Social Dynamics of Responsible-Use-of-Data in an Organisation: Enactment of Ethical Espoused Intentions in Practice and Learnings by an Insider Researcher

by Dorotea Baljević

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

under the supervision of Dr Julia Prior and Dr Ken Dovey

UTS HREC ETH19-4059

University of Technology Sydney
Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology

September 2025

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I, Dorotea Baljević, declare that this thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology at the University of Technology Sydney.

This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

This research is supported by the Australian Government Research Training Program

Production Note:
Signature removed prior to publication.

Signature

5th of September 2025

Date

Abstract

Adopting an ethnographic methodology, this research focuses on understanding the social dynamics associated with ethical decision making in a defined organisational context. The five key themes identified reveal that contrary to the rhetorical claims of the organisation's policies, the espoused intention of ethical decision making was disregarded in practice in favour of political and individual interests.

This research was conducted within a defined corporate setting in Australia. As an 'insider researcher', I was employed within the organisation in a role embedded within existing organisational practices and the project methodology adopted to develop a digital product. This study demonstrates that ethical decision making in an organisation requires an environment beyond enterprise structures, processes, and procedures. In addition to being embedded in a supportive cultural context, ethical decision making must be viewed as an indispensable value proposition.

Much of the extant research on this topic utilises a positivist methodology, with few studies exploring the topic in a defined and embedded organisational setting. Through an ethnographic case study conducted by myself, as an insider researcher, within a defined organisational setting, this research contributes to the existing body of knowledge through insights illuminating the socio-political dynamics that challenge the practice of ethical decision making in organisations.

Acknowledgement, Dedications, and an Idea Manifesto

Acknowledgement goes to the pivotal individuals who were my advocates and contributed to personal inflection points (otherwise colloquially known as ‘Ah-ha’ moments) that resulted in the manifestation of this research. My appreciation goes to my two supervisors, Dr Julia Prior and Dr Ken Dovey. Both enhanced my experience of the PhD research journey through their friendship and respect as my academic mentors and provocateurs. They fostered explorative thought and were patient with my continuous inquisition of the ethnographic process, allowing me to break free from classically trained closed thinking systems. During my Masters of Data Science and Innovation, Dr Theresa Anderson, as Course Coordinator, was pivotal in making me see the beauty behind the quote, 'Behind every data point is a human being', and broadening my pursuit of ethical use of data. In a professional capacity, I am grateful to two great leaders, Peter Speranza and Tony Brennan, under whom I had the privilege of working, for allowing me to align my academic and professional pursuits in completing this PhD research.

While confidentiality is to be maintained for all those who were part of the study, I am privileged to have not only worked alongside them professionally but deeply appreciative of how openly they embraced the study and their candour in the spirit of research. Without them, this study would not have been possible.

Special mentions go to Professor Moskovitch in Canada, Professor Massaro in the United Kingdom, Dr Chris Cook in Australia, and dedication to the late Professor Eng Chew for their early guidance and input into the literature review and research question.

The notion of ethical behaviour was instilled in me from a young age. I am forever indebted to my parents for teaching and inspiring me with their integrity in the struggles we faced together for the benefit of the planet and society. I was raised in a humanist household, with my parents publicly addressing ethical issues and never fearing consequences. It is with much love and pride I dedicate the completion of this PhD thesis to my parents,

Spomenka Pejašinović-Baljević, who, through circumstance, achieved professorship but never had a chance to teach future generations, and Dušan Baljević (Душан Бaљевић), who started his doctorate but was restricted from pursuing this further in foreign lands.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction

> *An applicant is being interviewed for a position in an organisation. The human resources manager asks, 'Do you lie, steal, or cheat?' The applicant replies, 'No, but I am willing to learn'. Or so the joke goes. While character is formed at an early age, human behaviour is pliable, and it certainly behoves those charged with managing society's institutions and organisations to understand what the important factors and influences are when it comes to ethical choices and behaviour in their organisations. (Wittmer, 2001, as cited in Frederickson & Ghere, 2005, p. 49).*

1.1 Research Background

The nature and scale of unethical behaviour in business is a significant problem, with the topic of ethical practices becoming a major concern due to the nature and scale of such behaviour in corporate settings (Howard, 1979). The ongoing rise of known and exposed ethical violations in organisations sees this concern continue to be relevant, with 49% of employees working within for-profit organisations openly reporting that they have witnessed some form of unethical conduct, such as lying to stakeholders or abuse of resources (Plinio et al., 2010, as cited in MacDougall et al., 2014). Chang and Smithikrai (2010) estimate that these counterproductive behaviours cost US businesses up to USD50 million annually. While this figure alone is significant, it may not include indirect costs such as the loss of organisational reputation, loss of trust, employee stress, and reduced employee motivation (Mitchell et al., 2020). Examples of such violations are likely to be found across every industry, generation, and region. They include Ford Motor Company attempting to use a crude probability of deaths to determine whether they should recall their cars in 1973 (Shaw & Barry, 2001, pp. 83–86); in 2014 Adani Group's Carmichael coal mine in Australia, which was touted to benefit the economy but has caused extensive social and environmental damage; and in recent years the findings that most major Australian superannuation funds have holdings in nuclear weapons companies (Carter et al., 2021).

After the Second World War, the focus on 'corruption' increased rapidly across social sciences research (Castro et al., 2020). Comparing searches for the key phrase 'ethical decision making' on EBSCO Information Services databases revealed a growth of articles in 2011 and 2012. In empirical terms, 300 articles per year were published in 2011 and 2012, compared to approximately 150 in previous years. Since 2012, over 3000 peer-reviewed articles have been published in this field.

'Ethical decision making', a term with multiple definitions, is best understood as a 'process by which individuals use their moral base to determine whether a certain issue is right or wrong' (Carlson et al., 2009, p. 536). According to Jones (1991), the main elements characterising such a process are moral issues and moral agents. A 'moral issue' develops whenever individual behaviour causes favourable or damaging consequences for others. A 'moral agent' is an individual who "acknowledges the presence of a moral issue and acts according to their morality" (Zollo et al., 2017, p. 682). It is not enough for a dilemma to exist; we must also understand how to recognise and act upon it.

When organisational decision-makers encounter a decision with ethical implications, they may be impelled to exercise cognitive effort and address the issue rationally and deliberately (Woiceshyn, 2011). However, this can be problematic because while emotions do not significantly affect rational decisions, they may be important for making appropriate ethical decisions (Celuch et al., 2015). This marked distinction is corroborated in the neuroscience literature, which indicates that ethical decision making differs in its use of neural networks for cognition, intuition, and the role of emotions (Ast, 2019; Salvador & Folger, 2009; Zeni et al., 2014).

Much of the current research into ethical decision making has roots in the cognitive development approach initiated by Kohlberg (1969, 1981, 1984) and later expanded upon by Rest (1974, 1986). Rest's model influenced future research in four areas: awareness, intent, judgement, and behaviour (Craft, 2013). This has led to decades of research into constructs across (but more often separately) individual antecedents, organisational contexts, and the influence of external environments on ethical intentions. In the last decade, dual processing models have emerged to advocate a dynamic interaction of conscious and subconscious processes in ethical decision making (e.g., Murnighan & Wang, 2013; Reynolds, 2006; Warren & Smith-Crowe, 2008; Woiceshyn, 2011 – examples cited in Noval & Stahl, 2017).

Although ethical decision making is an important topic, experimental studies have dominated the literature, with findings often not representative of the working adult population and potentially limited in generalisability (Mitchell et al., 2020). In 2019, as part of a special issue of *Personnel Psychology*, submissions were sought on the topics of ethical decision making and ethical behaviour in general within organisations. A total of 65 papers were received. The editors noted that 17 were 'desk rejected' and only ‘four articles’ were chosen (Mitchell et al., 2020, p. 6). While this acceptance rate (Mitchell et al., 2020) is consistent with other research area submissions to *Personnel Psychology*, it indicates the slow research uptake into this important topic within the organisational context.

1.2 Researcher's Interest in this Topic and the Inception of the Idea

Governments, NGOs, private enterprises, schools, and hospitals are faced with the same challenges each day – what decisions do they need to make to ensure longevity and value for their customers and stakeholders while balancing what today are referred to as ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) issues such as corporate social responsibility, triple-bottom-line thinking, and sustainability? These are issues that have a long-term impact on organisational success and sustainability. Yet the focus on short-term capitalist interests across the globe does not reward such long-term behaviour.

Almost a decade before writing this thesis, the early ideation of the research began. My avid interest in bridging social and technical sciences into professional life (articulated in detail in Chapter 4, Section 4.4) has been a driving factor to study this field. I often witnessed organisations lay off hundreds to thousands of people to protect their financial interests without considering the economic consequences these individuals and families would face. In difficult times, teams that were not considered ‘core’ would have their budgets reduced and key personnel let go, again with a detrimental impact on future organisational success. Reports on decisions that led to ethical scandals with societal impact occurred frequently. For example, popular sports brands like Nike and Adidas were accused of using child labour, while Amazon was reported to be maltreating its employees and abusing minimum wage practices while making large profits. Although this behaviour was not illegal at the time, it promoted unethical practices.

Regardless of public or private sector organisations, my experiences in Australia, Asia, Europe, and particularly the United States saw these effects repeated over decades. Disappointingly, I read the same results in the extant literature. In the last seven to ten years, the reliance on technology to make socially complex decisions has taken hold, with ethics being transferred to a binary construct. My interest in this research was therefore fostered over several decades in which three notable inflection points occurred:

- 2009: Teachings within the MBITM at the University of Technology Sydney: Case studies of exemplar organisations showed a healthy balance of ethical decisions and successful business outcomes was possible, i.e., Ricardo Semler of Semco in Brazil.

- 2016: Technology vendors introduced advanced data techniques such as Machine Learning in enterprise implementations. Early adoption of the IOT claimed to mimic the ‘human brain’. Data scientists were referred to as unicorns, and their extension to traditional decision-making systems was deemed a ‘dark art’. Yet their decisions impacted customer experience, pricing models, and humans across the value chain. I started noticing the change and enamour of data before the statements of ‘data is the new oil’ occurred; I just did not realise the scale of its impact in the future.

- 2018: Studies in the Masters of Computational Neuroscience at Humboldt Universität in Berlin. At an ethical research symposium, an exasperated German professor pleaded with young students and researchers to pursue

> and explore alternate and ethical models of legitimising their careers and not just blindly following university tenurial or journal rankings. Some concepts regarding academia's current failures demonstrate how lessons from industry 10-15 years ago could have been beneficial, such as the dot.com bust and the aggressive investment banking complex of the 1980s.

This led to the question of why ethical decision making is so difficult to execute in practice. Based on my personal enterprise and commercial international experience, business decisions of late are hidden in a labyrinth walled by multitudes of data, making prioritisation of what information to seek, store, and create a difficult-to-near-impossible task. This is particularly important in this Information Age, where data is human-made and collected and shared across machine devices that no longer require human intervention. In addition, the data challenge is no longer localised but shared globally and instantaneously. As humans, we, too, are overloaded by inputs from our sensory systems and decision processes. However, our brains (in healthy circumstances) are wired to prioritise memories or facts that need greater or immediate access. Our brain does not increase its capacity to do this as there is finite space in our skull; rather, it uses organic means to strengthen the synaptic connections – referred to as plasticity. Yet, in organisational settings, these organic principles of strengthening rather than scaling do not seem to be adopted, with the growth of load becoming insurmountable.

The concept of ethics that frames this research is bounded by the perspectives conveyed in the existing organisational ethics literature rather than generalisations or usage within other domains and practices. Specifically, this thesis endorses the oft-referenced definition by Jones of ethics comprising a specific category of human judgements that are 'both legally and morally acceptable to the larger community' (Jones 1991, p. 3). In the context of this research, this refers to the observed attitudes, responses, and behaviours of interview participants, organisational leadership, clients, and other stakeholders in their approach to a specific ethical decision-making domain ('responsible use of data' of a digital product). This refers simply to whether these decisions and outcomes are considered an accepted and welcome approach rather than one that creates agitation and resistance. While seemingly simple, this evolving task is a key part of this research field. The reasoning for this is best characterised by the statement of two seasoned researchers in this area when summarising the body of literature on ethical decision making:

> *The ethics field is in a quandary. If we don't believe it is important to define what an ethical decision is, or don't believe that it's our place to do so, then we are a field without meaning. If we do believe that such a definition is necessary, then we have no choice but to motivate an understanding of what the normative basis of those values should be and how "ethical" should be measured. Such an understanding is really a call for a bridge to be built between the normative and descriptive fields of business ethics. By nature of the objective of this paper – to review the field of ethics – and our backgrounds, we cannot resolve this issue in this manuscript. (Tenbrunsel & Smith-Crowe, 2008, p. 9).*

They continue:

> *The lack of a definition of the central construct of interest, "ethical decision making," has hindered past research in the area of behavioural ethics and will continue to bring the field down unless serious attention is given to it. (Tenbrunsel & Smith-Crowe, 2008, p. 59).*

1.3 Research Aims, Objectives, and Research Question

The literature, as detailed in Chapter 2, demonstrates gaps regarding ethical decision making within an organisational context. While models summarising ethical decision making exist, very few have been practically applied or founded in an ethnographic study. While this study adopts a multidisciplinary approach, it is primarily situated in information systems. The intent of this research is, therefore, not to extend or evaluate these models. With my keen interest for this research to have a practical application and build foundational understanding, this PhD research focuses on the question: What is the nature of the social dynamics that manifest in attempts to ensure ethical decision making within a defined corporate context?

The social reality of the decision-making process is not objective. It is a label, an artificial creation, that does not exist beyond human consciousness (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). This research explores the phenomenon of ethical decision making, contests assumptions embedded in the extant research (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011), and develops theory to explain decision-making practices in the social reality labelled ‘organisations’. This is performed through ethnographic research using interviews, observations, participatory experience, and relevant data associated with the product development in the organisation (i.e., those available from Jira’s tickets and confluence pages, Agile methodology tools, and annual reports).

While this methodology enables analysis to occur without the obligation to link data to a preestablished theory (Glaser, 1978, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the following sub-questions are used as a guide:

- How organic is organisational decision making in organisations, and within a defined context, is there a common ecosystem that binds the development and outcome of an ethical decision?
- How can a qualitative study of the politics and learning associated with ethical decision making in a defined organisational context contribute to a theoretical understanding of the ethical decision-making process?

The thesis's aims, objectives, and success criteria are summarised in Table 1.1.

Aim	Objective	Success Criteria
Understand the role of learning and politics in ethical decision making.	Obtain understanding of extant literature.	Development of literature review with clear gaps identified and articulated across breadth of disciplines.
	Using qualitative means, conduct a study of ethical decision making within a defined organisational context.	Complete an ethnographic study of ethical decision making in a defined organisational context.
Enrich our understanding of the role of social	Explore the efficacy of an interpretative research	Provide transparency to techniques used in this study

dynamics in the execution of ethical decision making within a defined organisational context.	methodology for identifying the role of political factors in the execution of ethical decision making within a defined organisational context.	and learnings for understanding how social dynamics affect ethical decision making within a defined organisational context.

Table 1.1 Thesis Aims, Objectives, and Success Criteria

1.4 Originality and Significance of the Research

This research seeks to identify and understand the current processes and gaps in ethical decision making in corporate Australia through the lens of a single organisation. This includes bringing awareness to the research community and industry of the importance of the process and the protocol that guides ethical decision making. As a result, the significance of this research includes:

1. Education for the industry to recognise, reflect, and identify critical data points and elements for their ethical decision-making domain.
2. Evaluating decision domains to determine the core elements required and suggesting ways of improving them and understanding that embedding ethical practices in organisational routines significantly increases the load on the environment or time to make the decision.
3. Encouraging decision-makers to pause and reflect on what happens when technology begins to supersede human capabilities and boundaries. How will this impact our ethical decision making?

In terms of originality, to my knowledge, there are fewer than a handful of papers written and made available in the English language that study this topic or a similar topic using an ethnographic methodology. Only one is known regarding organisational ethical decision making (Reinecke & Ansari 2015). All work within this study and dissertation is of my curation and was conducted under the guidance of supervisors Dr Julia Prior and Dr Ken Dovey.

Due to the length of the thesis, the part-time nature of the research, and a keen prioritisation of effort on the development of content and data analysis, the decision was made to commission transcription services (from Pacific Transcription Services) and editorial services (from accredited editor Marita Smith). Pacific Transcription Services complied with strict Australian data privacy rules and transcribed all audio interviews using NVivo Basic. This enabled the material to be prepared for easier search and convenient analysis. All interview files and associated data were destroyed (with no copies made) once I was assured of the quality of services rendered by *Pacific Transcription Services*. Marita Smith identified spelling errors and proposed grammatical changes. They did not make any direct changes but proposed revisions through markup in the document. The style and intent of the work remained original. The final decision of incorporating these suggested changes lay with me as the researcher and author. This was done under strict data management conditions and in compliance with Australian Privacy Policies, with the document being deleted from the editor's computer after I deemed the work complete. I, as the researcher, absorbed these services' full costs without any external or university assistance.

Due to recent advancements in generative AI techniques, I declare that all work in this dissertation was human created, processed, and analysed. No AI tools, such as ChatGPT or otherwise, were used.

No payments or gifts were accepted by or offered to me during the research. Participants or the organisation received no payments or gifts during the research. As identified during the HREC process, this would have compromised the ethnographic integrity. No known conflicts of interest were identified or arose during the study.

1.5 Navigating this Thesis

Each chapter of this thesis can be read on its own merit, with key learnings and a summary of the contents provided at the beginning and end of the chapters, respectively. Table 1.2 provides a thesis outline.

Chapter	Chapter Name	Contents
Chapter 2	Literature Review	The literature review sets the foundation for understanding the extant research on the PhD topic. Fields and theories in organisational management, psychology, and neuroscience are covered and where possible related to ethical decision making in organisations. Key models from the extant literature are covered in addition to insights from the latest artificial intelligence theory on ethical decision making.
Chapter 3	Methodology	An outline of the ethnographic process used in this research is detailed. This includes the approach in selecting the methodology, data collection and analysis, approach to custodianship of the data, and reflexivity practised.
Chapter 4	Research Context	An overview is provided of the key factors associated with the research. These include the organisation studied, the key (de-identified) actors, and description of myself as research instrument and 'insider researcher'. Ethical decision making is described in relation to the 'responsible use of data'.
Chapter 5	Research Insights	The synthesised data analysis delivered five dominant themes describing 'what was going on' in the organisation as it related to ethical decision making in the specific context studied.
Chapter 6	Conclusion and Discussion	Key insights from the thematic analysis relating to the extant research are discussed. Learning gained as an insider researcher is reflected upon, and what the research outcomes mean for the practice of ethical decision making is explored. Suggestions for future research are offered.

Table 1.2 Thesis Outline: Literature Review

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Chapter Overview

A preliminary search into ethical decision making as a research topic yielded literature related to psychology and organisational management theory. In building an understanding of the extant domain, a conscious decision was made to consider broader disciplines, particularly as my personal interactions with this domain had seen applicability in adjacent fields of neuroscience, artificial intelligence, and systems thinking. This literature review reveals the significant research on 'the individual': propositions in the organisation concerning leadership and the evolution of models that define ethical decision making theory. The macro studies primarily focus on race as a differentiator. The practical interplay of theory is mostly absent, as are concepts of learning and politics.

The literature review, therefore, explores the extensive range of this research domain, including the dynamics, antecedents, and consequences at the individual, organisational, and political macro levels (visually shown in Figure 2.1 with key sub-categories). In the context of this research, antecedents refer to the factors that individuals are born with, nurtured by or influenced in their capacity for ethical decision making. From an organisational and macro perspective, this refers to the firms' or societies' entrenched structures, biases, and stimuli for ethical decision making. Consequences refer to the impacts or potential of impacts studied in the field of ethical decision making.

This chapter proceeds as follows. Section 2.3 discusses individual antecedents and consequences. Section 2.4 details the organisational context, and Section 2.5 explores the macro context. Section 2.6 provides a history of models for ethical decision making, and Section 2.7 presents insights from AI research. Section 2.8 discusses the current state of play concerning what is still not understood about ethical decision making. Finally, Section 2.9 summarises the gaps in the existing literature for organisational ethical decision making.

