 1975).

Individuals derive their moral intuitions through "innate psychological mechanisms that coevolved with cultural institutions and practices" (Graham et al. 2009, p. 1030). Innateness in this sense means that individuals are capable of recognizing moral concerns or "foundations" within decision contexts a priori due to heritable characteristics (Graham et al. 2009; Marcus 2004). However, the content and contextual relevance of the various moral foundations (and thus the intuitions generated within a given context) are subject to broad cultural and direct social influences that are learned over time (Haidt and Joseph 2007). In this way, an individual's embeddedness influences both the applicable norms that elicit discrete emotional responses and the rationalizations people employ to justify their intuitive moral

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[2] I am again grateful to one of the anonymous reviewers and the editor of this manuscript for highlighting the significance of emotion within the CEST perspective and how it might relate to the model I develop here.

judgments as needed (Waldmann et al. 2012; Haidt 2001). Haidt and Graham (2007) identify five distinct categories of innate moral foundations, two that focus on individual rights and well-being ("individualizing foundations"), and three that highlight group concerns ("binding foundations"). The individualizing foundations involve innate recognition of concerns about individual harm/care and fairness/justice/reciprocity (Haidt and Joseph 2007). The binding foundations involve concerns associated with ingroup/loyalty, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity (Graham et al. 2009).

Within the social intuitionist model, Type 2 processing primarily intervenes after-the-fact of moral judgment "when explanations and rationalizations must be conjured" to explain and defend one's judgment to others (Tenbrunsel and Smith-Crowe 2008, p. 574). That said, on some occasions individuals do exhibit a deliberate, reasoned moral decision making process that overcomes their initial moral intuition and alters their judgment (Haidt 2001). In addition, individuals can encounter problems where they either fail to generate an intuitive judgment or they experience multiple conflicting intuitions and therefore engage Type 2 processes to ultimately arrive at a judgment (Moore and Gino 2015; Haidt 2001). However, from the social intuitionist perspective the Type 2 processes are much less dominant than traditional views of ethical decision making imply. Rather, individual's initial moral intuitions often prove very challenging to overcome, meaning a great deal of ethical decisions are determined through Type 1 processing in which discrete emotions generate affective states of approval or disapproval (Greene and Haidt 2002).

Although empirical support for the social intuitionist approach continues to develop (see Haidt and Kesebir 2010; Haidt 2007; Wheatley and Haidt 2005), the extent to which moral judgment results through intuition remains a point of contention within moral psychology (Huebner et al. 2008). However, the idea that emotion plays an important role within moral reasoning and judgment is much less controversial, even where the primacy or pervasiveness of intuition is debated (Griffith et al. 2016; Kligyte et al. 2013). Given these considerations, the model developed here embraces the notion that the use of moral intuition is prevalent within individual ethical decision making. That said, I do not adopt the extreme social intuitionist position that the vast majority of Type 2 moral reasoning simply represents post hoc rationalization to support intuition. Such rationalization clearly does occur. The assumption here, however, is that Type 2 processes intervene more frequently than the social intuition perspective traditionally provides. This Type 2 processing of ethically charged decisions is also highly dependent on emotional reactions individuals derive in context.

In regard to emotion and Type 2 processing of ethical questions, Rest (1986) provides a highly influential rationalist process model of ethical decision making. While Rest's approach assumes that ethical decision making results through Type 2 processing, it does not proscribe a specific approach to moral reasoning that individuals ought to apply. However, a critical component of this model is that individuals must attain awareness that an ethical issue exists as a necessary step in making a moral decision. Moral awareness is defined as an individual's "determination that a situation contains moral content and legitimately can be considered from a moral point of view" (Reynolds 2006b, p. 233). In the absence of moral awareness, decisions result instead through an amoral process even if the actions comport with the relevant ethical requirements (Tenbrunsel and Smith-Crowe 2008).

Numerous factors such as the characteristics of the issue under consideration (Jones 1991) and individual differences in moral sensitivity (Reynolds 2006b) are posited to drive moral awareness. Emotion is also a critical factor that stimulates moral awareness (Reynolds and Miller 2015). In this regard, emotions signal that issues contain moral content as Type 2 processing intervenes to reason about a problem and formulate an appropriate judgment. While there are distinct factors that dictate whether Type 2 processing will intervene highlighted below, emotional reactions increase the probability that individuals attain moral awareness and consider relevant moral dimensions within their Type 2 reasoning capacity. However, individuals also remain capable of discounting and weighting emotional considerations as they actively deliberate and decide. In addition, social factors again define normative expectations about appropriate emotional experience and inform this process of becoming morally aware. In this way, emotions carry out a signaling function within both Type 1 and Type 2 processing in regard to ethical dimensions of decisions, stimulating both Type 1 moral intuitions and moral awareness critical to Type 2 reasoning.

