Children’s and Adolescents’ Judgments About Social Responsibility: Moral Identity and the Public Good

by

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The current research sought to assess children's (10-11 years), adolescents' (13-14 years), and adult's (Psy100 students) perceptions regarding the importance and obligation to engage in various civic activities. Drawing from previous research on the topic of civic obligation, participants were presented with five different types of civic acts (voting, volunteering, charity work, clubs & sports, and petitions/protests) and were asked to assess the extent to which these acts were important, obligatory, and legally mandatory. Of interest was also participants' justifications for their responses, which were coded according to moral reasoning, personal choice, or practical factors which mitigated responses. Finally, measures of moral identity were administered to explore the extent to which individual differences in the personal importance of moral qualities influenced responses. Results suggested that younger participants rated charitable endeavors as more obligatory and legally mandatory than did the young adults. Conversely, the young adults tended to prioritize voting more highly relative to the younger participants. Supplementing these findings were the justification analyses, which suggested that younger participants used more moral reasoning in their responses to questions about charitable organizations compared to the young adults. Results also suggested that moral identity was related to the quantitative evaluations of the different civic activities. Moral identity was also
positively associated with the use of moral reasoning within morally salient activities across all situations. Regression models indicated that this link between moral identity and moral cognition persisted when age effects were controlled.
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Chapter 1: The Research Questions

Why are people moral? This is a classic question that has been the concern of psychologists for decades and of philosophers for millennia. Like so many seemingly simple questions it requires a great deal of qualification and unpacking before arriving at a reasonable answer. What is morality? What makes people "moral"? Is morality something that people do, or is it something that people are? What actions are moral actions? If morality is something that people are, can we identify traits or characteristics that moral people possess that other, less moral people do not? Under what circumstances will people engage in moral behaviors or think in moral terms? In what circumstances will other, non-moral considerations move to the forefront of people's evaluations of a situation?

Many theorists and researchers have sought to address some or all of these questions, presenting numerous definitions of morality and moral behavior. The questions these researchers seek to answer are usually similar-- what distinguishes a moral person from a non-moral person? Why will some people act in a "good" way, while some people will not act in the same way in the same situation? The introductory chapters to this dissertation will summarize various approaches to morality research, most notably the seminal work on moral cognition proposed by Jean Piaget and, later and perhaps more significantly, Lawrence Kohlberg. While the finer theoretical points of these researchers will be discussed, it is important to understand that they proposed that people use qualitatively different reasoning when evaluating different situations. This might suggest that people engage in increasingly more sophisticated reasoning about moral situations-- the entire structure of their thought changes as a result of developmental processes (Piaget, 1926; Kohlberg, 1958). Others might suggest that different social situations are evaluated using different criteria, and that a situation may only be considered moral once
certain criteria are met (Turiel, 1983). These qualitative differences suggest that it is differences in the interpretation and evaluation of social situations that constitute the essence of moral functioning.

But what influences this qualitative change in moral evaluation? When there is variance in how people interact with their environments, one can assume that this variance is attributable to two sources. First, there could be variance in the situations. In terms of morality research, this would suggest that some situations are morally salient, and that all people who are placed in this situation might be expected to evaluate the situation in the same way. Thus, morality might be considered a characteristic of the social scenario, rather than a set of traits or characteristics possessed by an individual. Alternatively, there might be variance in people. These individual traits or characteristics might be the primary factor that allows us to predict moral thoughts and behavior. Different people might evaluate the same situation in different ways, and to understand variation in morality we must understand variation in people.

One line of research took a cunning approach to the study of moral variation in human beings. Instead of attempting to identify traits or qualities that might separate morally virtuous people from morally average people, Colby and Damon (1992) approached the question from the other direction: how do conspicuously moral people think? Using a case-study approach, they identified people who had lived lives of consistent moral excellence, who could be said to be moral exemplars. Colby and Damon's (1992) definition of exemplars was based on a long history of volunteer, humanitarian, and/or activist work; in many cases, their moral exemplars had won awards or honors for their service. While the content of the moral behaviors reported by exemplars varied greatly, there were certain commonalities to their experiences. Moral exemplars each tended to describe their lives using themes of continual evolution, suggesting an
enduring interest in self-understanding. They frequently reported themes of open-mindedness and a concern with truth, particularly in regard to moral information (Colby & Damon, 1992).

What was immediately apparent from this research was that these moral exemplars reported qualitative differences in their approach to social situations--they simply seemed to think about the world in a demonstrably different way. Acting in moral ways seemed to be very important to them, suggesting that they possessed some sort of trait or characteristic that helped to fuel their moral behaviors. In their stories there was also an explicit recognition of a need for moral action--that there was an injustice to rectify or a people in need of help. This recognition suggested, at least to some degree, a cognitive evaluation of moral necessity as a precursor to moral behavior. These people were not moral by accident, they were moral by intention. By definition, these moral exemplars behaved in consistently more moral ways relative to others engaged in the same activist movements. They were distinguished by their commitment, their effectiveness, and their evaluations of the activities. This suggests that it is possible to look at morality as a quality that has variance between individuals, that it can be looked at as a trait or characteristic. The question then becomes how one can define morality as something that has variance within individuals when morality is something that needs to be possessed by all people to a relatively high degree. After all, somebody cannot simply choose to be immoral; even if somebody has little respect for society's rules, it would be exceedingly maladaptive to act on this lack of respect (Nucci, 2004). This leads to a challenge in studying morality as an individual difference: how can individual differences in morality be measured when such a clear floor to moral behavior exists?

Another major contribution of Colby and Damon's work (1992) was to clearly identify a social arena in which exemplars were able to demonstrate their conspicuous moral quality. It
was telling that the exemplars were community leaders. They tended to be activists, involved in social movements or organizations designed to help others. Their moral service was in a community setting, rather than in an individual, interpersonal environment. This doubtless gave these exemplars more of an opportunity to distinguish themselves based on their own moral qualities, making them more easily recognizable as moral exemplars. However, it also spoke to the unique qualities of civic involvement as a social activity. Many definitions of morality make explicit reference to prosocial behaviors, focusing on the society-promoting nature of moral activity. If people are better off as members of a society than they are in isolation, and if moral activities help strengthen society, than civic activities can be said to have a moral quality to them.

Civic activities are also useful to study because they have motivations and benefits to the individual that are not moral in nature. A person might volunteer because they feel the act of helping others to be a moral imperative. Another person might volunteer to gain practical experience in order to help their career. A person might vote to exercise their right to be represented by their government, or they might vote based on how much they personally stand to gain based on the candidate for whom they vote. On the surface, the act (a person volunteers in their community, a person votes in an election) is the same, but the volunteer's evaluation of that activity contains variance by which some might view the act in a moral light and others might not. The civic domain thus becomes an excellent set of social activities in which to evaluate moral variation in individuals. They represent acts that are familiar to all people in a society, they are acts motivated by a complex set of factors (some moral, some not), and they produce considerable variation in behavior and in the evaluations of these behaviors.

The current research seeks to assess morality in the civic domain. It is proposed that
morality constitutes-- to some degree-- an individual difference. This implies that it is a construct that varies normally within the population. In an ambiguous or complex situation some people will look through a moral lens and some people will take other, competing considerations into account. The social situations to be evaluated are civic activities. These activities can be interpreted according to moral reasoning or according to other concerns. Because they represent complex situations, people can either attend to the moral qualities or to the other possible factors. As such, they provide an avenue by which people high in morality can be distinguished from those to whom morality is less important. If a situation can be interpreted in a moral way, how can we predict who will evaluate it in a moral way?

This dissertation will first examine some of the core psychological theories of morality. These theories will emphasize cognition as the source of morality. These cognitive theories are typically concerned with individuals' explicit evaluations of socially complex situations, and how these evaluations can inform appropriate behaviors. Cognitive theories often focus on qualitative differences in the evaluation of moral situations-- that moral scenarios are considered to be fundamentally different than non-moral situations. Chapter one will discuss the genesis of theories of moral cognition, beginning with Jean Piaget's cognitive developmental theory, transitioning to Lawrence Kohlberg's theory, and then discusses the cognitive developmental approach espoused by social domain theory. As will be apparent, these cognitions form an important component of moral functioning. However, there are important limitations to these theories that suggest room for other, complimentary constructs that might allow for a fuller picture of moral psychology.

Next, the focus will shift to moral identity. While moral cognition is generally concerned with evaluations of social situations, moral identity focuses on individual differences in the self-
importance of morality. In chapter two, the components of self-concept and identity will be discussed as pertains to the construction of a moral identity. Theories of moral identity will be presented, along with the points of convergence and divergence between some of the primary theories of moral identity. Moral identity casts morality as an individual difference, suggesting variation: some people might have high levels of moral identity, and some might have low levels of moral identity. This variance could map onto moral behavior in a variety of ways, either by reducing the attributions of a personal responsibility to behave in a moral way or by influencing a person's tendency to recognize a complex social situation as morally salient.

The next chapter will examine the civic domain. As previously stated, the civic domain represents a complex social situation that can be interpreted either in moral or non-moral ways. The Colby and Damon (1992) research suggested that moral exemplars differed in their contributions to society, not just in their contributions to others on an interpersonal level. The civic domain thus represents social situations of sufficient complexity to provide an excellent test of the influence of moral identity on moral reasoning. This chapter will examine the development of people's perceptions of social authority and children's evaluations of civic responsibility. It will discuss perceptions of civic obligation-- the obligation to engage in an activity perceived to be socially useful.

A number of core hypotheses will be examined by this study:

1) **Moral identity is related to moral reasoning.**

Moral reasoning is a crucially important component to understanding the moral life of people. As will be discussed, the capacity to explicitly recognize a social situation as morally salient forms a primary motivator of moral activity and distinguishes morality from other types of behaviors. However, there has also been an increased interest in other facets of moral
psychology. In particular, a moral identity or moral self-concept has generated considerable interest by theorists and researchers. Very little research has examined a possible association between moral identity and moral cognition, despite the strong theoretical reasons to believe that such a link exists. The current research will address this gap. It will do so by addressing the theoretical links between theories of moral cognition and moral identity. As will be apparent, there is good reason to believe that cognition is an important part of both reasoning and self-concept theories. The results of the current research are expected to complement this theoretical link, as the association between moral identity and moral reasoning will be explored. In this research, measures of moral identity are expected to correlate with measures of moral reasoning. This is due to the tendency of people high in moral identity to attend to the moral salience of complex social situations, even when other considerations are competing for a person's attention.

2) Evaluations of civic activities will be related both to moral cognition and to moral identity.

The civic domain provides an excellent opportunity to assess the relation between cognition and identity. Civic behaviors include very complex social situations that require people to balance concerns of morality, personal choice, and the larger social good. Even the moral considerations might include some variance, as some civic activities (such as volunteering) might be considered morally relevant because of the potential benefits to others (care-based reasoning), while an activity like voting or protests might be seen as valuable because it ensures the voices of citizens are heard (justice-based reasoning). This study will examine the civic domain in assessing how moral reasoning and moral identity predict judgments and reasoning about these complex scenarios. As these acts are expected to result in a great deal of variation in reasoning (as they constitute complex social situations that may be
interpreted in many ways), it is expected that participants who have high levels of moral identity will be more likely to use morally relevant reasoning when asked to assess the appropriate civic acts.

3) **Moral identity will be linked to perceptions of civic obligation.**

While it is important to assess the relation between moral identity and the explicit recognition of situations as morally salient, it is also expected that moral identity will inform attributions of social and moral responsibility. Moral identity is thought to promote moral behavior. It is no coincidence that Colby and Damon (1992) developed their theory of moral identity based on people who had built a lifetime of concrete behavior designed to promote social justice and wellbeing. In keeping with this idea, participants will be asked to assess the extent to which certain activities should be considered both obligatory and legally mandatory. It is expected that individuals who are high in moral identity and who utilize moral reasoning more often will also be more likely to suggest that certain civic activities are obligatory. Specifically, civic behaviors with a perceived moral benefit are expected be more likely to be considered mandatory by these participants.

4) **There will be developmental differences in evaluations of civic activities.**

The current study will assess participants from multiple age groups, ranging from late childhood to early adulthood, on the relevant measures of moral identity and civic reasoning. It is expected that there will be certain areas of convergence and divergence with regard to these age groups' perceptions of the importance and obligation to engage in civic activities. As will be discussed, there are expected to be developmental differences in the assessment of the value of civic activities that are of abstract moral value. These activities, voting and signing petitions/joining protests, are expected to be considered important because of their value in
promoting democracy and in ensuring that a society is governed by a representative body. These values are expected to be more apparent to older participants than to younger. While it is unclear what differences there might be in the evolution of helping activities (volunteering, charities), there is reason to believe that younger participants are more likely to attend to the prosocial nature of these activities than they are to competing matters of autonomy and personal choice (McNeil & Helwig, 2015).

5) The hypothesized link between moral identity and moral cognition will persist despite developmental differences in reasoning about civic activities.

While identity and self-concept are considered to be developmental constructs, the developmental progression of moral identity is less clear (Krettenauer & Hertz, 2015). Furthermore, evidence suggests that moral identity may be present in younger children (Krettenauer & Hertz, 2015), and that even very young children use similar reasoning as older participants when assessing similar social scenarios. Thus, while there is expected to be variation between younger and older participants in the frequency of different reasoning used to evaluate civic activities, the content of this reasoning is expected to be similar. As the cognitions that older and younger participants use will be comparable, and as moral identity is thought to predict moral cognition, the relation between identity and cognition in this study is expected to persist across age groups.

Chapter 2
Morality

In his work on cognitive development, Jean Piaget theorized that children actively sought to understand their physical and social worlds (Piaget, 1926). The search for truth—defined as cognitions that most accurately portrayed the world—provided the foundational force driving
Development occurred as children developed theories (schema) about how the world worked, and modified these theories depending on their experiences. Rather than assuming that children were content to internalize inviolable social norms from adults, as did Freud (1961), Piaget hypothesized that rules could be altered for a greater good and that social experiences were the primary source of moral knowledge (Piaget, 1932). In his theory, Piaget depicted people as rational agents motivated by a desire for more knowledge, and this depiction has formed the basis of many influential psychological theories (e.g., Turiel, 2016).

Lawrence Kohlberg’s theory reaffirmed Piaget’s depiction of morality as a primarily rational process. Kohlberg’s theory was rational in that it focused on the soundness of the reasons behind moral behaviors, rather than the content of the behaviors themselves, which Kohlberg believed could be influenced by a variety of situational factors (Kohlberg, 1958; Kohlberg, 1984; Moshman, 2005). Taking Piaget’s model of a person as a rational agent, Kohlberg believed that individuals were constantly evaluating social norms according to abstract moral principles. These principles were deontic in nature; they represented a set of formal logical rules that bound a person to act because there can be no rational reason not to behave in accordance with these principles. Kohlberg believed that justice was the primary deontological principle that motivated moral thought and behavior. What was morally right in a situation was what was most just; the only rational justification for an unjust action is if this action served more foundational principles of justice, such as committing robbery in the name of saving a life.

Like Piaget, Kohlberg believed the cognitions of children and adults to be different; children lack advanced perspective-taking abilities and the formal operational ability to think in abstract terms. Therefore he agreed with Piaget’s belief that moral judgment progressed through a series of stages. Gradually, increases in cognitive capacity allow for more advanced
perspective taking ability, enabling the child to co-ordinate the perspectives of multiple stakeholders and to adjudicate between competing claims in a moral situation in order to decide the most just course of action. With the ability to think in abstract terms comes the realization that social rules are not ends in themselves, but rather serve underlying moral principles, primarily the principle of justice. To Kohlberg, moral development is the process by which a child’s thinking gradually evolves from a punishment orientation, by which the rightness of an act is evaluated based on an authority figure’s response to it, to a legalistic or law-maintaining orientation, by which a child acts in accordance with proscribed social roles and the codified laws of a society or state (Kohlberg, 1958; Kohlberg, 1984). Finally, there comes the realization that laws are themselves reflections of more abstract principles of justice, and that laws thus can be imperfect when they fail to reflect these principles.

Kohlberg’s theory has also drawn considerable criticism. Of particular concern is the value of moral cognition in predicting moral behavior. Without the ability to predict what people will actually do, understanding people’s justifications becomes a “useless luxury” (Blasi 1983, p. 185). In his meta-analysis on the subject, Blasi (1980) examined the relationship between moral cognition (defined in this case as the modal stage of moral reasoning) and various moral behaviors, such as altruism, conformity, delinquency, honesty, etc. Blasi concluded that there was sufficient evidence to suggest that moral reasoning was a robust predictor of moral behavior across a variety of contexts. Later meta-analytic research confirmed Blasi’s findings, suggesting a robust association between moral reasoning and moral behavior (de Posada & Vargas-Trujillo, 2015). However, moral judgment accounted for only a portion of variance in behavior, as the effect sizes for significant findings ranged from small to moderate.

Blasi also noted some core theoretical concerns associated with using judgment to predict
behavior. Some research designs assessed morality in terms of behaviors like delinquency and altruism, to use some examples. While these behaviors may seem intuitively moral--a "good" person would help others and refrain from harm--it is not always clear how Kohlberg's stage theory would account for these variables. Delinquency might be considered immoral if it represented harm to another for personal gain, but might not if it represented a rejection of authority. Altruism might be consistent with principles of justice, but it is not always clear why this would be the case. Kohlberg himself did not believe that moral judgment would perfectly predict moral behavior and conceded that other considerations would have an influence (Kohlberg, 1984). At lower levels of reasoning, many participants could provide rationally defensible reasons for mutually exclusive courses of action (i.e. the same stage of reasoning could be used to defend a decision whether or not to steal a drug to save a life with equal adequacy), although thought and behavior were theorized to be more consistent at post-conventional stages. In sum, Blasi's meta-analysis presented evidence for a judgment-action gap by establishing moral judgment as a significant but imperfect predictor of moral behavior.