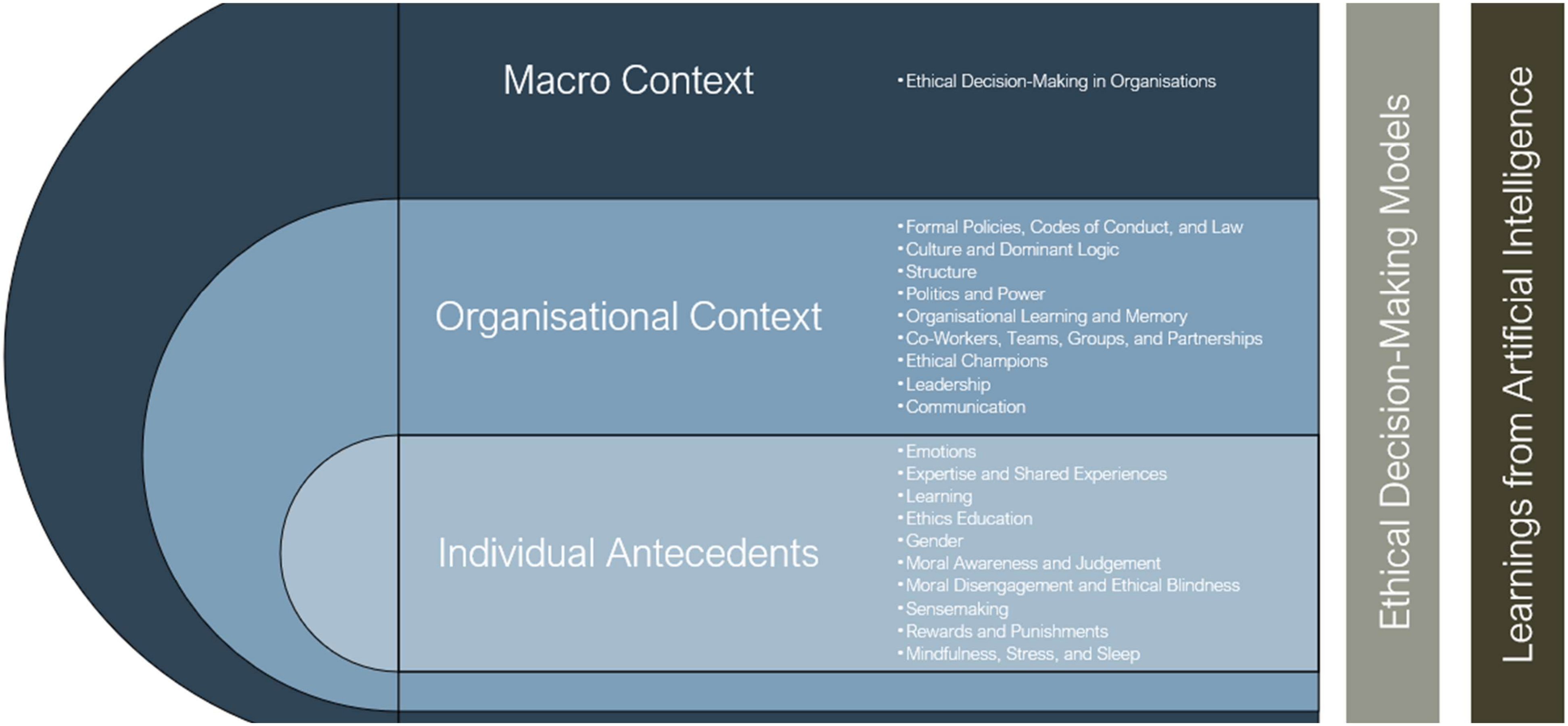

Figure 2.1 Visual Conceptualisation of the Literature Review

Note. Created by the PhD author.

2.2 Literature Review Methodology

Given the expansive research domains of organisational ethical decision making, this chapter outlines the multistage approach to the literature review.

First, a preliminary keyword search using ‘ethical decision making’ and ‘ethical decision analysis’ was performed through the multidisciplinary EBSCOhost Research Platform. The final list of articles yielded 75 results, of which one was written in Turkish. Second, a structure was established to identify common themes. All articles were re-read in a reflexive evaluation process using relevant parts of Eisenhardt’s (1989) seminal work, ‘Building Theories from Case Study Research’. These stages involved ‘analysing the data’ (specifically examining the metadata analyses and results of the studies), ‘shaping hypothesis’ (identifying the key theme(s) or ‘logic’ across cases within a single paper), and ‘enfolding literature’ (comparison of conflicting and similar articles) (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 533).

Third, common themes were summarised into a concept matrix. Based on the case study review, a preliminary version was developed to organise the themes. Notable gaps were identified in macro politics, learning, and using an ethnographic approach (See Appendix A).

Fourth, the corresponding journal articles of focus were identified based on the themes. Using the Scientific Journal Rankings, appropriate article sources were based on eight relevant subject areas. The eight subject areas were decision sciences (miscellaneous) issues, ethics and legal aspects, arts and humanities (miscellaneous), organisational behaviour and human resource management, management science and operations research, cognitive neuroscience, and behavioural neuroscience. As a general rule, journals with ratings above 2.5 were selected. This resulted in 23 journals being shortlisted (see Appendix B).

Fifth, a literature search was conducted. The gaps identified in the initial concept matrix were used to expand the keyword search for the shortlisted journals to include terms such as ‘triple-loop learning’, ‘enterprise logic’, ‘institutional logic’, ‘dominant logic’, ‘espoused values’, ‘values in action’, and ‘literature review’. Initially, 253 articles were identified. Once their content and applicability to this research were reviewed, the list was reduced to 54 articles. This was revised in May 2024 to ensure the capture of any articles published within the two years from when the original literature review was conducted. A few articles that did not appear in the search but were mentioned in key papers or had citations of note were also included. This resulted in a total of 95 articles (i.e., adding 41 to the earlier 54).

Where applicable, this process included reviewing each journal article based on its ethnographic research integrity (Grey et al., 2019), particularly regarding the following:

- Researchers, namely whether they were embedded or ‘second-level’ informants (Norstedt & Breimo, 2016; Reiner, 2000) and whether the research intent was clear (Fetterman, 1989).
- Participants, namely the seniority of their role, their openness to the process, whether they were being paid for the research and the diversity of the sample.
- Covert or overt level of the research.
- Quality of the research and whether the researchers used raw notes from their field diaries or sanitised accounts (Devereux, 1967; Tomkinson, 2015).
- The approach for addressing ethical concerns, whether it was part of the research, and the relevant conditions and settings (Guillemin & Gilliam, 2004; Israel & Hay, 2006).

The final 95 shortlisted articles formed a summary of the literature for the body of research across interdisciplinary articles in social, cognitive, organisational management, and neurobehavioral sciences. Thus, the literature review is broken into five primary focal areas: (1) individual antecedents; (2) organisational antecedents; (3) a political (macro) overview; (4) a history and review of ethical decision-making models; (5) what can be learnt from AI ethical decision-making theory; and (6) a summary of the gaps in the literature that indicate potential research endeavours. Note that a heuristic search

(Aquino & Pagliarussi, 2006) was considered for the literature review; however, it was deemed premature for this topic.

As a final bonus step, on the 9th of June 2024, Connected Papers was used to cross-reference the extent of the literature review search performed for this PhD. Connected Papers is a visual tool for researchers to explore papers relevant to their area of interest and study. A graph of relevant papers is produced based on their similarity.[1]

As a point of reference, the oft-cited review in this research topic (Behavioral Ethics in Organizations: A review) from 2006 was used as a search anchor. The below network graph was generated, and this output alone shows that over 80% of the related papers are also considered in this PhD research (Figure 2.2).

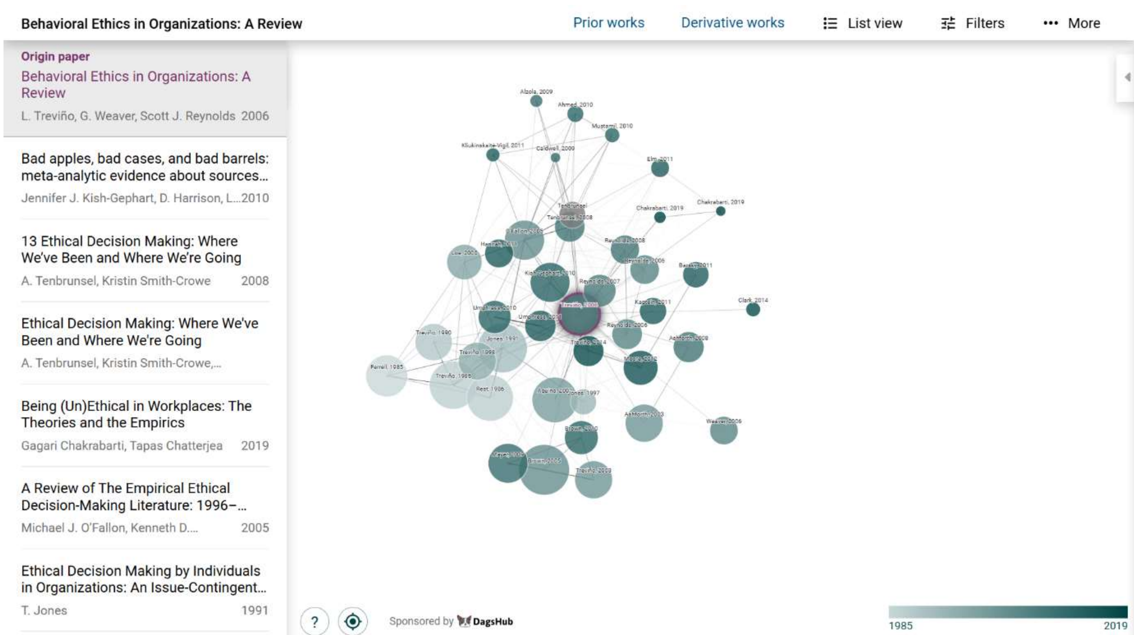

Figure 2.2 Connected Papers Search result

Note. Created by the PhD author using Connected Papers, 6th June 2024.

[1] With direct citations showing stronger links and being connected directly. Connected Papers uses the Semantic Scholar Paper Corpus (licensed under ODC-BY) which has access to hundreds of millions of published papers.

2.3 Individual Antecedents and Consequences

Howard (1979) states that decision making is what someone does when they do not know what to do. This uncertainty is compounded by the fact that decision-makers often encounter problems that are too dynamic and multifaceted for rational analysis (Thiele & Young, 2016), and ethical dilemmas are, by their nature, complex and ill-defined (Mumford et al., 2008 as cited in Hiekkataipale & Lämsa, 2017; Thiel et al., 2012, as cited in Hiekkataipale & Lämsa, 2017). Individual factors are the most frequently studied elements of ethical decision making. They comprise 77% of the overall findings between 2004 and 2011, mainly focusing on personality (Craft, 2013; Covery, 1990, as cited in Howard, 2001), highlighting that personality has replaced character as the basis for judging individual behaviour.

Over the last fifty years, several individual antecedents to ethical decision making have been identified, including:

- *Gender* (e.g., Chonko & Hunt, 1985; Ferrell & Skinner, 1988; Franke et al., 1997; Hegarty & Sims, 1978; Jones & Gautschi, 1988; Marques & Azevedo-Pereira, 2009; McCabe, Treviño & Butterfield, 1997; Ruegger & King, 1992, cited in Reynolds, 2006; Whipple & Swords, 1992; Yankelovich, 1972 – citations in Rajeev, 2012).
- *Age* (e.g., Kohlberg, 1984; Peterson et al., 2001; Sidani et al., 2009; Wimalasiri, 2001 – citations aggregated from Rajeev, 2012).
- *Education* (e.g., Awasthi, 2008; Levy & Sharma, 1994, cited in Rajeev, 2012; Rest, 1986; Singhapakdi et al., 1999).
- *Locus of control* (e.g., Forte, 2004; Hegarty & Sims, 1978; Singhapakdi & Vitell, 1991; Treviño & Youngblood, 1990 – citations in Rajeev, 2012).
- *Religion or spirituality* (e.g., Fernando & Chowdhury, 2010; Ho, 2010; Oumlil & Balloun, 2009 – citations in Lehnert et al., 2016; Rahman et al., 2021).
- *Ego* (e.g., Treviño, 1986).
- *Ethical and moral maturity/engagement* (e.g., Bandura, 1986; Eisenberg, 2000; Kohlberg, 1969; Rest, 1986).

- *Emotions* (e.g., Connelly et al., 2004; Gaudine & Thorne, 2001; Robertson et al., 2007; Salvador & Folger, 2009).
- *Thinking style* (e.g., Groves et al., 2007 as cited in Craft, 2013; Guidice et al., 2009).

Conversely (and interestingly), studies have also yielded results that show that some of these proposed antecedents have minimal or no effect on ethical decision making, including gender (e.g., Matlin, 1993; McCuddy & Perry, 1996; Peterson et al., 2001 – citations aggregated from Rajeev, 2012) and age (e.g., Cortese, 1989; Ekin & Tezolmez, 1999; Kohut & Corriher, 1994; Stanga & Turpen, 1991 – citation examples provided in Rajeev, 2012).

Further, some studies indicate that actions taken 'to avoid harmful consequences for others (proscriptions) or to enhance the wellbeing of others (prescriptions) are conceptually distinct categories with different psychological bases and unique antecedents' (e.g., Crilly et al., 2008; Janoff-Bulman et al., 2009, as cited in Noval & Stahl, 2017, p.591). Therefore, the ethical decision-making process will have distinct frames of reference depending on the outcome or scenario. This may also be why attempts at improving decision-making processes through positivist means were identified as problematic, even harmful, in early literature (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1977, as cited in Howard, 1979).[2]

Each of the antecedents identified as significant and in notable research is investigated further in the following sections (2.3.1 – 2.3.10).

2.3.1 Emotions

A central element of this body of literature is a rationalist approach, among which Rest's (1986) ethical decision-making model is one of the most cited frameworks (Zollo et al., 2017). It has been shown that emotions strongly influence attention, judgement, and

[2] This was something that I could have benefited from earlier in the literature review process, namely not using a systematic and positivist approach.

decision making in organisations (Forgas & George, 2001; Maitlis et al., 2013, cited in Beveridge & Höllerer, 2023, p.1865). Perhaps this is why business scholars in the twenty-first century rediscovered the importance of decision-makers' emotive, instinctive, and intuitive reactions (Dane & Pratt, 2007; Haidt, 2001; Rajeev, 2012). Moral dilemmas – situations in which ethical decisions arise – have been shown to heighten activity in brain regions associated with emotions (Greene et al., 2004; Greene et al., 2008, as cited in Umphress & Bingham, 2011). While research has shown that more complex emotions such as desire, disgust, jealousy, and empathy affect reasoning (Haidt, 2003; Metcalfe & Mischel, 1999), there have been specific studies on emotions in morally problematic behaviour. Much like Gino and Pearce (2010), who linked unethical behaviour in organisational contexts to the emotion of envy, others have found that it is linked to fear (Kish-Gerphart et al., 2009), anxiety (Kouchaki & Desai, 2015), guilt (Eisenberg, 2000), shame (Treviño et al., 2006) and anger (O'Reilly et al., 2016). Other literature has explained that the emotion associated with what-if scenarios (i.e. Celuch et al., 2015; Kray, 2006) could also influence ethical decision making. In such scenarios, evaluations of regret versus disappointment indicate that regret is the most intense of all negative emotions (Saffrey & Roese, 2006, as cited in Celuch et al., 2015). In their empirical study, Celuch et al. (2015) reveal that the anticipated negative emotion of regret has a significant effect on subjects' judgements and intentions associated with unethical decisions.

Umphress et al. (2020, as cited in Mitchell et al., 2020, p. 9) identify how employees' internal emotional states, specifically their moods, could result in a path to unethical behaviour. Further, it is not just the current emotions of a decision-maker that affect the decision; a body of research shows that a decision-maker's pre-existing mood can be just as relevant (Noval & Stahl, 2017). Individuals in a positive state of mind will be more likely to engage in prosocial behaviour but less likely to refrain from activities that have harmful consequences for others. Conversely, individuals in a negative mood will be more likely to avoid activities that put others at risk or harm but, simultaneously, less prone to engaging in activities that have positive consequences for others (Noval & Stahl, 2015). This finding has been confirmed in the neuroscience literature by Damasio et al. (1990) in their study of patients who suffered from vmPFC damage. Damage to this part of the brain can cause a loss of emotional responsiveness in general. Damasio et al. (1990) observed that although these patients continued to have normal reasoning abilities, they could not make adaptive, value-based decisions in various practical and moral contexts and were more likely to display antisocial behaviours (see also Bechara et al., 1994, 1996 as cited in Zhong, 2011).

It is not just the interplay of emotions with brain activity that influences ethical decision making. The endocrine system also has an important role in ethical decision making. Hormones have been found to stimulate bonding with others and reward us for prosocial behaviour (e.g., Keltner et al., 2014; Schultheiss & Stanton, 2009, as cited in Robertson et al., 2017). In a collaboration of organisational management theory and neuroscience, researchers created a multilevel framework to analyse the relationship between various emotions in the workplace (Ashkanasy, 2003; Ashkanasy & Ashton-James, 2005; Ashkanasy & Dorris, 2017). The framework placed organisations at the top of the hierarchy and spanned five analysis levels: (1) within-person, including affective events, neurobiology, and cognitive processes; (2) between-persons, including individual differences; (3) interpersonal relationships, such as dyads; (4) groups; and (5) the organisation as a whole, including policies and culture/climate. Their work concluded that positive emotions are crucial to positive organisational behaviour (Ashkanasy & Ashton-James, 2005) and are complexly intertwined.

However, not all are convinced of the interwoven nature of emotions. For example, Rabl and Kühlmann (2008) concluded that emotions have a significant role in ethical decision making on the individual level rather than on a larger organisational scale. Beveridge and Höllerer (2023, p. 1881) recommend further study of the 'two types of moral decision making processes in organisations – one more emotional and one more deliberative' . They find that when emotionality is high, the outcomes chosen are more likely to diverge from the organisation’s modus operandi (p. 1881).

Overall, emotions have a significant impact on ethical decision-making outcomes. Further, the emotional state and communication level of an ‘ethical champion’ (see Section 2.4.7) can also influence peers’ ethical decision-making processes. For example, if an ethical champion uses anger rather than sympathy to communicate an ethical issue, this may garner attention and signal certainty regarding the relevant issue (Geddes & Callister, 2007; Rozin et al., 1999, as cited in Chen et al., 2020), but this style is likely to make them unpopular among team members (Chen et al., 2020).

2.3.2 Expertise and Shared Experiences

> *The Greek philosopher Aristotle's observation that practical judgement is gained from experience, has been consistently held historically. For this reason, ethical behaviour has been considered a virtue of elders rather than youth. (Thiele & Young, 2016, p. 36).*

Expertise or age, specifically those mature in years, has been associated with more ethical approaches and decision making. Ethical behaviour and decision making increase with higher levels of moral reasoning (Wotruba, 1990, as cited in Rajeev, 2012), and moral reasoning has been directly linked to age (Rest, 1986). Borkowski and Ugras (1998) conducted a meta-analysis of 35 studies and concluded that attitudes and behaviours become more ethical as people mature. This was corroborated in the studies reviewed by Román and Munuera (2005), who found that subjects displayed more conservative and strict ethical tendencies as age increased and held fewer compromising interpretations (Sikula & Costa, 1994). However, a question should be posed about who is assessing the 'ethical' scale to determine such cause to take effect.

Social learning theory (Bandura, 1986) suggests that much human behaviour is learnt through the influence of examples, and people do not need to have their own experiential reinforcement to learn. It has been stated that we learn mostly through vicarious processes (Rajeev, 2012, p. 9). While studies indicate the relative ease of learning 'unethical behaviour' in the shared experience (e.g., Gould & Kaplan, 2011), the reverse is unclear. With leaders in organisations tending to be older, the interplay between seniority, age, and shared experiences is still a gap in understanding ethical decision making. Therefore, there is potential to study the effects of the 'elders' of our society on educating the younger generations and providing a frame of reference for ethical decision making.

Chiu et al. (2021) studied stress in employees from a perceived threat to their jobs due to technology and experiencing what the authors called ‘techno-insecurity’. They concluded that this may activate employee moral disengagement mechanisms and behaviour harmful to their colleagues and the organisation.

Shared experience and expertise are not well studied in ethical decision making in organisations, and outside of the study by Chiu and colleagues, there have not been any recent contributions.

2.3.3 Learning

A dual thinking process has also been identified in learning strategies for ethical decision making. These learning strategies are termed model-free and model-based approaches (Christopoulos et al., 2017). In model-free learning, individuals directly learn the values of actions (Gläscher et al., 2010). Model-free learning responses are usually established following previous experience and a great deal of practice. Model-based learning evaluates the actions and consequential rewards of those actions based on current internal and external states (Christopoulos et al., 2017). Both model-free and model-based learning are needed; however, model-free learning can be problematic ‘because it can be rigid and slow to change’ (Christopoulos et al., 2017, p. 706). This becomes an issue in ethical situations arising in a constantly dynamic environment within organisations. Whether model-free learning can be enhanced through shared experience with elders is unclear from the ethical decision-making research. It has been noted that the peer effect neutralises unethical behaviour, allowing it to become socially acceptable (Gould & Kaplan, 2011), as do similar acts by people we admire in attempts to emulate their career path and decisions (unethical as they may be) (Ibarra, 1999).

Research shows that retrospection is critical to repeated social interactions (Parks et al., 2003). Reynolds (2006, p. 742) states that ‘anyone who has lain awake at night contemplating the experiences of the previous day, knows that retrospection is a key component of the ethical experience and learning'. However, only the neurocognitive model accounts for this process.

Further, Hegarty and Sims (1978) posited that if the unethical behaviour is assumed to be a learnt behaviour, it could be speculated that specific rewards and punishments may modify such behaviour. However, it is unclear what these rewards and punishments are. While learning is not a topic detailed in most studies related to ethical decision making, it is often promoted through the need for training in the organisational setting.

2.3.4 Ethics Education

Education results in greater sensitivity to different viewpoints and is linked to a person's stage of cognitive moral development (Singhapakdi et al., 1999). As Román and Munuera (2005, p. 478) suggested, 'if knowledge is virtue, then the more educated the salesperson, the more ethical the salesperson's behaviour'. Some studies have found no significant relationship between education level, moral reasoning ability, and ethical standards (Forte, 2004; Marques & Azevedo-Pereira, 2009, as cited in Lehnert et al., 2016). However, Awasthi (2008) found that taking an ethics course directly affected managerial judgement, not moral judgement (Craft, 2013). After the Enron scandal, it became common for accounting textbooks to include 'ethics problems' (Yuthas et al., 2004). As Yuthas et al. (2004) suggested, the accounting profession has emphasised the agency of individuals as the source of ethical behaviour. However, the entire industry maintained a reactive view of its ethical responsibilities, only introducing change when forced to do so, such as after an audit failure (Yuthas et al., 2004).

This view of 'education' reflects a weak relationship between it and ethical decision making. Further complicating the matter, there is no agreement about what ethics training in organisations should be; even those who believe it should be taught disagree on the nature of its delivery (Reynolds, 2006). Mladenovic et al. (2019) find a strong positive reinforcement outcome for students taking an ethics course in their first year of accounting studies. The course was considered 'sophisticated' and included contextualised views of ethical issues in business, government, and social environments that required students to consider the effects of decisions on various stakeholders (Mladenovic et al., 2019). This awareness of others could be the key difference in the success of the training (e.g., Mencl & May, 2009; Watley & May, 2004). On this point, Reynolds (2006, p. 745) posited that 'infusing managers with prototypes of ethical behaviour … can override the system and automatically lead to ethical outcomes'. These prototypes could be enhanced by training people in empathy (Pecukonis, 1990, as cited in Cropanzano et al., 2017). One study, however, on the activation of brain regions connected to empathy indicated that Machiavellian-type personalities were better able to detect the emotions of others, facilitating manipulative acts (Bagozzi et al., 2013).