A great deal of emotion's impact on both Type 1 and Type 2 processing occurs through the ways that emotions influence attention (Gaudine and Thorne 2001). Attention "describes the process by which individuals focus information processing on a specific set of sensory stimuli at a moment in time" (Ocasio 2011, p. 1287). Emotions drive attention to specific stimuli present within the broader environment (Öhman et al. 2001). This emotion-driven attention reflects an automatic process and occurs prior to more deliberative Type 2 assessment of stimuli (Öhman 1993). For moral issues in particular, emotion "draws our attention to the morally salient features of our environment" which heightens an individual's sensitivity to these moral features of a decision (Huebner et al. 2008, p. 1). Emotion makes moral considerations inherently more salient, vivid, and accessible (Fiske and Taylor 1991). Emotional experience retains this signaling capacity as Type 2 reasoning intervenes leading to a morally aware process (Gaudine and

Thorne 2001). In this sense, an individual's emotional compass draws attention to the moral dimensions of decisions that they would otherwise fail to attend to in the absence of these feelings.

In summary, the ethical decision making process envisioned here is one in which the "rational and non-deliberative processes appear to be co-dependent and work cooperatively" (Moore and Gino 2015, p. 245). The model adopts a default-interventionist approach in which emotion frequently stimulates moral intuitions through Type 1 processes (Evans 2007; Haidt 2001). These intuitions generate affective states of approval or disapproval that lead to moral judgments that result without active Type 2 reasoning (Haidt 2008). Type 2 processing can intervene to provide rationalizations to support intuitions and also enable morally aware individuals to work through a focused and deliberate decision process that leads to reasoned judgments (Haidt 2001). However Type 1 processes, due to their prevalence and speed, exert a considerable impact on moral judgments. Emotion independently remains relevant to Type 2 processes through its capacity to stimulate moral awareness as an individual reasons about problems with ethical content. In these ways, emotion is a vital component of an individual's holistic ethical decision making process.

## Emotion and Organizational Contexts

Organizations represent discrete social contexts that place unique requirements on how individuals experience and express emotions in ways that impact ethical decision making. In particular, organizations exhibit norms that regulate and inhibit emotional experience and expression, particularly in regard to certain disfavored emotions such as anger (Ashforth and Humphrey 1995; Stearns and Stearns 1989). These workplace norms are influenced by broader societal norms, but also reflect organizational culture and role expectancies tied to an individual's position within the organizational hierarchy (Rafaeli and Sutton 1989). To be clear, the contention that organizations often proscribe or limit emotional experience or expression in no way implies that organizations are cold, emotionless places. People clearly feel and express emotions at work all the time. Organizations also exhibit considerable variation in terms of their norms about emotional experience and expression. The assertion here is simply that organizations are contexts where the norms about emotional experience and expression are generally more defined and restrictive relative to other social contexts such as friendships or family relationships.

Organizations develop these more restrictive norms about emotional experience and expression for a number of reasons. First, organizations often enact competitive strategies that require employees to project positive emotions such as enthusiasm, happiness, or engagement (Fineman 2006). Second, organizations create value through the cooperative efforts of their constituent members. This vital cooperation also heightens interdependencies that generate increased levels of emotional stimuli (Kelly and Barsade 2001). Therefore, emotions, particularly extreme or negative emotions such as anger, must be managed to foster essential cooperation and ensure that employees can work together effectively over time (Boudens 2005). One significant way to accomplish this is to define and limit how emotions are both experienced and expressed within the organizational setting. Finally, while there can be meaningful differences between how individuals actually feel and the emotions they choose to express, organizational norms "define what we should feel in various circumstances" (Hochschild 1979, p. 289). This is significant because an emotion an individual chooses to express feeds back on to their internal emotional state so that "inner feelings may change and become consistent with expressed feelings" (Rafaeli and Sutton 1989, p. 14). As a result, organizational norms about the expression of emotion are internalized and alter how individuals actually experience feelings while at work. In these ways, organizational life places unique burdens on individuals to effectively regulate both their emotional experience and expression while at work.

Formally, emotion regulation involves "the evocation of thoughts or behaviors that influence which emotions people have, when they have them, and how people experience or express these emotions" (Richards and Gross 2000, p. 411). Regulation is goal driven and results either through an individual's willful management of their emotional experience or via subconscious, automatic mechanisms (Gross 2015; Gyurak et al. 2011; Mauss et al. 2007b). The organizational norms discussed above make emotion regulation a highly salient goal when individuals are at work. Generally, in order to successfully regulate emotion, individuals apply specific strategies as they experience their feelings and decide whether to express them in specific contexts like the workplace. Individuals focus their emotion regulation efforts on both antecedent and response conditions (Gross and John 2003). Antecedent emotion regulation strategies operate prior to emotions becoming experienced while response-based strategies are enacted after feelings arise and emotional responses are triggered (Heilman et al. 2010; Richards and Gross 2000; Gross 1998).