2.1 Moral Cognition and Moral Rules—Social Domain Theory

In speculating on the cause of the judgment-action gap, Blasi (1980) noted that it was not always clear whether an experimental design was an adequate measure of moral behavior. What was often missing was how participants individually evaluate the situations. A researcher might define cheating on a test, for example, as an act that a moral person would not do, and if a morally mature person cheats on a test then one might conclude that moral stage does not correlate with honesty. But is lying or cheating an inherently immoral activity, as defined by deontological moral principles? If violating those rules brings no harm or imposes no cost on
anybody else, a participant might decide that the rules governing cheating are arbitrary and that their violation is not a moral infraction. Cheating would constitute an objective measure of immoral behavior only if one assumes that all social rules are evaluated in the same way.

A large body of research suggests that people do indeed categorize social rules (Turiel & Smetana, 2015). Researchers adhering to the social domain approach have identified three main areas or “domains” of social concern. One area, social conventions, encompasses the rules that co-ordinate the interactions of individuals within a social system (Nucci & Turiel, 1978). The meaning of these systems is purely symbolic, and so social conventions derive regulatory power from the standards that society has agreed upon. For example, society has agreed that certain traffic light colors mean certain things because some system is required to control the flow of traffic. Since these social rules have no objective value, society can agree to alter them if an acceptable consensus is reached (and can, for example, change the color of traffic lights to and still retain the same meaning if there was general agreement to do so). Social conventional rules therefore are likely to have culturally specific or symbolic meaning as they serve purposes of social organization and coordination. Since the meaning of these activities is symbolic, the wrongness of an activity is contingent upon a prohibiting rule; if this rule is removed, then the prohibited activity is no longer considered wrong.

Moral issues, by contrast, are considered objectively important; their rightness or wrongness is not contingent upon a governing authority. This is because moral issues are based upon intrinsic notions of justice, harm, and fairness associated with specific actions (e.g., murder, theft). The harm caused by a moral violation is objective insofar as it has certain intrinsic features. For example, hitting another person causes that person pain, and is judged wrong because of that objective result rather than due to the prohibition of a governing authority.
If a government were to legalize hitting, the act would still be considered wrong due to these intrinsic moral features. Because of these objective consequences, moral rules are considered to represent contextual and cultural universals.

Studies of children’s, adolescents’, and adults’ reasoning about social conventional and moral prohibitions have found that participants from a variety of cultures distinguish these social domains according to a number of criteria (e.g., rule-contingency, generalizability across contexts, authority contingency, etc.) and use domain appropriate justifications in support of these distinctions (see Nucci, 2001, Smetana, 2010, for reviews). Even very young children are able to distinguish between moral and social conventional rules based on these criteria. For example, Weston and Turiel (1980) asked children from ages five to eleven to imagine a school in which the principal decided to change various school rules. Some of the rules were social conventional (allowing children to take their clothes off when it is hot, allowing children to leave their toys on the floor instead of putting them away) and some of the rules were moral (allowing children to hit one another). Children considered the previously prohibited social conventional activities (taking clothes off, leaving toys on the floor) to be permissible once the rules governing these activities had been lifted, suggesting that they considered these rules under the jurisdiction of the relevant authority figure. However, children did not consider the moral rules against hitting as under the purview of the principal, giving very strong negative evaluations of a policy lifting a ban against hitting another child, as well as negatively evaluating a child who hit another child even in the absence of a rule.
2.2 Personal Choice, the Personal Domain, and Positive Morality

The social domain approach attempts to capture the complexity of people’s relationship to society. However, there are certain decisions that are not considered under the purview of authority and yet are also not governed by abstract moral principles. The choice of clothing to wear, of food to eat, of games to enjoy, of friends to spend time with; these decisions are considered to be distinct from the rules governing social conventional and moral decisions. Social domain theorists have proposed that people delineate certain decisions (termed “personal issues”) as a matter of individual prerogative, and that decisions over these issues are not legitimately regulated by social considerations or by authority figures (Nucci, 2001). This personal domain reflects decisions that are considered to affect an individual and only that individual, such as choice of clothes, friends, or other interests. The personal domain has been identified and studied in a variety of cultures (Nucci, Camino, & Sapiro, 1996; Nucci, 2001) and age groups (Smetana, 1981; Turiel, 1983; Weston & Turiel, 1980), suggesting a core need for human beings to exert authority and ownership of particular aspects of their own lives.

In addition to distinctions between personal and moral domains, morality itself may be comprised of different types of obligations (Kahn, 1992). As noted earlier, people seem to accept certain restrictions upon their behaviour due to moral concerns. Acts such as murder, theft, assault, and fraud, for example, represent clearly identifiable harm to others, and people concede that their right to self-determination does not extend to such behaviors. On the other hand, morality does not simply entail actions that individuals are bound not to perform. Moral
behaviour also entails a range of activities intended to ameliorate the individual misfortune of others or to benefit society as a whole. Activities such as the donation of time and effort to charities, for example, often provide direct benefits to others. These activities have clear, objective benefits, and are easily recognizable as belonging to the moral domain. They are usually considered laudable, respectable behaviours (Kahn, 1992). However, even though these behaviours are clearly moral and highly valued, it does not necessarily follow that people recognize an obligation to do them. In fact, research has suggested that people do not consider “positive” moral acts—or moral behaviours intended to help another—as obligatory as they do “negative” moral acts—or those entailing abstinence from committing immoral or harmful behaviours (Kahn, 1992). Although one is obligated to refrain from immorality one is not necessarily as obligated to act in an outwardly prosocial fashion.

To assess this distinction between positive and negative morality, Kahn (1992) presented children and adolescents with a series of stories describing either a positive moral act (giving lunch money to another in need, give money won in a raffle to the poor) or an immoral, yet potentially justifiable, act (a mother stealing money to give to her children so that they can buy lunch). Participants were asked to rate how obligatory each act was; in the case of the positive acts, they were asked how wrong it would be not to perform the act of giving money away, or in the case of the negative act, how wrong it was to steal the money. They were then asked whether the act was praiseworthy (something somebody “should” do) and if there should be a law mandating the act. The cost of the moral action was also varied; in one condition, the moral act (or not performing the immoral act) was highly costly to the individual, and in another condition the personal cost was minor.

The results revealed clear differences in reasoning between the different behaviours. The
immoral act was considered to be wrong and highly obligatory; that is, all participants thought that the mother was wrong to steal in order to feed her children. This did not substantially differ as a function of cost; even when the consequences of the mother not stealing were quite severe, participants still tended to rate the act as immoral and to maintain that the mother was obligated not to act in such a fashion. In the positive morality condition, children tended to positively evaluate the act and reported that one “should” give money to the less fortunate. Yet many did not rate the act as obligatory. When the cost to the self was high, participants almost unanimously rejected an obligation to help. However, when the cost to the self was low, a bit more than half of participants perceived the act of helping as obligatory. When asked to justify their responses, participants frequently cited moral concerns of justice and welfare, suggesting that they all recognized that the dilemmas were moral in nature. Yet, many considered the responsibility to help non-obligatory, particularly when the cost to the self was high. These results suggest that helping others, while praiseworthy, was assessed as a matter of personal prerogative, while the responsibility to obey the law existed regardless of one’s personal inclination. When the cost to the self was low, the results were less clear. While the majority of participants thought helping to be a matter of personal discretion, this reasoning was not universal. Approximately 40% of children did report an obligation to help, and often felt this obligation to be enforceable by law.

This study provides insight into the factors that affect perceptions of moral obligation. Individuals seem to sacrifice personal freedom to obey a law prohibiting clearly immoral behavior. However, the obligation to help others seems to be evaluated differently. Personal freedom can sometimes take precedence over moral concerns. In this case, people sometimes decide that their freedom or need for self-determination means that they have a right not to help.
Therefore, obligation in a helping situation is affected by contextual variation that does not appear to be a factor in the evaluation of the responsibility to refrain from immoral actions.

The Social Domain paradigm might also help to address the judgment-action gap. In this perspective, an individual would be expected to view social conventional rules as binding only in those contexts that are governed by the appropriate conventions. In contrast, if a person evaluates a situation as morally salient, they should be more likely to act in a morally appropriate fashion. Failure to do so may be due to an evaluation of competing considerations from the social conventional or personal domains. To illustrate, in the Kahn (1992) study, children tended to justify negative morality (the obligation to refrain from immorality) using abstract notions of justice, care, and fairness, deontological principles that should apply across contexts. Positive morality, on the other hand, was frequently justified using personal choice reasons, suggesting that positive morality entailed a mixture of moral and personal considerations. Indeed, while a majority of children did not believe that one had the obligation to help others, a sizeable minority did profess a responsibility to help others when the cost of helping was low. In some situations, then, the children attended to the prosocial nature of the dilemmas, evaluating them in terms of the moral domain, while in others they used primarily personal domain justifications.

While this approach can readily explain children's assessment of obligation, the link between cognition and behavior seems to rely on circular reasoning. A situation is considered moral if justified using deontological moral principles, and the use of deontological moral principles tells us that the situation must have been viewed in moral terms. But why does a person attend to the moral in one situation and the social conventional or personal in another? If social situations are frequently complex, multi-faceted mixtures of domains, how can one predict which domain a person will attend to in a given situation? Are some people more sensitive to
moral situations, some to social conventional, and some to personal? Without the ability to predict behavior, cognitive approaches become vulnerable to the accusations of Haidt (2001) and others who maintain that cognition cannot predict, but can only “explain” (as rationalizations) after the fact. Kohlberg recognized that cognition alone could not sufficiently account for moral motivation and he later added modifications to his theory to account for this fact. In addition to recognizing a situation as having moral meaning, a person also judged their own responsibility to act (Colby et al, 1987). In adding these types of attributions, Kohlberg seemed to open the door for individual differences to be integrated into a theory of moral development. One such individual difference may be moral identity, to be taken up in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

Moral Identity

In choosing to portray a person as an autonomous, rational agent, Piaget (1926) granted a self-selected direction to development. People are motivated to develop schema that are consistent not only with their experiences, but also consistent with their values and beliefs, their ideas about how the world should be constructed. While this can often lead to biases and distortions, the rational person also requires sufficient justifications for these beliefs. In this way, a person’s development can be both subjective and objective, self-directed and predictable.

The portrayal of a person as a rational agent is also crucial in understanding how one’s self-concept is constructed. Self-concept theory supposes that a person possesses traits and characteristics, and that these traits and characteristics predict behavior (Sheldon et al., 1997). Because these traits have motivational force, a person can enhance their understanding of reality by attending to their own personal qualities. Just as a person develops schema that represent
their theories about reality, a person also develops self-directed schema representing theories about who they are as a person (Harter, 1999; Moshman, 2005). These self-schema or self-theories are combined into a self-concept that is both broadly consistent across contexts as well as situation-specific (Harter, 1999; Markus & Nurius, 1986).

Building upon this idea of the self as a rational, autonomous agent, self-concept researchers focused on the utility of a person's understanding of their own qualities (Harter, 1999). Knowledge about the self aids one in helping to create a coherent story about personal experiences by providing a framework to organize experiences and weave them into a self-narrative. Self knowledge is thought to aid in the creation of increasingly sophisticated self-schema, giving rise to self-theories whereby one attempts to understand and predict how one will react and behave across situations. Like any set of schema, these theories are subject to alteration if they are at odds with perceived reality. Due to a person's inherent need to accurately understand reality, a person must modify their self-schema if their beliefs about themselves are not found to match their actual behaviors or predispositions. When this occurs, one’s intellectual homeostasis has been disrupted; one believes oneself to be one kind of person and has behaved as if one were another. This disruption produces what is referred to as a self-discrepancy (Higgins, 1987). These self-discrepancies threaten one’s personal self-concept, and therefore threaten a person’s ability to explain their world and their role in it, producing negative affect. Higgins (1987) maintains that self-discrepancies and the ensuing negative affect can have important implications for human motivation. How people act in a situation can be based largely on who they feel they currently are, and who they want to become in the future (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Nor are these perceptions of the self static constructs; people are constantly re-
evaluating their individual traits and goals, and refining their ideas about their desired possible selves.

3.1 Identity and Self-Relevance

Moshman (2005) provides an overview of the commonalities among different theories of identity, arriving at the conclusion that identity involves an explicit theory of oneself that is stable across situations and time. Moshman focuses on the role of self as a rational agent in evaluating one’s traits, experiences, culture, and values, defining identity in terms of cognitive developmental theory. In focusing on explicit theories of the self, Moshman does not deny the importance of implicit sources of information. Rather, he defines identity as something that is constructed, as something that involves a period of exploration, reflection, and commitment. This approach to identity retains fidelity with how the construct was initially described by Erikson (Erikson, 1968), and by later theorists who focused on the types of identity exploration and commitment (Marcia, 1966). The integration of a rational agent into theories of identity allows for more insight into how a person assigns value to some traits and experiences, while other possible selves remain more peripheral. Identity and self-concept are as much a product of a person’s desires as their actual qualities and experiences. Development thus becomes, to a certain extent, a self-directed process.

As a result of this process, identity formation can be thought of as the development of a series of self-relevant schema. As individuals recognize and endorse certain aspects of themselves as being central to their self-concept, they become more attentive to information that confirms this endorsement, and may be less likely to seek out information that conflicts with their self-schema. Higgins (1987) describes schema in terms of availability and accessibility.
Schema that are more available represent cognitive structures that a person possesses based on their experiences. Accessible schema are those that are readily retrieved and utilized as people attempt to understand their experiences. There are individual differences in schema availability and accessibility (Cervone & Shoda, 1998), as different experiences can create and modify schema. More specifically, as schema are retrieved and utilized in interpreting current experiences, they become increasingly accessible and therefore more likely to be retrieved and utilized to interpret future experiences. As Lapsley and Narvaez (2004) describe it, highly accessible schema (those that are frequently used to interpret information) serve to direct a person’s attention to environmental cues. In the longer-term, these schema predispose a person to the selection of self-relevant life goals which serve to maintain their personal dispositions. Finally, accessible schema become increasingly automatic as they are applied, resulting in what Lapsley and Narvaez (2004) refer to as “chronically” accessible schema.

The study of the self therefore allows for the exploration of an individual person’s evaluation of his or her own characteristics. As Blasi and Glodis (1995) note, the study of traits and experiences are only relevant insofar as a person assigns relevance to them. The integration of an autonomous agent into the conceptions of self and identity allows for a model of development that is self-relevant and self-determined. It integrates the role of authenticity—a personal endorsement of the decisions that a person has made and the characteristics that one possesses—into development and motivation. Some have noted that a person who forms authentic, personally endorsed goals is more likely to work to achieve those self-relevant goals then they would goals that are imposed upon one by an external source (Sheldon et al, 1997; Sheldon & Elliott, 1999). Research has suggested clear benefits to allowing a person to act in an autonomous, self-determined manner (Helwig, 2006; Ryan & Deci, 2001). As will be discussed
in the next section, the study of morality has become increasingly interested in integrating self-concept and identity constructs.

### 3.2 Moral Identity

Blasi (1983) provided an integration of social cognitive and cognitive developmental theory in constructing his model of moral behavior. Unlike previous models, which focused on either primarily cognitive or primarily affective accounts of motivation, Blasi’s focus was on the self-concept (Blasi & Glodis, 1995; Moshman, 2005). In Blasi’s model, as in Piaget’s, a person is primarily motivated to seek the truth, to experience reality in as accurate a manner as possible. This applies to one’s self-concept as well; one seeks to have self-relevant schema that provide an accurate depiction of the person’s qualities, abilities, goals, and so on. It is these self-appraisals that provide the individual variance in moral behavior. Just as there is individual variation in how people attend to external stimuli, so too is there variation in how people evaluate and construct their own self-concepts. The focus on self-concept grounds Blasi’s theory firmly in the cognitive domain, and as such he retains a focus on the primary motivational role of deliberative cognition (Blasi, 1983). However, Blasi also recognizes the importance of accounting for affective motivational forces, as well as non-deliberative social cognitive influences. Thus, he adopts a dual-motivational approach, whereby the rational desire to experience reality in an unbiased manner clashes with irrational, affective needs, fears, and desires.

In defining morality, Blasi focuses on the individual’s construal of the situation (Blasi, 1983). One’s interpretation of an ambiguous situation as morally salient is necessary for moral behavior to occur; one cannot be moral by accident, but must actively decide to behave in a prosocial manner in order for the behavior to be virtuous (Dworkin, 2011). Of particular
importance is a person’s attribution of responsibility. Individuals may recognize a situation as morally salient and still not behave in a moral fashion if they do not feel it is their responsibility to act (Kohlberg, 1958; Kohlberg, 1984). In order for moral behavior to occur, then, a person must cognitively appraise a situation as morally significant (as opposed to social conventional or personal in nature). They must then feel a personal responsibility to act in a morally appropriate manner, and not pass that responsibility on to others. A failure to act in a moral fashion can occur on either of these levels, and as such there are individual differences in the extent to which one will either attribute moral qualities to a situation or attribute a personal responsibility to act.

The key moral motivator to Blasi is self-relevance (Blasi, 1983). People form cognitive constructions of their selves based on past experiences and social relationships (Harter, 1999), but also based on their ideologies, future goals, hopes and fears (Markus & Nurius, 1986). These possible selves provide a powerful motivational force (Higgins, 1987) and form the cognitive basis of Blasi’s theory. The appraisal of one’s qualities is rational and deliberative and based on observations of a person’s actual behaviors. A person’s desire to know the truth motivates them to act in a manner consistent with the way they believe themselves to be. If a person acts contrary to these beliefs, self-discrepancies occur (Higgins, 1987), generating negative affect that motivates a person either to re-evaluate their self-concept, or to act in a way that re-establishes their sense of self-consistency. This need for self-consistency is key; people are motivated to act in a manner consistent with their beliefs about who they are.