As with all ethical dilemmas, care about how individuals will be equipped to manage an ethical scenario is needed. Given the ambiguity of ethical and moral dilemmas, rather than focusing on reason to indicate what is right and wrong, it has been suggested that companies incorporate intuition and emotion into their ethics training (Zhong, 2011). Yet, in three experimental studies, Kim and Loewenstein (2021) reveal that promoting and developing ethical principles can help improve ethical decision making and moral awareness.

Much like a shared experience, ethical training is an area that has not been thoroughly studied in the organisational setting but has been merely addressed on theoretical grounds.

2.3.5 Gender

It is commonly, and somewhat crudely, acknowledged in many studies that females are more 'ethical' than males (e.g., thousands of studies summarised and recognised in Franke et al., 1997, p. 929). It is however important to note that a majority of these studies have not provided clarity or made the distinction between whether they are referencing biological sex or gender. At times the terms are used loosely and interchangeably in terms of today's understanding. More recent research at the individual level shows that it is still unclear whether male and female executives use similar criteria in ethicality when making judgements (Mah et al., 2023, p. 602).

Gilligan's (1982, as cited in Franke et al., 1997) 'ethics theory of care' argues that males and females are socialised differently and, thus, have different moral perspectives. According to this theory, females view the world as more interconnected and, thus, care more about community and relationships, avoid violence, and try to help those in need. Conversely, males view the world as composed of autonomous individuals and act to avoid inequality. Females are also more likely than males to have heightened sensitivity to inequality and support regulations (Shapiro & Mahajan, 1986). While this notion is generally supported, Gino et al. (2013, p. 2200) observe that, in a competitive situation regarding regulations, 'women cheat more on competitive tasks'. They conclude that people with fewer advantages will forgo regulations to eliminate competitive disadvantages. Similarly, in another study, the author concludes that the differences in accounting behaviour between the genders are driven by risk propensity and not ethicality since the female CEOs engaged in ethical actions only when external monitoring was in place (Zalata, 2019, cited in Mah et al., 2023).

This indicates that social dynamics may be more relevant than gender to ethical decision making. Franke et al. (1997, p. 928) argue that assessing gender in isolation is 'unwarranted' and that the focus of this research should be directed towards exploring why such differences may occur regarding the topic of ethical decision making. The literature primarily focuses on gender differences and, to date, has not considered the biological constructs of difference.

2.3.6 Moral Awareness and Judgement

> *Ethics is the maxims prescribing the behaviour of moral agents toward sentient beings. Sentient beings are beings that can experience sensation or feeling. Moral agents are sentient beings able to conform to standards of what is right or just in behaviour. (Howard, 2001, p. 71).*

The positive relationship between moral intensity and ethical decision making was consistently reaffirmed by studies during the early 2000s, such as Karacaer et al. (2009), Miyazaki (2009), and Leitsch (2004) (as cited in Craft, 2013). Research in the last decade suggests that individuals often disagree over what is moral (Brown et al., 2022; Reynolds, 2006), creating a strong likelihood that employees experience conflict between their ethical values and the law at work (Kundro et al., 2024). Kim and Loewenstein (2021) performed three experiments, finding that moral awareness is partly a matter of the depth of individuals' knowledge of ethical principles. Still, their examples provide some benefits compared to having no ethical training (Kim & Loewenstein, 2021). The results from such research warrant further investigation into ethics, particularly regarding expertise, knowledge transfer, and potential organisational training and learning on the topic.

Employees are hypothesised to behave ethically when their views align with those held by the organisation, particularly regarding religion (e.g., Weaver & Agle, 2002, cited in Thatcher et al., 2023). Conversely, Thatcher et al. (2023, p. 740) propose that when these misalign (i.e., Islamic religious identity within a Christian organisation), the individuals may be perceived as less ethical, resulting in potential discrimination/harassment within the workplace.

In decision-making contexts, however, individuals with strong moral convictions have been identified as likely to resist attempts from others to change their views (Aramovich et al., 2012). For example, in the technology domain, studies reveal that a person with high moral judgement is often reluctant to use or purchase pirated software (Moores & Chang, 2006; Rahman et al., 2021; Tan, 2002).

Studies have not reviewed or reflected on why an individual perceives a judgement as moral or how this originated. By extension, how a moral individual could be swayed to make an unethical judgement, and vice versa, is yet to be thoroughly explored.

2.3.7 Moral Disengagement and Ethical Blindness

Dane and Pratt (2007) stressed a significant distinction between the process of intuiting and the outcome of moral intuition (p. 36), adding that the whole process is affectively charged (p. 40). Perhaps provocatively, in 1677, Baruch Spinoza stated that understanding and believing are merely two words for the same mental operation (Mladenovic et al., 2019). If understanding is the act of believing, people would not be able to reject what they can understand. In the realm of ethical decision making, an enhanced sense of moral self-perception is associated with reduced motivation to engage in prosocial behaviours and a perceived license to make harsher moral judgements of others (Zhong & Liljenquist, 2006; Zhong et al., 2010).

Research supports the link between moral disengagement and workplace deviance (e.g., Huang et al., 2017; Ogunfowora et al., 2021; Valle et al., 2019, cited in Chiu et al., 2021). However, understanding ethical issues is not the same as behaving ethically; the behavioural process of acting and learning sometimes requires arguing with others to address conflicts and problems. An atmosphere of accepting disagreement will help avoid a situation wherein employees refrain from reporting wrongdoings despite their awareness (Kaptein, 2011, as cited in Smith et al., 2014). 'Ethical blindness' is 'the temporary inability of a decision maker to see the ethical dimension of a decision at stake' (Palazzo et al., 2012, p. 325). This is pertinent in organisational contexts, 'where economic, financial, and political interests frequently stimulate insensitivity to ethical dilemmas' (Zollo et al., 2017, p. 696). Utilising three lab experiments, Zhong (2011) supports this assertion, whereby deliberative decision making may increase unethical behaviour by taking a rationalist approach. Studies also demonstrate 'that employees have blind spots about how unethical their behaviour is and, therefore, can justify (minor) ethical violations' (De Cremer & Moore 2020). These insights stem from what is referred to as behavioural ethics (e.g., Bazerman & Gino, 2012; De Cremer et al., 2010, 2011; De Cremer & Tenbrunsel, 2012; De Cremer & Vandekerckhove, 2017; Moore & Gino, 2015; Treviño et al., 2006).

In other circumstances, a process known as 'neutralisation' is used to mask, overlook or dismiss ethical dilemmas (Umphress & Bingham, 2011). Moore et al. (2012) tested the neutralisation theory (otherwise called 'moral disengagement') and showed that a consistently stronger marker of unethical behaviour was the mere propensity to disengage morally. A study found that wealth managers suspended their ethics at work and distanced themselves from their controversial expertise by framing their workplace activities as 'just business' (Harrington, 2019, p. 1485, cited in Heimstädt et al., 2024). This was corroborated in another study that identified that those who took part in illicit computer activities had higher levels of moral disengagement (Rogers, 2001, as cited in Gino et al., 2013). However, it is acknowledged that further research is needed to understand how moral traits, emotions, and situations influence disengagement (Rogers, 2001). This highlights gaps in the research related to the multifaceted interplay of antecedents in ethical decision making.

Guidice et al. (2009) found that strategic decision-makers are more willing to engage in a questionable practice when the target is a competitor rather than a peer or colleague. Such behaviour is considered more ethical, potentially because competition can be understood as a power dynamic. Individuals with high levels of psychological entitlement (whether this is related to power or personal achievements) are more likely to consider unethical actions as being ethical (Thomason & Brownlee, 2018) and less likely to comply with moral and social codes (Arciniega et al., 2019). In the organisational context, Arciniega et al. (2019, p. 1135) acknowledged that people who strive for power might be more powerful, successful, and assertive than those who are more benevolent and may, therefore, be less afraid of any consequences associated with unethical behaviour.

It is not always power at the individual level that can result in unethical behaviour. Shulman (2000) assessed a profession of high occupational prestige: the private detective. Shulman (2000, p. 260) stated that 'private detectives are licensed and regulated, they have specialised knowledge of legal issues, they must follow ethical codes of conduct, and the work requires specific education and involves high control'. The research explored and observed situations where detectives justified legal but deceptive work-related actions and how they mitigated a sense of personal liability (e.g., covert surveillance or offering secret cash payments for information).

Moral disengagement or neutralisation has also been found outside the organisational domain. Gneezy and Rustichini (2000) found that charging parents a small fine when they were late to collect their children from childcare actually increased late pick-ups. The monetisation of the behaviour gave a different meaning to the violation (the late pick-up). Any moral implications (e.g., respecting the teacher's after-work hours and the psychological safety of the child) dissipated when the transaction involved a fiscal amount (Christopoulos et al., 2017). From the parent's viewpoint, the behaviour could be deemed 'defensible' because they were paying the teacher (Christopoulos et al., 2017).

Eres et al. (2017) argue that as intangible concepts (such as those that are digital) are processed in the brain differently from tangible or physical concepts, decisions regarding ethical dilemmas that are 'intangible' could be significant in organisational situations. This area is worth exploring, particularly regarding the interplay of social dynamics in organisational settings.

2.3.8 Sensemaking

> *The core of sensemaking is the construction of a mental model that integrates information and guides the decision maker to action. (Hmelo-Silver & Pfeffer, 2004, as cited in Zeni et al., 2016, p. 849).*

There are two systems (dual processes) of thinking: System 1 is fast and involves having no control over the process, and System 2 involves deliberate and 'rational' computations (Stanovich & West, 2000). These systems can conflict in an assumption of complete rationality, such as 'overeating, or smoking' (Evans, 2008, p. 268). A conflict between the systems might be why problematic behaviours occur, such as choice inconsistency and preferences for short-term rewards (e.g., Daw et al., 2005; Dayan et al., 2006; Loewenstein & O'Donoghue, 2004, as cited in Christopoulos et al., 2017). The incorrect use of a system may deviate individuals' ethical propensities, resulting in the 'unintended unethicality' of decision-makers (Palazzo et al., 2012; Tenbrunsel & Smith-Crowe, 2008, p. 553; Zhong, 2011; Zollo et al., 2017).

Sensemaking is considered a 'promising' (Reinecke & Ansari, 2015, p. 870) addition and approach to understanding the ethical dimension. However, in ethics, 'surprisingly, researchers know little empirically about these processes of sensemaking' (Sonenshein, 2007, p. 1035) and 'how parties make sense of the ethical complexity they encounter and establish a shared sense of ethical meaning' (Reinecke & Ansari, 2015, p. 868). Researchers studying ethical decision making have used Haidt's (2001) sensemaking theories as a comparative point to the more rational moral reasoning, as Haidt's work touches on the psychological, physiological, and neurological bases for moral judgements (Greene & Haidt, 2002). In an experiment related to sensemaking in ethical decision making, it was demonstrated that the 'complexity of people's mental models generated in response to a convoluted ethics case is positively related to two distinct measures of ethical decision making' (Bagdasarov et al., 2016, p.140). In short, not only did the researchers corroborate the findings of an earlier proposition that mental models likely impact ethical decision making (i.e., Mumford et al., 2008, 2012 as cited in Bagdasarov et. al. 2016), but also the relationship to ethical decision making being mediated by sensemaking (Bagdasarov et al., 2016, p.140). Reinecke and Ansari (2015) conducted an ethnographic study that examined the process of establishing a fair-trade price for coffee. They concluded that the negotiations for defining 'fair' occurred through a collective social sensemaking process, arguing that 'Deliberants made sense through formatting, proceduralizing, and decentering and then dealt with particularities of the situation through suspending intractables and exceptionalizing' (Reinecke & Ansari, 2015, p. 886).

Insufficient information can derail ethical decision making in the sensemaking process (Weick, 1995). Imperfect information results in humans relying on 'gut feel' (Kozyrkov, 2019). Thus, relying on memory can be crucial to obtaining the necessary information. Conceptual remembering (knowing the theme/object and its role) is useful for guiding ambiguous decisions that have yet to be encountered (Sheldon et al., 2019). In contrast, perceptual remembering (knowing the appearance of the theme/object) is useful for guiding decisions for well-structured tasks that have been experienced (Sheldon et al., 2019). The ability to shift between these forms of memory recall (remembering) during decision making is key to adaptive behaviour (Sheldon et al., 2019). However, there is evidence that recollection can be degraded and transformed – that is, memories can be changed (Lewis & Durrant, 2011). These transformations can occur over weeks, years or even decades (Nadel & Moscovitch, 1997; Winocur & Moscovitch, 2011). With the recognised ambiguity of ethical decisions, the study of memories and the ability to switch between recall methods is of import.

While various research domains are interested in dual process thinking for ethical decision making, there is a difference between their objectives. Two notable research domains are 'behavioural ethics' and 'behavioural economics'. As De Cremer and Moore (2020, p. 372) note:

> *Behavioral ethics shares a common assumption with behavioral economics, which is that human decision-makers often deviate from rationality, especially so when ethical decisions are required. Behavioural economics aims to understand why people do not always follow their rational self-interest, whereas behavioural ethics wants to understand why people do not always recognize that self-interest almost automatically underlies their actions and therefore leads to unethical behaviours.*

While sensemaking has been referred to as a 'promising addition', there have not been further studies related to this field and the grey areas exposed in ethical decision making.

2.3.9 Rewards and Punishments

> *One of the most active and optimistic areas of current research in behavioural business ethics involves designing and testing interventions – referred to as nudges in behavioural economics – to improve ethical behaviour or reduce unethical behaviour. (De Cremer & Moore, 2020, p. 382).*

As early as the 1970s, research suggested that reward systems can influence ethical and unethical behaviour through direct rewards and punishments (Hegarty & Sims, 1978;

Laczniak & Inderrieden, 1986, as cited in Treviño & Youngblood, 1990). Treviño and Youngblood (1990) decided to test this and found that mild punishment did not influence behaviour. Legal scholars have suggested using shame sentencing to combat white-collar crimes (Kahan & Posner, 1999, as cited in Zhong, 2011).

While Wang and Murnighan (2017) found that small monetary incentives could promote honest behaviour, Sandel (2012) claimed that the lure of monetary payoffs often leads to unethical behaviour. Cash payments can decrease people's willingness to help by changing their perceptions of a situation from social to monetary (Heyman & Ariely, 2004). Although empirical results are mixed, Titmuss's (1970) classic example revealed that monetary rewards reduced rather than increased blood donations by dampening social motivations. Treviño et al. (2006, p. 965) cautioned that offering incentives for ethical behaviour is 'complex' as it may undermine the intrinsic motivation to engage ethically.

It is not just the presence of the incentives that matters but whether they are offered publicly or privately. Material incentives can demotivate people when offered publicly (Angelucci et al., 2019; Ariely et al., 2009, cited in Park et al., 2022). Park et al. (2022) suggest further studies on the effectiveness of incentives, particularly those less visible in nature, such as recognition and affirmation.

Other studies indicate that if punishment for unethical behaviour does not exist and a situation arises where that behaviour becomes profitable, then unethical behaviour will continue (Wang & Murnighan, 2015). But when a small incentive exists for ethical behaviour, it may still be enough to resist unethical behaviour, even when the incentive for unethical behaviour is larger (Wang & Murninghan 2015, cited in Park et al., 2022). Rather than the reward or punishment acting in isolation, a combination of both may be more effective for preventing unethical behaviour in organisations. This, in particular, is absent in the existing literature.

There is yet to be an exploration of the nature and relationship between punishments, rewards, and, more broadly, the appropriate interventions that can be used in ethical decision making in an organisational setting. Park et al. (2022) indicate incentives and punishment may be mitigated when organisations have strong governance, such as an active and independent board of directors (e.g., O'Conner et al., 2006 as cited in Park et. al. 2022 p 318).

2.3.10 Mindfulness, Stress, and Sleep

Metacognition is how people monitor and adjust their information processing (Nelson, 1996, as cited in Kudesia, 2019). Breakdowns, or information constraints (March, 1994), activate these deliberative information processes, which include searching, problem-solving, and sensemaking (Kudesia, 2019). Breakdowns are any 'situation of non-obvious-ness' where people cannot continue acting based on their existing expertise (Winograd & Flores, 2008, p. 165, as cited in Kudesia, 2019, p. 409). By better noticing potential breakdowns, people can respond before they become severe (Kudesia, 2019) and, consequently, invoke the incorrect thinking or learning system to apply to a decision. Kudesia (2019) references preventative actions, including mindfulness, stress management, and adequate sleep. Recently, a framework developed from empirical studies showed that aspects of mindfulness positively influenced morality while acknowledging some cases of negative influences (Berryman et al., 2023).

Sleep deprivation has been linked to increased cheating by students (Barnes et al., 2011) and cyberloafing by employees (Wagner et al., 2012). Additionally, there is considerable neuroscience evidence of the effects of a lack of sleep on cognitive functioning (Lim & Dinges, 2010), which, as noted in ethical decision-making studies, can negatively affect behaviour and its outcomes.

Stress, similar to mindfulness, is not a physiological factor. However it does affect moral decision making (Starcke & Brand, 2012). Our available time is often considered a factor of stress; however, very few decisions need to be made in the moment (Kouchaki & Smith, 2020). The absence of time-bounded stress enables sensemaking/intuition to invoke a path towards successful ethical decision making (Sonenshein, 2007).

Mentors can also help avoid ethical missteps (Howard & Korver, 2008; Kouchhaki & Smith, 2020). However, outside of these few studies there is little that have explored the role of mentors in organisations. Learning and the act of reflection has not yet been studied in the organisational context, and would warrant further investigation for ethical decision making.

2.4 Organisational Context

> *This is another clue that business ethics in the twenty-first century, as it is actually practiced, is not really about efficiency or shareholder value; rather, it is an effort that rationalizes a transfer of wealth to those who, in the minds of decision makers, truly deserve it. (Bowie, 2013, as cited in Silver, 2015, p. 280).*

The assumption that individuals only have two primary behaviours when making ethical decisions (i.e., to lie or tell the truth) belies a far more complex phenomenon that cannot be devoid of context (Fritz, 2020; LaFollette & Graham, 1986; White, 2022, cited in Cooper et.al., 2023, p. 656). Organisational scholars have begun identifying several important contextual drivers of unethical organisational behaviour, such as time and culture (Svensson & Wood, 2003, as cited in Paik et al., 2019), ethical leadership (Brown & Treviño, 2006), ethical climate (Mayer et al., 2009), and codes of conduct (Weaver & Treviño, 1999). Organisations in which the ethical infrastructure is weak – infrastructure that refers to the rules, policies, and procedures regarding ethical behaviour are ambiguous or not seriously reinforced – result in those in managerial positions relying on their own judgement to navigate ethical behaviour (i.e., Benton & Cobb 2019; Dobbin & Zorn 2005; Mizruchi & Marshall 2016, Noval & Stahl, 2015 as cited in Gonsalves, 2022). This substantiates the commentary by Fuqua and Newman (2006) regarding the need for specific structural and functional processes to exist in an organisation before ethical leadership can be effective.

Pimentel et al. (2010) presented a model for ethical decision making that assessed the interplay between individual-level variables (e.g., demography and position in the organisation), the structure and climate of the organisation in which the decisions are made, and the socio-political features of the business environment. Conversely, Moore et al. (2012) noted that research into organisational ethical behaviour has failed to explain variance using contextual variables alone (citing Kish-Gephart et al., 2010). Similarly, Mitchell et al. (2019, p. 14) argued that behavioural ethics has rarely tackled 'higher levels of analyses, such as divisions, departments, and organizations, in a meaningful way'. They referenced the example of the Wells Fargo account fraud scandal, which involved thousands of individuals in a highly coordinated fashion (McLean, 2017).

Further, Mitchell et al. (2019, p.14) recognised that events such as ethical dilemmas and breaches 'constitute more than just the sum of individual behaviours – they involve unique cross-level processes that give rise to situations that are largely inconsistent with our understanding of individual-level behavioural ethics'. Making decisions in times of crisis is an ethically laden task that triggers 'inevitable, complex, and urgent trade-offs (e.g., the greater good versus individual rights; responsibilities toward society versus fiduciaries)' (Alpaslan & Mitroff, 2021, p. 1). The characteristics of an ethical organisation contrast to those of an unethical organisation, particularly as evidenced with the inconsistencies between espoused and practised values (Diamond & Adams, 1999, as cited in Smith et al., 2014). Craft (2013, p. 256) states that researchers need to go beyond individual antecedents in ethical decision making to find a renewed focus on organisational variables for future research.

Sections 2.4.1. to 2.4.9 explore key organisational concepts. A significant gap in the existing literature on ethical decision making is the relative absence of the role of political dynamics in the ethicality of organisational decision making.

2.4.1 Formal Policies, Codes of Conduct, and Law

Professional codes are created to deter decision-makers in unethical circumstances (Bommer et al., 1987). Chui and Grieder (2020) conducted an exploratory content analysis of codes of conduct across 100 of the largest US employers. They found that almost all organisations mentioned an investigation and sanctioning process for wrongdoings and concluded that 'such systems are highly prevalent and … are made salient to employees' (Chui & Grieder, 2020, p. 3, in online Appendix A). Where these codes of conduct or monitoring systems have been implemented to ensure punishment or identification of unethical behaviour, the results are mixed in terms of overall effectiveness (Chui & Grieder, 2020). Some cases show that these strategies in isolation are more harmful even if an ethical failure has not occurred (Schminke et al., 2014). This confusion mirrors the research findings on rewards and punishments at the individual level.