The initial stage of emotion regulation involves identification. Identification occurs when an individual perceives that an emotional response is beginning and determines if "the value attached to the emotion is sufficiently negative or positive to activate regulation" (Gross 2015, p. 14). As emotions register and valuation occurs, some emotion regulatory responses can trigger automatically (Mauss et al. 2007a; Frijda 1988). Within this process of valuation, organizational
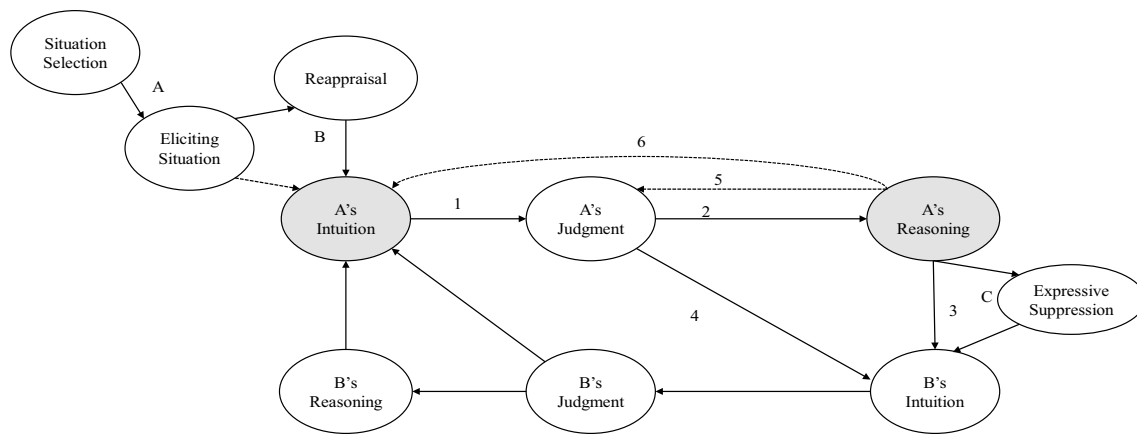
**Fig. 1** Adapted from Haidt (2001). The numbered links for Person A only (1) the intuitive judgment link, (2) the post hoc reasoning link, (3) the reasoned persuasion link, (4) the social persuasion link, (5) the reasoned judgment link, and (6) the private reflection link. The A link represents the influence of situation selection and its impact on exposure to eliciting situations, the B link reflects the reappraisal tendency, link C represents suppression within reasoned persuasion. A's Intuition and Reasoning mechanisms are shaded to highlight that the organizational context can alter the content of the intuitions and reasoning that result

norms about emotion place constraints upon both the type and intensity of permissible feelings, and whether subsequent expressions of these emotions in the workplace context are acceptable (Griffith et al. 2016). These organizational norms once experienced sufficiently (or over-learned), allow "rapid automatic processing on a schematic level" that supports a preference to mitigate emotional experience within organizational life, particularly in regard to strong negative emotions like anger (Scherer 1995, p. 245; Elfenbein 2007). In this way, discrete emotion regulation strategies become routinely engaged over time as individuals become socialized within their organizations (Campos et al. 2004; Bartel and Saavedra 2000).

There are a number of specific emotion regulation strategies that individuals apply at either the antecedent or response stages that are relevant to ethical decision making within organizations. Situation selection is an antecedent strategy that involves affirmatively choosing environments expected to generate desired emotions and avoiding situations expected to create unwelcome emotions (Gross 1998). Another antecedent approach is reappraisal whereby individuals construe situations in ways that decrease the emotional significance of these stimuli (Lazarus 1991; Gross 1998). When effective, reappraisal dramatically reduces an individual's subjective emotional experience and "actually preempts full-blown emotional responses" (Richards and Gross 2000, p. 41). In contrast, expressive suppression is a response regulation strategy utilized after the emotional content of stimuli has been subjectively experienced (Richards and Gross 1999). Expressive suppression thus involves an individual's conscious efforts to inhibit the expression of their emotional reactions to decisions or events (Gross 1998). Organizational norms lead individuals to apply these regulation strategies regularly, and this impacts decision making when individuals encounter ethical issues at work.

## Ethical Decision Making and Emotion Regulation at Work

The central premise advanced here is that emotion plays an essential role in generating individual moral intuition through Type 1 processing and morally aware reasoning essential to effective Type 2 processing, but the organizational work context inhibits this process. Emotion is a critical trigger that drives individuals' attention and signals to them that moral dimensions are present within decisions they face (Damasio 1994). It leads people to either arrive at an intuitive moral assessment of the issue (Haidt 2001) or triggers moral awareness that ethical concerns bear on the problem at hand as they deliberate and reason (Reynolds and Miller 2015). However, organizational norms in regard to both feeling and display rules often disfavor the experience and expression of many emotions (Elfenbein 2007). Over time, this conditions individuals to regulate both their internal reactions to emotionally laden stimuli as well as the expression of many feelings they experience when at work (Ashforth and Humphrey 1995). A de-emotionalized decision process becomes habitual and automatic, as individuals learn that their organization represents a context where they need to make and support decisions in less emotional (i.e. rational) terms (Ashforth and Humphrey 1993; Ekman 1984).

The process model envisioned here is set forth in Fig. 1. Individuals differ in their levels of emotional awareness (Taylor 1994) and moral attentiveness (Reynolds 2008).