But not all of these beliefs about the self are equally important. As Blasi notes, the self is not simply a collection of qualities, traits and characteristics. A person orders these traits and characteristics into a hierarchy. Some of these traits are peripheral, comprising complimentary characteristics that do not strongly inform a person’s identity narrative. The self-discrepancies
generated by acting in a manner inconsistent with these traits is usually not strong enough to motivate behavior. Instead, one will be more likely simply to alter their beliefs about these characteristics, devaluing the importance of these traits and maintaining one’s sense of self-worth. However, some characteristics are more deeply integrated and form the foundation of one’s self-concept. Acting in a self-discrepant manner here is likely to result in negative affect that cannot simply be resolved by devaluing these qualities; a person cannot simply move these foundational traits to the core of their self-concept without completely altering the structure of their identity. Thus, a person is strongly motivated to behave in a manner consistent with their core self-concept, but might frequently act in a manner inconsistent with their less central qualities. The question is one of self-relevance, the extent to which a person feels as if a behavior is a reflection of and consistent with their deeply held beliefs about who they are.

3.3 Moral Identity—Structure and Implications

Blasi’s definition of moral identity draws heavily from cognitive developmental theory, sharing an emphasis on a rational, deliberative agent who consciously recognizes the moral salience of a situation and decides whether a personal responsibility to behave exists. While the social cognitive approach to moral identity shares many of the theoretical assumptions of Blasi’s model, it also relies less on conscious deliberation. Indeed, social cognitive theorists propose that most psychological functioning occurs below the level of conscious reasoning (Lapsley & Hil, 2008). Aquino and Reed (2002) adopt a more virtue-ethics inspired approach to the study of moral identity, proposing that individuals possess a moral “prototype”, a cognitive construction of what they believe a “good” person to be like, centered around morally desirable traits that such a moral prototype would possess. To Aquino and Reed, traits provide the framework for
identity. They propose that people organize their self-concept around descriptions of personal qualities that allow them to define the kind of person that they may or may not be. In proposing that moral identity be organized around moral personality traits, Aquino and Reed are better able to devise methods of measurement. In their model, accessing a morally relevant schema allows one to access related schema through spreading activation (Aquino & Reed, 2002). As such, it is possible to measure moral identity by priming people’s image of their moral prototype and asking them to compare themselves to that prototype.

Lapsley and Narvaez (2004) provide a similar emphasis on schema availability and accessibility in their model of moral identity. Instead of focusing on stable personal characteristics, Lapsley and Narvaez emphasize the development of morally relevant schema. Lapsley and Narvaez (2004) integrate deliberative cognition into their social cognitive model while still retaining their focus on implicit, non-rational processes. Their model is one of moral expertise. Experts, they say, are demonstrably different from non-experts in their domain of excellence. Experts are able to organize information more efficiently, and are able to achieve a level of automaticity in decision-making in their field of expertise (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004). Thus, for experts, it appears as if most decision-making is made on a non-rational, unconscious level. But the expertise model makes it clear why rational deliberation and developmental experiences are crucial to the development of schema. A chess expert might look at a board and make decisions that seem impossibly fast to chess novices; indeed, it might scarcely appear as if the expert was putting any thought at all into their moves. However, one would hardly say that skill at chess is entirely due to genetic predispositions or instinct. Rather, with time and practice, the schema associated with chess have become so deeply ingrained into the expert’s cognitions that they are retrieved instantly and unconsciously when they are relevant to the situation. With
practice, then, schema can achieve a level of automaticity that causes them to appear to be unconscious.

In their model, Lapsley and Narvaez (2004) define moral identity as a possession of high levels of moral expertise. People high in moral identity are those to whom moral schema are highly accessible and available, and who are thus able to make complex moral decisions almost automatically. Ironically, it would appear as if the most “moral” people are those who think about morality the least. However, this would overlook the cognitive source of these schema. Lapsley and Narvaez (2004) integrate rational, deliberative decision-making into their social cognitive approach by claiming that automatic schema have their origins in rational deliberation. Over time and after considerable thought, moral cognitions become internalized so deeply by moral experts that no further rational deliberation is usually necessary. This is not to say that deliberation plays no further role. In situations that are highly complex or unfamiliar, even an expert’s automatic schema are unlikely to give enough information without some measure of reasoning. Experts also frequently evaluate situations in order to ensure that their automatic decision making processes remain appropriate; as such, people are able to modify their implicit schema with cognitive effort if those schema are found to poorly fit reality. To Lapsley and Narvaez, then, deliberative cognitive processes give rise to, modify, and evaluate the implicit schema that account for most moral decision-making.

Each model of moral identity possesses certain differences, but most are built upon the same set of assumptions. Blasi’s moral centrality model and the social cognitive moral expertise model each assume that there is individual variation in the extent to which a person values the possession of moral qualities. Both models assume that the source of moral schema is deliberative cognitive reasoning, but both also recognize that there are other, irrational constructs
that can interfere with and override moral cognition’s link to moral behavior. These models also assume that rational cognitive processes are influenced by and also influence non-rational, implicit processes; a person can modify these implicit processes if they are found to be irrelevant to one’s experiences. As these processes are modified based on experience, moral identity theories are defined as developmental theories, contingent on a person’s experiences and unique perspective. Moral identity theories, then, are able to provide a framework whereby individual differences are integrated into decades of research defining morality in terms of rational, universal processes. As such, it is possible to study a person’s traits and characteristics without necessitating a definition of morality that is contextual and relativistic.

3.4 Moral Identity—Does it Predict Moral Behavior?

Moral identity theories arose as an attempt to account for the missing variance in the judgment-action gap (Blasi, 1983). It should follow, then, that measures of moral identity predict tangible moral behavior. Indeed, research suggests that moral identity has demonstrable links to moral and prosocial activities (Hardy & Carlo, 2011; Hardy, Bean, & Olsen, 2014; Hertz & Krettenauer, 2016). In one line of research, Aquino and Reed (2002) correlated their social cognitive moral identity construct with measures of volunteerism. They found that moral identity was positively correlated with self-reported volunteerism, satisfaction derived from volunteering, and the depth of their involvement in volunteer behaviors. In the same research, moral identity also predicted high school students’ willingness to donate food in an experimental condition. In addition, the measure of moral identity used by Aquino and Reed (2002) in these studies had predictable correlations with other morally relevant measures, such as sympathy, moral reasoning, religiosity, and (negatively correlated with) normlessness and negative
reciprocity. Finally, their explicit, self-report measure of moral identity correlated with an implicit measure of morality. In contrast, this measure had no correlation with theoretically unrelated constructs, such as self-esteem, social anxiety, locus of control, and impression management.

Similarly, measures of moral centrality have been found to predict moral behavior (Arnold, 1993); adolescents who considered moral qualities as more central to their sense of self were more likely to engage in prosocial behaviors and reported more moral motivation when compared to adolescents who integrated non-moral qualities more closely into their self-concept. In another study using a similar measure, Barriga and colleagues (2001) examined the link between moral self-relevance and antisocial behavior. Results from this study suggested a predictable relationship, with moral self-relevance negatively correlating with antisocial behavior when controlling for factors such as gender, internalizing behaviors, and moral judgment.

Another implication of moral identity and the accessibility of moral schema is that individuals with chronically accessible moral schema should be more likely to interpret ambiguous social situations as moral in nature (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004). Narvaez et al (2006) demonstrated that individuals high in moral chronicity—participants for whom morally relevant schema were chronically accessible—tended to make different inferences about situations than did non-chronics. Across a series of studies, it was found that moral chronics tended to supplement their recall of sentences depicting actors engaging in social behaviors by ascribing morally salient personality traits to those actors. This tendency was most pronounced when no recall instructions were given, suggesting that individuals high in moral chronicity made spontaneous moral attributions when faced with ambiguous social situations.
3.5 Moral Exemplars

As previously discussed, moral exemplar research concerns itself with individuals’ life stories, rather than an examination of bottom-up processes thought to constitute a moral self or moral identity. If there are individual differences in morality identity, then it should manifest as a normally distributed construct, as seen in any other individual difference. If moral identity has actual predictive validity, individuals very high in the construct should differ from those with normal or low levels in meaningful ways. Finally, if moral identity should predict moral behavior, then it should follow that those high in moral identity are also those who demonstrate consistent and meaningful moral behavior. As such, a great deal of moral identity research has focused on the narratives of supposed moral exemplars, those who have demonstrated conspicuous moral behavior over a long period of time. Rather than attempting to identity processes that might lead to a greater tendency to behave in a moral manner, moral exemplar research examines individuals who are more likely to behave in a moral manner to assess how they might differ from individuals who have not demonstrated such moral excellence.

The research described earlier by Colby and Damon (1992) provided considerable support for this depiction of moral exemplars. In a similar vein, Frimer and Walker (2009) seek to resolve the tension between rational and irrational processes, and between self-interested and prosocial values by suggesting that values of agency (self-determination) and communion (other-oriented behaviors) are both tightly integrated into the self-concepts of moral exemplars. They present a reconciliation model in which a healthy, morally developed individual has managed to integrate these competing values into a coherent model of moral motivation. Each value is necessary for a moral person; one who has too many agency-centered values tends to care little about the well-being of others. However, a person who has too many communion values
integrated into their sense of self may lack the capacity to put these values into practice in a manner helpful to others, due to a lack of proper motivation typically supplied by integrating authentic, agentic drives. Frimer and Walker (2009), thus, argue that these values are synergistic for moral exemplars, and indeed are integrated together in mature forms of moral identity. Examining the values embedded in the personal narratives of undergraduate students, Frimer and Walker (2009) found that this model of moral identity did indeed predict moral behavior. Agency and communion values tended to develop separately, but in moral exemplars were fused together. These findings suggest that, in the case of highly moral individuals, the personal domain and the moral domain are entwined, rather than distinct. People high in moral identity tend to want to do good of their own volition.

A further avenue of exploration concerns the relation between moral identity and moral cognition, which to this point has received little attention from moral development research. As previously noted, moral exemplar research has found little association between moral identity and moral maturity (Colby & Damon, 1992). While the moral maturity, as measured by Kohlberg’s stages of moral cognition, is an imperfect measure of moral cognition, more contemporary research has reported a similar lack of relation between moral identity and moral cognition (Hardy, 2006). However, other research has demonstrated a link between cognition and identity in the moral domain (Barriaga et al, 2001; Aquino & Reed, 2002). Thus, it seems that more research is required to assess the possible link between identity and cognition in the moral domain.

Moral cognition and moral identity have thus been presented as competing constructs, leading to criticism of identity as a reductionist approach to morality that fails to properly account for situational variance (Nucci, 2004). However, theoretical conceptions of moral
identity contain nothing fundamentally incompatible with explicit theories of moral cognition. It is not unreasonable to suggest that moral identity is highly reliant on rational cognition, either as a source of moral heuristics (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004) or as a necessary requirement to recognize a situation as morally salient (Blasi, 1983). Self-concept theory does not deny the power of situational variance in influencing behavior or cognition; indeed, a great deal of research has been conducted on individuals' coordination of their self-concept across situations (Harter & Monsour, 1992; Donahue et al, 1993). However, moral identity research has thus far failed to examine the relation between moral self-concept and explicit moral cognition in mixed-domain scenarios. This is a relevant gap in the literature, as theoretical accounts of moral identity suggest that it should allow for an ability to predict the extent to which people will attend to the moral salience of complex situations relative to other concerns.

In sum, moral identity theory points to a model of morality that endorses individual differences as moderating the link between cognitive and emotional factors and moral behavior. A constructivist model involves both subjective experience and objective reality. In supplementing a social cognitive, rational model with a more idiosyncratic, subjective self-concept one, it is hoped that a more complete model of moral motivation might be observed. As described, there is considerable evidence to suggest that differences in self-concept and identity might produce a qualitatively different experience in the moral domain. Those to whom moral qualities are more tightly integrated into their self-concept might be more sensitive to moral aspects of ambiguous, mixed-domain social situations. In addition to being more likely to attend to moral stimuli, people high in moral identity might be more intrinsically motivated to act in a moral fashion. Their evaluations of their real self and their ideal selves are thought to be more grounded in moral principles, and to act contrary to these principles would thus represent a
betrayal of who they are as a person. It would seem, then, that moral identity models, being compatible with other models of moral behavior, could provide useful supplements to other theories of moral motivation and prosocial behavior.

3.6 Moral Identity and Development

While moral identity researchers have done a considerable amount of work outlining the structure and function of the construct, comparatively little work has explored the developmental nature of moral identity. In exploring the topic of the developmental antecedents of moral identity, Krettenauer and Hertz (2015) noted that there was comparatively little evidence supporting age-related differences in the moral identity construct. This is a surprising gap in the literature, considering that many of the constructs underlying moral identity, such as self-concept, have developmental progressions that are relatively well understood (Harter & Monsour, 1992). The self-concept undergoes considerable changes throughout adolescence, as multiple selves are reorganized into a construct that is both stable and flexible (Harter 1999). This would also suggest that moral identity undergoes similar development in adolescence, as some youth reorganize their self concept to favor moral qualities over non-moral ones.

However, Krettenauer and Hertz (2015) note that there is little evidence of age-related change in moral identity in adolescence.

This finding has many possible explanations. First, as the researchers note, the measures designed to measure moral identity might lack the sensitivity required to detect subtle developmental differences (Krettenauer & Hertz, 2015). Next, not all models of moral identity contain a strong developmental component. The sociocognitive perspective of moral identity focuses on moral schema and chronicity (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004). As schema are formed and
reorganized throughout the lifespan, within this model there is no reason to presuppose that adolescence would be a period of life more or less important to the development of moral identity than any other period. Finally, it is possible that there is a developmental progression to moral identity, but that it takes place either before or after late adolescence.

This final point bears more consideration. Krettenauer and Hertz (2015) report that moral identity is more sensitive to contextual variation in late adolescence to early adulthood, that this cross-context differentiation peaks at about 25 years of age, and then declines. This suggests that moral identity is a later developing construct than previous theorists suppose, but that it is still essentially a developmental construct. More work is still required to assess the relation between age and the development of moral identity. Studies that examine moral identity from early age groups to adulthood might allow researchers to assess where the construct begins to develop.

The current study seeks to address this gap in developmental work in moral identity by assessing moral identity development from a cognitive developmental perspective. If moral identity and cognitive developmental theories are compatible and supplementary, the fact that there has been little research exploring the link between them constitutes an important gap in the moral development literature. The current research seeks to address this gap by drawing upon Social Domain Theory to assess children’s and adults’ reasoning about complex moral scenarios and to explore whether moral identity relates to participants’ judgments about these situations. If moral identity influences a person’s tendency to attend to the moral salience of a situation, then it should relate to the use of moral reasoning when evaluating complex social situations relative to other considerations. One area which often features such complex social situations is the civic domain. The civic and political arena frequently involves situations in which it is necessary to balance matters of personal choice, pragmatic benefits, and moral considerations. As will be
discussed in the next chapter, research on civic responsibility has frequently found that participants make complex judgments in which social responsibilities are balanced against other, non-moral considerations. In this case, it is proposed that moral identity might provide valuable insight into what judgments a person will make about these complex situations.

Chapter 4

Youth and Society

Lawrence Kohlberg’s theory of moral development focused, in part, on judgments of a person’s relationships with authority. He suggested that young children are characterized by a very simple, deferential relationship to authority figures (Kohlberg, 1958; Kohlberg, 1981; Kohlberg, 1984). As children have limited perspective taking abilities, they tend to evaluate the “goodness” or “badness” of an action based on a parent or other adult authority’s reaction to the action. Young children have more limited perspective-taking abilities and are often apt to take the perspective of an adult or authority figure when evaluating a situation. They are unable to think in terms of abstract moral principles, and as such adopt a very simple punishment/reward orientation through which authority defines the “good”. It is only with development that children and adolescents grow to differentiate social rules from moral principles.

In one line of research generally supporting Kohlberg’s characterization of children, Gallatin and Adelson (1970, 1971) asked children and youth to imagine that a thousand people had moved to an island and set about designing a nation. Youth were then asked to evaluate various laws that balanced personal freedoms against various societal goods. These social goods included, for example, prudential goods (a law requiring men over a certain age to have regular medical checkups), aesthetic considerations (a law requiring citizens to paint their houses every
few years), or legal concerns (if laws governing civil liberties should be amended in times of national crisis). Other conditions more directly placed certain rights at odds with one another—whether childless adults should contribute to taxes to pay for education (even when they are not direct consumers of this service) or whether religious minorities should be forced to receive vaccinations (even if their beliefs forbid the practice).

The results suggested important developmental trends. Younger children tended to focus on the utility of the laws or the concrete benefits of the policies. There was little evidence that the youngest age group understood the societal purpose behind the various practices; their responses were primarily grounded in a pragmatic cost/benefit analysis. Children also were more likely than older youth to uncritically accept the government’s authority to restrict the personal freedom of citizens. There was a gradual developmental progression towards understanding the broader purpose of each law, including a law’s possible effect on different social actors. Younger children and adolescents were also less likely to have a clearly formulated notion of the public good, for example, that an educated populace benefits everyone, and so they were more likely to accept people being able to opt out of paying education taxes if they did not have children who would directly benefit. The oldest youth surveyed were more likely to evaluate laws from many different perspectives, including the notion of the public good, as well as demonstrating sensitivity to the implications of laws for the individual liberties of society’s citizens, showing less uncritical acceptance of government authority.

The findings of Gallatin and Adelson (1970, 1971) support the claim by Kohlberg and by Piaget that evaluations of authority and rules are related to developmental processes, with children making less complex attributions of authority than do adults (Piaget, 1932; Kohlberg, 1958). The youngest age group in these studies tended towards an uncritical acceptance of
authority, often conceding that the government and social leaders knew what was best for
society. Older youth were willing to cede a certain amount of decision-making power to
authority figures, especially when those decisions were seen as having some sort of benefit to
society and to citizens. However, older youth were much more likely than children to endorse
the rights of the individual to self-determine, even if this self-determination entailed some sort of
risk to the person. It is clear that youth base their evaluations of authority on more than the
simple social utility or deference to their leaders on which younger children base their decisions;
for example, they consider the social utility of the decisions balanced against certain inherent
rights that citizens are thought to possess, such as rights of self-determination and other
freedoms.