In studying the application of codes of ethics to computer abuse, the codes seem to affect those who are 'high in responsibility denial' (Harrington, 1996, p. 272). While a few academics have noted relatively little research on the influence of performance targets to performance, and consequently its impact to ethical decision making (Rajeev, 2012), several studies in this field focus on salespeople. One study (Arkinstall, 1994) focused on how targets influence salespeople's behaviour. In this study, 75% of salespeople knowingly violated a company's codes to achieve targets (Arkinstall, 1994). Almost a decade later, it was noted that codes and policies could change salespeople's ethical perceptions but are unlikely to change their behaviour (Valentine & Barnett, 2002). These policies are considered quality control measures rather than ethics codes (Yuthas et al., 2004). Therefore, the mere existence of codes of ethics is insufficient to influence ethical behaviour or awareness (e.g., Lagace et al., 1991; Valentine & Barnett, 2002).

Peterson (2002) noted conflicting results in studies examining formal ethics codes. Some produced a strong correlation, while others showed a weak influence. Provocatively, it was stated that 'no matter how much compliance training you give your employees, there is only so much that [you] can do if your pay structures are still encouraging them to be corrupt' (de Haldevang, 2017, p. 297, cited in Park et al., 2022). However, the answer is not to have a complete absence of a code. McKinney et al. (2010, p. 510) found that professionals working in organisations with a code of ethics were inclined to find ethically questionable situations less tolerable than those at firms without one. Other studies reveal that a code of ethics can influence unethical behaviour (Peterson, 2002; Pflugrath et al., 2007; Okpara, 2003; Treviño et al., 1998).

Researchers have identified the importance of consistency between formal organisational systems, policies, procedures, practices, and shared perceptions in studying ethical organisational climates (Kuenzi et al., 2019). As Kuenzi et al. (2019, p. 63) notes, 'most organisations involved in ethical scandals have a code of conduct and tout the importance of ethics, but unethical behaviour prevails because something is missing'.

Rowe's (2005) ethnographic work observing decision making in the British police force showed that due to the demands of the dynamic policing environment, principles in texts or professional codes of practice are very difficult to operationalise. Pratt and Crosina (2016, p. 341) warn that the autocratic nature of honour codes and religious artefacts could prime unethical behaviour.

67% of ethical behaviour research papers in management journals refer to unethical behaviour as illegal behaviour. This raises the issue of moral and lawful misalignment (Kundro et al., 2024). Even the law can negatively impact employee behaviour, as legal pressures can be demotivating factors lowering intrinsic moral awareness in employees (Kundro et al., 2024). Legal constraints can result in employees taking a 'passive orientation' to their work rather than engaging deeply for ethical considerations (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009, cited in Kundro et al., 2024).

The potential ideological and political nature of these codes has not been addressed effectively in the field of ethical decision making.

2.4.2 Culture and Dominant Logic

Events involving broad-based ethical scandals at organisations such as the American International Group, Countrywide Financial, Lehman Brothers, and Siemens AG continue to garner significant attention. In nearly all of these cases, post-mortem accounts indicate dysfunctional ethical environments as the origin of illegal and unethical activity (Arnaud & Schminke, 2012, p. 1767).

Culture is significant in determining ethical behaviour (Treviño, 2006, as cited in Smith et al., 2014). Ethical decision making involves the consideration of team-level phenomena. Findings suggest that managers need to view organisational citizenship not simply as an individual act but as a social process (Zagenczyk et al., 2008). A comparison of how private and public sector enterprises deal with competition could demystify the effects of competition on the ethical behaviour of employees (Rajeev, 2012). Yet, Neubaum et al. (2004, as cited in Savur et al., 2018) suggested that the ethical climate in some organisations takes longer to develop than in others. This may have led to the perceived lack of progress or hesitation in research on organisational culture and its effects on ethical decision making (Craft, 2013).

Victor and Cullen (1987) introduced the concept of an ethical climate and inspired studies examining antecedents, including ethical intentions and decision making (Buchan, 2005, as cited in De Cremer & Moore, 2020). There is mounting evidence that, in addition to personal characteristics of employees, the organisational environment is a key influence towards unethical behaviour (Kish-Gerphart et al., 2009) and these form perceptions of a unit's or organisation's ethical climate (Reichers & Schneider, 1990, as cited in Kuenzi et al., 2019). Social information processing theory and associated theories – for example, framing (Tenbrunsel & Messick, 1999), social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), and moral self (Blasi, 1984) – 'suggest that employees are vigilant observers of their environments, searching for information to help them understand what is valued and, therefore, how to behave' (Mitchell, Reynolds & Treviño, 2019, p.10).

Researchers have contended that individuals will embrace either an ethical frame or a business frame when making ethical decisions (see Tenbrunsel & Messick, 1999; Tenbrunsel & Smith-Crowe, 2008). Lee and Aaker (2004) have attempted to explain that employees are likely to be responsive to business framed arguments for ethical dilemmas and consequently adjust their judgement. As these business arguments are typically aligned with the predominant business logic (how team members would naturally think about and approach decision making in business contexts) and are conceptually recognisable, individuals will feel 'right' about these business framed arguments (Lee & Aaker, 2004). Economic factors do not necessarily lead to unethical behaviour but may increase the likelihood of employees making decisions for their organisation rather than client interests. Jacob and Levitt (2003, cited in Park et al., 2022, p. 318) give the example of educators with incentives tied to student performance and in standardised tests where student test scores may be manipulated to avoid harming school ratings.

Chen et al. (2020) argue that combining ethical and different types of business framing can persuade teams to make more ethical decisions. Where some employees strongly and exclusively identify with the organisation, such individuals would be highly motivated to help the organisation, even at the expense of others and societal norms (i.e., Conroy et al., 2017; Dukerich et al., 1998; Umphress & Bingham, 2011; Vadera & Pratt, 2013; and Ashforth & Anand, 2003; Pinto et al., 2008, as cited in Umphress & Bingham, 2011). Employees may view unethical pro-organisational behaviour as a way to reciprocate positive social exchange relationships with their employer, boss or both (Kleiman, 1996, as cited in Umphress & Bingham, 2011). Castro et al. (2020, p. 948) find that 'higher levels of informal corruption commonly occur in environments where culture, tradition, history, and social norms reflect an acceptance and perhaps even encourage lower standards of ethics'. This could be mediated by an organisation's ethical climate or culture, where individuals view themselves as strongly motivated to enact the organisation's identity and, consequently, embrace ethical behaviour (Caprar et al., 2022, p. 765).

The 'peer effect' between workers is also significant (Gould & Kaplan, 2011). Ethical and unethical behaviours are affected by social influence or social contagion, highlighting the role of social context in behaviour (Zagenczyk et al., 2008). How this contagion effect propagates can be explained by two theoretical frames: social information processing theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978, as cited in Zagenczyk et al., 2008) and social learning theory (Bandura, 1986). A study reviewing behaviour prior to an unethical act occurring reveals that when individuals are anticipating behaving unethically, they will engage with fewer people or in 'lower-density networks' (Jacobsen et al., 2022, p. 867).

An important variable that can affect unethical behaviour concerns the influence of cross-cultural differences. Some scholars perceive the concept of a 'decision' as a Western phenomenon. Howard (1979, p. 5) asks, ‘Can you imagine Buddha or Lao-Tzu making a decision?’. Zhuang et al. (2005) found a clear difference between reporting a peer’s unethical act versus that of a supervisor in Chinese employees. The reason is rooted in cultural norms; the researchers referred to ‘Chinese high power distance culture’ that results in employees being less willing to report unethical acts by supervisors. Calls from the literature have sought more research to examine international business ethics (Bailey & Spicer, 2007; Chang & Chen, 2017; Paik et al., 2019; Weaver, 2001). Several challenges have hindered research on behavioural ethics cross-culturally, including measuring ethical behaviours in remote office locations and parallel access to study participants across various international settings (De Cremer & Moore, 2020).

Arnaud and Schminke (2012) highlighted that shared perceptions of appropriate moral reasoning were insufficient to ensure ethical behaviour. They argued that organisation members might agree on the right thing to do; however, ethical behaviour is unlikely to occur unless they also care about the targets of their behaviour (collective empathy) and believe they can carry out their desired actions (collective ethical efficacy).

Culture is an area of great interest as it relates to ethical behaviour and decision making. What is absent are observations ‘in-action’ to provide substantiation of existing theory or to generate new theory outside of a few studies, such as Reinecke and Ansari (2015) for setting a fair price for sustainable coffee and Burton et al. (2018) regarding Quaker religious organisation decision making.

2.4.3 Structure

> *Individuals build organisational structures (including routines, practices, rationales, and discourses) as a type of social (as opposed to individual) defence to manage their emotions (e.g., anxieties). These organisational systems, in turn, influence how people behave, think, and feel. The cross-level, mutually reinforcing dynamics are not always conscious. For this reason, organisations may have structures that may appear dysfunctional; although, in reality, they may serve to protect members from unwanted emotional experiences. (Pratt & Crosina, 2016, p. 324).*

Several studies explore how organisations, tasks or processes can be structured to enhance ethical behaviour. For example, Desai and Kouchaki (2017) demonstrate that accountability can reduce overbilling using the influence of work-report formatting to structure ethical practices. Other studies reveal that structuring tasks to maximise variety can mitigate violation of policies and guidelines by increasing the level of cognitive complexity to individuals (Derfler-Rozin et al., 2016, as cited in De Cremer & Moore, 2020). In the early 2000s, a call was made for more research on how to design organisations to encourage ethical behaviour (De Cremer & Moore, 2020). Tenbrunsel et al. (2003, p. 285) coined the term 'ethical infrastructures' to refer to the 'organisational elements that contribute to an organisation's ethical effectiveness'. Moore et al. (2012, p. 11) note that the workplace environment provides ample opportunities for moral disengagement:

> *Organisations tend to be hierarchical, providing opportunities for the displacement of responsibility; work is often undertaken within teams, providing opportunities for the diffusion of responsibility; organisational membership automatically defines the boundaries of an in-group, providing opportunities for moral justification (to protect the organisation) and the cognitive minimization of the consequences of one's actions for those who are outside the organisation (and thus in an out-group).*

It is not just the organisation but also the department that can matter. The early work of Weber (1995) provided insights into the inner workings and power base of three departments in a particular organisation. Weber (1995) was able to identify a locus of analysis in making an ethical decision based on the department 'types' and how this could lead to ethical practices (or climates) (see Figure 2.3). The departments identified in the research were 'technical core', 'buffer', and 'boundary-spanning'. Weber (1995) discovered that the technical core (in this case, focused on cheque processing) department tended to show an individual locus of analysis and used an egoism ethical criterion more than the other departments. The data also showed that the boundary-spanning departments (those with a customer service focus) tended to assume a cosmopolitan locus of analysis and used a principled ethical criterion when resolving ethical issues at work (Weber, 1995).

	Locus of Analysis		
	Individual	Local	Cosmopolitan
Ethical Criterion Egiosm	Instrumental		Caring
Benevolence	Caring		
Principle	Independence	Rules	Law and Code

Figure 2.3 Dimensions of Ethical Climate Types

Note. From 'Influences upon Organizational Ethical Subclimates: A Multi-Departmental Analysis of a Single Firm', by J. Weber, 1995, Organization Science, 6(5), 509–523, p. 512 (https://www.jstor.org/stable/2634959).

Weber (1995) posited that an explanation for such behaviour was that technical core departments are insulated and can contribute to the narrow ethical decision making perspective that manifests as an individual locus of analysis. While this research was published in the mid-1990s, it provides an interesting commentary on innovation and novel/nascent technologies in 2024, with most organisations likely witnessing this phenomenon of the technical core department in practice. Unlike the technical core's emphasis on pursuing self-interest, the buffer departments had a more convoluted position within the organisation, showing a more 'benevolent' and 'caring' nature. This is likely due to their role, including the diplomatic dimension of service.

While the concept of structure is distinct to culture, they do not exist without one another. However, more research is required to understand the departmental locus of analysis within organisations, particularly global firms.

2.4.4 Politics and Power

Politics among heterogeneous actors drives critical decision making (Coopey & Burgoyne, 2000, cited in Nakanishi, 2022, p. 285). Yet power and politics were not oft-studied topics in organisational ethical decision making prior to the 2000s.

Li et al. (2023) propose that organisations may fail to recognise unethical behaviour because it arises from those with a lower power base rather than a powerful one. Explanations for this are rooted in employees' perceptions of self-worth. Those with a healthy sense of their value and self-acceptance (Kim & Gal 2014) are more likely to form honest and productive work relationships, express their true opinions, and make transparent decisions (Li et al., 2023, p. 1435). This sets a stark proposition, as most employees do not wield much power, which could create an environment with a high potential for unethical consequences in the workplace (Li et al., 2023, p. 1435).

The area of politics and the nature of power is seldom investigated, and given the social dynamics in organisations, it is a field that warrants further enquiry.

2.4.5 Organisational Learning and Memory

Social information processing theory, originally developed by Salancik and Pfeffer (1978), explains that co-workers need to obtain information (particularly when starting a new role) due to their jobs (and the organisations in which they exist) being complex and ambiguous. Employees will seek advice from those they believe have useful knowledge and learn from those they admire (Ibarra, 1999). By extension, employees who believe that the organisation values their contributions and cares about their wellbeing (perceived organisational support) exercise affective organisational commitment, yielding organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) (Eisenberger et al., 1990, as cited in Zagenczyk et al., 2008). When employees perceive that their jobs aid their learning and motivate them intrinsically, they develop positive perceptions of work exchange with the organisation (Cardona et al., 2004).

Educational or training interventions in both public (Hameiri et al., 2014) and organisational (Bang et al., 2017) settings demonstrate positive results in altering deep-seated ideologies and have clear implications for decision making in organisations (Lambert et al., 2022). Insights related to organisational learning, such as double-loop learning practices, instigate institutional changes requiring 'anticipatory, reflexive and deliberative practices' (Owen et al., 2021, p. 10, cited in Wicher & Frankus, 2023, p. 21).

These are practices seen to have considerable weight in ethical decision making. Further, Martin (2016, as cited in De Cremer & Moore, 2020) demonstrates that storytelling intervention in a company during the onboarding process of new starters has an ethically positive effect.

Coraiola et al., (2023, p. 392) argue that memory shapes how the past is morally evaluated and impacts how members conduct themselves in the present. They argue that misbehaving organisations may establish some form of 'honor among thieves' and promote social forgetting when accused of corporate irresponsibility (as cited in Coraiola et al., 2023, p. 392).

Calls to understand and study the frameworks of memory that guide ethical decisions in organisations have been made (Coraiola et al., 2023). Mena and Rintamäki (2020) identify 'mnemonic sensitivity' and 'mnemonic integrity' as two aspects of organisational collective memory related to decision making. The question of how ethical principles evolve still needs to be addressed (e.g., Donaldson & Dunfee, 1994, cited in Coraiola et al., 2023). Another area requiring further research is how organisational practices promote organisational learning that manifests in changes to policies and routines (Martin et al., 2024, p. 12) and how organisational learning could be a mitigant and/or facilitator of ethical decision making.

2.4.6 Co-Workers, Teams, Groups, and Partnerships

> *Co-workers may be in a significantly better position than supervisors to know about the various types of employee unethical behaviour assessed here, as presumably employees are more motivated to hide these behaviours from supervisors. (Moore et al., 2012, p. 34).*

Zey-Ferrell et al. (1979) and Zey-Ferrell and Ferrell (1982) had stated the behaviour of peers are an important influence on employees. Thomason and Brownlee (2018) found that 95% of respondents indicated that a poor hiring decision negatively affected the team’s morale. When ethical events arise, shared mental models within teams could lead to a shared sensemaking process. Where shared mental models are not achieved, competing hypotheses will arise. Teams may prove beneficial regarding ethical decision making because individual team members may hold each other accountable for their actions (Macdougall et al., 2014, p. 17). Conversely, given the diffusion of responsibility, team or group ethical decision making could suffer (Macdougall et al., 2014).

The ethical awareness within a team differs from that of an individual, as the basis of communication and collaboration is founded on the dynamic interaction within the team (Humphrey & Aime, 2014). These dynamics are understood through social theories such as social exchange theory and social identity theory. Social exchange theory proposes that behaviour in action results from weighing the costs and benefits of an exchange, effectively a cost-benefit analysis for determining the value of the relationship (Homan, 1958, as cited in Roulet et al., 2017). Social identity theory relates to how individuals identify themselves through groups, including class, sport, family, and religion (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255).

Studies on ethical behaviour relating to social exchange theory have been conducted with negotiators, auditors, suppliers/buyers, and situations where stock repurchase programs arise. Negotiators with high rapport are more likely to reach an agreement and be more satisfied with the outcome. Although rapport generally affects standard negotiation settings positively, the effects of rapport on impasse settings lead to instances where conflict between negotiators only produces success if one or both parties act unethically or 'misbehave' (Jap et al., 2011). In a study of auditors, they were, on average, 30% more likely to approve reports after they were told the company had hired them. This aligns with behavioural ethics research, suggesting auditors will have a more permissive view of liminal practices when they benefit their clients (Mohliver, 2019).

Social identity theory posits individuals' desire for positive self-evaluation drives them to identify with an in-group and differentiate themselves from an out-group. The need for a positive identity also propels individuals to seek information that establishes the in-group as different from and better than the out-group (Abrams & Hogg, 1990, as cited in Franke et al., 1997). People are shaped by their relationships of responsibility and care, which are inescapably woven into the language of deliberation (Robinson, 2011, as cited in Reinecke & Ansari, 2015). This has implications for decision making in an organisation where the management phenomenon of 'group think' prevails. Conversely, Spoelma et al. (2023, p. 18) demonstrate the benefits to team members of having an elevated sense of recognition and rewards that is dependent on the recommendations of their teammates, and how this leads to 'the harmful effect of bad apples on relationship conflict', which mitigates creative performance. It is not just the relationships within the organisation that can be an influencing factor. In a study by Watley and May (2004) that simulated a scenario of managers making an ethical decision, the findings confirmed that personal connections can influence decision making (i.e. Ajzen, 1988; Weiss & Nowicki, 1981, as cited in Becker et al., 2011). Not only does it affect the decision-making process, but it also affects the 'behavioural intentions that emerge from the process' (Watley & May, 2004, p. 119).

Klein and Kozlowski (2000, as cited in Chen et al., 2020) argue that individual-level and team-level ethical awareness have distinct underlying structures. Thus, the consequent team ethical awareness might be quite dissimilar to team members' average individual ethical awareness (Klein & Kozlowski, 2000, as cited in Chen et al., 2020, p.248). As team members are motivated towards team solidarity, these individual team members may reject those in the capacity of ethical champion when it is recognised to threaten harmony of the team or achievement of desired team outcomes (Jetten & Hornsey, 2014, as cited in Brown et al., 2022 p. 1137). This seemingly corroborates a study on the dynamic of supplier and buyer behaviour by Johnston et al. (2004, as cited in Hill et al., 2008). They found that higher inter-organisational cooperative behaviours, such as shared planning and flexibility, were strongly linked to a supplier's trust in the buyer firm. However, this theory did not explain why trust levels decline in relation to subtle unethical behaviours (Johnston et al., 2004, as cited in Hill et al., 2008). When dealing with global firms, the concepts that apply within organisations and partnerships may also have different outcomes concerning ethical dilemmas.[3]

[3] This may be useful in the future because the organisation that is the subject of this research has its headquarters in Australia. Australia has one of the first globally recognised modern slavery acts (Australian Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Cth)).

Brown et al. (2022) find that ethical conflict has positive and negative outcomes on members' emotions, attitudes, and perceptions of group dynamics. They state that 'as society becomes more polarized, ethical issues, challenges and disagreements are likely to occur in our workplaces' (2022, p. 1146). Several factors are still not understood within team and group dynamics, such as whether diversity within the team impacts decision making (Martins & Sohn, 2022) and the values (in)congruence of a relationship where there is ethical conflict (Brown et al., 2022).

2.4.7 Ethical Champions

In organisations, employees with ethical concerns often 'remain silent' (Kish-Gephart et al., 2009; Milliken et al., 2003). It is perceived that many organisations 'implore their employees to speak up so that the organisation can learn about problems before they metastasise into something more serious that can threaten the organisation and its reputation' (Chen & Treviño, 2023, p. 1316).

Individual roles inside organisations might also alter the ethical decision-making processes (De Cremer & Moore, 2020). Decisions with ethical implications, such as organisational reputation and stakeholder wellbeing, may depend on those individuals in teams who embrace the role of advocate of an ethical decision in their team (i.e., ethical champions or ethical voice (Morrison 2014 as cited in Burris et al., 2023) at the earliest decision stage (Kish-Gerphart et al., 2009) rather than raising concerns after the fact when the harm has already been done (Chen et al., 2020).

Extant research paints a pessimistic illustration for potential ethical champions (Oç et al., 2019) or those with an ethical voice, suggesting that a single ethical champion may be unable to influence team decisions in an ethical direction and that the ethical champion can expect to face social isolation from peers (Morrison, 2022 as cited in Chen & Treviño 2023). Morrison (2014, cited in Burris et al., 2023, p. 1699) states that 'when a decision is made about speaking up, the potential performance gains must be both significant and sufficiently likely to occur in order to overcome the interpersonal risks inherent in speaking candidly to someone with more power'. Chen and Treviño (2023) argue that there is often complete ambivalence to the ethical voice or champion.

Teams that make more ethical decisions tend to use ethical and business arguments (Chen et al., 2020). Chen et al. (2020) note that framing an ethical dilemma is just as important as addressing and identifying it. They further argue that it is unclear whether higher-status members receive credit or lose their status because of their ethical championing behaviour. Chen et al. (2020) recommend further research into this question, suggesting that the power and political base could have an important role and lead to different outcomes for ethical champions.

In the last few years a review of the broader extant literature on voice by Morrison (2022) emphasised the need for awareness and focus to the ethical voice as the 'antecedents and consequences likely differ from those associated with traditional voice that focuses on ideas to improve productivity and efficiency' (Chen and Treviño, 2023, p. 1316).