In addition, attention is a limited cognitive resource (Lavie 1995). Individuals in contexts such as the workplace face numerous and often competing demands on their attentional capacity (Cyert and March 1963). Thus, the possibility always exists that individuals may fail to notice relevant moral aspects of the problem due to individual differences in attentiveness or limitations on attentional resources (Butterfield et al. 2000; Fiske and Taylor 1991). When individuals fail to notice the ethical dimensions of a problem, they do not experience the corresponding moral emotions and neither a moral intuition nor moral awareness results. Rather, the individual makes an amoral decision that fails to account for the moral dimensions relevant within the decision context (Tenbrunsel and Smith-Crowe 2008).

In many instances, however, individuals are able to notice environmental cues sufficient to trigger an emotional response and generate an affect-laden moral intuition. This intuitive mechanism represents an automatic Type 1 process. However, within organizational contexts, workplace norms that limit the experience and expression of feelings can impede this mechanism. This transpires as individuals internalize organizational norms and come to habitually apply emotion regulation strategies (Gross 2015). When individuals join an organization they are enculturated about organizational norms in regard to emotional experience and expression (Rafaeli and Sutton 1989). In the process envisioned here, individuals initially continue to experience many emotions, but quickly learn what emotions are acceptable to experience and express as they interact with other organizational members. As a result, the organization's norms become internalized, and individuals enact the regulation strategies of situational selection, reappraisal, and expressive suppression more frequently. The internalized norms further alter individuals' actual emotional experience through defining specific acceptable emotions that can stimulate intuitions or form the basis of morally aware reasoning tied to distinct moral foundations.

## Situation Selection

We begin with the antecedent regulation mechanism of situation selection (Link A in Fig. 1). Individuals often anticipate both the emotions they expect to experience in specific decision making contexts and the emotions the decision itself will lead them to experience in the future (Loewenstein et al. 2001). Differences in emotional sensitivity further imply that some people are more likely than others to recognize that a decision context carries the potential to generate specific emotions. However, most individuals prefer to avoid the experience of unpleasant emotions and they utilize a variety of techniques to limit their exposure to such feelings (Gross 1998; Freud 1936). Situational selection is an emotion regulation mechanism whereby individuals avoid

contexts that they expect will generate unwanted or unpleasant emotional experiences (Gross 2015). Noteworthy factors that make unpleasant emotional experiences more or less likely include both the issue under consideration and the people involved in a particular decision (Weiss and Cropanzano 1996). At work, selection causes individuals with greater emotional sensitivity to avoid organizational contexts where the potential to experience unwanted or unpleasant emotions is high. This selection effect is stronger where the organization's norms against the experience of specific emotions are well defined and these discrete emotions are anticipated to result.

Decisions with moral dimensions often present a clear risk that they are likely to generate negative or unwanted emotional experiences (Kligyte et al. 2013; Schnall et al. 2008). Situational selection implies that individuals will avoid these types of decision contexts when possible. In addition, individuals with greater emotional sensitivity are more likely to anticipate emotional factors and therefore enact selection. As a result, organizations face a danger that the individual or groups that make decisions about ethical problems are less sensitive to the essential emotional responses that generate vital moral intuitions or moral awareness (Haidt 2001; Rest 1986). These selection concerns are mitigated somewhat by defined job responsibilities and the hierarchical structure of organizations that make it difficult for individuals to self-select their situations on all occasions. However, some degree of flexibility surely remains. Furthermore, the organizational hierarchy can at times enable a division of emotional labor through processes such as delegation to facilitate situation selection for certain individuals (Elfenbein 2007; Ashforth and Humphrey 1995). As a result, situational selection impairs the organizational capacity for ethical decision making through this subtle influence on who actually makes morally sensitive decisions. The above considerations lead to the following propositions:

**Proposition 1a** *Individuals with greater emotional sensitivity are more likely to utilize situation selection within organizational decision making for decisions that carry significant ethical issues.*

**Proposition 1b** *The positive relationship between individual emotional sensitivity and the use of situation selection within ethical decision making is moderated by the strength of the organizational norms about limiting emotional experience.*

## Reappraisal

Reappraisal (Link B) is a second antecedent emotion regulation mechanism relevant within organizational ethical decision making. Reappraisal results via both attentional

and schematic mechanisms (Gross 1998). Attentional reappraisal involves situations where individuals automatically redeploy their attention away from emotionally charged dimensions of stimuli and toward more neutral aspects (Gross 2015). Schematic reappraisal results as individuals utilize discrete schemas to interpret stimuli and make sense of events (Weick et al. 2005; Weick 1995). These schemas or knowledge structures also activate automatically in response to "the simple registration of sensory inputs" to facilitate sensemaking and achieve regulation goals (Mauss et al. 2007a, p. 148). Organizational norms that limit emotional experience are over-learned, and their application becomes habitual and automatic (Elfenbein 2007). These norms combined with the reappraisal mechanism cause individuals to either fail to attend to emotion-laden aspects of situations or code emotionally charged issues in less emotional, and thus more manageable, ways.