These findings also suggest that youth maintain that society has a certain right to curtail
their behaviors. What was less clear is the extent to which individuals were obligated to actively
engage in behaviors designed to improve society (positive morality). Previously described
research has suggested that people make complex evaluations of their responsibility towards
another person, balancing factors such as the needs of the other person and the cost to the self
(Kahn, 1992). While this research provides valuable insight into one’s perceptions of
interpersonal obligation, it did not explicitly explore a person’s responsibility towards a broader
social structure. To investigate this, Metzger and Smetana (2009) presented youth with scenarios
describing different forms of civic behaviours and asked them to assess their perceived
obligation to perform these behaviours. They asked youth aged 15-19 years to assess the
importance of civic activities such as community helping (i.e. volunteering), standard political
(i.e. voting), social movement (i.e. protests), and community involvement (i.e. sports and clubs)
behaviours, and to assess the obligation to engage in such activities. They also asked youth to
select, from a pre-generated list of responses, justifications (Moral, Social Conventional, or Personal Choice) for their answers.

Their results showed that community helping and standard political involvement were evaluated as more important than community gathering and social movement activities. They also found that youth perceived an obligation to engage in standard political and community helping behaviours, with standard political involvement, intriguingly, considered the most obligatory act. Finally, youth tended to select social conventional justifications as reasons for why standard political involvement was considered the most obligatory of activities, whereas community helping was usually justified using moral reasons, while the other activities were justified through the use of personal choice concerns.

The findings of this study suggest that youth perceive an obligation to help others, and to be active participants in democratic society, extending the results of the Kahn (1992) paper in suggesting that older youth may have a more mature conception of personal responsibility and how best to discharge that responsibility to the benefit of society at large. The overall lack of personal justifications in the Standard Political and Volunteerism conditions suggests that youth do not simply consider positive morality as a function of personal choice. Rather, youth tended to consider what is best for the functioning of society. Obligation, then, does not simply exist when performing an unambiguously moral task, such as helping another. Political procedural tasks, such as voting, also carry a certain obligation behind them; citizens have a responsibility to take the time necessary to select their leaders. It seems that individuals have a more extended sense of obligation than is immediately apparent from the results of the Kahn (1992) study, especially when these actions benefit society or entail democratic political obligations.
4.1 Children’s Evaluations of Rights and Authority

Developmental research suggests that children may have more sophisticated conceptions of rights, civil liberties, and civic obligation than was previously supposed. Noting that previous research only evaluated children’s perceptions of abstract rights and civil liberties when in conflict with concrete social outcomes, Helwig (1995) sought to examine children’s ability to evaluate and reason about rights in a variety of situations, including those in which rights or civil liberties were in conflict with one another (i.e. freedom of religion vs. right to protection from harm) and in straightforward situations in which children were asked to judge whether the government could legitimately suppress individual rights and freedoms, such as freedom of speech and religion. The results suggest a complex pattern in which judgments and reasoning were determined both by development and by the specific situations in which rights had to be coordinated with other social concepts (e.g., equality, harm, societal laws). Similar to previous research, in complex social and moral conflicts, younger adolescents tended to give priority to other social and moral concerns (e.g., harm, law) than rights to freedom of religion or expression, whereas older adolescents and young adults were more likely than younger adolescents to support these civil liberties. However, early adolescents also conceptualized rights such as freedom of speech and religion as universal moral concepts that should be guaranteed in all societies, regardless of existing laws or practices. Younger adolescents almost unanimously criticized a law designed to restrict freedom of speech and religion. In addition, approximately half of the youngest age group judged it acceptable to violate such a law (compared to middle and older adolescents, who almost unanimously supported law violation). When asked to give justifications in support of civil liberties, participants at all ages appealed to self-expression, personal choice, and democratic principles.
The results support the conclusion that there are clear age-related trends in the evaluation of civil liberties in relationship to social rules and authority. Older adolescents are better able to co-ordinate multiple competing claims, particularly when freedoms are in competition with one another. However, in this research, unlike previous research, even young children demonstrated an ability to understand civil liberties on a conceptual level, and in some situations to support these rights even in conflict with concrete benefits or with the dictates of authority.

The social domain research in general shows that children affirm civil liberties and freedoms. Young children are able to evaluate laws in terms of moral principles and demonstrate some ability to reject laws that do a poor job of upholding these principles (Helwig, 1998; Helwig & Jasiobedzka, 2001). Authority can legitimately alter social conventional rules, but not laws that serve moral principles (e.g., those that support basic freedoms). In examining the obligation to engage in civic behaviors, then, the question becomes this: is civic participation a matter of moral obligation, or one of social conventional utility, or rather personal choice (or, perhaps some combination of these)?

4.2 Morality and Civic Obligation

The characterisation of children as unable to properly assess civic rules in an abstract or complex manner is likely an oversimplification. As described, children show more sophisticated understandings of freedoms and social rules than previously claimed (Helwig, 1995). There may also be methodological issues leading prior research to underestimate children’s understandings. For example, Gallatin and Adelson (1970; 1971) presented children with policies supporting the public good and asked them to evaluate those policies in a "negative" sense, that is, to assess exceptions to those policies and to evaluate legitimate reasons for non-participation. Less is known about children's evaluations of policies supporting the public good themselves. The
current research will seek to explore this issue by assessing the extent to which children and youth support government imposed taxes on the populace to provide or enhance certain public goods. Do children understand the social utility of institutions such as healthcare, education, and security, or will they evaluate these programs from the perspective of simply personal utility or personal choice?

Research (McNeil & Helwig, 2015) examining perceptions of hypothetical government-implemented mandatory community service programs in high schools found an age-related pattern in which older (17-18 years) youth were more likely than younger children (10-11 years) to cite autonomy-related considerations when evaluating mandatory service programs. However, even young children were able to understand the prosocial value of such programs. In this research children and youth were asked to compare different service program compositions: one in which the government selected the activity students were to perform (e.g., helping out in food banks to feed the poor), and one in which the choice of service activity was left to the individual students. While there were age-related differences in the use of autonomy-based reasoning, even the youngest age groups often did cite autonomy considerations when the service programs were highly limiting of personal freedom (such as when the government, rather than students themselves, selects the activity). Overall, the findings indicate that there were commonalities in the ways in which participants from various age groups evaluated policies designed to promote the public good (e.g., all thought that some form of mandatory community service in high schools was good), but that there were also age-related variations in reasoning about mandatory community service between childhood and early adolescence, with concerns over individual autonomy and choice becoming more salient in adolescents’ reasoning with increasing age.

It seems apparent that the motivations to engage in political behaviors are a complex
combination of self-interested, duty-based, and moral/altruistic considerations. It may be that the obligation to engage in civic behavior is linked to one's beliefs about why such behaviors are important. Metzger and Smetana (2009) found variance in both the level of perceived obligation and the reasoning behind various types of civic behavior. Similarly, Kahn (1992) found variation in the perceived obligation to help others under certain circumstances, namely when the needs of the others were perceived as great and the cost to the self was considered to be low. Although both the type of activity and the age of participants contributed to variations in evaluations of civic activities, individual differences may explain the tendency to reason one way or another when faced with complex social situations. In particular, individuals high in moral identity might be more sensitive to the moral considerations inherent in many civic behaviors and situations. As these situations involve competing considerations, the relative value that an individual places on moral concerns compared to other issues (e.g., personal choice) might influence their tendency to view these civic situations in a moral manner (i.e., as obligatory or praiseworthy). As noted earlier, Narvaez and colleagues (2006) reported that individuals with chronically accessible moral schema were more likely than controls to attend to morally salient stimuli. Colby and Damon (1992), in their exploration of the narratives of moral exemplars, frequently reported that these exemplars felt helping to be obligatory, and that to fail to act in a moral fashion would be to betray some important aspect of themselves. These findings suggest a potential association between moral identity and civic obligation, at least in those instances in which civic behavior can be justified using moral principles. Thus, the current study sought to assess the contribution of moral identity to explanations of variations in judgments and reasoning about a variety of types of civic responsibility, drawing on participants from a broad age range.
(late childhood to early adulthood).

4.3 The Current Research & Hypotheses

4.3.1 Hypothesis 1: There will be developmental differences in evaluations of civic activities.

Previous researchers have noted that different types of civic activities are evaluated in different ways, reflecting the complex balance between personal prerogative and public good involved in many civic activities (Flanagan, 2005; Metzger & Smetana, 2009). However, there is still a great deal of nuance in these civic evaluations that has been left unexamined. First, the current study seeks to extend the findings on perceptions of civic obligation by assessing potential developmental progressions in participants' evaluations of civic activities.

First, the current study sought to examine directly children’s and adolescents’ perceptions of social obligations to contribute to public goods. Prior research (Gallatin & Adelson, 1970, 1971) examined children’s and adolescents’ reasoning about citizens’ obligations to contribute to the public good in relatively complex situations, such as whether those who are without children should be required to pay an education tax along with those with children. However, children’s understanding of obligations to contribute to the public good in more straightforward situations were not examined in that research. In the present study, this issue will be explored by questioning participants on the legitimacy of a government's right to tax citizens in order to provide basic public services, such as hospitals and schools. Whereas previous research suggests that older youth will provide more complex justifications of obligations to contribute to the public good (Gallatin & Adelson, 1970, 1971), in the present study, even younger children are expected to support the government's right to tax citizens because of moral considerations such
as the overall benefit of such programs to society or to individuals’ welfare.

As well, this study will examine potential age-related variations in judgments and reasoning about other types of civic activities by asking both child and adolescent participants to evaluate the importance, obligation, and acceptability of a law mandating the types of civic activities studied by Metzger and Smetana (2009): standard political (voting), volunteering, community gathering (clubs & sports), and social movement (petitions & protests). To these issues was added another activity, the support of charitable organizations, in order to examine reasoning about a clear moral behavior with prosocial implications but very little promise of personal benefits.

Another goal of the current research was to provide an examination of the justifications and reasoning behind these evaluations by conducting semi-structured interviews using a Social Domain Theory framework. This allows a more detailed exploration of the variation and nuance in the responses, especially in the moral domain. It also permits a more thorough examination of how children and youth balance competing considerations of personal choice and moral principles by allowing multiple justification responses to be coded.

Using such a study design, it was expected that participants would justify standard political voting behaviors through use of democratic principles of equal participation, even at younger ages (Helwig, 1998). However, it was expected that children would be less likely to make use of this reasoning than would older youth, who were expected to demonstrate more appreciation for the abstract value of voting as a form of civic contribution. Conversely, results for the helping behaviors (community and charitable organizations) were expected to parallel those found in McNeil and Helwig (2015). Whereas all age groups were expected to make similar use of moral justifications in their justifications for these programs, older participants
were expected to use more personal choice justifications than would younger participants, reflecting their tendency to see civic situations from multiple domains.

4.3.2 Moral Identity

Whereas previous research has noted situational variation in the evaluation of civic activities, there have been few attempts to account for this variation. The current research seeks to address this gap by supplementing analyses of judgments and reasoning with measures of individual differences in participants’ moral identity. While many conceptions of moral identity exist, there are commonalities to the theoretical approaches that suggest that moral identity could account for variance in the perceptions of civic activities. Most theories of moral identity propose that it serves to focus attention to the moral salience of ambiguous situations (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Blasi, 1983, Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004). Thus, the current research seeks to explore the application of moral identity to civic activities, which constitute complex, multi-faceted moral situations that involve moral and personal-choice considerations.

4.3.3 Hypothesis 2: Moral Identity Will Be Linked to Perceptions of Civic Obligation.

It is expected that moral identity will positively relate to quantitative assessments of obligation to engage in civic activities that could be considered moral in nature, namely the volunteering and charitable organization behaviors. The relation between moral identity and voting should be affirmed if voting is thought to be justified based on moral principles of fairness and equality of participation. However, if it is justified based on social conventional principles, as was found in Metzger and Smetana (2009), then no relation between moral identity and the obligation to vote is expected to exist.
4.3.4 Hypothesis 3: Moral Identity Will Be Related To Moral Reasoning.

It is expected that, due to the role that identity plays in guiding individuals' attention towards self-relevant stimuli, individuals who score higher on moral identity measures will provide more explicit affirmations of the moral salience of these complex social scenarios. It is also expected that these explicit affirmations will be manifest in the use of moral reasoning, with individuals higher in moral identity providing more moral justifications in their evaluations of civic scenarios. Correspondingly, it is also expected that this will result in less use of personal-choice justifications in reasoning about these situations. As indicated by research on moral exemplars, individuals high in moral identity will be more likely to perceive an obligation to contribute in situations that they believe to be moral in nature, and they are less likely to attend to personal choice considerations (Colby & Damon, 1992).

Moral identity is also expected to be related to the availability and accessibility of moral schema in evaluating the civic behavior of hypothetical agents (Narvaez et al., 2006). Research suggests that individuals high in moral identity are more likely to spontaneously recall morally salient traits (Narvaez et al, 2006). This is likely due to the tendency of individuals to evaluate reality based on those schema that are most easily retrieved and applied to diverse situations. In the current research, it is expected that individuals high in moral identity would use more morally salient traits when asked to describe an individual who engaged in civic behaviors, as well as more morally salient traits to evaluate those who declined to participate in such endeavors. This is likely because these moral descriptors are most easily retrieved; that is, they are "chronically" accessible schema and are more likely to be applied to ambiguous situations (Narvaez et al, 2006). As such, this measure of moral chronicity acts as an additional measure of moral identity.
4.3.5 Hypothesis 4: Moral Identity and Moral Cognition Will Be Related Independently of Developmental Differences.

Developmental differences are expected to account for some of the variance in the evaluations of the importance and the obligation to engage in civic activities (Wray-Lake, Metzger, & Syvertsen, 2016). As moral identity does not seem to vary considerably over the age groups assessed in this study, and as even young children seem to attend to moral schema based on moral identity (Krettenauer & Hertz, 2015), this developmental variation is not expected to override the aforementioned link between moral identity and moral cognition. As such, both age and moral identity are expected to predict variance in moral reasoning independently of one another. Age will predict moral cognition in the ways described earlier. Conversely, individuals high in moral identity will be more likely to use moral reasoning, regardless of age group.

Chapter 5

Method

5.1 Participants

The sample was comprised of (108) Canadian children, adolescents, and young adults, divided evenly into three age groups: 10- to 11-year-olds (n = 36, M = 10.76, hereafter "Late Childhood") and 13- to 14- year-olds, (n = 36, M = 14.08 years, hereafter "Early Adolescents") recruited from a database containing a list of families interested in participating in psychological research, and undergraduate students recruited from an introductory psychology class from a large Canadian university (n = 36, M = 19.52 years, hereafter "Early Adults"). Families in the database were recruited from hospitals, day-care centers, camps, and through mass mailings and
parent shows. Parental consent was solicited for participants drawn from the two youngest age
groups (the Late Childhood and the Early Adolescents), while the oldest age group (the Early
Adulthood group) provided their own consent for participation. The two community samples
(the Late Childhood and Early Adolescents) were each given a $10 honorarium for their
participation, while the Early Adults were given course credit. The ethnic background of the
entire sample was 60% European-Canadian, 17% Asian Canadian, and 23% from various other
ethnicities (e.g. African Canadian (4%), Hispanic Canadian (3.5%), Middle Eastern (7.8%),
Caribbean (2.9%), Other (4.9%) etc.). Across all participants, approximately 74% of
participants' parents had attended university or had completed a post-graduate degree, while 11%
had completed college or other vocational training, and the remaining 15% had a high school
education or less. To assess the homogeneity of groups on demographic variables, chi-square
analyses were performed to assess the similarity of the distribution of demographic
characteristics. Results indicated that the groups differed in their family ethnic identifications
(mothers: $\chi^2 (12) = 21.10, p = .049$; fathers: $\chi^2 (12) = 22.65, p = .031$). In addition, the groups
differed on the education levels of the fathers ($\chi^2 (8) = 22.19, p = .005$), but not the mothers.
Percentages for these variables may be found in Table 1. Occupationally, 65.1% were employed
in managerial, professional, sales, or technical occupations, 23.2% were employed in
manufacturing, trades, or in service roles, 4.9% were unemployed, 4.4% were stay-at-home
parents, and 2.5% were unemployed.
5.2 Design and Procedure

5.2.1 Civic Obligation Interview

To assess judgments of various aspects of civic engagement, a semi-structured interview was given to participants lasting approximately 30-45 minutes. In this interview, participants were asked to imagine a hypothetical country similar to Canada in which the government was considering the implementation of various laws designed to engender civic involvement (e.g., to make participants care more about others in their community). Following this, the interview consisted of two main sections.

5.2.2 Taxation Acceptance Task.

In the first section, participants were asked to assess the extent to which the government was justified in taking money from each citizen, in the form of taxes, in order to pay for services that the government deemed necessary for society to function. These services—hospitals, schools, and police officers/firefighters—were thought to comprise those that would generally fall within the purview of the state to provide for citizens. This task was meant to determine whether or not participants would judge that citizens had a responsibility to contribute to these services at a personal cost. Participants were asked to rate, on a 1-7 point likert scale, the extent to which it was acceptable for the government to tax citizens in order to provide healthcare (hospitals and doctors), education (schools and teachers), and security (police officers and firefighters). A high score on these items would suggest that government was justified in taxing citizens in order to provide these services, while a low score on these items would suggest that participants felt that the citizens should be exempt from taxation and should be free to pay for
these services if they personally desire.