2.4.8 Leadership

As with a learning organisation, the effort to establish and ensure an ethical environment must begin with the highest levels of management who encourage desired behaviours from their employees while also modelling those behaviours (Sackman et al., 2009, as cited in Smith et al., 2014). Leaders' behaviours are an important influence on values and ethical practices. Decisions with significant ethical implications typically involve high ambiguity, complexity, and uncertainty (Dane & Pratt, 2007). Managers and those in leadership positions often encounter the burden of managing various stakeholders' expectations and time pressures which increase their prospect of facing complex ethical problems (Dukerich et al., 2000; Lämsa & Takala, 2000; Mumford et al., 2000, as cited in Hiekkataipale & Lämsa, 2017 p. 457). Enabling the leadership team to focus on fairness and justice in the working environment may combat unethical behaviour (Rahman et al., 2021).

The ethical behaviour of those at senior levels affects their organisations' social performance and long-term viability (e.g., Brown & Treviño, 2006; Deconinck, 2005; Waldman & Galvin, 2008, as cited in Noval & Stahl, 2017). Leaders' behaviours and communications act as a frame that can motivate either ethical or unethical acts (Babalola et al., 2020, as cited in Mitchell et al., 2020; Bush et al., 2020 p. 47); inform formal work norms, systems, and structures that reduce the engagement of unethical behaviour (Kuenzi et al., 2019, p. 65); and reduce/increase employees' sense of connection (Babalola et al., 2020, as cited in Mitchell et al., 2020). There 'continues to be a conflation between ethical leader behaviours and followers' evaluations of the leader's values, traits, and behaviours' (i.e. Alvesson & Einola, 2019 as cited in Banks et al., 2020, p. 1). A leader with a bottom-line mentality towards employees can generate an approach that motivates unethical behaviour by enhancing employees' self-interests (Babalola et al., 2020, as cited in Mitchell et al., 2020). Conversely, leaders who demonstrate authentic behaviours are likely to see their employees display ethical and prosocial behaviours (Hannah et al., 2011, cited in Gibson et al., 2023). Bush et al. (2020) argue that a deontological approach, or having a purist 'moral manager', does not always lead to positive outcomes. Earlier research by Stouten et al. (2013) found that people do not particularly like consistently ethical leaders. These leaders 'were perceived as too ethical, an ambition that is too hard to achieve for many' (Stouten et al., 2013, p. 386).

In interviewing 20 MBA students, Weaver et al. (2005) identified the leadership characteristics these participants sought towards building an ethical environment. These included being open to and solicitous of input, integrity, values, maintaining relationships, and an uncompromising, consistent ethical vision (Weaver et al., p. 316). Although some research (as cited in De Cremer & Moore 2020) indicates that ethical leadership shares foundations with abusive supervision (Mackey et al., 2015) and destructive leadership (Schyns & Schilling, 2013), Brown and Mitchell (2010) contended there is theoretical distinction between ethical leadership and that of unethical leadership. Neubert et al. (2009, as cited in De Cremer & Moore, 2020) explored how ethical leaders' effects continue to accumulate towards a positive environment and the generation of positive impacts (Vianello et al., 2010, as cited in De Cremer & Moore, 2020), such as increasing the positive perceptions of the organisational climate (Neubert et al., 2009, as cited in De

Cremer & Moore, 2020) and encouraging a desire to reciprocate positive interactions (Piccolo et al., 2010).

Strain theory remains one of the most influential and highly cited theories for explaining organisational misconduct, with a clear prediction that underperformance will create pressure to engage in misconduct (Gonsalves, 2022, p. 766). Gonsalves (2022) expands earlier studies on strain theory by looking at longitudinal data drawn from legal claims filed against 1500 firms between 2000 and 2017. Gonsalves determined that the strain individual-level managers may experience from conflicting values, unrealistic goals, and the lack of coping skills can result in motivations towards unethical decision making.

Singhapakdi et al. (1999) found that managers with more Machiavellian tendencies would perceive ethical problems with less import and were less likely to take corrective action, thus associating Machiavellianism with lower sensitivity to ethics and a proponent to unethical behaviour. Those managers who are unaware or, at the very least, feel psychologically distant from the people who will be harmed or benefit from their decisions will have a lower emotional reaction (Noval & Stahl, 2015). Contrary to popular belief, a balanced thinking style does not always lead to more ethical decision making, as reflected in a study on the differences in style between Korean and US leadership (Paik et al., 2019).

Regarding the skills a leader needs in ethical dilemmas, Zeni et al. (2016) suggested that leaders should target (and learn) strategies for bias minimisation during the process of recognising a problem and the information-gathering stages of sensemaking. Zeni et al. (2016) claimed this could lead to more ethical outcomes.

Hiekkataipale and Lämsa (2017) suggested that those leaders in middle manager positions do hold awareness of the various ethical aspects of their work and are able to identify settings that can be characterised as ethical problems. Problems arise when managers know the right thing to do but do not act accordingly (Nash, 1990, cited in Hiekkataipale & Lämsa, 2017, p. 473). Hiekkataipale and Lämsa (2017) suggested that support from leadership and peers' group could be contributing factors that encourage those in middle manager positions to make the necessary interventions in ethical problems. The role of middle managers is rarely addressed in the management ethics extant literature. The focus has predominately remained at executive-level ethical issues (Dean et al., 2010 as cited in Hiekkataipale & Lämsa, 2017).

Stating that 'questionnaires remain a popular (if misguided) approach to studying leadership', Day (2014, p. 862, cited in Banks et al., 2020, p. 1) advocated using alternate research methodologies when studying complex domains such as ethical leadership.

2.4.9 Communication

Ethical decision making is an ambiguous undertaking that requires processes such as sensemaking to elucidate a way forward. Because ‘communication is a central component of sensemaking’ (Weick et al., 2005, p. 413), individuals tend to use communication styles to uncover information when resolving and managing moral conflicts (Dukerich et al., 2000, as cited in Hiekkataipale & Lämsa, 2017; French & Albright, 1998, as cited in Watley & May, 2004, p. 108).

Lamber and Luoma (2020, p. 724) identified, through an empirical analysis, two logics of communication in an organisation: prodevelopment (to induce positive organisational change) and procohesion (maintaining unity within the organisation). They surmised through the existing research that prodevelopment communication can be thwarted by factors such as poor organisational design, misaligned incentives, toxic organisational culture, failures in recruiting, and capabilities (p. 724). With most organisations to date using predevelopment communication deemed as the ‘normal case’ of (p. 725), predevelopment communication can be scarce in research findings because it is deemed 'pointless' (p. 725).

The discovery process has been highlighted in studies exploring the effects of consequential information compared to proximity or available personal information. Research has recognised that consequential information has a role in ethical decision making models (e.g., Hunt & Vitell, 1986; Ferrell & Gresham, 1985; Tsalikis et al., 2001, as cited in Watley & May, 2004). For example, information regarding consequences can be particularly powerful in shaping behaviour (e.g., Fritzsche & Becker, 1984, as cited in Watley & May, 2004) when the consequences affect the decision-maker (Laczniak & Inderrieden, 1987, as cited in Watley & May, 2004) and when the consequences affect others (Forsyth & Nye, 1990; Wittmer, 1992, as cited in Watley & May, 2004). Mencl and May (2009) (continuing an earlier study by Watley & May, 2004) discovered that an increase in the severity of consequential information, specifically on human resource management professionals, affected the responsibility the decision-maker felt towards the harmed party (as cited in Craft 2012). However, prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) posits that individuals prefer decisions framed in a more positive light as a gain rather than a loss.

Communication in ethical dilemmas is influenced by style and language. Sonenshein's (2007) findings provide an example, it was found that individuals would be inclined towards using business language rather than ethical language when raising social issues with their leaders or superiors. In the same study, when individuals raised the issue with peers the results differed. The approach in keeping calm and suppressing emotions to influence others has been suggested by other researchers (Grant, 2013; Meyerson & Scully, 1995, as cited in Chen et al., 2020). This corresponds with the literature on ethical champions, which shows that strong emotions of anger do not guarantee messaging success.

An important mental model in a learning organisation is that disagreement will be considered an opportunity to clarify rather than end a discussion. When an organisation's political systems and the information obtained through communication channels do not coincide with official information, employees may become cynical about management's desire for open communication (Smith et al., 2014). A longstanding issue in politics is the connection between ideas and actions, words and deeds (Abercrombie et al., 1980, cited in Seeck et al., 2020, p. 69). It has been noted that words and ideas constitute the practice of management (i.e., Gronn, 1983, cited in Seeck et al., 2020), implying that communication from leaders has an important role in ethical decision making.

Access to information and the duration before an ethical dilemma is opened for communication has an interesting cascading effect. Watley and May (2004) studied the practice of stock option backdating (a practice of misreporting the date of stock option grants without proper disclosure that is now considered unethical and illegal) and compared it to other notable unethical practices. Mohliver (2019, p. 315) notes that there is a variance in the period before a consensus is reached on how the particular practice is viewed and enters public discourse, 'ranging from a few weeks, as was the case with the illicit use of expense accounts among British [members of parliament] (see Graffin et al., 2013), to many years, as with international tax arrangements (see Cardoso, 2016)'. Mohliver (2019, p. 315) further states that, 'first, liminal practices or their consequences become topics of public discourse. Then regulators, stakeholders, and the media scrutinize the practice, and their views about its appropriateness are shaped and revealed over time'. The ability to perceive and engage in discourse on an ethical dilemma requires more than a single leader or ethical champion. As Mohliver (2019) states, it requires involvement across several parties to decide and discuss the legal and ethical status of a practice.

Like culture, the relationship between communication and ethical decision making is not well understood within organisational contexts. More research based on qualitative methodologies is required to extend the body of work, particularly regarding the effect of business language on ethical decision making.

2.5 Macro Context

A significant portion of the body of research on ethical dilemmas in organisations proposes that the problems experienced are related to daily personal, intrapersonal, and relationship issues in the workplace rather than strategic issues (Dukerich et al., 2000; Feldt et al., 2012, as cited in Hiekkataipale & Lämsa, 2017). In this respect, Seeck et al. (2020, p. 67) claim that the phenomenon of ideology in the field of management studies is contested and ambiguous, and manifests as 'semantic promiscuity'.

As Haase and Raufflet (2016, as cited in Seeck at al., 2020) point out, business organisations are embedded in an ideological context. Ethical dilemmas, such as a lack of governance, volatility of financial markets, and bankers' greed cannot be understood without reference to ideologies and their related values (Davies & McGoey, 2012, as cited in Haase & Raufflet, 2016). Indeed, being ignorant of the power and macro contexts can have dire consequences, as highlighted by Mastio and Dovey (2019, p. 14), who explored power dynamics in an Australian organisational setting:

> *Working with power becomes a collective responsibility; one in which attempts are made to make explicit the full range of power dynamics that manifest in any form of collective endeavour. As the case shows, failure to critically scrutinize, and manage constructively, these dynamics leads to outcomes where everyone is worse off.*

Scholars within the field of business ethics and beyond have provided many detailed analyses of ideology related to single levels; however, more clarity is required about the interplay between these interfaces (Woodbine et al., 2012, p. 211, as cited in Haase & Raufflet, 2017). As early as 1997, Collins advocated the issue of participation in decision making 'at societal, organisational, and individual levels', with his work exposing inconsistencies in the responsible management of ethical decision making (cited in Aguilera et al., 2022, p. 490).

Shils (1967, p. 66, as cited in Seeck et al., 2020) argued that 'compared with other patterns of beliefs, ideologies are relatively highly systematised or integrated around one or a few preeminent values, such as salvation, equality [and] ethnic purity'. This may be why employees cynically distance themselves from (but perpetuate) ideologies of managerialism, consumerism or neoliberalism (example studies as cited in Seeck et al., 2020, p. 62). This de-identification leads to an 'ideological transference' in which the rituals of submission to ideology are performed by surrogate objects (Fleming & Spicer, 2005). This form of surrogacy has been observed in a study related to US consumers' perceptions of global sourcing practices, where their deontological views focus on the effects on US communities and the environment rather than the poor treatment of overseas workers (Bregman et al., 2015). The researchers commented that while US consumers held deontological views, they could still accept ‘global social inequities related to the treatment of human capital’ (Bregman et al., 2015, p. 238).

National cultures have a role in ethical dilemmas. However, most research-based comparisons focus on a comparison between ‘Western’ and ‘non-Western’[4] managers and employees. This has included the differences between American and Asian cultures in protecting intellectual property rights (Husted, 2000), ethics perceptions gaps between Chinese and American students (Chang & Chen, 2017), Chinese and Japanese IT professionals (Davison et al., 2009), and the comparison of individual levels of idealism and relativism in comparing ethical judgement in South Africa, South Korea, the Middle East, and Thailand to that in America (for a summary of studies, see Chan & Lai, 2011). However, these are not the only factors at play, and there have been calls to explore differences in subjective experiences of caste and/or class manifestations. For example, the study of the 'working-class' and their experiences with dignity (Bapuji et al., 2024, p. 26). There has also been a noted general lack of indigenous focus in studies on organisational ethical issues (Salmon et al., 2023).

Recently, there has been a rise in studies ranging from shareholder influence on stakeholder perspective as it relates to 'sustainability logic' (Diebel et al., 2024, p. 292) and its manifestation in organisations' moral practices (Chuah et al., 2024; Rosca & Taylor, 2023; Shin et al., 2021 as cited in Diebel et al. 2024; Vedula et al., 2022). The extant literature highlights shareholder activism’s contributions towards improvements in corporate governance and accountability (Gillan & Starks, 2007; Guo et al., 2021 as cited in Chuah et al., 2024), enhanced disclosure of climate change risks (Flammer et al., 2021 as cited in Chuah et al., 2024), and increased awareness of social, political, and environmental issues (Baloria et al., 2019; Yao et al., 2023 as cited in Chuah, Desjardine & Henisz 2024).

[4] Such language is not preferred by myself as a researcher and perpetuates a social (notably ‘Western’) construct because countries determined as Eastern, Southern or Western do not fit neatly within geographic boundaries. At present there is no suitable replacement term without explicitly listing all the countries, cultures, and regions.

There is counter-evidence in research findings related to customer perceptions. Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012) found that customer satisfaction was weighted towards the capacity to save money rather than an organisation's ethical and environmental policies and stance (see also Ruiz-Alba, 2021).

While much research within the last three years has focused on environmental issues, the topic of shareholder values and the impact of broader macro and external factors on ethical decision making remains relatively unaddressed (Chuah et al., 2024). As De Cremer and Moore (2020, p. 382) argue, macro-level factors related to organisational ethical decision making 'is a course worth pursuing'. Research, however, should not only address the role of ‘overt’ and apprehensible power but also the role of abstract power in ethical decision making where groups acquiesce unwittingly to their own domination (Mastio & Dovey, 2019, p. 293). This form of power shapes peoples’ apprehension of the existing social order as an inevitable and natural phenomenon of life (Tilly, 1991, p. 594, as cited in Mastio & Dovey, 2019).

2.6 History of Models for Ethical Decision Making

A rich history of descriptive ethical decision making models stems from Rest's (1974, 1984, 1986, 1994) seminal four-component model. Many scholars have refined and developed this work by delving deeper into important antecedents that result in an ethical decision from an individual and/or organisational perspective. Most have originated from a theoretical basis, but some are the product of field studies. In the last decade, intuition and sensemaking have been included in these models. Much like the review of the extant research literature, the models do not address politics at the macro level or the politics of learning. However, the most recent models acknowledge reflexive practices (Zollo et al., 2017) and contemplative practices (Berryman et al., 2023). Sections 2.6.1 to 2.6.9 summarise each of the recognised models addressed in the ethical decision-making literature.

2.6.1 The Beginning: The Four-Component Ethical Decision-Making Model

Rest's (1984, 1986) four-component ethical decision-making model (Figure 2.4) drew heavily on cognitive moral development theories from Kohlberg (1969, 1971) and the research findings from Schwartz (1977). Rest's (1986) model included moral awareness (ability to interpret the morality of the situation), moral judgement (decision towards an action that is morally right), moral intent (prioritisation of moral values over other forms of values), and moral behaviour (execution and implementation of the moral intention) (Groves et al., 2008, as cited in Craft, 2013).

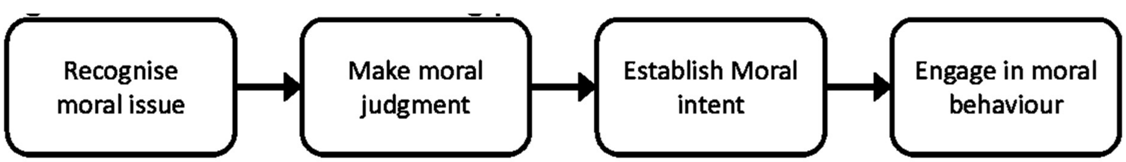

Figure 2.4 The Four-Component Ethical Decision-Making Model

Note. From 'Moral Development: Advances in Research and Theory', by J. L. Rest, 1986, Praeger.

2.6.2 Marketing-Specific: The Contingency Model

Ferrell and Gresham (1985) developed a contingency model (Figure 2.5) specific to the marketing context. They intended to clarify and synthesise the various factors in ethical and/or unethical decision making. They categorised the variables that influence employees' ethical decision making into two sets: (1) individual (e.g., knowledge, intentions, attitudes and values) and (2) organisational

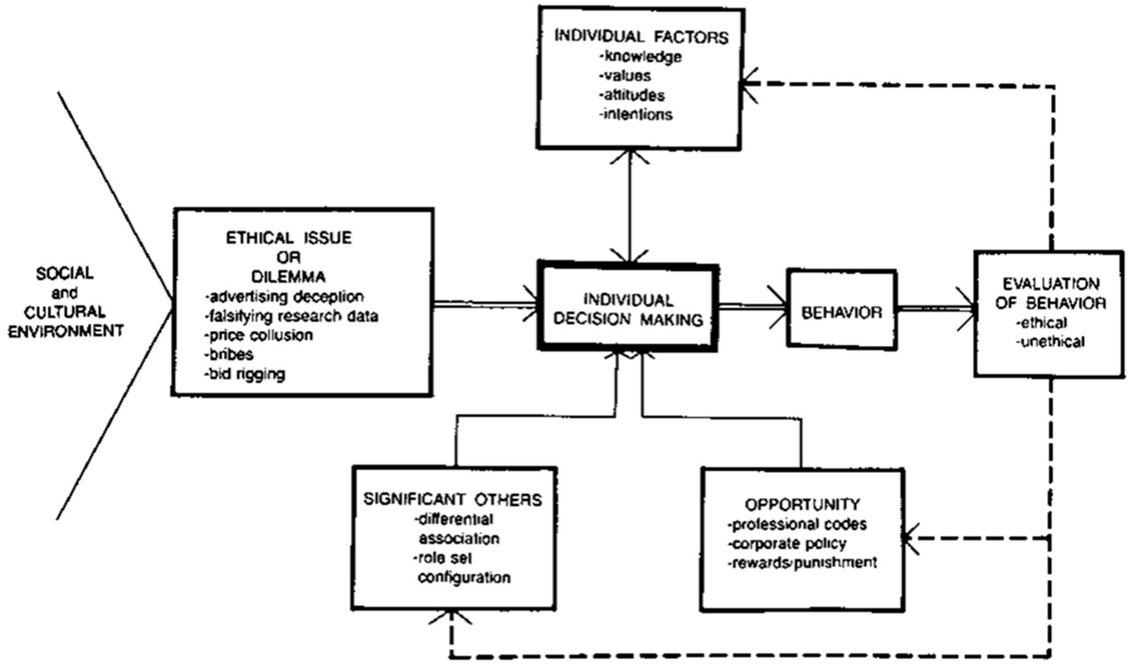

Figure 2.5 The Contingency Framework

Note. From, 'A Contingency Model of Ethical Decision Making in a Marketing Organisation', by O. C. Ferrell and L. G. Gresham, 1985, Journal of Marketing, 49(3), 87-96, p. 89 (https://doi.org/ 10.1177/002224298504900308).

2.6.3 General Theory of Marketing Ethics: The Hunt and Vitell Model

Extending on the marketing field discussion, the model created by Hunt and Vitell (1986) (Figure 2.6) started as a tool to teach marketing students ethical decision making. It garnered attention from other researchers as a model that could be used more broadly. Their first publication in 1986 was a multidimensional model to show the effect on employees' ethical decisions. It was initially construed as a causal model, but the researchers clarified in their 2006 publication that it was a process model (Hunt & Vitell, 2006, p. 151). Much like Rest's (1974, 1994) first stage of 'recognising the moral issue', the key to this model is that the individual recognises that they have an ethical situation; otherwise, it does not trigger the 'subsequent elements of the model' (Hunt & Vitell, 1986). Rather than an esoteric concept, they acknowledged and included cultural and moral philosophy as inputs to their model.