For ethical issues in particular, this means that individuals learn to schematically frame decisions as business problems rather than moral questions. (Tenbrunsel and Smith-Crowe 2008; Tenbrunsel and Messick 1999). In this sense, individuals within organizations ask themselves what type of decision they face and how someone like them ought to decide such an issue given the context (Messick 1999; March 1995). Within most organizations, the answer to this question is that people ought to be decision makers who are not driven by excessively emotional considerations (Tversky and Kahnemann 1981; Simon 1979). This broad goal is sufficient to trigger reappraisal that limits an individual's ability to register emotions and thereafter derive moral intuitions (Mauss et al. 2007a). Instead, through both attentional and schematic reappraisal, organizational decisions are driven by amoral considerations in which the moral components of a question are neither noticed nor considered (Tenbrunsel and Smith-Crowe 2008).

Reappraisal is envisioned as a very powerful emotion regulation strategy that influences organizational ethical decision making significantly. This is the case because reappraisal is a Type 1 process that functions automatically without any conscious awareness that regulation has occurred (Mauss et al. 2007a). In light of this, reappraisal is a mechanism that is prevalent for individuals that need to conserve cognitive resources (Mauss et al. 2007b). Given the complexity and uncertainty associated with many organizational decisions, the need for cognitive economy is often in high demand in work contexts (Simon 1947). As a result, reappraisal is expected to occur fairly regularly within organizational settings. In addition, upon reappraisal individuals may still reach a quick, intuitive assessment of a decision. However, the regulation mechanism stifles relevant emotional aspects of the stimuli impairing the signal that moral concerns are relevant to this Type 1 assessment. The reasoning set forth leads to two additional propositions:

**Proposition 2a** *Individuals are more likely to apply reappraisal when facing issues with significant ethical dimensions within organizational decision making.*

**Proposition 2b** *The positive relationship between reappraisal and decisions with ethical dimensions is moderated by the strength of the organizational norms about limiting emotional experience.*

## Moral Intuition

Even after individuals are enculturated, selection and reappraisal do not always preclude individuals from registering emotions sufficient to trigger moral intuitions. The model developed here remains probabilistic not deterministic. In addition to dampening emotional experience through antecedent processes, organizational norms can also alter the specific emotions individuals experience and the content of the corresponding intuitive judgments that result. As noted earlier, individuals derive moral intuitions across five distinct moral foundations (Haidt and Graham 2007). Haidt (2001) maintains that intuitions "within culturally supported ethics become sharper and more chronically accessible" while those with less support "become weaker and less accessible" (p. 827). The organizational context maintains dominant cultural norms that define appropriate emotional experiences (Elfenbein 2007). These norms chronically alter the accessibility of discrete moral foundations to favor those that align with culturally endorsed emotions and virtues. Specifically, I argue that relative to other settings, most organizational work contexts make the moral foundations tied to ingroup/loyalty and authority/respect more salient and available compared to harm/care and fairness/reciprocity foundations.

This is the case because organizations represent defined communities of shared interests that require extensive cooperation to create value and achieve their goals (Child 1972). These contextual factors increase the salience of the two binding moral foundations referenced above and lead people to discount other foundations that might otherwise be relevant. As an example, whistleblowers with legitimate claims are often disliked, undermined, and viewed as disloyal by other members of their organizations (Cortina and Magley 2003). Such feelings reflect that in-group and loyalty considerations are prioritized at the expense of other concerns such as the individual welfare of the whistleblower. In this way, emotion norms can influence both the target of the emotional reaction and the content of the emotional experience itself. Rather than feeling anger at a wrongdoer, individuals experience dislike for a disloyal whistleblower.

That said, individuals exhibit meaningful differences in their propensities to access discrete moral foundations (Graham et al. 2009). Thus, some individuals will still experience

emotions that trigger harm or fairness concerns. However, they remain less likely to state these concerns in emotional terms given organizational norms regarding the expression of emotion and the regulation mechanism of expressive suppression (discussed below). In addition, the organizational setting does not eliminate the relevance of moral foundations associated with individualized intuitions, it only makes them chronically less accessible. Thus, severe instances of harm or injustice are still expected to trigger the appropriate emotional experiences for individuals with the corresponding intuition still accessible on these more extreme occasions. Finally, when harm or fairness concerns involve the self rather than discrete others, I posit that individuals remain more likely to experience emotions that trigger intuitions tied to the individual moral foundations, although reappraisal can still limit this effect. Thus, when we are treated unfairly we are more likely to experience emotions like anger compared to when we observe others like our whistleblower from above receiving similar unfair treatment. The above considerations lead to the following proposition:

**Proposition 3** *Moral intuitions derived from the binding moral foundation are more frequent compared to moral intuitions derived from the individualizing moral foundations within organizational decision making.*

## Moral Reasoning

As noted, a key question within a default-interventionist model such as the one envisioned here involves specifying conditions that cause Type 2 reasoning processes to intervene within a specific decision context (Thompson 2009). As with attention, some individuals are characteristically more inclined to engage in Type 2 reasoning (Evans 2007; Epstein 2003). In addition, as previously noted, competing demands on cognitive resources can influence the likelihood of Type 2 intervention, with the potential for intervention falling as cognitive resources become scarce (Evans 2011). Under a social intuitionist approach, Type 2 reasoning is expected to occur either to provide rationalizations for moral intuitions or to generate a judgment where a dispositive intuition does not result (Haidt 2001). Consistent with this, Type 2 intervention within the model presented here is influenced by multiple subjective factors, but a threshold question is whether any initial intuition provides a sufficient "Feeling of Rightness" (Thompson 2009) or "Feeling of Appropriateness."