5.2.3 Civic Activities Reasoning Interview

In the second section, modelled after Metzger and Smetana (2009), participants were asked to evaluate five different types of civic activity—Standard Political activities (i.e., voting in elections), Helping Community activities (i.e., volunteering in their community), Helping Others activities (i.e., supporting charities designed to help those in other countries), Community Gathering activities (i.e., joining clubs and sports in the community), and Social Movement activities (i.e., signing petitions and joining protests). For each civic activity, participants were asked a series of questions. First, participants were asked to assess the perceived Importance of the activity on a 1-5 point likert scale (1 = not at all important, 5 = extremely important). Next, a measure of Obligation was assessed by asking people how wrong it was not to engage in the activity on a 1-5 point likert scale (1 = not at all wrong, 5 = extremely wrong). In the next question, participants were asked to assess the extent that the government could Legally Mandate participation in the activity on a 1-7 point likert scale. In this condition, participants were told that the government of this hypothetical nation was considering passing a law requiring citizens to engage in the activity in question (such as requiring citizens to vote, volunteer in their community, support an international charity, join a club or a sport, or learn about the issues that citizens were petitioning or protesting about). Low scores on the likert scale would denote a lack of support for the law and a rejection of the government’s ability to mandate the activity, whereas high likert scale ratings would suggest that the citizens supported a law requiring citizens to engage in the activity.

It should be noted that the social movement activity featured slightly divergent wording relative to the other categories. The nature of Social Movement activities—signing petitions and
engaging in protest movements—was considered to challenge the status quo, whereas the other activities were more supporting of existing social institutions. Given the unique nature of Social Movement activities, it was judged odd to propose that the government would pass a law mandating that citizens engage in these activities, as it would be tantamount to the government passing a law forcing citizens to disrupt society or to challenge social institutions. Accordingly, the Legal Mandate for the Social Movement category was changed to a law mandating citizens learn more about the social issues so that they could theoretically make more informed decisions about whether to either sign a petition or join a protest themselves, or to support others who were engaged in these activities.

To supplement measures of importance and obligation, participants were asked to evaluate two hypothetical citizens: one citizen who engaged one of the activities, and another who did not participate. Specifically, participants were asked to predict the amount of positive or negative affect that would result from the decision to engage or not to engage in the civic behavior. In the positive engagement condition, participants were presented with a hypothetical citizen, who was given a name that matched the gender of the participant, who elected to participate in the activity. For example, participants were asked to imagine a citizen who chose to vote during election time (for the standard political condition), or who joined a club or sport in the community (for the community gathering condition), or who signed a petition or joined a protest about an issue (for the social movement condition). Participants were then asked to rate, on a 1-7 likert scale, how good or bad this citizen would feel about having taken part in the activity. Low scores on this scale would indicate that the participant would feel extremely badly about having participated, while high scores would indicate that the participant would feel extremely good. Finally, in the negative engagement condition participants were then asked to
imagine a different citizen who elected not to engage in the activity. That is, instead of voting or joining a club or a sport, this citizen “just doesn’t do that”. The affect rating in this instance assessed how positive or negative (on a 1-7 likert scale) a citizen would feel about not having completed the task.

The rating scales for the civic obligation interview were adapted from previous research (Prencipe & Helwig, 2002). The rating scales using the 7-point scale (Legal Mandate, Positive Engagement, and Negative Engagement) were presented as a visual array of rectangles in order of descending (for the negative ratings) and ascending (for the positive ratings) size, with the smallest rectangle serving as a neutral mid-point. These rectangles were presented on a 40 cm X 30 cm card. For the Importance and Obligation questions, a 5-point scale was presented depicting five rectangles of ascending size, starting with the smallest rectangle corresponding to “not at all”, and the largest corresponding to “extremely”. These rectangles were presented to participants on a 20 X 22 cm card. Each program (Standard Political, Helping Community, Helping Others, Community Gathering, and Social Movement) was accompanied by a corresponding picture to aid comprehension, and the participants were probed in order to ensure that they understood each program and condition.

5.2.4 Civic Activity Ranking Task

Previous research on the ranking of desirable qualities suggests that traditional ranking tasks are useful in that they ensure variation between items, but give little indication about the degree of the differences between items, nor in how participants perceive trade-offs between items (Li et al, 2001). In light of this, an adaptation of a ranking task was devised to assess the extent of the differences in value allotted to each type of civic activity in relation to each other type. To measure this, after the interview, participants were given ten tokens. They were then
told to imagine that the government had taxed individuals from the hypothetical nation, and after allocating funds to programs that were more clearly important (hospitals, schools, and police/firefighters), the government had money left over, and that each of the ten tokens represented 10% of these funds. The participants were then asked to assign the tokens to the programs as they saw fit; (i.e. a program encouraging people to vote, clubs and sports in the community, a program educating people about issues and setting aside areas for protests, etc.). Participants were also told that they could elect not to assign any tokens to any of the programs, and that any unassigned tokens would represent tax money returned to the country’s citizens. In this way, the relative importance of each program could be measured while still allowing participants the opportunity to conclude that none of the programs was worth funding and to simply offer citizens a tax rebate.

5.2.5 Coding and Reliability

Fifty percent of the interviews (balanced evenly across age and gender) were selected to devise a scheme to code the justifications. This scheme was then used to code the remainder of the interviews. The final coding scheme comprised four major categories, one of which featured three sub-categories. The scheme was modelled after that used in previous research on moral obligation (Kahn, 1992). The moral category contained responses that were judged to govern matters of rights, social contract, fairness, and care. As these various responses represented a variety of moral issues, the moral category was further broken down into three different types of reasoning. The first category, the Moral Justice category, involved responses that concerned issues of justice, fairness, equality, and also social contract—i.e., the responsibility of a state or polity to see to the needs of citizens. The next category, Moral Democracy, involved statements concerning the right of citizens in a democratic society to express their opinions and to have their
voice heard in a democratic manner, and the state’s responsibility to govern based on the desires and opinions of its citizens. The final category, the Moral Care category involved responses expressing a concern for the welfare of others, such as helping and caring for those in need, as well as general prosocial activities and sentiments. A category was coded as Moral if the responses fell into any of these three sub-categories.

In addition to the moral categories, participants frequently cited questions of personal autonomy and act-based evaluations when justifying responses to the various questions. The Personal Choice/Benefit category was applied to responses that featured matters of personal choice, autonomy, freedom from coercion, personal characteristics, as well as matters of unambiguous personal benefit such as questions of personal health and economic well-being. Similarly, the Act-Based Mitigation category featured responses which excused one from participation by calling into question the utility of the activity, the personal burdens associated with the activity, reasons that justified not engaging in the activity, and personal beliefs that prohibited one from effectively participating in the civic activity in question. Note that the Personal Choice/Benefit and the Act-Based Mitigation conditions were similar in that they both often excused a person from engaging in the activity, but for different reasons. In the Personal Choice/Benefit category, a citizen is excused from obligation because he/she has a personal right to autonomy and freedom from coercion, while in the Act-Based Mitigation condition characteristics of the activity reduced the necessity to perform the act, such as the lack of the value in the activity, the prevalence of competing desires (even if the act is important), or a feeling that engaging in the activity would run contrary to one’s own principles or beliefs. A summary of the coding scheme with sample responses may be found in Table 2.

Multiple justifications were coded and weighted according to the total number of
justifications given, but the three main theoretically relevant codes (Moral, Personal choice/benefit, and Act-Based Mitigation) were hierarchically prioritized above another code, Conventional. This category was applied to responses that were solely concerned with the maintenance of the community and promotion of community values, the relationships between community members, and the uncritical acceptance of community and government authority over the actions of citizens. Finally, a pragmatic/general positive/negative code was coded when no other justification code was relevant. Reliability for these justification categories was assessed by having an independent coder code twenty-five percent of the interviews, balanced evenly across age and gender for comparison with the original coding. Intercoder agreement, in the form of Cohen’s Kappa, was .76.

5.3 Moral Identity Measures

5.3.1 Trait Generation Task

To assess moral identity, multiple measures were used based on the different theoretical definitions of that construct. In one such theoretical definition, Lapsley and Narvaez (2006) focus on the concept of moral chronicity and the easy retrieval of morally relevant schema. To assess this, a task similar to that used in moral chronicity research (Narvaez et al, 2006) was adapted for the current research. In the interview, during those questions which assessed the positive engagement and negative engagement conditions, participants were asked to generate traits to describe the hypothetical citizen who either chose to participate in the civic activity, or who chose not to participate in the activity (i.e. traits to describe a citizen who chose to vote in elections and traits to describe a citizen who chose not to vote). In this trait generation task, participants were asked to think of some words to describe the hypothetical citizen. The list of
traits was then coded based on previous work on moral exemplars (Walker & Hennig, 2004). The scheme based on this work focused on differing definitions of moral exemplarity, and was used to distinguish between different types of moral traits, and to differentiate moral from non-moral qualities. The three types of moral qualities coded in this scheme were Justice Exemplar (focused on principles of fairness and equality), Brave Exemplar (focused on traits governing morally relevant actions), and Care Exemplar (focused on qualities concerning helping others, generosity, and positive social engagement). These traits were coded according to the conceptualization of moral exemplars described in Walker and Hennig (2004), which differs somewhat from the definition of moral according to Social Domain Theory. Traits from the trait generation task were coded based on their similarity to one of traits featured in the categories from Walker and Hennig (2004). Traits were assigned to only one category; in the case of a trait that was applicable to more than one exemplar category, the trait was assigned to the category thought to be most appropriate to that characteristic. Traits that did not fall into any of the above categories were assigned to a fourth, Non-Moral category. Reliability for these traits was assessed in the same manner as for the civic activities justification coding scheme. First, fifty percent of the interviews were used to develop the scheme of categorizing the different traits into their appropriate categories. Once the scheme was finalized, twenty-five percent of the interviews were coded by independent coders and an inter-rater reliability coefficient was calculated, yielding a Cohen’s kappa of .76. As with the previous coding scheme, all interviews used to develop the scheme and to assess reliability were evenly balanced across age and gender.

5.3.2 Moral Identity Questionnaire

The next measure of moral identity featured a 10-item measure developed by Aquino and Reed (2002). This measure emphasizes the role of trait associations as comprising a moral
identity schema. As such, it presents participants with a list of morally relevant traits (e.g. compassionate, honest, kind), and then asks participants to imagine a prototypical moral person who possesses all of those traits, and then presents questions asking the participant to compare themselves to that moral prototype in various ways. The 10 items are each assessed on a 1-7 likert scale that measures agreement with the statement that comprises each item (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). The items load onto two subscales: Internalization and Symbolization. The Internalization subscale contains those items that assess the extent to which a person values the integration of moral qualities into their core sense of self. Sample items for the Internalization subscale include “It would make me feel good to be a person who has these characteristics”, “I strongly desire to have these characteristics”, and “I would be ashamed to be a person who had these characteristics (reverse coded)”. The Symbolization subscale contained items pertaining to the act of communicating to others that a person has morally relevant characteristics. Sample items for this scale include “I am actively involved in activities that communicate to others that I have these characteristics” and “The fact that I have these characteristics is communicated to others by my membership in certain organizations”. While the scale was administered to all age groups, the wording was changed slightly for the youngest age group to aid in comprehension. Adequate reliabilities were obtained, with $\alpha = .73$ for the Internalization scale and $\alpha = .79$ for the Symbolization subscale.

5.3.3 Adapted Good-Self Assessment

The Adapted Good-Self Assessment (Arnold, 1993; Barriga, Morrison, Liau & Gibbs, 2001) measures moral self-concept in a manner similar to previous research on the measurement of self-concept in youth (Harter & Monsour, 1992). Participants were asked to rate the self-importance of 16 traits on a 4-point likert scale (1 = not important to me, 4 = very important to
In addition to this independent rating of individual traits, participants were asked to assign traits to one of three concentric circles. The innermost circle represented traits that were the most important to individuals, the next circle comprised traits that were important but not foundational to a person’s sense of self, while the outermost circle represented traits that were not considered important to their sense of self. Participants also were told to place no more than 3 traits in the innermost (“most important”) circle in order to increase the variability of the traits. Of these 16 traits, 8 were moral qualities (considerate, honest, helpful, sympathetic, generous, sincere, fair, & dependable), while the remaining 8 traits comprised desirable but non-moral characteristics (imaginative, industrious, outgoing, athletic, funny, logical, independent, energetic). Each characteristic was presented with a synonym in order to aid comprehension (e.g., industrious or hard-working, honest or truthful, etc.). This measure yielded four different moral identity scores. First, the mean of the moral items was taken in order to calculate a general moral identity score, AGSA (Adapted Good-Self Assessment) Moral ($\alpha = .74$). Second, to control for a possible tendency to favor socially desirable moral characteristics, residual scores were calculated by regressing moral characteristics from non-moral characteristics, which was used to calculate an overall score of moral centrality, AGSA Centrality Moral (Krettenauer, 2011). Finally, the same scores were calculated for the circles measure, with scores ranging from 1-3 depending on which of the concentric circles the item was place within (1 = outermost circle, 2 = middle circle, 3 = innermost circle) to create a AGSA Ranking scale, and the moral centrality of these scores also was calculated through the same method to create a AGSA Centrality Ranking scale. Higher scores on all centrality represented a greater valuation of moral qualities relative to desirable non-moral qualities.
Chapter 6

Results

6.1 Hypothesis 1: There will be developmental differences in evaluations of civic activities.

The first set of analyses sought to assess possible developmental differences concerning both the quantitative evaluations of the various civic activities and the justifications for these responses. The analytic strategy used to explore these hypotheses focused on three tasks. First, the taxation acceptance task was analysed to assess the perceived utility of taxation in providing for public goods. Then, the quantitative evaluations of the importance, obligation, and legal mandate variables for each of the civic activities were assessed. Finally, the qualitative justifications were examined to explore possible differences in reasoning across age groups. For all analyses, a 5 (Activity) X 3 (Group) mixed-model ANOVA was performed on the relevant dependent variables.

6.1.1 Civic Activity Analyses

To assess the evaluation ratings, a mixed-model ANOVA using one within-subjects factor and one between-subjects factor was used. The within-subjects factor explored the effects of the various types of civic activities (Activity) and thus contained five levels (Standard Political, Helping Community, Helping Others, Community Gathering, and Social Movement). The between-subjects factor (Group) was comprised of the age groups of the participants (Late Childhood, Early Adolescent, and Early Adulthood). In the Taxation Acceptance task, the
within-subjects factor contained three levels, each corresponding to a different Public Good (Hospitals, Schools, Police/Firefighters). Coded justification categories were analysed according to their proportionate usage, and responses were transformed using an arcsine transformation (Winer, Brown, & Michels, 1991) to alleviate the concerns with non-normality that can arise with proportionate data. In the justification analyses, only categories used in 10% or more of the responses were analyzed. For all mixed-model ANOVA analyses, significant interactions were further explored using a test of simple main effects, with pairwise comparisons using the Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons. As the hypotheses for this study primarily focused on developmental differences, only those simple main effects exploring differences between age groups were explored for the justification analyses. As preliminary analyses revealed no significant effects for gender, all analyses were collapsed across that variable.

6.1.2 Taxation Acceptance

The first set of analyses concerned participants' endorsement of the government's ability to levy taxes for services normally considered public goods-- hospitals, schools, and police officers/firefighters. Evaluation ratings for these measures were assessed first using a mixed-model ANOVA with one within-subjects factor and one between-subjects factor. Mean scores for these items may be found in Table 3. The between-subjects factor (Group) contained the three age groups of the participants (Late Childhood, Early Adolescence, Early Adulthood). A 3 (Public Good) X 3 (Group) mixed-model ANOVA performed on the quantitative evaluations of approval scores of government taxation yielded a main effect for group \( F (2, 104) = 4.00, p = .022, \eta_p^2 = .07 \). Post-hoc analyses indicated that the Early Adolescent group reported overall higher endorsement levels of government taxation than did the Late Childhood and Early
Adulthood groups.

The justifications were assessed in a similar manner, using 3 (Public Good) X 3 (Group) mixed-model ANOVAs. Justifications that reached the analysis criteria of 10% were: Moral Reasoning and Act-Based Mitigation. Results for the Moral Reasoning analysis indicated no significant differences as a function of Public Good or Group. Finally, there were no significant differences in the use of Act-Based Mitigation reasoning.

6.1.3 Evaluations

6.1.3.1 Importance Ratings

The next set of analyses examined the quantitative evaluations of the various civic activities (Standard Political, Helping Community, Helping Others, Community Gathering, and Social Movement). For each activity, participants were asked to assess how important the activity was (importance) and how wrong it would be not to engage in the activity (obligation). Participants were also asked about their support of a law mandating each civic activity (legal mandate) and to assess how good or bad somebody would feel if they both engaged in the activity (positive engagement) or did not engage in the activity (negative engagement). Analyses for the first three questions (importance, obligation, and legal mandate) are presented in the next section (mean differences for the positive and negative engagement questions did not reach significance). Means for all of these scores may be found in Table 4.

Judgments of the importance of each civic activity was assessed using a 5 (Activity) X 3 (Group) mixed-model ANOVA. A main effect of Activity was found, $F(4, 420) = 29.44, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .22$ qualified by a marginal Activity X Group interaction, $F(8, 420) = 1.94, p = .052, \eta_p^2 = .04$. Post-hoc tests comparing each age group within each activity condition revealed that
the main source of variation lay in the evaluations of the importance of the Helping Other category, with the Late Childhood and Early Adolescence group reporting higher levels of importance than the Early Adult group. Within each age group there was variation in the relative importance assigned to each activity. The Late Childhood age group considered the Standard Political, Helping Community, and Helping Others activities significantly more important than the Community Gathering and Social Movement activities. The Early Adolescent age group considered the Helping Others activity to be significantly more important than the Helping Community, Community Gathering, and Social Movement activities. This age group also considered the Standard Political activity to be significantly more important than the Community Gathering and Social Movement activities. Finally, the Early Adulthood age group rated the Standard Political activity as more important than all of the other activities, with the only other significant difference being higher importance scores assigned to the Helping Community activity compared to the Community Gathering activity.