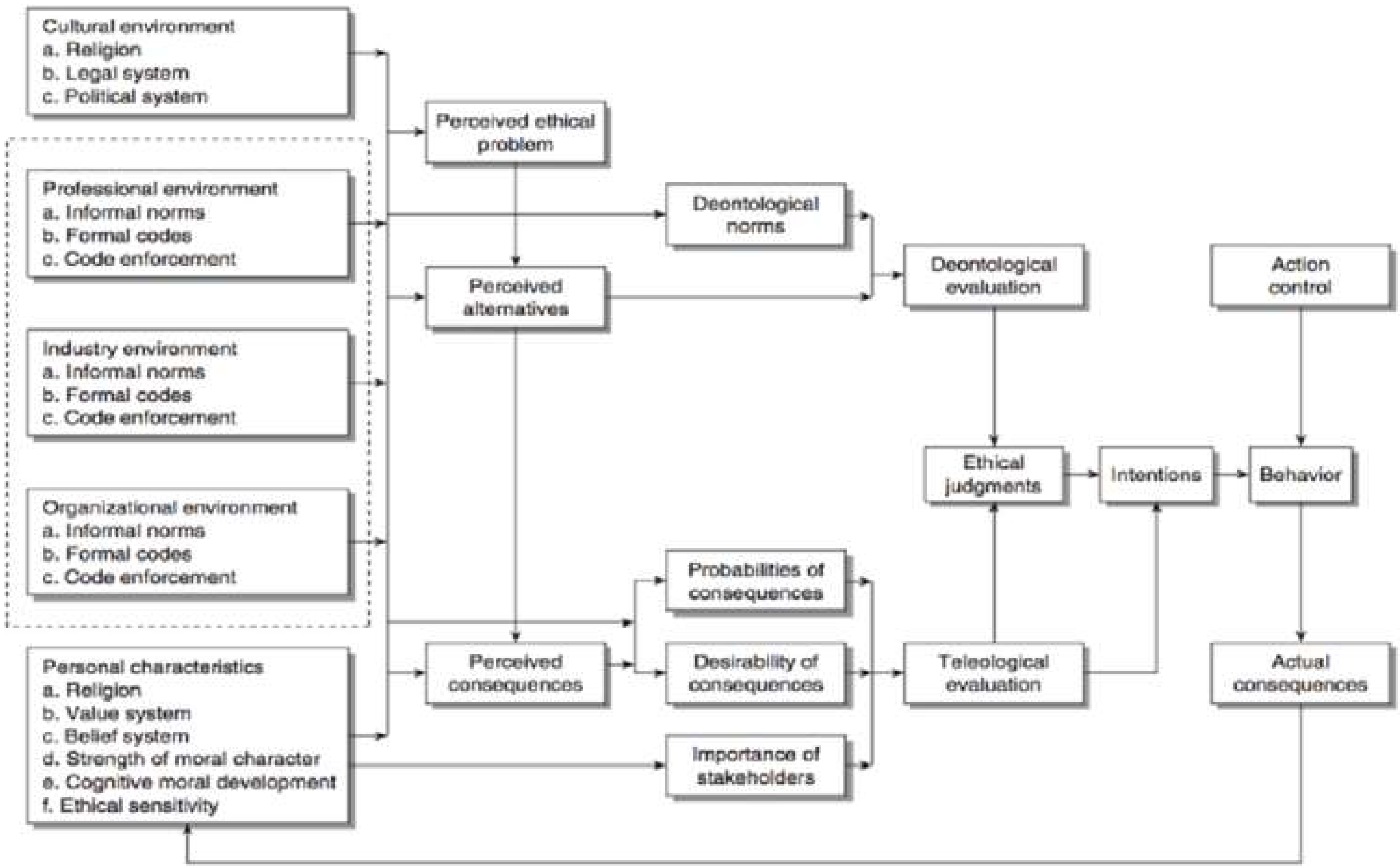

Figure 2.6: The General Theory of Marketing Ethics (the Hunt and Vitell Model)

Note. From 'A General Theory of Marketing Ethics', by S. D. Hunt and S. J. Vitell, 1986, Journal of Macromarketing, 6(1), p. 8 (https://doi.org/10.1177%2F027614678600600103).

2.6.4 The Individual is Not an Island: The Interactionist Model and the Interplay

Treviño's (1986) model of ethical decision making highlighted the context of the organisation (Figure 2.7). Specifically, the outcome of an ethical (or unethical) decision is determined by the interaction between the individual and the environment or situation (Macdougall et al., 2014). However, the model did not capture the process, namely, which individual factors accounted for an ethical outcome or the group dynamic of interactions affecting the decision.

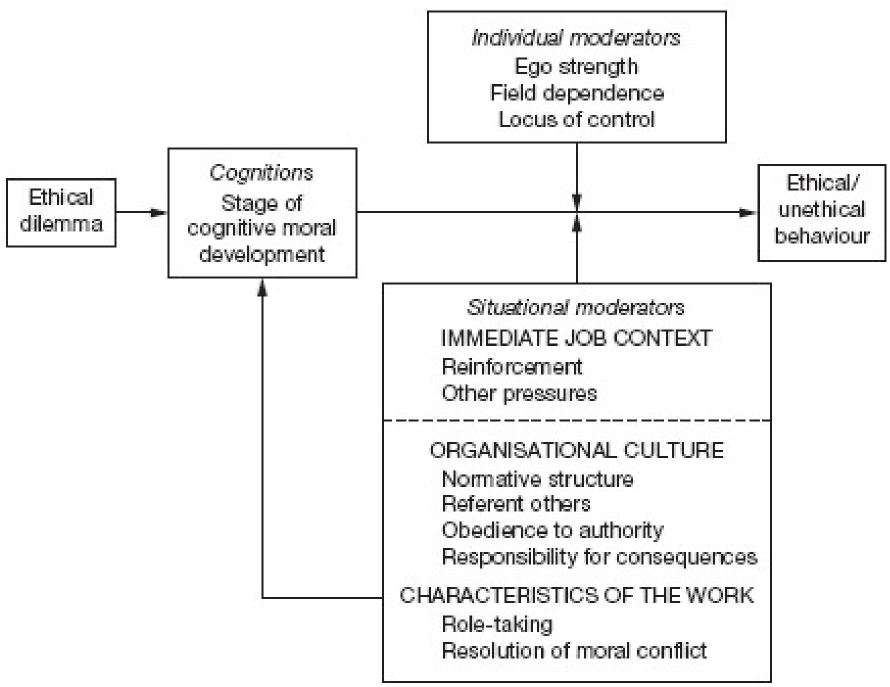

Figure 2.7 The Interactionist Model

Note. From 'Ethical Decision Making in Organizations: A Person–Situation Interactionist Model', by L. K. Treviño, 1986, Academy of Management Review, 11(3), 601–617, p. 603 (https://doi.org/10.2307/258313).

Bommer et al. (1987) extended this model by listing all the individual and environmental variables that may influence ethical decisions (Figure 2.8). Brass et al. (1998) argued that dyadic interactions seldom occur in isolation and usually involve other parties. Brass et al. (1998) proposed a 'social network model' explaining how the relationship of individuals can be influential to the ethical or unethical behaviour in an organisation. They summarised that if the relationship is strong, multiplex (i.e. where the nature of relationship between two parties is linked by more than one type of connection), and is characterised by equality in power it would provide the foundations to 'constrain unethical behaviour' (Brass et al. 1998, p. 19).

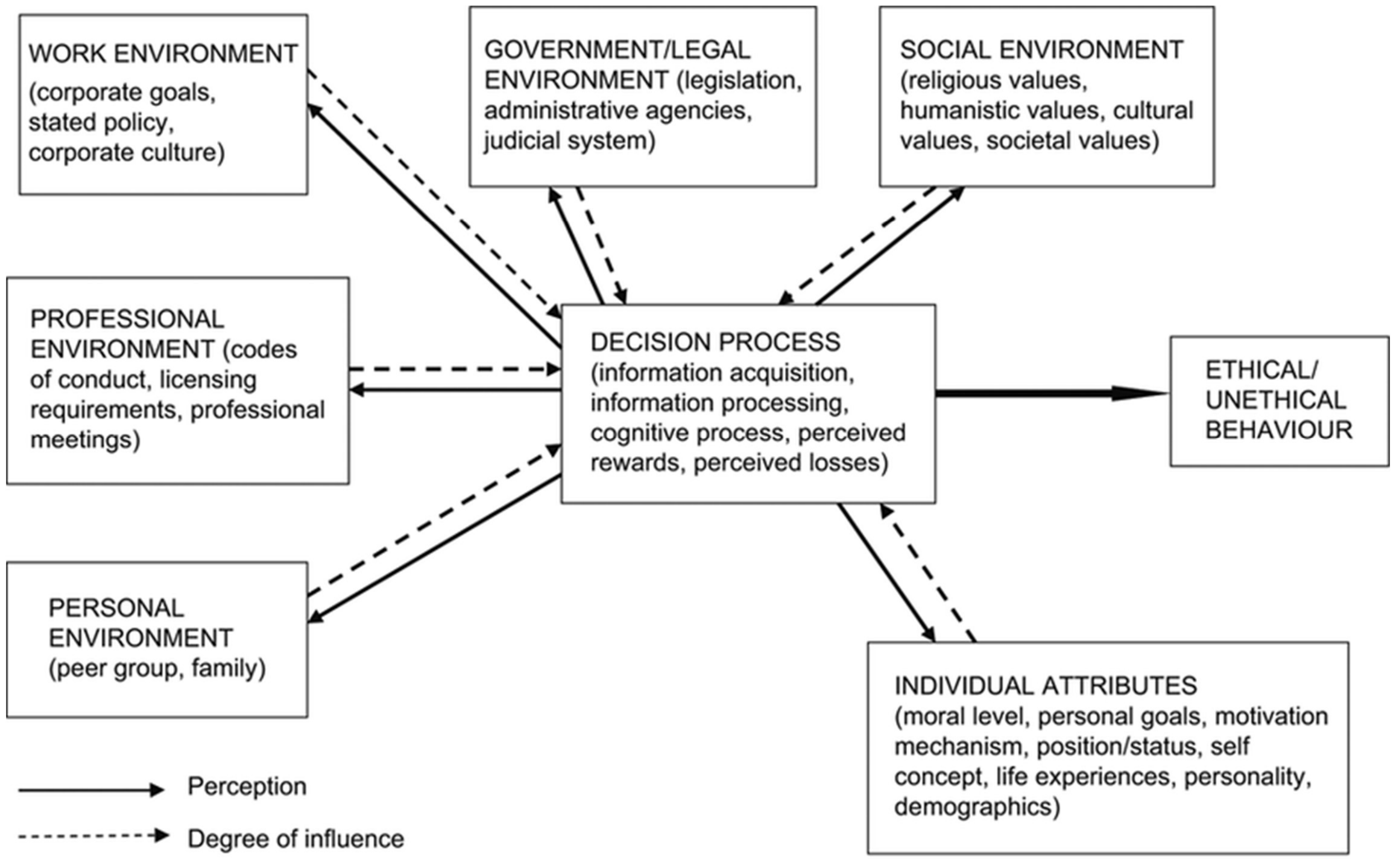

Figure 2.8 The Individual and Environmental Variables of Ethical Decision Making

Note. *From 'A Behavioral Model of Ethical and Unethical Decision Making', by M. Bommer, C. Gratto, J. Gravander, and M. Tuttle, 1987, Journal of Business Ethics, 6, 265–280, p. 266 (https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00382936).*

2.6.5 Organisational Perspective: The Integrative Ethical Behaviour Model

Stead et al. (1990) summarised the available research of the time and proposed five sets of variables for understanding ethical behaviour in organisations: (1) individual factors, (2) ethical philosophy, (3) ethical decision ideology, (4) external forces, and (5) organisational factors (Figure 2.9).

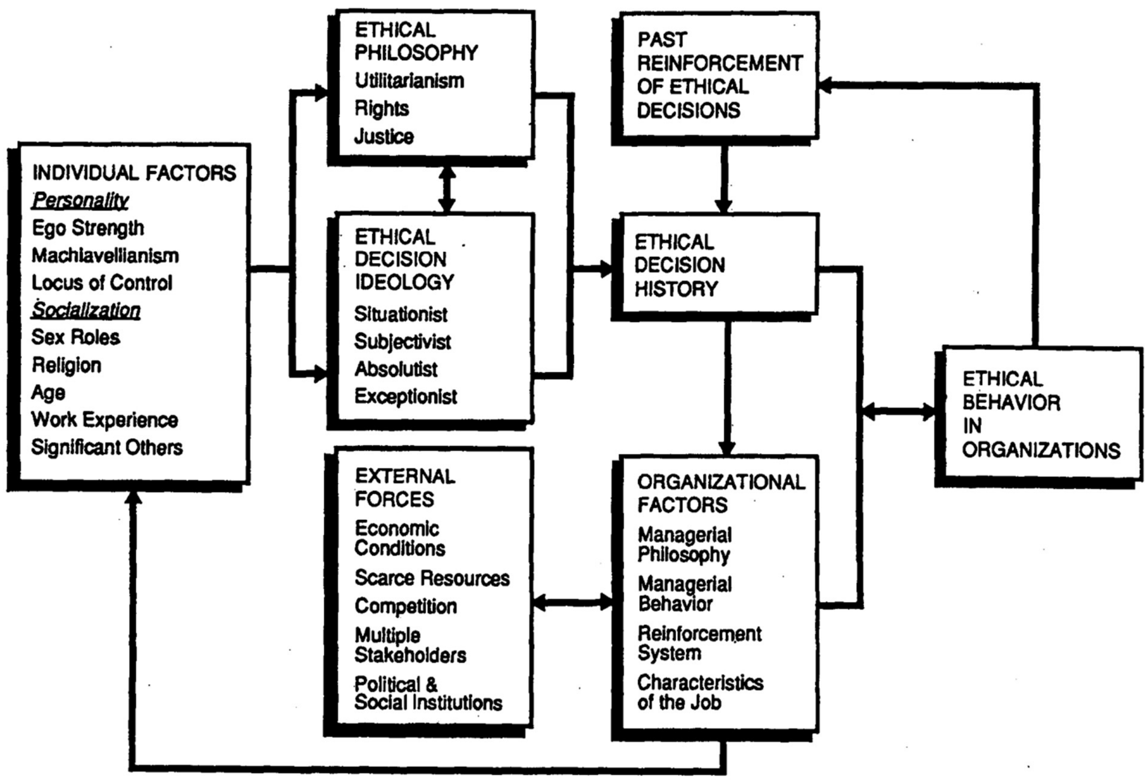

Figure 2.9 The Integrative Ethical Behaviour Model

Note. From 'An Integrative Model for Understanding and Managing Ethical Behavior in Business Organizations', by W. E. Stead, D. L. Worrell, and J. G. Stead, 1990, Journal of Business Ethics, 9, 233–242, p. 237 (https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00382649).

While the summarisation was not novel, it noted that the 'ethical choices the employee makes are reinforced over time by the organisation, they become a part of the employee's decision history which in turn can influence the ethical culture of the organisation' (Suen et al., 2007, as cited in Man-Fong Ho, 2011, p. 520). Their theoretical model highlighted that, of all variables, only the organisational variables could be controlled by corporate management.

Wittmer (2005) proposed a general ethical decision-making behavioural model incorporating and integrating most existing models (including Bommer et al., 1987; Ferrell & Gresham, 1985; Jones, 1991; Rest, 1984, 1986; Treviño, 1986).[5] While there were no new additions, refinements or expansions of the existing models in this work, this model represented ethical decision making as a mathematical operation. Ethical decision making is a function of the ethical decision processes, individual attributes, and environmental factors (Figure 2.10). However, Wittmer (2005) did not explain why this summarisation was needed and how it enhanced this body of knowledge.

Ethical decision making = *f*(ethical decision processes, individual attributes, environmental factors)

Figure 2.10 The Function of Ethical Decision Making

Note. From 'Developing a Behavioral Model for Ethical Decision Making in Organizations: Conceptual and Empirical Research', in G. Frederickson and R. Ghere (eds.), Ethics and Public Administration (2nd ed.), M.E. Sharpe, pp. 49-69.

The issue-contingent model (Figure 2.11) supplements, rather than replaces, rationalist- or individual-focused models (Jones, 1991). Jones's (1991) model can be seen as an extension on previous models (e.g., Ferrell & Gresham, 1985; Rest, 1986; Treviño, 1986) with neither the individual nor organisational variables being the sole focus. This also applies to the interactionist models. Jones (1991), however, argued that an ethical decision-making model must be 'issue-contingent' to explicitly consider the moral issue's characteristics. He described moral intensity as 'a construct that captures the extent of

[5] Note that the work of Stead et al. (1990) was not included in this integration.

issue-related moral imperative in a situation' (Jones, 1991, p. 372) and delineated six components believed to contribute to the moral intensity of a given situation: (1) the magnitude of consequences; (2) the social consensus; (3) the probability of the effect; (4) the temporal immediacy; (5) the proximity; and (6) the concentration of the effect. He claimed that moral intensity influences every component of employees' decision making.

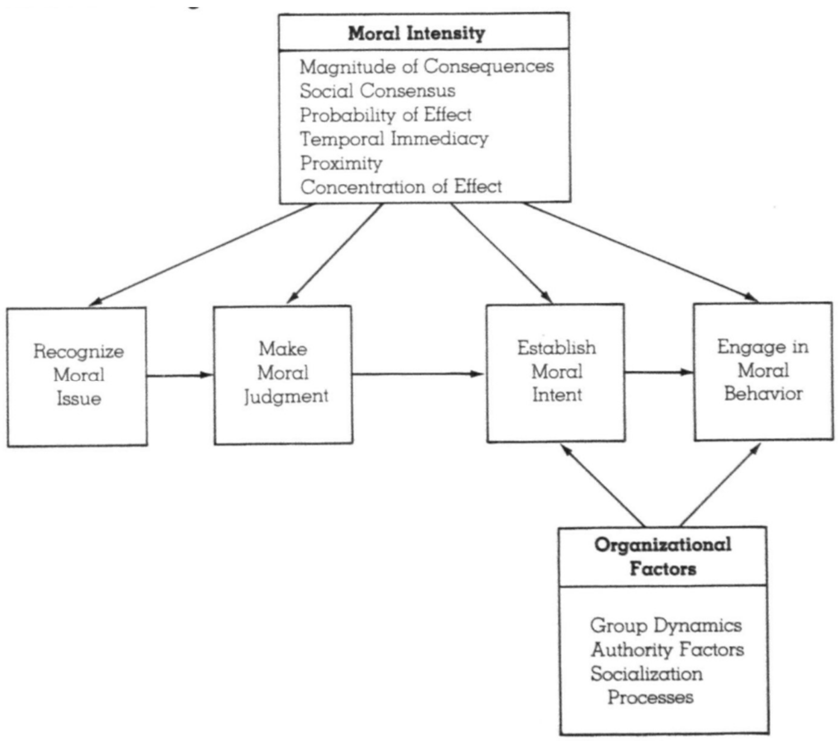

Figure 2.11 The Issue-Contingent Ethical Decision-Making Model

Note. From 'Ethical Decision Making by Individuals in Organizations: An Issue Contingent Model', by T. M. Jones, 1991, Academy of Management Review, 16(2), p. 379 (https://doi.org/10.2307/258867).

2.6.6 Acting on Principles

Tenbrunsel and Smith-Crowe (2008) established an ethics model to distinguish intentionality from acting on principles when determining the ethical outcome of a decision (Figure 2.12). Previous models partly explained why decision-makers may consciously make unethical decisions and differentiated between moral awareness and moral judgement (Tenbrunsel & Smith-Crowe, 2008, p. 586). Tenbrunsel and Smith-Crowe argued this would work if ethical decision making were a linear and additive process, which it is not. This highlighted situations where, when a decision is made, it has a different intent but the same outcome (i.e., an individual with no moral awareness makes an ethical decision).

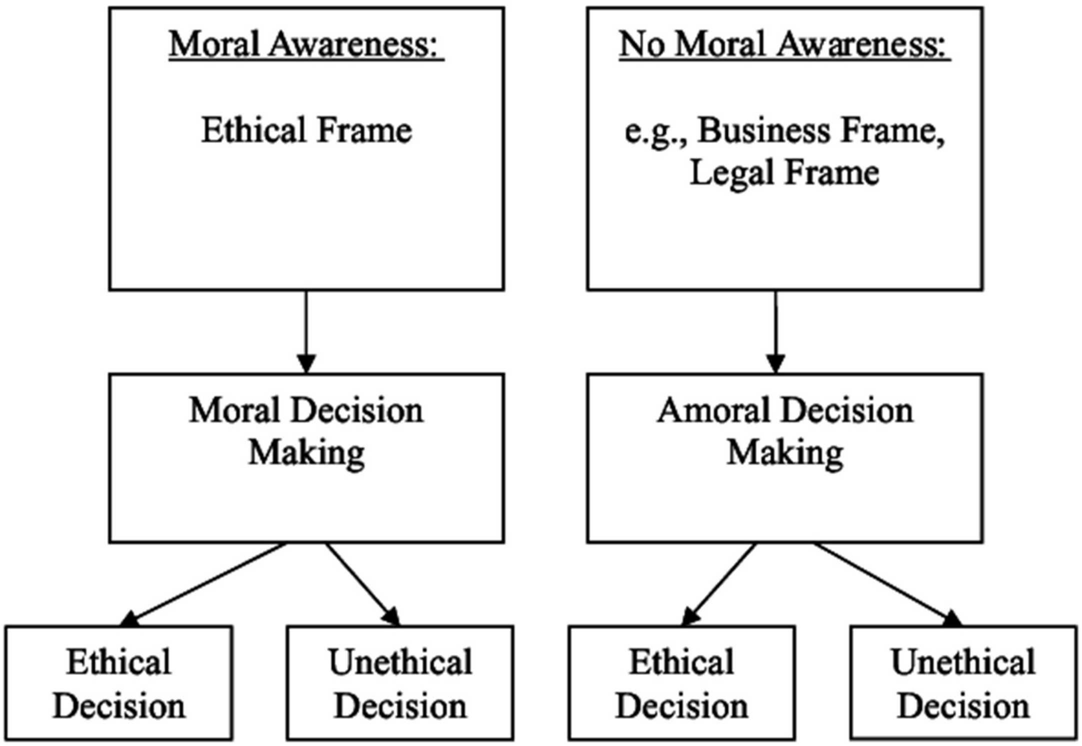

Figure 2.12 The Model of Ethical Decision Making Based on Principles and Intention

Note. From 'Ethical Decision Making: Where We've Been and Where We're Going', by A. E. Tenbrunsel and K. Smith-Crowe, 2008, Academy of Management Annals, 2(1), p. 548 (https://doi.org/10.1080/19416520802211677).

2.6.7 Introducing Sensemaking

Sonenshein (2007) suggested that research on ethical decision making needed to mimic the complexity of the real world and encourage engagement with the sensemaking processes of research participants (see also Zeni et al., 2016). In 2007, Sonenshein introduced a new ethical decision-making model called the sensemaking-intuition model

(Figure 2.13). Although sensemaking models existed, Sonenshein identified an area for improvement, especially in uncertain situations. While sensemaking was a novel introduction to this research domain, it was further extended to include subconscious processes (Haidt, 2001). However, the model did not account for the scale between individual and collective behaviours.