Thompson (2009, 2013) argues that individuals are motivated to obtain a correct response when faced with a decision. As a result, an individual's subjective confidence in their initial intuition strongly influences whether they will exert additional cognitive effort and engage Type 2 processing. The subjective Feeling of Rightness exists along a

continuum and can be influenced by the perceived fluency with which the intuition arrives as well as a person's subjective level of domain-relevant expertise (Thompson 2009).[3] As a general rule, when people have stronger feelings that their intuition is correct, they are more likely to rely on this intuitive response. Thus, where the Feeling of Rightness is higher, Type 2 reasoning processes are less likely to intervene.

Within organizational settings, however, individuals often face more extensive requirements to justify a decision and the reasoning behind it to others. In this way, organizations present significant relational concerns that can trigger more frequent Type 2 processing compared to other contexts. Provided that a moral emotion registers, the deliberative reasoning process that follows represents a morally aware process.[4] Type 2 reasoning is expected to commonly provide post hoc rationalizations consistent with an initial intuitive judgment provided the Feeling of Rightness is sufficiently high (Link 2 in Fig. 1) (Haidt 2001). However, the organization's norms about emotional experience impact this post hoc reasoning process to generate norm-consistent rationalizations along Link 5 in Fig. 1. These rationalizations that form the conscious basis for judgments emphasize more pragmatic reasoning strategies such as cost–benefit analysis that discount emotional factors in ways consistent with organizational norms. Similar to the process that stimulates intuition, moral judgments derived from in-group and authority foundations also grow more accessible and thus prominent within the post hoc rationalization process. Furthermore, these same biases toward pragmatic reasoning and specific moral foundations are also anticipated to result where a strong Feeling of Rightness does not exist and individuals engage in more extensive Type 2 processing and search. In

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[3] Thompson's (2009) feeling of rightness represents a metacognitive experience or second-order judgment that assesses the extent to which another cognitive process has functioned properly. In this sense, the feeling of rightness is an additional feeling generated alongside an intuition that cues whether to engage more deliberate Type 2 reasoning. There is debate whether this metacognitive process itself is part of Type 1 or Type 2 processing, or whether it amounts to a third type of cognitive process (See Evans 2009). This question is also well beyond the scope of this paper. The key consideration for our purposes is that the intuition is accompanied by a confidence level that when sufficiently low, will trigger Type 2 reasoning.

[4] Emotion's role in moral awareness is consistent with an interpretation of emotional experience as a part of individual's rational processing and thinking (de Sousa 1990). Along these lines, the influence of organizational norms implies that certain subjective emotional experiences are more objectively appropriate within the organizational setting than others. The key feature for the model is emotion's signaling value (Damasio 1994). Here I take the position that neither intuition nor rational thought is per se better or worse, only that emotion is critical to drawing our attention to moral dimensions of issues as we derive intuitions and/or reflect more deeply on moral questions.

this way, morally aware Type 2 reasoning that generates a judgment will still minimize individualizing foundational concerns. The overall result is a dampening of many emotional signals within organizational contexts that consistently blinds individuals to specific moral aspects of many decisions they face at work.

To illustrate, consider the example of a technology company that is contemplating capturing and monetizing extensive personal information about its users. Some members of the organization may experience emotional discomfort regarding this course of action that leads to the moral intuition that this strategy is morally wrong. This intuition is grounded in concerns over individual privacy, fairness, and the harm this approach could create. However, this thinking reflects an emotion-driven rationale which is disfavored within organizational decision making. Although this intuition engenders a strong Feeling of Rightness, the decision makers recognize they will need to explain their thinking to others within the firm. This triggers Type 2 processing whereby individuals rationalize that the contemplated approach is problematic because it presents substantial reputational risks for the organization. While this conclusion is consistent with an intuitive judgment that the course of action is morally wrong due to the harm it can cause individuals, the conscious reasoning that supports this conclusion is very different. The concerns about harm and fairness have faded from the decision. Instead, the judgment is grounded in a rationale about cost and benefits, and how the organization will be perceived by others.

Relatedness considerations within organizational life can also trigger Type 2 intervention independent of an individual's feelings about whether an intuition is correct. Specifically, concerns about how our moral judgments will impact our relationships with others can override an initial intuition to avoid "disastrous effects" on vital social relationships (Haidt 2001, p. 821). These social risks are very significant within organizational settings where cooperation is essential, individuals interact frequently with the same people, and a hierarchical structure creates differences in power and authority. Thus, within the workplace individuals recognize feeling right is not always sufficient. Rather the affect driven intuitions they experience must also exhibit a Feeling of Appropriateness. Upon experiencing emotions that trigger intuitions that present social risks that do not provide a sufficient Feeling of Appropriateness, Type 2 processing intervenes to reason in ways that allow individuals to avoid alienation and maintain their effectiveness within the organization. This can lead to rationalizations or in some instances, relatedness motivates Type 2 interventions that displaces an intuitive moral judgment previously derived. In this way, Type 2 reasoning can actually undermine ethical decision making in some instances. In light of the above, two additional propositions result:

**Proposition 4** *Type 2 reasoning will intervene if individuals fail to generate sufficient Feelings of Rightness or Appropriateness.*

**Proposition 5** *Type 2 reasoning will emphasize the binding moral foundations more extensively relative to the individuating moral foundations within organizational ethical decision making.*

## Expressive Suppression

Lastly, the organizational context also influences how individuals express emotions. Expressive suppression is an emotion regulation strategy that occurs after emotion registers and "consists of reducing or eliminating public displays of emotion" (Côté 2005, p. 510; Gross 2015). People that utilize expressive suppression do consciously experience their emotions making moral intuitions and morally aware reasoning available to them. However, suppression implies that these individuals still fail to discuss issues in emotional terms since that would again violate the normative expectations within their organization (Ekman et al. 1969). This is significant for a number of reasons. Organizational decision making and the broader process of sensemaking is both socially embedded, and public (Weick 1995). In light of this, suppression is both an effect of the organizational norms about the experience and expression of emotions, but also a reinforcing cause of this normative condition in its own right. Quite simply, norms that are followed provide powerful social proof to members of an organization about what constitutes acceptable behavior (Cialdini 2001). This feedback mechanism makes reappraisal more prevalent. Under a social intuitionist approach, suppression also directly impacts the moral intuitions others derive from their social context (Link 4). Suppression focuses organizational members' attention on de-emotionalized factors fostering what amounts to a rational contagion within organizational ethical decision making processes. People share the conscious rationalization or reasoning that they derive from Type 2 processes with others which strengthens the norms about emotion and also de-emotionalizes an important stimulus that might otherwise trigger the intuition of others if expressed differently. These considerations lead to the following proposition:

**Proposition 6** *Individuals communicate about decisions with ethical dimensions within organizations in more de-emotionalized terms when discussing these decisions with others.*

## Discussion

Organizations have become a dominant institution within modern society. They facilitate the essential coordination and cooperation that enables the completion of highly complex tasks to create value in ways that would not be possible without them. While the model developed here highlights a way in which organizational settings potentially impair ethical decision making, this does not imply that organizations are evil or inherently unethical places. The fact is that the experience and expression of some emotions like anger, particularly when felt strongly, can be highly deleterious to search and effective judgment within a great deal of organizational decision contexts (Kligyte et al. 2013). What the model highlights is that some of the norms organizations institute to manage these concerns present meaningful issues in their own right. Norms that disfavor the experience and expression of emotions can inhibit moral intuition and moral awareness. These norms can also alter the discrete content of both the intuitions and reasoning that result. This creates the potential for problematic biases within organizational ethical decision making that organizational actors must also address.

This issue of de-emotionalized organizational ethical decision making matters a great deal because of its potentially pervasive nature and because of its impact on otherwise well-intentioned individuals. Organizations need norms that mitigate some degree of emotional experience and expression. They may also have legitimate strategic reasons to prefer certain emotional states relative to others. However, the emotion regulation processes highlighted here operate subtly. Intuition, by its very nature, is not something individuals consciously control. Thus, the anticipated impacts on moral intuition and moral awareness will be exceedingly difficult for decision makers to collectively recognize. This presents a significant risk that a degradation of the quality of ethical decision making will grow pervasive within organizations over time. This dynamic is particularly troubling because all organizational actors would be susceptible to these effects, even those that are not previously predisposed or specifically motivated to engage in wrongdoing.

Given the risks, organizations and their constituent members must remain sensitive to the issues excessively unemotional (or overly rational) decision making norms present. In this regard, managers often retain considerable discretion over both the content and enforcement of emotion display rules (Côté 2005). To combat the risks, managers should encourage greater emotional sensitivity in decision making to avoid rational contagion, especially in regard to disfavored emotions. Such steps are particularly relevant at early stages of the organization's history, given

that display rules are theorized to feedback and strengthen organizational norms over time. One particular way to balance the need to foster individual emotional experience and expression with the organization's legitimate need to mitigate the risks emotion presents involves cultivating mindfulness and mindful organizing (Weick and Sutcliffe 2007). Mindfulness represents a metacognitive practice that enables individuals to cultivate "a greater receptivity to internal experiences" that enables them to "view their emotions from a detached perspective" (Kudesia 2019, pp. 415–416). At the collective level, mindfulness nurtures the capacity for "inquiry and interpretation grounded in capabilities for action" to promote heedful interactions (Weick et al. 2008, p. 38; Weick and Roberts 1993). Mindfulness and heedful interacting helps cultivate the collective capacity to experience emotions while remaining in sufficient control of the self so as not be ruled by them. The goal is to enables actors to experience, interpret, and discuss what these emotions signal and how to proceed effectively in light of these feelings.