6.1.3.2 Obligation Ratings

A 5 (Activity) X 3 (Group) mixed-model ANOVA on obligation ratings revealed a main effect of Activity, \( F(4, 420) = 35.14, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .25 \), qualified by an Activity X Group interaction \( F(8, 420) = 4.81, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .08 \). Post-hoc analyses comparing each age group within each Activity condition indicated that there were age group differences in the obligation assigned to the Helping Other condition. Both the Late Childhood and Early Adolescent groups considered Helping Others to be more obligatory than the Early Adulthood group. In addition, the Early Childhood group considered the Social Movement activity to be more obligatory than did the Early Adulthood group, and the Early Adolescent age group rated Standard Political activities as more obligatory than did the Late Childhood age group. Examining the simple main
effects within each age group, the Late Childhood participants considered the Helping Others behavior to be significantly more obligatory than all of the other activities, while the Helping Community activity was considered more obligatory than the Community Gathering and Social Movement activities. The Early Adolescent and the Early Adulthood age groups considered the Standard Political, Helping Community, and Helping Others activities equally obligatory, and each of these activities was considered more obligatory than the Community Gathering and Social Movement acts.

6.1.3.3 Legal Mandate Ratings

Legal Mandate entailed participants’ judgments of laws mandating the activity, such as a law requiring citizens to vote during every election (Standard Political Activity) or a law requiring citizens to join a club or a sport in the community (Community Gathering Activity). A 5 (Activity) X 3 (Group) mixed-model ANOVA revealed a main effect of Activity, $F(4, 420) = 26.93, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .20$ and of Group, $F(2, 105) = 5.67, p = .005, \eta^2_p = .10$, qualified by an Activity X Group interaction, $F(8, 420) = 6.02, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .10$. Post hoc analyses comparing age groups within each activity condition indicated that both the Late Childhood and Early Adolescent age groups were more accepting than the Early Adult group of a law requiring people to engage in Helping Others behaviors. In addition, the Early Adolescent age group was more accepting than were the Early Adulthood age group of a law mandating Social Movement activities. Conversely, the Early Adult group was more accepting than the Late Childhood and Early Adolescent groups of a law requiring people to engage in the Standard Political activity. Finally, the Early Adolescent age group was more likely to accept a law mandating Helping Community activities than was the Early Adulthood age group. The Late Childhood group was most supportive of laws mandating the Helping Community, Helping Others, and Social
Movement activities, considering them more acceptable than laws mandating Standard Political and Community gathering acts. The Early Adolescent age group considered the Standard Political, Helping Community, Helping Others, and Social Movement activities equally mandatory, and all were more mandatory than the Community Gathering activity. Finally, the Early Adulthood age group considered a law mandating the Standard Political activity to be more acceptable than one mandating the Helping Others or Community Gathering activity, while laws mandating the Helping Community and Social Movement activities were also considered more acceptable than one mandating the Community Gathering activity.

6.1.4 Justifications

6.1.4.1 Importance

The importance assessment comprised responses justifying the importance of each activity. Justifications reaching the analysis criterion of 10% in importance evaluations were: Moral Reasoning, Act-Based Mitigation, Personal Choice, and Convention. Summaries of these analyses may be found in Table 5. For this set of analyses, the primary goal was to assess developmental differences in the reasons used to justify participants’ responses. As such, for the post hoc analyses of higher interactions, only the simple main effects exploring the differences between age groups for each activity are reported.

Proportions of the frequencies of usage of each justification type for the importance analyses may be found in Table 6. For the Moral Reasoning category, post hoc analyses of the Activity X Group interaction comparing age groups within each Activity indicated that, for the Helping Others condition, the Late Childhood age group used more Moral Reasoning than did the Early Adulthood Age group. Conversely, the Early Adulthood age group used more Moral
Reasoning than both the Late Childhood and Early Adolescent age groups in the Social Movement activity.

For the Act-Based Mitigation category, post-hoc analyses of the Activity X Group interaction comparing age groups within each activity condition indicated that participants in the Early Adulthood age group were more likely to use Act-Based Mitigation reasoning when evaluating the importance of the Helping Other activity than were participants from the Late Childhood age group and Early Adolescent age groups. No age group differences were found for Personal Choice/Benefit or Conventional-based reasoning.

6.1.4.2 Obligation

Obligation assessed how wrong it was considered to be not to engage in the activity. The Moral Reasoning, Personal Choice/Benefit and Act-Based Mitigation categories each surpassed the 10% analysis criterion; frequencies for the use of justifications for the obligation section may be found in Table 7. Post hoc analyses of the Group X Activity interaction for Moral Reasoning indicated that the Late Childhood age group was more likely than were the Early Adulthood age group to use Moral Reasoning in the Helping Others activity. For Personal Choice/Benefit, post-hoc analyses exploring the Group X Activity interaction indicated that the Early Adulthood group was more likely than the Late Childhood or Early Adolescent groups to use Personal Choice/Benefit reasoning when assessing the obligation to participate in the Helping Others activity. For Act-Based Mitigation, post hoc analyses of the Group X Activity interaction indicated that the Early Adolescence group was significantly more likely to use Act-Based Mitigation reasoning than were the Late Childhood group in the Helping Others activity.
6.1.4.3 Legal Mandate

Legal mandate assessed participants' endorsement of a hypothetical law mandating each activity. Justifications reaching the analysis criterion of 10% in the legal mandate assessment were: Moral Reasoning, Personal Choice/Benefit, Act-Based Mitigation, and Convention; frequencies for the use of justifications may be found in Table 8. In the Moral Reasoning Group X Activity interaction, post hoc analyses indicated that the Late Childhood and Early Adolescent age groups used more Moral Reasoning in the Helping Others condition than did the Early Adulthood age group. For the Personal Choice/Benefit Group X Activity interaction, post hoc analyses comparing age groups within each Activity condition indicated that the Early Adulthood age group was more likely than the Late Childhood and Early Adolescent age group to use Personal Choice/Benefit reasoning when evaluating a law requiring Helping Others. The Early Adulthood age group was more likely to use Conventional reasoning overall than the Late Childhood age group. No age differences were found for Act-Based Mitigation.

6.2 Hypothesis 2: Moral Identity Will Be Linked to Perceptions of Civic Obligation.

The second major hypothesis was tested by a set of correlations assessing the various measures of moral identity and the quantitative evaluations of the civic engagement activities. These correlations tested the hypothesis that moral identity would predict significant variance in judgments and reasoning about civic responsibility. These analyses were divided into two components. First, bivariate correlations were used to explore the relation between the measures of moral identity and the various ratings of Civic Activities (Importance, Obligation, Legal Mandate) as well as the tendency to allocate tax revenue to the activities. The measures of moral
identity included Internalization and Symbolization from Aquino and Reed (2002) as well as the Adapted Good-Self Assessment (Barriga et al, 2001; Arnold, 1993). The Adapted Good Self Assessment was quantified in multiple ways: using the raw morality trait scores (AGSA Moral Traits), the morality trait rankings (AGSA Moral Rankings), and the measures of moral centrality for the raw scores (AGSA Centrality Moral) and the rankings (AGSA Centrality Rankings). Correlation coefficients for the Evaluations can be found in Table 9, while summaries are presented in the next section. Next, to help assess the unique predictive value of moral identity, hierarchical regressions were performed on each of the significant bivariate correlations. The first block of these regressions contained the participants' age group (Late Childhood, Early Adolescent, Early Adulthood) and gender, with higher beta values indicating an effect favoring older participants, and gender with higher beta values indicating an effect favoring females. The moral identity measure was then added to the second block in the regression model.

6.2.1 Bivariate Correlations

6.2.1.1 Internalization

The moral identity Internalization subscale (Aquino & Reed, 2002) correlated primarily with participants' ratings of Standard Political obligation, with higher Internalization scores generally predicting a higher level of obligation to vote and the acceptance of a law mandating voting. Internalization also showed some ability to predict morally salient civic activities, with significant correlations found between Internalization and the importance of volunteering and the support of a law mandating charitable contributions. Internalization was also associated with the tax money contributed to clubs and sports.
6.2.2.2 Symbolization

As expected, Symbolization was correlated with many measures of helping behaviors, predicting the importance and obligation to volunteer and contribute to charitable activities. Interestingly, Symbolization was also associated with the obligation to sign petitions and join protests. Contrary to expectations, Symbolization positively predicted Community Gathering behaviors as well.

6.2.2.3 Adapted Good-Self Assessment

The Adapted Good-Self Assessment (Barriga et al, 2001) measures were somewhat less correlated with civic activity evaluations, but those associations that were found were in hypothesized directions. The measures were associated with the obligation to volunteer and contribute to charities, an obligation to sign petitions and join protests, and less allocation of public tax money to clubs and sports. AGSA Centrality was also unexpected correlated with the perceived importance of Community Gathering activities.

6.2.2 Civic Activity Regressions

6.2.2.1 Internalization

The relation between Internalization and Standard Political Obligation remained significant when age and gender were accounted for ($\beta = .22, p = .024$), as did the relation between Internalization and Standard Political Legal Mandate ($\beta = .30, p = .001$). This suggests that the link between moral identity and the belief that voting is obligatory and legally mandatory persisted regardless of participants' age or their gender. Significant relations were found between Internalization and Helping Community Importance ($\beta = .20, p = .036$), Helping Others Legal
Mandate ($\beta = .25, p = .007$), as well as the amount of tax money assigned to Community Gathering activities ($\beta = -.22, p = .028$).

6.2.2.2 Symbolization

The relation between Symbolization and the perception of Helping Community Importance remained significant ($\beta = .28, p = .007$), as did Helping Others Importance ($\beta = .25, p = .013$) and Community Gathering Importance ($\beta = .38, p < .001$). Symbolization also remained a significant predictor of Helping Community Obligation ($\beta = .23, p = .025$), Helping Others Obligation ($\beta = .21, p = .027$), and Community Gathering Legal Mandate ($\beta = .25, p = .018$). The observed bivariate correlation between Symbolization and Social Movement Obligation did not remain significant in the regression model. While age group ($\beta = -.22, p = .035$) was a significant negative predictor of Social Movement Obligation, with younger age groups perceiving more obligation to sign petitions and join protests, Symbolization did not significantly predict the obligation to engage in Social Movement activities ($\beta = .16, n.s.$). Symbolization also failed to predict Helping Others Legal Mandate independently of age and gender ($\beta = .15, n.s.$). Again, age group accounted for most of the variance in this model, with younger participants demonstrating more support for laws mandating participation in charitable organizations ($\beta = -.34, p = .001$). The relation between Symbolization and Community Gathering Taxes ($\beta = -.14, n.s.$) was not significant when age and gender were accounted for, nor was the marginal association between Symbolization and Helping Community Legal Mandate ($\beta = .12, n.s.$).

6.2.2.3 Adapted Good-Self Assessment

The relation between the AGSA Moral and Helping Community Legal Mandate remained significant in the regression model ($\beta = .30, p = .002$), as did the relation between the AGSA Moral and Social Movement Legal Mandate ($\beta = .25, p = .010$). The AGSA Ranking
scores negatively predicted the tax allotted to Community Gathering activities in the regression model ($\beta = -.32, p = .001$). Similarly, the AGSA Centrality Moral was positively associated with Helping Community Legal Mandate ($\beta = .25, p = .008$) when age and gender were controlled for, suggesting that individuals who prioritized moral traits relative to non-moral traits were more supportive of such laws regardless of age. The relation between AGSA Centrality Ranking and Helping Others Legal Mandate did not remain significant ($\beta = .09, \text{n.s.}$), as age group accounted for most of the model's significance ($\beta = .37, p < .001$). AGSA Centrality Ranking did continue to demonstrate a significant negative association with the allocation of tax money to Community Gathering activities ($\beta = -.29, p = .004$).

6.3 Hypothesis 3 Moral Identity Will Be Related To Moral Reasoning.

The next hypothesis explored the prediction that moral identity would be positively correlated with the use of moral reasoning in appropriate situations and across all activities. To assess this, two measures of reasoning were calculated. First, the frequencies of the use of each justification category (Moral Justice, Moral Democracy, Moral Care, Personal Choice/Benefit, Act-Based Mitigation, and Conventional) were calculated by summing the use of each kind of reasoning within each civic activity type to create a within-activity reasoning score. Next, Total Reasoning scores were computed for each justification category by adding up all instances of the use of that reasoning across all conditions (e.g. Total Moral Justice, Total Personal Choice/Benefit), and a Total Moral Reasoning score was calculated by summing all instances of moral reasoning across all conditions. Similarly, the use of moral exemplar codes categorized using the exemplar types from Walker and Hennig (2004) (Justice Exemplar, Brave Exemplar, Care Exemplar and Non-Moral traits) was summed both across all activities and across all conditions. As with the previous analysis, these data were analyzed in two stages. First,
bivariate correlations were conducted to explore the relation between moral identity and moral reasoning. When the bivariate correlations were significant, hierarchical regressions were performed to assess the relation between moral identity and moral reasoning when age and gender were controlled for. Moral identity was calculated in the same way as it was in the previous section. Correlation coefficients may be found in Table 10.

6.3.1 Bivariate Correlations

6.3.1.1 Internalization

The Internalization subscale was associated with Moral Reasoning in the Standard Political activity, as well as with Moral Reasoning across all situations. Internalization was also negatively associated with the use of Personal Choice/Benefit reasoning in the Social Movement activity. In addition, Internalization was associated with the tendency to use more Care Exemplar-based traits in the trait generation task.

6.3.1.2 Symbolization

The Symbolization subscale featured similar results, being associated with the use of Care Exemplar trait descriptions across all situations. It was also correlated with a greater use of Moral reasoning and less use of Act-Based Mitigation reasoning in the Helping Others activity.

6.3.1.3 Adapted Good-Self Assessment

For the Adapted Good-Self Assessment, a higher mean AGSA Moral score was associated positively with Moral Reasoning and negatively with Personal Choice/Benefit-based reasoning in the Social Movement activity. The AGSA Ranking score was associated with higher ratings of Moral Reasoning in the Helping Others activity, as well as Moral Reasoning across all situations. AGSA Ranking was also associated negatively with Personal
Choice/Benefit-based reasoning in the Social Movement activity, as well as Personal
Choice/Benefit-based reasoning across all activities.

The moral self-relevance scores were associated with similar patterns of reasoning.
AGSA Centrality Moral was positively correlated with Moral Reasoning in the Social Movement
activity and negatively correlated with Personal Choice/Benefit reasoning in the Social
Movement activity.

For the AGSA Centrality Ranking measure of moral identity, there was a positive
association with Moral Reasoning in the Helping Others, and Social Movement activities, as well
as a positive correlation with Moral Reasoning across all situations. In addition, AGSA Ranking
Centrality was associated with Act-Based Mitigation reasoning in the Standard Political activity.

6.4 Hypothesis 4 Moral Identity and Moral Cognition Will Be Related
Independently of Developmental Differences.

6.4.1 Moral Identity Regressions

The final hypothesis sought to assess whether the observed relations between moral
identity and moral reasoning were due to developmental progressions or due to a core link
between identity and cognition. This was examined using a similar hierarchical regression
model. In the first block, age and gender were included, while in the second block the significant
correlation between moral identity and moral reasoning was explored.

6.4.1.1 Internalization

The relations between Internalization and reasoning remained constant in the regression
model. The positive relation between Internalization and Moral Reasoning in the Standard
Political condition persisted when age and gender were accounted for ($\beta = .24, p = .014$). Total Moral Reasoning was still positively predicted by Internalization when age group and gender were controlled for ($\beta = .25, p = .010$). The use of Care Exemplar trait descriptors across all activity types was also predicted by Internalization when age and gender were taken into account ($\beta = .37, p < .001$), as higher Internalization scores were related to more use of care traits when describing individuals. The relation between Internalization and Personal Choice/Benefit reasoning in the Social Movement activity did not persist in the regression model, with Age Group accounting for most of the variance in the model.

6.4.1.2 Symbolization

The relation between Symbolization and the use of Care Exemplar Trait descriptors across all activity types persisted when age group and gender were controlled ($\beta = .33, p = .002$), with higher scores in Symbolization associated with more care trait descriptors. The relation between Symbolization and Act-Based Mitigation in the Helping Others activity also persisted, with Symbolization predicting less mitigation-based reasoning ($\beta = -.27, p = .009$). However, the relation between Symbolization and Moral Reasoning in the Helping Others activities was no longer significant in the regression model ($\beta = .14, \text{n.s.}$) This same pattern also held for the relation between Symbolization and Total Moral Reasoning, with Symbolization accounting for little variance in the model ($\beta = .09, \text{n.s.}$).

6.4.1.3 Adapted Good-Self Assessment

The positive association between Social Movement Moral Reasoning and AGSA Moral remained significant when age and gender were accounted for ($\beta = .23, p = .019$), suggesting that individuals who endorsed moral traits more strongly were also more likely to use moral
reasoning in the Social Movement condition. Social Movement Personal Choice/Benefit reasoning was also negatively associated with AGSA Moral scores ($\beta = -.26, p = .006$) in the regression model.

The AGSA Ranking measure remained a significant positive predictor of Helping Others Moral Reasoning ($\beta = -.17, p = .047$), with individuals who reported higher rankings of moral qualities also more likely to use moral reasoning in assessing the Helping Others activity. AGSA Ranking was negatively associated with Social Movement Personal Choice/Benefit Reasoning ($\beta = -.24, p = .012$), with participants who ranked moral qualities higher making less frequent use of personal choice-based reasoning when assessing social movement activities. AGSA Ranking was positively associated with Total Moral Reasoning across all activities ($\beta = .21, p = .027$). Finally, the relation between AGSA Ranking was only marginally associated with Personal Choice/Benefit reasoning across all situations ($\beta = -.18, p = .060$) in the regression model.

The AGSA Centrality Moral measure continued to predict Social Movement Moral Reasoning in the regression model ($\beta = .21, p = .031$). AGSA Centrality Moral was also negatively associated with Social Movement Personal Choice in the regression model ($\beta = -.27, p = .006$).