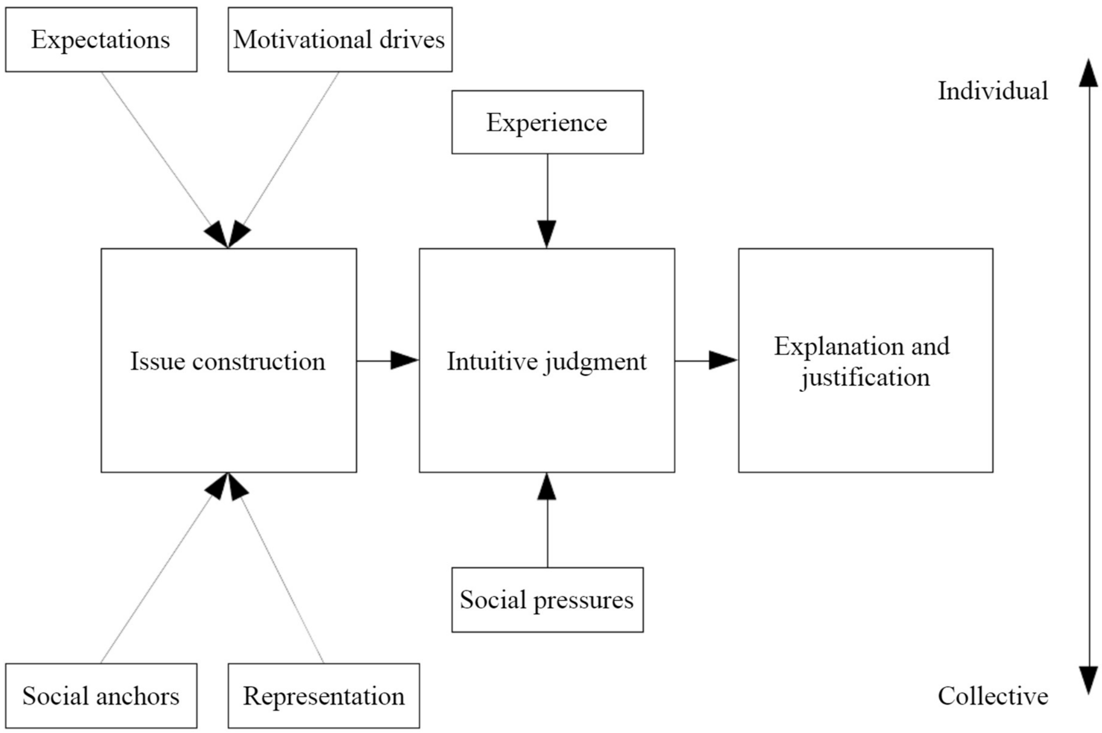

Figure 2.13 The Sensemaking-Intuition Model

Note. From 'The Role of Construction, Intuition, and Justification in Responding to Ethical Issues at Work: The Sensemaking–Intuition Model', by S. Sonenshein, 2007, Academy of Management Review, 32(4), p. 1028 (https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2007.26585677).

2.6.8 Intuition and Dual Processing

As the next step after the sensemaking-intuition model, Zeni et al. (2016) called for leaders to target bias reduction in the early stages of their sensemaking process. As Rest (1984) and Hunt and Vitell (1986) had identified in the years prior, without recognising the relevant moral or ethical issue, the process would not be enacted. Zeni et al. (2016,

p. 851) cautioned leaders to 'carefully select value systems relevant to' the situation and that 'prior values may no longer apply, and current information may be interpreted differently through a system'. The earlier calls for integrating moral intensity (Man-Fang Ho, 2009) led Zollo et al. (2017) to address this by summarising all the research thus far and including it in a dual processing model (Figure 2.14). Zollo et al. (2017) stressed how the intuition applied to moral judgements of those in decision-making positions could prevent their rational insensitivity to such ethical dilemmas. Echoing calls by Zeni et al. (2016), such reflexive thinking could enhance the ethical decision-making process and remove ethical blindness (Zollo et al., 2017).

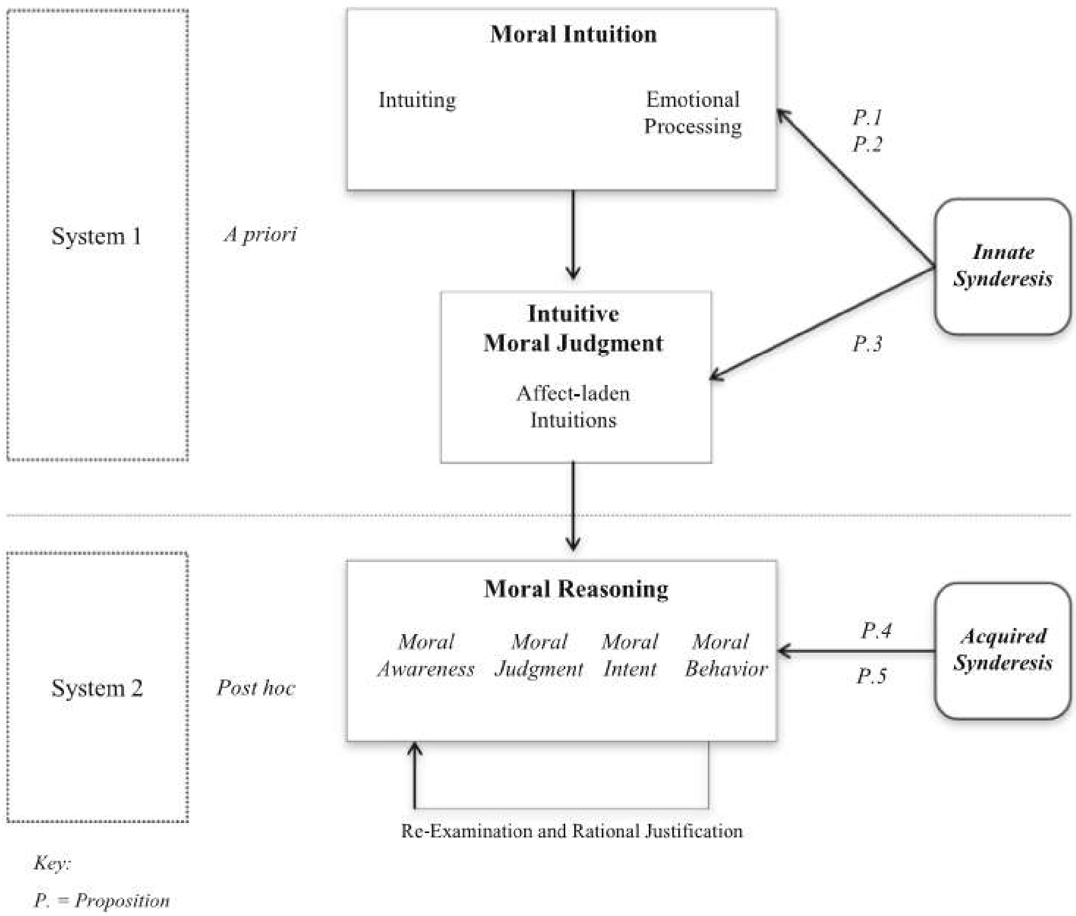

Figure 2.14 The Dual Processing Model of Ethical Decision Making

Note. From 'What Sparks Ethical Decision Making? The Interplay Between Moral Intuition and Moral Reasoning: Lessons from the Scholastic Doctrine', by L. Zollo, M. M. Pellegrini, and C. Ciappei, Journal of Business Ethics, 145, pp. 681-700 (https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-016-3221-8).

2.6.9 Moral Functioning Framework with Contemplation and Intervention

Berryman et al. (2023, p. 918) noted that contemplative practices to date had been 'divorced from their traditional ethical frameworks'. They argued that while the existing example models, such as the integrated ethical decision-making model (I-EDM) and social information processing-moral decision-making framework (SIP-MDM) factored intuitivism, dual-processing, and the dynamic nature of human psychology, there were shortcomings in assessing the impact of an intervention and its subsequent moral response(s) (Berryman et al., 2023, p. 922). The researchers adapted a multifactorial framework by inserting an intervention (a contemplative practice) (Figure 2.15). The intention was to assess the intervention's effects on moral functioning practically, which accommodates how moral responses change when they involve individuals, others, or the social context. They noted that this adaptation could provide a means of better understanding how contemplative practices could change the course of the individual through these practices.

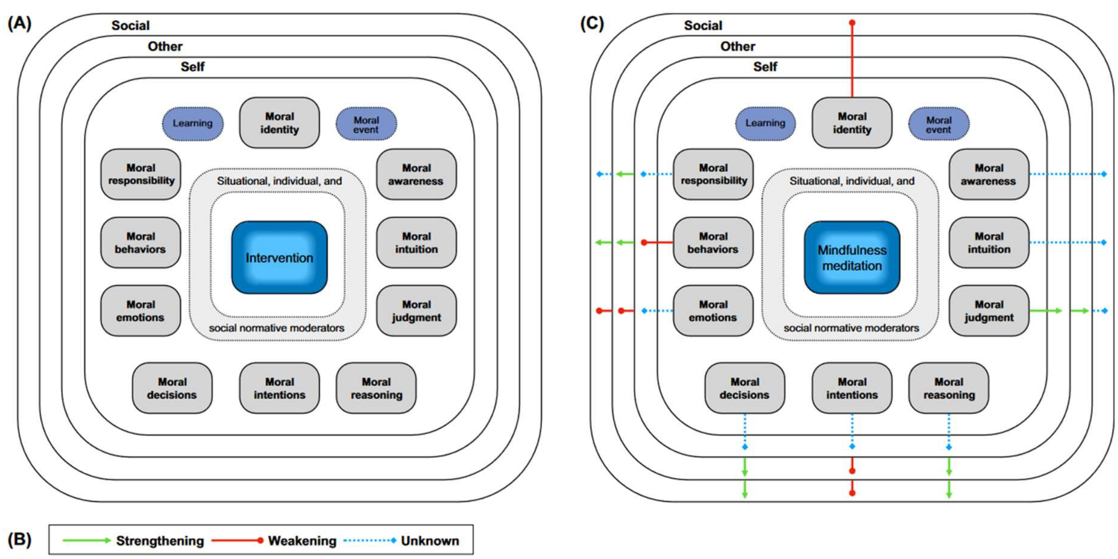

Figure 2.15 Visual Representation of the Moral Functioning Framework

Note. From Note. From 'Do Contemplative Practices Make us More Moral?', By K. Berryman, S. W. Lazar, and J. Hohwy, 2023, Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 27(10), pp. 916 - 931.

2.7 Learnings from Artificial Intelligence

With the progression and pervasiveness of advanced technology, particularly artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML),[6] it would be remiss to exclude a small portion of the available literature in this field. AI and ML are noted as important technologies that enable the deconstruction of the complexities of the mind, and societies are increasingly reliant on them for automated decision making (Noriega-Campero et al., 2019). Many managers are interested in using algorithmic systems to automate decisions (Kellogg et al., 2020). As such, ML and AI are forcing a different lens on decision making, including discussions about fairness and the allure of AI to power ethical decisions (e.g., Noriega-Campero et al., 2019; Susser, 2019).

Csaszar and Steinberger (2022, p. 26) note that organisational theory has been based on 'the premise that individual actors have hard limits to their ability to process information. AI alters that assumption by increasing those limits and thus expanding the bounds of rationality'. These authors further discuss the possible effects of AI on organisations, particularly regarding the ethical problems that are likely to arise, citing a range of recent studies (Abbas, 2020; Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014; Mohlmann et al., 2020; Kretschmer & Khashabi, 2020; Raj & Seamans, 2019; von Krogh, 2018; Wallach & Allen, 2009; all as cited in Csaszar and Steinberger, 2022, p. 26).

These tools are not, and cannot be, neutral arbiters of such choices and will work to subtly guide towards certain outcomes (Susser et al., 2018, as cited in Susser, 2019). After all, the objective of digital environments is to compute results. Therefore, the creators of choice architectures wield enormous power, which carries special ethical responsibilities (Susser, 2019). Even when those in leadership who introduced the AI decision-making systems face criticism, they may consider deflecting this criticism towards those experts in algorithms, who are supposedly able to ensure the ethical appropriateness of algorithmic systems. 'In practice, however, it is highly controversial what constitutes an expert on algorithms, or what procedures can be used to produce expert assessments of

[6] My opinion is that AI and ML are used interchangeably and that all current commercial implementations are really ML.

algorithms' (Heimstädt & Ziewitz, 2019, cited in Heimstädt et al., 2024, p. 145). Luetge (2017) considers the example of a German national ethics committee that cannot reach a consensus on what an AV (autonomous vehicle) should do when deciding whether to save its passengers or other road users. The alternative is to engage other expert groups; however, the industry may be reluctant to engage in this debate (Martinho et al., 2021). Experts from the AV industry may also feel a duty to protect their customers, which could explain why they have a stronger preference to save passengers compared to the general population (Zhu et al., 2022).

Often, these technologies involve the concept of a trade-off – in some cases, between perceived accuracy and 'fairness' (Dwork et al., 2012). The approach thus far to achieve fairness has been to use less distinct data (i.e., removing names and attributes that define groups or individuals). In practical terms, a technique that is noted to achieve the best trade-off between accuracy and fairness (i.e., using less distinct data) is undergoing training for these models. It is quite prophetic that the research of humans has also advised that similar early interventions in learning and reflection may yield better results (e.g., Zeni et al., 2016).

While there is enormous potential benefit in applying AI, unfortunately, there is a long history of using scientifically unsubstantiated techniques to affect people's lives and liberties (Giattino et al., 2019). This is already being noted in accounts of the ethics of AI (e.g., Coecklbergh, 2019; Dignum, 2019; Muller, 2020, as cited in Stahl, 2021). Mainstream media has labelled such technology as racist, sexist, and bigoted. If one were not exposed to this, one would only need to review the case studies as part of the European Union's project Shaping the Ethical Dimensions of Smart Information Systems: A European Perspective (SHERPA) that 'summarised' 39 significant issues of such technology (Stahl, 2021).

Recently, there has been a push for ethical AI, and many organisations and institutes have provided frameworks or principles for this approach. Numerous meta-analysis studies, including one by Harvard (Fjeld et al., 2020), have identified the principles of transparent and ethical AI from 36 key frameworks. This push has been mirrored in academia, with one study showing that since 2015, there has been an exponential increase in articles focusing on transparent, fair, and ethical AI (Zhang et al., 2021). Indeed, this same study noted that the field is of such interest that it is being cited across journals on topics of business and ethics, not just information systems – this complex, interrelated, and growing co-citation network is illustrated in Figure 2.16. This network diagram represents the co-citations of papers on ethics in artificial intelligence in various journals; the colour coding denotes logical clusters by discipline, and each node represents a journal.

What is promising is the acknowledgement of areas of anthropology, sociology, law, psychology, and political science being used to inform computational ethics (Awad et al., 2022). 'Ethics is shaped by customs, social constructs, institutions, organizations, and recorded cultural knowledge and history' (Awad et al., 2022, p. 399). There have even been demonstrations that AI systems can satisfy a democratic objective (Koster et al., 2022), teach us about machine minds, and shed light on their ethical decision making (Dillion et al., 2023). However, those researchers whose voices are likely to dominate the domain of computational ethics are categorised as WEIRD (Western, educated, industrialised, rich, democratic), which means extra care is needed to ensure diverse representation reflective of the global population (Awad et al., 2022).

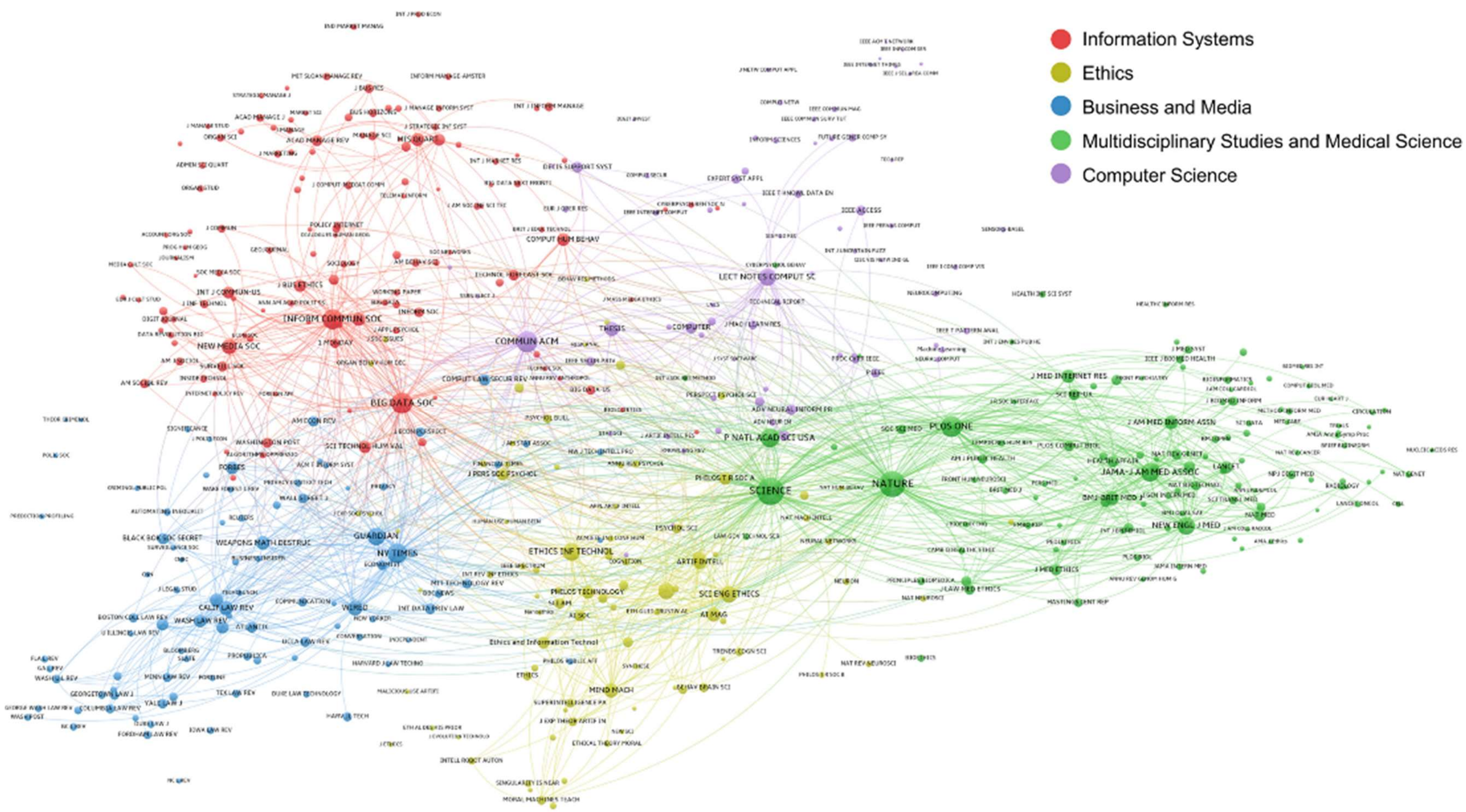

Figure 2.16 Co-Citation Network for Journals Cited by Research Articles on Artificial Intelligence Ethics

Note. From 'Ethics and Privacy of Artificial Intelligence: Understandings from Bibliometrics', by Y. Zhang, M. Wu, G. YijunTian, G. Zhang, and J. Lu, 2021, Knowledge-Based Systems, 222, p. 18.

2.8 What Is Still Not Understood About Ethical Decision Making

O'Fallon and Butterfield (2005) argued for an increased concentration towards empirical research as it pertains to the topic of ethical decision making, moving beyond the theory that is common and familiar to social sciences established during the 1980s and 1990s, such as Rest (1974, 1984, 1986, 1994) and Jones (1991). As one literature review of ethical decision making declared, the weakness in theory generation could be researchers' reluctance to move beyond the established theories (Craft 2013, p. 254). However, this could be quite the challenge, with the call to engage in 'the difficult and frustrating work of breaking down old assumptions, building new theories, and utilizing new technologies' (Tenbrunsel & Smith-Crowe, 2008, p. 593).

Past literature reviews and the existing ethical decision-making models have emphasised the need to further explore their political nature and individual and situational dynamics (O'Fallon & Butterfield, 2005; Treviño, 1986). Structuration theory (Giddens, 1976, 1979, 1984) may be the lens for viewing the dynamic nature of ethical decision making between the relationship of individuals, structures, and environments (Yuthas et al., 2004). This also has a foundation in the deep and rich body of literature on the ontology of learning (Huber, 1991). However, learning is also mostly absent from current ethics models. Den Hartog (2015, p. 427) noted that:

> *Much of the current [ethical leadership] work is cross-sectional field work, leaving us with too little knowledge to date on how the process unfolds over time. In short, a within-person examination into ethical leadership behaviours can provide unique insights that have not been identified with previous between-person investigations.*

This has already been suggested, with calls for future research to examine the relationship between factors related to the individual, organisation and moral intensity, with employees' ethical behaviour (Man-Fong Ho, 2011).

A guest editorial for the Journal of Information, Technology and People highlights that the existing information systems literature shows that the relationship between IS researchers and practitioners is largely disconnected (Gill & Bhattacherjee, 2009; Moody, 2000;

Rosemann & Vessey, 2008 as cited in Dennehy et al., 2021 p. 1541), with both communities contributing to this divide (Dennehy et al., 2021). To remedy this, the editors recommend that a relationship between researchers and practitioners be orchestrated, which could foster ethical design and contributions towards knowledge and practice (Dennehy et al., 2021, p. 1546).

The existing studies are mostly survey- or simulation-based, focus on the US, and address participant samples from universities (typically from a Master of Business Administration program). Very few ethnographic studies exist, with the most recent being immersed in setting the price of fair-trade coffee (Reinecke & Ansari, 2015). A perusal of any of the major organisational studies/management journals illustrates that not only is qualitative research in general significantly underrepresented, but those pieces of qualitative research that are published are predominantly foundational in orientation (Amis & Silk, 2008; Denison, 1996; Gephart et al. 2004; Moore et al., 2012). In summary, themes of politics and learning are mostly absent from the current literature, and, therefore, given the social environment of decision making, it was vital to explore these as part of this PhD research. This ultimately led to the research addressing this domain through an ethnographic methodology and identifying gaps related to the social nature of organisations. Thus, the research question is:

What is the nature of the social dynamics that manifest in attempts to ensure ethical decision making within a defined corporate context?