In conjunction with the cultivation of collective mindfulness, organizational members should also take affirmative steps to better ensure that the moral foundations about harm and fairness remain accessible and active within organizational decision making. This can potentially be accomplished by something as simple as making a point to ask questions such as "Who specifically does this decision disadvantage?"; "Which individuals or stakeholder groups receive an unequal or potentially undeserved amount of the benefits or burdens associated with this decision?" Adopting alternative frames for problems in ways designed to highlight harm or fairness concerns can trigger different emotional reactions. These emotional responses should spur new intuitions and carry the potential to generate moral awareness within reasoning. As just one example, many ethics researchers are familiar with the trolley–footbridge ethical vignette (Foot 2002). By changing details within this vignette, we often find that the same individual provides very different judgments depending upon the specific details presented (Appiah 2008). These differing judgments are attributable to either alternative intuitions or reasoning that results. Similar techniques applied within organizational settings could replicate these types of outcomes within applied decision contexts to promote a richer consideration of the alternatives.

In regard to future research, the model set forth did not examine the impact of specific positive or negative emotions within work contexts in great detail. Rather, I maintain that organizations define appropriate emotions and generally dampen emotional experience and expression. The appropriateness of a given emotion in a given context will vary across organizations. Additionally, norms can operate to inhibit the experience and expression of both positive and negative emotions. However, extreme emotional states are

assumed to be generally disfavored. This dampening effect suggests a variety of complex outcomes depending upon the valence and initial intensity of the emotion in question. As just one example, the dampening of some emotions like anger or disgust might enable overt forms of unethical behavior within organizations (See Smith-Crowe and Warren 2014), while a similar levelling of some other emotions might not. Future research should examine how specific emotions and the organizational norms regarding emotion interact and impact ethical choices.

In addition, the organizational norms about emotional experience and expression are likely to influence other classes of decisions individuals face at work. As an example, research has shown that emotion and emotion regulation strategies can alter individuals' degree of risk aversion. These changes in risk aversion alter individual risk preferences in ways that lead to more or less risky decisions depending upon the type and valence of emotion experienced, as well as the regulation strategy utilized (Heilman et al. 2010). To the extent that any decision is influenced by emotion, we should anticipate that the organizational norms about emotional experience and expression will impact the decision making process. Additional examination of these alternative types of decisions that trigger emotional responses also represents an interesting area for future theoretical and empirical development.

The theory set forth presents some notable direct empirical questions as well. I argue that both emotional experience and expression are compromised within the organizational setting in ways that impede ethical decision making. An interesting question is whether antecedent strategies that occur prior to emotional experience are more powerful than expressive suppression in regard to ethical concerns. While antecedent strategies like reappraisal occur automatically as individuals become immersed in their organizational context, suppression requires cognitive effort and individuals are aware that they experience an emotional response to a decision or issue (Mauss et al. 2007b). The expectation is that reappraisal would grow more dominant over time as a regulation strategy for ethical decisions, but this is clearly an empirical question. Furthermore, an additional avenue for future research involves what motivates expressive suppression from the individual's perspective as it relates to adherence to organizational norms about emotion. Various rationales such as discrepancy reduction (Diefendorff and Gosserand 2003) or impression management (see Leary and Kowalski 1990) may serve as motivation for adherence to the norms about emotion at work. Enhanced understanding of what motivates individuals at early stages to adhere to emotion norms as socialization occurs would be beneficial.

Finally, the model developed here assumes that most individuals within organizations are susceptible to the influence of both emotions and organizational norms. However, there are likely to be significant individual and group differences regarding the influence of these factors as applied to ethical questions. This is an additional area where further theoretical and empirical elaboration is needed. For example, gender differences seem potentially relevant both in terms of emotional experience and also in terms of the acceptability of expression for certain types of emotion at work. Gender has also been found to create differences in sensitivity to moral problems and awareness (Ameen et al. 1996; Singhapakdi et al. 1996). In addition, factors such as job satisfaction, identification, and commitment will differ across individuals (Dukerich and Dutton 1991). Issues core to a person's self-concept will also vary among individuals (Haidt 2001). These factors could also impact an individual's sensitivity and susceptibility to the influence of the organization's normative constraints. Finally, organizations themselves are embedded in broader societal contexts that also shape the normative environment individuals encounter while at work. Cultural differences regarding emotional experience and expression can substantially alter the development of the relevant organizational norms in ways that could either strengthen or weaken the process envisioned here.

## Conclusion

Ethical failures at organizations continue to present a significant problem. Rather than bad apples or bad barrels, the process model set forth here envisions ordinary people working in ordinary organizations, but the risk of ethically problematic decision making persists. The organizational norms about moderating excessive emotion are generally well intentioned, but they present a meaningful issue for certain classes of decisions. In a similar vein, an individual's regulation of emotion "is neither inherently good nor bad" (Côté 2005, p. 525). It is a normal psychological mechanism that enables people to manage their internal emotional states and interactions with others (Gross 1998). However, when these two processes interact as individuals function within organizations, problematic decisions may result. As both practitioners and researchers work to better understand ethical failures, the continued development of automatic cognitive processes, emotion, and the interactions between individual and organizational decision processes remains a vital area for further research.

## Compliance with Ethical Standards

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