The AGSA Centrality Ranking measure positively predicted Total Moral Reasoning across all activities ($\beta = .21, p = .030$). The relation between AGSA Centrality Ranking and Social Movement Moral Reasoning was not significant in the regression model ($\beta = .18, n.s.$), nor was the association between AGSA Centrality Ranking and Helping Others Moral Reasoning ($\beta = -.15, n.s.$). The relation between AGSA Centrality Ranking and the use of Personal/Choice reasoning in the Social Movement activity remained significant ($\beta = .25, p = .010$). The relationship between AGSA Centrality Ranking and Personal Choice/Benefit across all situations
Chapter 7

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to assess children’s, adolescents’, and younger adults’ conceptions of civic responsibility and obligation, and to ascertain what role moral identity played in these assessments and the corresponding reasoning. The current study had four main hypotheses that will be discussed below. First, that there will be developmental differences in the evaluations of civic activities. Next, that moral identity would be related to perceptions of civic obligation. Third, that moral identity would predict a tendency to use moral reasoning in assessing civic activities. Finally, it was expected that the relation between moral identity, civic obligation, and moral reasoning would persist when age effects were controlled.

6.1 Hypothesis 1: Developmental Differences in The Evaluation of Civic Activities

These general results suggest a developmental transition in perceptions of civic activities. In particular, the younger age groups tended to place more value on the Helping Others activity, rating it more important, more obligatory and giving more positive evaluations of a law mandating the activity than did the oldest age group. In contrast, the oldest age group placed more relative importance on the Standard Political activity (voting), rating it more legally mandatory than did the younger participants.

These results provide an interesting perspective into children’s and youth’s evaluations of
political activities. Previous research (Metzger & Smetana, 2009) examining reasoning about these types of issues in older adolescents indicated that youth considered Standard Political activities to be the most important and obligatory. Helping Community activities were also important and obligatory, while the Community Gathering and Social Movement activities were considered comparatively less valuable (Metzger & Smetana, 2009). While the relative valuation of civic activities is thus well understood, the current research extended these findings by focusing on developmental differences in the evaluations of different activities. In the present study, the Helping Others activity was one with clearly defined parameters yielding concrete benefits to another person. It was expected that younger age groups might evaluate such activities from a more concrete perspective (Piaget, 1932, Gallatin & Adelson, 1970; 1971). For example, they might evaluate the responsibility to help others in a less ambiguous fashion and consider it a moral responsibility towards the less fortunate (Dworkin, 2011). In focusing on the prosocial nature of these helping behaviors, younger children appeared to place relatively less value on competing considerations of personal choice or pragmatic limitations. This is consistent with previous research which suggests that younger children might be more accepting (than older participants) of limitations placed on their personal freedoms if they perceive those limitations as in service of a prosocial goal (McNeil & Helwig, 2015). As children approach adolescence they may become more concerned with autonomy and how to balance and coordinate personal choice and prosocial obligation.

Voting, on the other hand, is an activity with a more abstract, often symbolic value with little direct concrete benefit to the self or to others (Feddersen, 2004). Since the value of voting is more abstract, it might be less clear to younger participants why it would constitute a civic obligation. Also, helping others might entail a civic activity that children and youth from these
age groups are familiar with and might actually partake in. In contrast, voting is an activity that youth are legally prohibited from taking part in, and as such it is possible that the younger age groups consider this activity as less personally relevant, and therefore less important or obligatory.

In contrast, the oldest age group perceived fewer obligations to engage in Helping Others behaviors. However, it is not necessarily true that this is because they felt less moral obligation to engage in actively prosocial activities. After all, the Helping Community activity was usually considered similarly important, obligatory, and mandatory when compared to the Standard Political activity. Rather, it might be that participants from the Early Adulthood age group were engaging in a more sophisticated assessment of the costs and benefits of engaging in the various behaviors. Participants in previous research (Kahn 1992) were more likely to cite a moral responsibility to help others if they perceived the cost to the self to be low and the needs of others to be high. It is possible that the oldest age group was considering the cost to oneself in rating the importance and obligation to help those in other countries, balancing that against the prosocial benefit. In this sense, it might not simply be that older participants are less sensitive to the prosocial value in the activity but are rather balancing costs and benefits in a more sophisticated manner, as consistent with the previous research on how youth evaluate different social goods against one another (Gallatin & Adelson, 1970; 1971).

6.2.1 Developmental Differences in Reasoning About Civic Activities

The justification results also suggest qualitative differences in the evaluation of civic acts. The Early Adolescents were more likely than the Early Adulthood age group to use moral
reasoning in assessing the importance of the Helping Others activity, further indicating the special moral salience that this act held for the younger age groups. Conversely, the oldest age group was more likely to use act-based mitigation and personal choice-based reasoning in justifying their responses to the Helping Others condition. As well, the early adolescent age group was more likely than the Late Childhood age group to employ act-based mitigation reasoning. Thus, whereas the younger age groups were more likely to focus primarily on the moral aspects of the helping behaviors, the older age groups were more likely to take a more multi-faceted approach, balancing prosocial considerations against personal choice concerns, sometimes giving priority to the latter. Act-based mitigation reasoning indicates that these participants did not simply see the Helping Others activity as a straightforward moral situation, but rather as a complex situation that mixes legitimate moral features with elements of personal choice and pragmatic considerations that might provide legitimate constraints on a person's ability to help others. Thus, while older participants used proportionally less moral reasoning in evaluating the Helping Others situation, it is not simply due to selfish, egoistic considerations, but rather due to an appreciation of the complexity of some situations and the various types of concerns that need to be considered and balanced. Overall, these findings echo those of earlier theorists suggesting that older participants are more able than younger to consider questions of obligation and personal choice in a more complex manner (Kohlberg, 1958; Kohlberg 1984; Gallatin & Adelson, 1970, 1971).

However, the results of the current research also support other theorists who suggest that children's perceptions about civic activities have been underestimated. While there were differences in the extent of the usage of different types of reasoning among different age groups, each age group used similar justifications when evaluating activities overall. This distinction is
important in understanding how children and youth reason about civic activities. Previous theorists have suggested that children either have an imperfect understanding of more abstract civic situations or reason about those situations in a manner fundamentally different from older youth (Gallatin & Adelson, 1970, 1971; Kohlberg, 1958; Kohlberg 1984;). However, the results of this study suggest that children are not only able to understand abstract notions such as democratic principles or justice-based reasoning, but are able to apply those notions to civic situations in a manner that is largely consistent with that of adolescents. Children appear to understand the basic concept of civic responsibility and the utility of various civic activities.

This is also seen in the findings from the taxation task. When participants were asked to evaluate the utility of public goods, such as whether the government could legitimately tax citizens in order to pay for goods such as hospitals or schools, there was variation in endorsement ratings, with older age groups reporting a greater endorsement for taxation used to provide public goods. However, there were no significant differences in the justifications used to arrive at these conclusions. Taken together, the findings suggest that the general type of reasoning is comparable across age groups, and that younger participants are able to understand the value of public goods and the responsibility of governments to provide for citizens, even as older age groups might be more able to see the social utility of these public good and the responsibility of governments to provide them for citizens. These findings echo research suggesting that civic engagement is a construct that is measurable across diverse age ranges, even as there is a developmental trajectory suggesting that older youth display overall higher levels of civic engagement (Wray-Lake et al, 2016).

Interestingly, while there were few differences between age groups in the evaluations of the Social Movement activity, there was some age-related variation in the use of justifications to
describe the importance of this behavior. In particular, the Early Adolescent and Late Childhood age groups were less likely than the Early Adulthood age group to use moral reasoning in assessing the importance of the Social Movement activity. While all groups assigned a similar quantitative level of value to the Social Movement activity, with all age groups rating it as less valuable than many other civic activities, an examination of the justifications for these responses reveals that the older age group demonstrated a more nuanced perception of the activity's purpose. All of the age groups referenced the socially disruptive nature of the act, but the oldest age group was more likely to reference the moral value of the activity. This disparity in the use of moral reasoning in the assessment of the Social Movement activity may be due to a tendency of the younger age groups to place comparatively more value on the maintenance of social conventions (Kohlberg, 1981), leading them to be less sensitive to the possible social benefits of such disruptive acts, as well as a general development in civic engagement across age levels (Wray-Lake et al, 2016).

6.3 Moral Identity

To date, little research has explored the link between moral identity and perceptions of civic activities in a systematic fashion. While previous research has established that moral exemplars (defined as those higher in moral identity) are typically more active in the civic domain, many of these studies have focused on personal narrative paradigms, and few have evaluated children from as wide an age range as the current research. Also missing is an examination of the link between moral identity and moral reasoning. Previous research has suggested that moral identity and moral reasoning have very little relation to one another (Colby & Damon, 1992). However, other research has suggested a significant association between
moral cognition and moral identity (Aquino & Reed, 2002). The current research sought to further explore what association moral identity has with moral reasoning, using distinctions made within the social domain approach. In particular, it explored how moral identity affected the tendency to evaluate complex social situations by attending to the moral salience of those situations, rather than to personal choice or act-based mitigation considerations.

6.4 Hypothesis 2: Moral Identity Will Be Linked to Perceptions of Civic Obligation

The current study found many links between moral identity and quantitative evaluations of the importance, obligation, and acceptance of laws mandating civic activities. These findings demonstrate that people who score highly in measures of moral identity evaluate certain activities in different ways. Previous research on the subject suggested that many civic activities were justified through the use of personal choice or social conventional reasoning (Metzger & Smetana, 2009). In particular, in Metzger and Smetana (2009), Standard Political activities were justified through the use of social conventional reasons, in contrast to previous research where children and youth were found frequently to use morally relevant considerations of fairness of representation when evaluating voting in a democratic context (Helwig, 1995). The correlations between the moral identity measures and the quantitative evaluations suggest a moral component to participants' perceptions of the political activity of voting, evidence that is supported by the participants' explicit use of democratic principles of fairness and equality in their justifications for their ratings.

Different measures of moral identity relate to different patterns of civic evaluations. Internalization related more strongly to the Standard Political activity, correlating positively with
the perceptions of the obligation, legal and otherwise, to engage in the activity. These results lend credence to the notion of a moral obligation to engage in voting behaviors, rather than an obligation derived from social conventional considerations. As well, the Symbolization subscale was correlated with many evaluations of the more explicitly prosocial activities, being related to the importance and obligation to engage in Helping Community and Helping Others activities, while the Adapted Good Self Assessment was associated with the obligation to engage in Helping Community behaviors. These findings suggest both the moral nature of civic activities and the construct validity of the moral identity measures. While there is clearly a social conventional, community-building aspect to civic activities, the present study revealed a moral dimension as well, lending credence to the notion that these activities represented ambiguous situations that could be interpreted in multiple fashion.

6.5 Hypothesis 3: Moral Identity Will Be Linked to Moral Reasoning

The results gave support to the notion that individuals higher in moral identity were more likely to use moral reasoning when evaluating civic activities. There was considerable variation in this relation, with some activities featuring overall stronger associations between moral identity and moral reasoning than did other activities. However, moral identity also significantly predicted moral reasoning across all civic activities, pointing to a more general preference for moral reasoning in individuals higher in moral identity. This finding was robust, occurring across multiple measures of moral identity, particularly those measures that attempted to assess the personal value placed on moral qualities. It seems that individuals higher in moral identity tended to appreciate the moral salience of complex social situations, resulting in a tendency to use more explicit moral reasoning in assessing these scenarios.
While moral identity seemed mainly to predict moral reasoning across all activities, there was also substantial situational variation in the associations found in reasoning. These types of relationships between identity and reasoning tended to be specific to the type of moral identity measure used. For example, the Internalization subscale of Aquino and Reed’s (2002) measure predicted the use of moral reasoning in the Standard Political activity, suggesting that this more abstract concept of moral identity was linked to more abstract moral considerations in an activity where the moral salience is derived from concepts of equality and representation. Higher levels of Symbolization also were related to comparatively less use of Act-Based Mitigation reasoning in the Helping Others activity. The symbolization measure contains a strong focus on behavioral tendencies and social experiences, and as such it is logically associated with an activity of a clearly prosocial nature. These participants perceived fewer context-based reasons to avoid engaging in civic activities in this condition, lending support to the notion that moral identity may focus attention towards more morally salient stimuli by reducing the salience of non-moral distracters in situations with a clear moral mandate (Lapsley & Narvez, 2004).

Interestingly, the Adapted Good Self Assessment correlated most strongly with justifications in the Social Movement activity. These measures were positively correlated with the use of moral reasoning in the social movement condition and negatively associated with personal choice-based reasoning. In previous narrative work on moral exemplars, many of those who were considered high in moral identity were those who challenged social institutions in the manner typically represented by those engaging in Social Movement activities (Colby & Damon, 1992). These findings coincide with those from prior narrative research, and provide support for the notion that moral identity influences the perceptions of ambiguous situations. In the context of this narrative research, Social Movement activities involve the prioritization of moral
principles of equality or care over social conventional considerations valuing public order and authority. While participants were attentive to these social conventional considerations, those higher in moral identity were more likely to perceive the moral value of these Social Movement activities and less likely to consider personal choice when evaluating these situations.

Individuals higher in moral identity were also more likely to generate care-based trait descriptions when evaluating individuals who engaged in the various civic activities, supporting previous studies examining different types of moral exemplars (Walker & Frimer, 2007). This research, comparing care and brave moral exemplars found that care exemplars had core self-concepts that more completely incorporated moral considerations into their core self concepts, and that these individuals were more likely to be sensitive to the moral salience of situations, including a greater sensitivity to the needs of others. The current research provides robust support for this finding. These findings support theoretical notions of the relationship between moral cognition and moral identity (Blasi, 1980, Krettenauer & Hertz, 2015), suggesting that those who have higher levels of moral identity are more likely to use moral cognitions compared to other types of reasoning overall.

6.6 Hypothesis 4: Moral Identity and Moral Cognition Will Be Related Independently of Developmental Differences

While there were expected to be developmental differences in the evaluation of different activities, the association between moral identity and moral reasoning was hypothesized to persist when these developmental differences were controlled. The results confirmed this link, especially in the Internalization and Adapted Good-Self Assessment measures. However, the Symbolization subscale's link to civic activities and moral reasoning shifted considerably when
age was taken into account. The bivariate correlations suggested that Symbolization had a significant link to the Helping Others activity, leaving one to conclude that this behavioral measure of moral identity was correlated with the very concrete, behavior-focused prosocial act of contributing to charities that help individuals in other countries. Regression models that take age group into account reveal a different story: development (age), rather than moral self-concept, predicted the support for this activity. Similarly, the AGSA Moral Centrality measure no longer predicted the same support for the Helping Others activity when age was taken into account, with a similar pattern found for the association between the AGSA Ranking Centrality measure and moral reasoning in both the Helping Community and Helping Others activities.

These results emphasize the importance of accounting for developmental progression as well as stable individual differences in moral orientation. As Kahn (1992) suggested, the perceived obligation to help others depended on a cost/benefit analysis in which the cost to the self and benefits to others were taken into account. Older participants tended to use less moral reasoning in assessing the Helping Others condition than did younger participants, suggesting that they assigned fewer benefits to this behavior and thus found it overall less obligatory. These findings support previous research suggesting that older youth use more complex reasoning in evaluating moral situations involving personal choice and the obligation to help others than do younger participants (McNeil & Helwig, 2015). It is important to note that the value assigned to the activity, as measured by the evaluations of the activity, was still predicted by Symbolization. Individuals higher in Symbolization were more likely to state that the Helping Others was both more Important and Obligatory than individuals lower in Symbolization. However, they were overall less supportive of attempts by the government to mandate the activity. This lends further support to the notion that older youth are not more selfish or less prosocial, but rather are lending
more weight to the potential costs to the self relative to younger participants by considering the loss of personal autonomy resulting from social pressures or legal mandates obligating participation in an activity.

These developmental findings also provide support for both the stability and situational variability of moral identity as an individual difference. This study suggests that individuals higher in moral identity have a demonstrably different orientation towards civic activities. They are more likely to consider many of these activities as more important, obligatory, and legally mandatory than do individuals low in moral identity. They produce measurably different patterns of reasoning, using more morally salient justifications relative to individuals low in moral identity. These findings suggest that this moral sensitivity represents a stable, individual difference that influences a person's representation about their responsibilities to other people and to society as a whole. Individuals who score higher in moral identity perceive more responsibility to contribute to society, and justify this sense of obligation in a morally salient manner.

However, moral identity accounts for a significant proportion of variance in this sample, but its importance does not preclude other contributing factors (Krettenauer & Hertz, 2015). The results of this study emphasize the importance of looking at situational variation and developmental progression as contributing factors. The link between identity and civic activities was stronger in some civic domains than it was in others. Issues regarding personal choice and benefits were still very important to participants, regardless of moral orientation. Activities which provided tangible benefits to one's own society, such as voting in elections or volunteering in one's own community, yielded more substantial correlations to moral identity than did those with ambiguous benefits, such as participating in petitions or protests or helping those in other
countries. Age was also an important variable to take into account. While many of the relations between identity and civic activities were unaffected by age, there was also evidence that development accounted for more variance in some situations than did individual differences. Taken as a whole, the results of this study support the idea that moral identity can provide valuable supplementary information to existing research examining children's and youth's relationship with society and authority.

### 6.7 Limitations

While the current study investigated evaluations of civic behaviors and the reasoning behind perceptions of obligation, it did not directly measure political or civic behaviors. In large part this was due to differences in the opportunity to engage in such behaviors: the younger participants were unlikely to have been provided with the same opportunities to engage in most of the civic behaviors, and in the case of the Standard Political activity would be legally prohibited from making a contribution. Thus, while the current study could measure the moral salience of the situations and explore how that might lead to perceptions of obligation, it has limits as a true measure of moral motivation because it did not measure any concrete behavior. However, previous research has established links between moral identity and moral behavior (Aquino & Reed, 2002, Krettenauer & Hertz, 2015), suggesting that an evaluation of civic activities as morally salient is important in understanding a person’s decision regarding whether or not to engage in such an activity.

Another limitation concerns the cross-sectional nature of the current study. While this research was able to capture existing differences between age groups, causality cannot be explored without a longitudinal design. It is thus unclear whether moral identity results in
enhanced appreciation of the value of civic contribution or if individuals who possess strong beliefs about civic responsibility are more likely to integrate moral qualities into their sense of self. With the current research design, a general developmental progression in moral identity is difficult to properly assess. In addition, there were differences between the groups in their demographic composition, with the younger age groups coming from families that had different ethnicities and paternal education levels than did the oldest age group.

6.8 Conclusion

This study provided important insight into how children, youth, and young adults evaluate civic activities and the obligation to engage in those activities. Previous research assessed aspects of these questions, but no research has provided an in-depth evaluation of the reasoning of individuals across a wide range of age groups. This study found that younger participants were more likely to support activities in which the benefits were clearly prosocial, such as helping those less fortunate in other countries. This activity was considered more important, and children were more likely than older participants to positively evaluate a law mandating the behavior. Younger participants also were more likely to justify their judgments through the use of moral reasoning directed towards considerations of fairness and equality, and were less likely to consider helping others to be a matter of personal prerogative. In contrast, the older participants were more likely to consider political contributions such as voting in elections to be more obligatory and even legally mandatory. Interestingly, the type of reasoning used in different situations across individuals was relatively similar: for example, even the youngest age group understood the democratic value in free elections. However, these principles affected their prioritization of civic activities differently from the older youth, who seemed to consider these
democratic notions as more central to driving obligation than other moral concerns.

In addition to assessing the structure of reasoning, this research also attempted to account for variations in how individuals applied reasoning to complex situations. Civic activities represent complex situations combining moral and personal choice considerations. While individuals might be more likely to consider an activity obligatory if it is morally salient, it is unclear what motivates a person to attend to moral considerations over personal choice concerns. This study suggests that moral identity plays a role in determining whether a person will apply morally relevant reasoning to a situation, or consider it a matter of personal prerogative outside the realm of moral obligation. This research found that moral judgments and moral identity were indeed related to one another, providing support for theoretical constructions of moral identity as grounded strongly in rational, deliberative cognition.
References


democratic and authority-based decision making in peer, family, and school contexts.

*Child Development, 74*, 783-800.


Development, 63*, 416-430.

Kohlberg, L. (1958) *The development of modes of moral thinking and choice in the years ten to

Stages (Essays on Moral Development, Volume 2)*. Harper & Row


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<td>Justification</td>
<td>Description (and example of actual responses)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moral Reasoning</td>
<td>Reference to issues of justice/equality, fairness of representation/having one's voice heard, or harm/care. (“Helping others, we’re pretty rich, we’re got more money than we need by a long shot and there are people who don’t have enough. And I think it’s sort of good to spread it around a bit.”; (“People like Canada because there is a democracy, a lot of people complain that “I want this to happen” but no one hears me, basically voting is their way of getting heard and choosing the representative they want. So yeah, very important.”))</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Personal Choice/Benefit</td>
<td>Reference to personal autonomy or objectively beneficial results (health, etc.). (“Because it’s a person’s choice. They can do whatever they want. I think that no one needs to be forced to do anything and I don’t think people should be critique(d) for not joining clubs.”)</td>
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<td>Act-Based Mitigation</td>
<td>Reference to an aspect of the activity that reduces the importance of the act, or reference</td>
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to a personal external factor that reduces a person's ability to engage in the activity without reference to personal choice/autonomy. (“It is important to be a global citizen but then again, you might not have the means. You will be digging into your own wallet, when you might not be able to afford it.”)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Conventional</th>
<th>Reference to the value of the activity to the maintenance of the social order and interaction with others in the community. (“Because I think it engages them into the community and allows them to make connections with other people”).</th>
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<td>General Affect/Pragmatic</td>
<td>Considerations not related to any of the previous theoretically relevant justifications. Contains purely pragmatic considerations, undifferentiated responses, or unelaborated positive/negative statements.</td>
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Table 3-- Mean (Standard Deviation) Scores for Taxation Acceptance Task

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<td>E Adu</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.89 (1.03)</td>
<td>6.41 (.69)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.80 (1.26)</td>
<td>6.33 (.93)</td>
<td>6.39 (.87)</td>
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Table 4: Mean (Standard Deviation) Scores for Evaluations

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<th>Helping Others</th>
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<td>(.76)</td>
<td>(.83)</td>
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EC = Early Childhood, E Ado = Early Adolescent, E Adu = Early Adulthood. Note: Justifications may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
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*: \( p < .05 \)
**: \( p < .01 \)
**: \( p < .001 \)
Appendix A

Interview and Questionnaire Measures

I am going to tell you about some situations and I’d like to know what you think of them. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions I’m going to be asking of you. If there is any question that you do not feel comfortable answering, you can let me know, and we will skip that question. If you have questions about anything that I might ask, please feel free to ask me at any time. Also, all of the things that you’ll be telling me during this interview are confidential, which means that I won’t repeat anything that you say to me to anybody else. The only reason that I’m tape recording the interview is so I don’t have to write down everything you say.

I would like you to imagine there’s a country similar to Canada. In this country, let’s suppose the government and the people in charge decided that, along with the laws they usually have, like laws against stealing or hurting somebody, they wanted to do things that would make people help out in the community. They wanted to try to get citizens to care more about other people in their community and their government. I’m going to tell you about some of the different ways that the government is thinking about doing this, and I’d like to know what you think of each one.

Part 1

First I’d like to talk about how much you think the government and people in charge should pay for things in society. Let’s say the government wants society to have certain things that the government thinks will make people’s lives better. In order to pay for these things, the government tells everybody that they have to give the government some money every year, in what the government calls taxes. The government then takes the money they get from these taxes and spends it on things they think society needs. Other people might think that the government shouldn’t take money from people to pay for certain things; they might think that if people want certain things they can pay for it on their own. I’d like to ask you about some things and I’d like to know for each of them, if you think this is something that the government should take some money (taxes) from everybody in order to pay for, or if this is something that people can decide to pay for on their own, and so the government shouldn’t collect taxes from everyone to pay for it.

Let’s say that the government decided that they wanted to make sure that sick people got the care that they need. So they take some money from everybody in the country and use that money on hospitals and other places that care for the sick. Let’s say that some people think that they should be allowed to pay for hospitals if they want, and keep their money if they don’t want to pay for hospitals. Do you it’s a good thing or a bad thing for the government to take some money from people to pay for hospitals? Why?
Let’s say that the government decided that they wanted to make sure that every child in the country went to school and received an education. So they take money from everybody in the country and use that money on schools and teachers. Let’s say that some people think they should be allowed to pay for teachers and schools if they want, and keep their money if they don’t want to pay for teachers and schools. Do you think that it’s a good thing or a bad thing for the government to take some money from people to pay for teachers and schools? Why?

**Standard political.**

How important do you think it is that people vote? Why?

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How wrong is it for somebody not to vote? Why?

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Let’s say the government passed a law saying people had to vote during every election. Do you think this would be a good law or a bad law?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Extremely Very A little Neither Good A little Very Extremely
Bad Bad Bad nor Bad Good Good Good

Say _____ is a person who lives in this country. During election time, _____ goes out and votes. What are some things you would say to describe _____?

How do you think _____ would feel about voting after they had done it?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Extremely Very A little Neither Good A little Very Extremely
Bad Bad Bad nor Bad Good Good Good

Say _____ is a person who lives in this country. But instead of going out and voting, _____ refuses to do it. How would you describe _____?

How do you think _____ would feel about not voting after they had done it?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Extremely Very A little Neither Good A little Very Extremely
Bad Bad Bad nor Bad Good Good Good

Helping (Community)

How important do you think it is that people volunteer to help others in the community? Why?

1 2 3 4 5
Not at all A littleSomewhat Very Extremely

How wrong is it for somebody not to volunteer to help others in the community? Why?

1 2 3 4 5
Not at all A littleSomewhat Very Extremely

Let’s say the government decided to pass a law saying that people had to go out and help in the community once a month. Do you think this is a good law or a bad law?
Helping (Other oriented)

How important do you think it is that people support charities that help people in other countries? Why?

1                      2                        3                             4                    5
Not at all                 A little                       Somewhat                    Very                  Extremely

How wrong is it for somebody not to support charities that help people in other countries? Why?

1                      2                        3                             4                    5
Not at all                 A little                       Somewhat                    Very                  Extremely

Let’s say the government passed a law that requiring people to spend some time or money helping to support charities that help people in other countries. Is this a good law or a bad law?

1                      2                        3                             4                    5                    6                   7
Extremely       Very                  A little           Neither Good       A little           Very                   Extremely
Bad                  Bad                    Bad                 nor Bad                Good              Good                 Good

Helping (Other oriented)

Say _____ is a person who lives in this country. In his/her spare time, _____ goes out and volunteers to help other people in the community. What are some things you would say to describe _____? How do you think ____ would feel about volunteering after they had done it?

1                      2                        3                             4                    5                6                   7
Extremely       Very                  A little           Neither Good       A little           Very                   Extremely
Bad                  Bad                    Bad                 nor Bad                Good              Good                 Good

Say _____ is a person who lives in this country. But instead of going out and volunteering, _____ refuses to do it. How would you describe _____? How do you think ____ would feel about not volunteering after they had done it?

1                      2                        3                             4                    5                6                   7
Extremely       Very                  A little           Neither Good       A little           Very                   Extremely
Bad                  Bad                    Bad                 nor Bad                Good              Good                 Good
Say _____ is a person who lives in this country. In his/her spare time, _____ goes out and donates time and money to charities that help people in other countries. What are some things you would say to describe _____?

How do you think ____ would feel about doing this after they had done it? What sorts of things would they be feeling?

1               2               3           4                      5                6                   7
Extremely       Very                   A little           Neither Good       A little           Very                   Extremely
Bad                  Bad                    Bad                 nor Bad                Good              Good                 Good

Say _____ is a person who lives in this country. But instead of going out and supporting charities that help people in other countries, _____ refuses to do it. How would you describe _____?

How do you think ____ would feel about doing not donating time and money to charities this after they had done it? What sorts of things would they be feeling?

1               2               3           4                      5                6                   7
Extremely       Very                   A little           Neither Good       A little           Very                   Extremely
Bad                  Bad                    Bad                 nor Bad                Good              Good                 Good

Community Gathering

How important do you think it is that people join clubs and sports in the community? Why?

1                     2                        3                             4                    5
Not at all                 A little                       Somewhat                    Very                  Extremely

How wrong is it for somebody not to join clubs and sports in the community? Why?

1                     2                        3                             4                    5
Not at all                 A little                       Somewhat                    Very                  Extremely

Do you think it would be OK if the government should pass a law requiring people to join clubs and sports in the community?

1                     2               3                 4                 5            6                   7
Not at all                    A little bit          Not very                Somewhat           OK                          OK                          OK
OK                               OK                      OK                          OK                                                                      OK

Say _____ is a person who lives in this country. In his/her spare time, _____ goes out and join clubs and sports in the community. What are some things you would say to describe _____?
How do you think ____ would feel about clubs and sports after they had joined them?

1                     2               3                 4                 5            6                   7
Very                           Bad                 A Little                    Neither Good            A Little            Good          Very
Bad                                                     Bad                         Nor Bad                      Good                                   Good

Say _____ is a person who lives in this country. But instead of going out and join clubs and sports in the community, _____ refuses to join them. How would you describe _____?

How do you think ____ would feel about clubs and sports after they had joined them?

1                     2               3                 4                 5            6                   7
Very                           Bad                 A Little                    Neither Good            A Little            Good          Very
Bad                                                     Bad                         Nor Bad                      Good                                   Good

**Social Movement**

How important do you think it is that people sign petitions and join protests? Why?

1                     2                        3                             4                    5
Not at all                 A little                       Somewhat                    Very                  Extremely

How wrong is it for somebody not to sign petitions and join protests? Why?

1                     2                        3                             4                    5
Not at all                 A little                       Somewhat                    Very                  Extremely

Let’s say the government passed a law saying people had to spend some time learning about issues so they could sign petitions and join protests. Do you think this is a good law or a bad law?

1               2               3           4                      5                6                   7
Extremely       Very                   A little           Neither Good       A little           Very                   Extremely
Bad                  Bad                    Bad                 nor Bad                Good              Good                 Good

Say _____ is a person who lives in this country. During election time, ______ goes out joins a protest about something he/she cares about. What are some things you would say to describe _____?

How do you think ____ would feel about protesting after they had done it? What sorts of things would they be feeling?

1                     2               3                 4                 5            6                   7
Say _____ is a person who lives in this country. But instead of going out and signing petitions and join protests, _____ refuses to do so. How would you describe _____?

How do you think ____ would feel about clubs and sports after they had joined them?

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Ranking task (Adapted from Li et al, 2002)

I’ve talked about a lot of different things the government could do today, and now I’d like to know what you think of each one. Let’s say the government has taken a little bit of money from all of the people in a country in taxes. Let’s say that after seeing to the things the government thinks people need, like schools and hospitals, the government has some money left over at the end of the year, and it would like to spend the money on one of the programs we just talked about. I’ll give you these 10 pennies to represent how much money the government has to spend. Each of the pennies represents 10% of the money the government has. What I’d like you to do is to put the pennies on each of the pictures (place the pictures in front of them, describe what each picture represents, as below). You might place all of the money on one or two programs or some money on each. You might also put none of the money on the programs; let’s say that all of the money that you keep will be given back to the people.

Program encouraging people to vote (____%)
Program encouraging people to volunteer in their community (____%)
Send money to help people in other countries (____%)
Educating people about protests and setting areas aside for protest movements (____%)
Sports and clubs (____%)
Give money back to people (____%)
Adapted Good-Self Questionnaire

In front of you I have a set of circles. These circles represent you as a person. The circle in the middle are the things that you think are most important to you. The next circle are those things that are less important to you, but are still important to you. Finally, the outer circle are those things that are not so important to you. I also have here 16 traits that are important to people. Some of these might be important to you, some of them might not be so important to you. For each of these traits, I’d like you to put them in one of the circles. What I’d like you to do is to only put 3 traits, maximum, in the middle circle. You can move the rest around as you’d like.

(After task completion).

Of the three traits in the middle, you’ve listed (list them). What I’d like you to do now is to pick one of those traits; I’d like you to pick one trait as the most important; without this trait, you would not be you.
The Adapted Good-Self Assessment (Barriga, Morrison, Liau, & Gibbs, 2001; Adapted from Arnold, 1993)

Instructions:

Of the 16 listed values, place them in the circles as appropriate. *There can be no more than 3 values in the "Most Important" area of the diagram.* Of the three qualities in the middle circle, identify one that is most important, "without which you would not be you".

1 = Not important to me  2 = somewhat important to me  3 = important to me  4 = extremely important to me

1. Considerate or polite.................................................................1 2 3 4
2. Imaginative or creative............................................................1 2 3 4
3. Honest or truthful.......................................................................1 2 3 4
4. Industrious or hard-working......................................................1 2 3 4
5. Helpful or kind..........................................................................1 2 3 4
6. Outgoing or sociable.................................................................1 2 3 4
7. Sympathetic or understanding..................................................1 2 3 4
8. Athletic or agile.........................................................................1 2 3 4
9. Generous or sharing.................................................................1 2 3 4
10. Funny or humorous.................................................................1 2 3 4
11. Logical or practical.................................................................1 2 3 4
12. Sincere or heartfelt.................................................................1 2 3 4
13. Independent or self-reliant.......................................................1 2 3 4
14. Fair or reasonable.................................................................1 2 3 4
15. Energetic or active.................................................................1 2 3 4
16. Dependable or reliable............................................................1 2 3 4
Moral Identity Questionnaire (Standard and Adapted)

Moral Identity (Aquino & Reed, 2002) (14, 17, undergrad version)

Listed below are some characteristics that may describe a person.

Caring
Compassionate
Fair
Friendly
Generous
Hardworking
Helpful
Honest
Kind

The person with these characteristics could be you or it could be someone else. For a moment, visualize in your mind the kind of person who has these characteristics. Imagine how that person would think, feel, and act. When you have a clear image of what this person would be like, answer the following questions.

1. It would make me feel good to be a person who has these characteristics.

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

2. I am actively involved in activities that communicate I have these characteristics.

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

3. I would be ashamed to be a person who had these characteristics
4. The fact that I have these characteristics is communicated to others by my membership in certain organizations.

5. I strongly desire to have these characteristics

6. I often wear clothes that communicate the fact that I have these characteristics

7. The types of things I do in my spare time (e.g., hobbies) clearly identify me as having these characteristics.

8. The kinds of books and magazines that I read identify me as having these characteristics. Having these characteristics is not really important to me.

9. Having these characteristics is not really important to me.

10. Being someone who has these characteristics is an important part of who I am

Moral Identity (Aquino & Reed, 2002) (10 year-old version)
Listed below are some characteristics that may tell us what a person is like.

Caring
Compassionate
Fair
Friendly
Generous
Hardworking
Helpful
Honest
Kind

The person who is like this could be you or it could be someone else. For a moment, picture in your mind the kind of person who is like this. Imagine how that person would think, feel, and act. When you have a clear image of what this person would be like, answer the following questions.

1. It would make me feel good to be a person who has these is like this.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

2. I am actively involved in activities that show to others have I am like this.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

3. I would be ashamed to be a person who was like this.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

4. The fact that I am like this is clear to others by the groups I belong to.
5. I really want to be like this.

6. I often wear clothes that show I am like this.

7. The types of things I do in my spare time (e.g., hobbies) clearly show that I am like this.

8. The kinds of books and magazines that I read identify me as being like this.

9. Being like this is not really important to me.

10. Being someone who is like this is an important part of who I am.