2.9 Chapter Summary

Although ethical decision making is evidently an important topic, much of the extant research on the phenomenon of ethical decision making in organisations has adopted a positivist methodology, with few studies exploring the topic in a defined and embedded organisational setting.

In 2019, as part of a special issue of Personnel Psychology, submissions were sought regarding ethical decision making. The editors noted that only 'four articles' were chosen

(Mitchell et al., 2020, p. 6). While the low acceptance rate (Mitchell et al., 2020) is consistent with other research area submissions to Personnel Psychology, it indicates that a topic with such import is experiencing a slow pace in generating theory, findings, and research progress within the organisational context.

Research to date has predominantly been based in the USA, with studies generally using a survey-based approach to examine ethical decision making. To date, only 54 papers, 13% of all papers in the area, can be attributed to multi-factor studies, and there remains a scarcity of qualitative studies within an organisational setting. The greatest gaps exist in topics covering rewards/punishments, organisational learning, politics, and macro factors. These gaps motivated the research to explore the social dynamics of ethical decision making in an interpretivist methodology (see Chapter 3) to uncover 'what was happening' in an Australian business context.

Chapter 3: Methodology Proposition, Selection, and Approach

3.1 Chapter Overview

> *The long journey we are embarking on arises from an awareness that we inject a host of assumptions at every part of our research – in our observing, our interpreting, our reporting, and everything else we do as researchers. These are assumptions about human knowledge and assumptions about realities encountered in our human world. Such assumptions shape the meaning of research questions, the purposiveness of research methodologies, and the interpretability of research findings. Without unpacking these assumptions and clarifying them, no one (including ourselves) can divine what our research has been or what it is now saying (Crotty, 1998, p.17).*

Michael J Crotty (1998) challenged the relevance of the ontological and epistemological assumptions embedded in the positivist research paradigm and associated research methods to social research. He developed an approach to social research that identified the assumptions related to the nature of the research question, the research context, and the knowledge sought as a foundation for choosing an appropriate research methodology. By taking the following steps (the order is of import as Crotty suggested each of these represents a clear decision point for the research design process), this approach was used as a guide in determining the design of the research:

- Identifying the epistemological and ontological assumptions
- Identifying the relevant theoretical paradigm
- Establishing the methodology
- Defining the research methods compatible with the methodology

This chapter proceeds as follows. Section 3.2 discusses the ethics associated with this research, and Section 3.3 explicates the reasons for the research design and the selection of the research methodology. These choices are based on identifying the philosophical assumptions related to the domain of organisational ethical decision making. As the literature review (see Sections 2.5, 2.8, and 2.9) ascertained, significant gaps exist in the extant literature regarding our understanding of this domain due to the scarcity of studies embedded in an organisational setting. Specifically, knowledge of this phenomenon has been predominantly focused on positivist ontological and epistemological assumptions. Section 3.4 details how this methodology was conducted in practice to address the research question. It includes the specifics regarding the research methods utilised in the collection of appropriate data, as well as their analysis and interpretation. Section 3.5 provides a reflection on my reflexivity and positionality as a researcher, and Section 3.6 discusses data management throughout the research process. Finally, Section 3.7 concludes with a chapter summary.

3.2 Ethical Research

Individual and organisational informed consent was provided, as was approval from UTS' Human Research Ethics Committee, project number UTS HREC ETH19-4059. The nature of the research was not to focus on individuals but rather on the dynamic of the roles which these individuals occupy as it pertained to the research question. It is important to note that, where possible, ethical research practices have been maintained and embedded as part of the research methodology. This extends beyond compliance with standards and the HREC and is 'complemented by a consideration of core ethical issues and a transparent discussion of how decisions were made in response to those issues. Doing so reveals those decisions as tailor-made for the case at hand and not imposed upon the case without regard for its specificities' (Greenwood, 2016, as cited in Izlam & Greenwood, 2022, p. 3). An example of this, was decisions of participation in the study that may have had an element of discomfort and awkwardness due to pre-existing professional relationships with me. To mitigate this, the process of consent was managed independently with the implementation of an arm's length recruitment strategy minimising potential ethical conflict.

At each step of the research, individuals were reminded that their involvement, or even decision not to participate or to withdraw part way through the study, would have no impact to on their job security or be considered in their career progression in their current workplace. As some participants did have a direct reporting line into me, effort was made that they understood my preference for knowledge generation with an explicit assertion that the research would be prioritised over The Organisation's ambitions during the study.

This research utilises institutional ethnography, a 'method of inquiry' (Smith, 2005) describing how an individual experience interfaces with an organisation (McCoy, 2006). The research is transparent regarding every process and decision made, including the selection of articles for eligibility, approach to data analysis, and tailored research design.

Minimisation of sensitive information being divulged and being responsible regarding the use of data and the subjects was paramount. However, the priority was not to be 'careful while writing up' (Van Maanen, 1983, p. 277) the research, in that the outcomes would be ambiguous and fraught with misinterpretations, but rather to ensure it enriched the existing body of work for future practical use in organisations.

The process of seeking permission for tables, graphs, and images from other texts aligns with APA's 7th Edition guidance. Where this has been missed, it is an unintentional oversight.

3.3 Research Paradigm and Methodological Selection

3.3.1 Determining the Epistemological and Ontological Assumptions

Burrell and Morgan (1979, p. 22) argue that 'all theories of organisation are based upon a philosophy of science and a theory of society'. The underlying philosophical assumptions that manifest in theories reflect the perceived nature of the research domain and the knowledge sought through the research (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 24). Identifying these assumptions locates the research within a distinct paradigm; as Howe (1987, p. 22) comments, paradigms are constituted by the 'assumptions, theories, beliefs, values and methods that make up a particular and preferred view of the work'. Burrell and Morgan (1979, p. 22) identify four paradigms in which social research can be located and argue that these paradigms are divided across two axes: the subjective versus objective axis and the radical change versus regulation axis (highlighted by the orange lines in Figure 3.1).

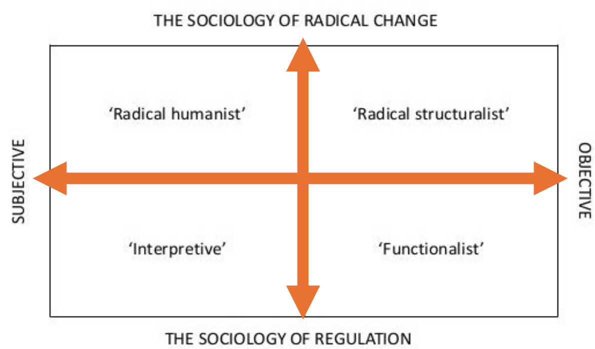

Figure 3.1 Sociological Paradigms

Note. From 'Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis' by G. Burrell and G. Morgan, 1979, p. 22, Ashgate Publishing.

The axis across the subjective/objective dimension markedly differentiates philosophical assumptions on the ontological and epistemological nature of the research domain (McGregor, 2019). In this respect, Crotty (1998, p. 10) views ontology as 'what is' and epistemology as 'what it means to know'.

To determine the specific epistemological assumptions underpinning this research's philosophy and theory, I had to first understand the ontological basis of the research context. I concluded that organisational decision making is a socially constructed and continuously re-constructed phenomenon with no objective basis and, thus, its ontology is *nominalist* (see Figure 3.2 from Burrell and Morgan's (1979) explanation of the subjective-objective dimension axis). Nominalism, unlike realism, does not exist external to individual consciousness; in fact, it is a direct product of individual consciousness (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 4). In the absence of human minds, 'organisational decision making' would not exist. The phenomenon exists only as a mental concept with names/labels for language convenience.

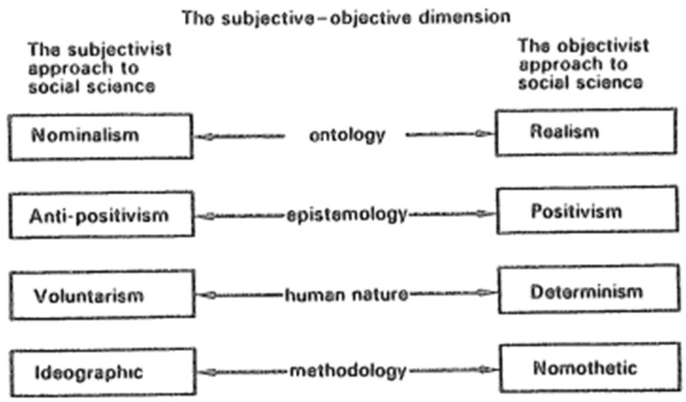

Figure 3.2 The Subjective-Objective Dimension Axis

Note. From 'Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis' by G. Burrell and G. Morgan, 1979, p. 3, Ashgate Publishing

Furthermore, the knowledge sought in researching 'organisational decision making' is subjective and inter-subjective in nature. It does not exist independently or objectively but is socially constructed through social interaction and verbal discourse (Piaget, 1966) and dependent on social perception and interpretation. The epistemology of the research data in alignment with the nominalist ontology is thus *subjectivist* (note that, as with several other terms used by Burrell and Morgan (1979), the term 'anti-positivism' is outdated; it has been replaced by the term 'subjectivism').

3.3.2 Identifying the Relevant Theoretical Paradigm

The other axis used by Burrell and Morgan (1979) separates the sociology of radical change (transformation) from the sociology of regulation (order). 'Regulation' assumes a research environment that is 'stable, cohesive and possibly with an underlying harmony' (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 18), where researchers attempt 'simply to understand the social world as it is' (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 28). 'Radical change' refers to the assumption that the reality of the research context is a politically constructed one characterised by active intervention and transformation (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 32).

The intention of this research is to understand the research context as it relates to ethical decision making in a single organisation without attempting to transform or alter this context. Acknowledging the socially constructed nature of the organisation, the research attempted to understand the social dynamics that impact decision making within this context. Thus, in assuming a subjectivist epistemology and a nominalist ontology, and with the intention to understand the research domain as it is rather than attempt to transform it, the research is located in the *interpretivist* paradigm. Interpretivism is what Burrell and Morgan (1979) refer to as a direct product of German idealism, incorporating Max Weber's concept of 'verstehen' – in German, meaning 'to understand' – in this case from the perspective of those involved without attempting to predict or control the phenomenon.

3.3.3 Establishing the Methodology

Thus, given the research question "What is the nature of the social dynamics that manifest in attempts to ensure ethical decision making within a defined corporate context?", ethnography was adopted as the most appropriate research methodology. Through such a research methodology, this study intended to identify assumptions (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2011) and develop theories to explain decision making practices in the socially constructed reality of an organisation. Watson (2012, p. 16) notes that ethnography is not just a methodology but a genre of 'social science writing that draws upon the writer's close observation of and involvement with people in a particular social setting and relates the words spoken and the practices observed or experienced to the overall cultural framework within which they occurred'. In this respect, the research leverages the 'everyday ethnography' Watson (2012) alludes to by incorporating the daily insights gained through my work role.

3.3.4 Defining the Research Methods that are Compatible with the Research Methodology

The ethos of ethnography, for the purposes of this study was founded in the techniques prescribed in the *Ethnographer's Toolkit* (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999). While ethnographic methods and approaches date back decades earlier, the techniques within the collection of LeCompte and Schensul were leveraged for the purposes of data collection, interpretation, analysis, and synthesis in this study. This enabled me (a relative 'novice') to draw on a guided method in leading this ethnographic study.

The intention of this research is to observe and interact with the actions of design teams in the delivery of a digital product, as these actions pertain to the responsible use of data. As highlighted in Chapter 4, I had a full-time role within the organisation (henceforth referred to as The Organisation) and was conducting the PhD in a part-time capacity with the extended function of being an 'insider researcher'. This term of insider researcher went beyond only having direct interaction with the participants of the study, or what has been referred to as an 'inquiry on the inside' (i.e. Evered & Louis 1981, & Louis & Bartunek 1992), as it included my professional role within The Organisation. This is similar in nature to that of Maxine Simmons' insights of using ethnography in nursing and having both a role as senior manager while being ethnographer for the same organisation (Simmons 2007) and Brown's reference to 'insider insider' police researchers who are both police officers and researchers (Brown 1996).

The research methods included interviews, observations, participant experiences, and access to relevant data (i.e., annual reports, project artefacts) associated with the field of The Organisation. Data synthesis and analysis follow the methods advocated by LeCompte and Schensul (1999) and Gioia et al. (2012). These methods are supported by triangulation (see Section 3.4) and multi-layered by multi-layered reflexivity and triangulation (i.e., triangulation across data, researchers, and theory as prescribed by Denzin 2017) (see Section 3.5).

3.4 Research in Practice – Data Collection, Interviews, and Analysis

3.4.1 Collection of Data

Data were collected over a period of 18 months (time was bounded till a point of data saturation had occurred). This enabled the capture of data related to the evolution of decision-making processes and the role of social dynamics therein. As an 'insider' researcher, my professional role enabled the participative observation required for collecting this data, as the process aligned with The Organisation's Agile Product Delivery Cycles. An Agile Cycle, labelled by The Organisation as a 'Commit', refers to a body of work that defines a team's activities and outcomes over a three-month period. Alignment of the research to The Organisation's Agile process provided the equivalent of a 'real-time' data feed.

The Agile cycles had key processes or rituals that could be leveraged as 'markers' in the alignment of the research (see Figure 3.3). The key 'markers' comprised of three key rituals: *Sprint Planning and Stand-Ups*, which detailed what is to be worked upon and the requisite team interactions; the *Sprint Review*, which detailed the learnings of the team as these related to the previous work; and the *Sprint Retrospective*, which closed the Cycle and allowed for further reflection on the performance of the team. Each Agile cycle acted as a single 'spiral' of research in which the data was interpreted and reflected upon. While new data was collected at each spiral, each subsequent period would perform the process with cumulated data rather than just the net new data collected.

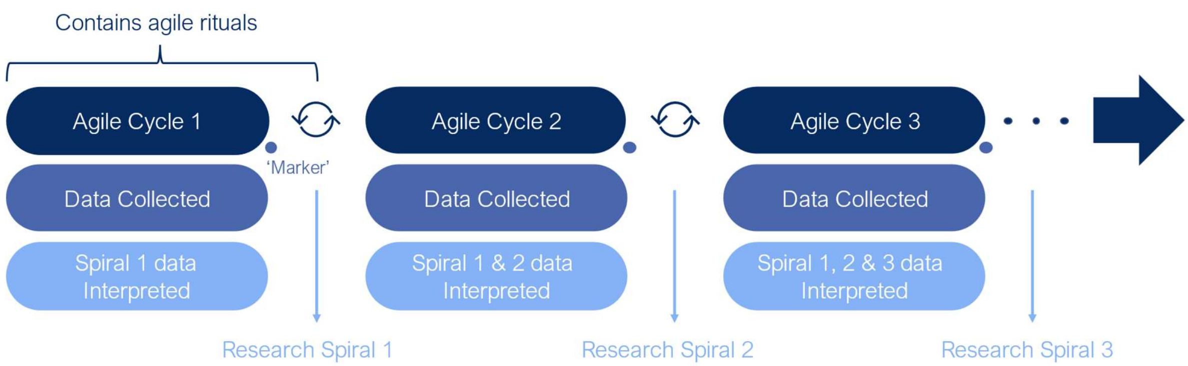

Figure 3.3 Illustrative Agile Cycle and research Spiral Used

Note. Created by the PhD author

Four key types of source data were collected:

- *Observational field notes* in the form of a 'logbook' were maintained in a physical notebook and transcribed weekly to a text document stored in a UTS Teams folder, which only my supervisors and I could access. The resulting digital document had 42 pages worth of field notes.
- *19 Structured interviews* of 19.5 *hours of content*, with each interview consisting of raw audio (MP3) data combined with video footage (MP4) (i.e., using the Microsoft Teams recording function) that was transcribed in rich text format. 409 pages of transcript were collected
- *Reflexive journal entries* over each three-month cycle.
- *Organisational documentation*, including data from publicly available annual reports (PDFs), any known risk data (CSV), and written retrospectives as part of the Agile process (i.e., extracts from Jira).

3.4.2 Participants, Briefing, and Consent

Participants in the study were members of The Product team and those whose decisions impacted their work. Members provided consent for the entire study duration and represented a group that could be compared with existing research (based on the logistical, definitional, and conceptual considerations in ethnographic research provided by LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). The number of participants was not the main consideration rather, it was the understanding whether I (as the researcher) could gain saturation of insight on this ethical decision-making phenomenon within The Organisation. A few of the selected participants had a direct reporting line into me in a professional capacity, not just in terms of organisational priority but also their individual performance objectives that included appraisals, promotions and salary conversations.

Participants were invited to a briefing session, during which time was provided for an open 'Question and Answer' session (see Figure 3.4). Individuals experiencing discomfort in raising questions or concerns in the session were encouraged to direct their queries to either myself in my researcher capacity or to my supervisors. This session included understanding the nature of ethnography, clarifying the research question, their expected involvement, and how any key ethical concerns would be addressed. All questions and responses were documented and summarised in an email to all participants to use as input for deliberation before providing their consent.

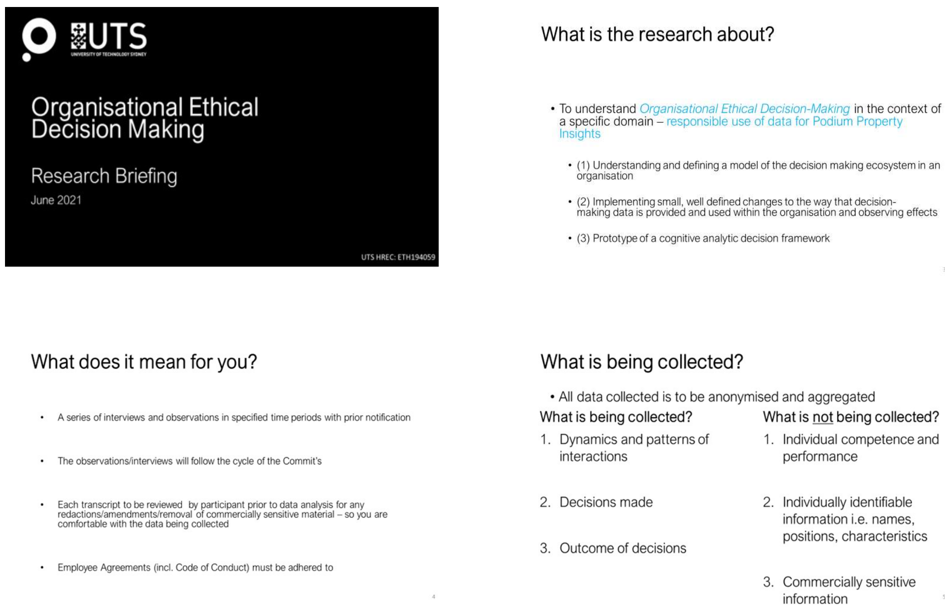

Figure 3.4 Excerpt of Presentation Briefing to Interview Participants

Note. Created by the PhD author

All participants were made aware of the general selection criteria during this briefing. No individual or role selected for an interview was named or identified to the wider group. Notifications regarding participation in the study were provided using staff emails by an independent third party (who also served the function of confirming participation). This independent third party was an executive assistant in the Digital Business unit who knew all the individuals personally. Consent for interviews and observation were kept separate but followed the same process. This ensured explicit consent was sought for each type of interaction and form of data collection. Figure 3.5 provides an example consent form.

UTS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (THIRD-PARTY OBSERVATIONS)
IS ETHICAL DECISION MAKING MORE ORGANIC THAN WE THINK AND ETH194059

WHO IS DOING THE RESEARCH?
My name is Dorotea Baljevic and I am a student at UTS and researcher for this project. My supervisor and Principal Investigator is Dr. Julia Prior

WHAT IS THIS RESEARCH ABOUT?
This research is to find out about how organisations approach ethical decision making.

FUNDING
No funding for this project has been received.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME?

You will likely have minimal involvement in the research. This research is focused on the experiences of your role within the product team being observed but some data will be collected based on the interactions in and around the work place. Here, you are encouraged to interact normally during the observational period while data is being collected. If you do interact with the observed team you will not be identified by name, role, and will remain anonymous.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
IS ETHICAL DECISION MAKING MORE ORGANIC THAN WE THINK AND ETH194059

WHO IS DOING THE RESEARCH?
My name is Dorotea Baljevic and I am a student at UTS. My supervisor is Dr. Julia Prior

WHAT IS THIS RESEARCH ABOUT?
This research is to find out about how organisations approach ethical decision making

FUNDING
No funding for this project has been received.

WHY HAVE I BEEN ASKED?
You have been invited to participate in this study because of your suitable expertise and applicability to the research domain.

IF I SAY YES, WHAT WILL IT INVOLVE?
If you decide to participate, I will invite you to
- participate in 1-hour (or 1.5-hour) semi-structured interviews that will be audio recorded and transcribed every two months
- let me observe you as you work over the period of one year

Figure 3.5 Excerpt of Participant observation and interview consent forms

Note. Created by the PhD author

During participation invitation, observations and interviews individuals were reminded that I was not an employee or leader in the organisation while in the capacity as a researcher. While it was made clear in the consent forms, it was further reiterated that information collected and synthesised for the study was only for the purposes of the research and would not have a bearing on their individual performance reviews. Any participant who had any concerns this was not the case, or general worries about the research, was offered to follow internal HR processes or to escalate to my supervisors or university (appropriate contact details were provided). No concerns or issues were raised in this regard before, during or after the study.

While every attempt was made to identify and address these types of risks, the nature of the insider researcher role is defined by the complicated relationship between the researcher, participants and the organisational context. It was still a position which could have been perceived as compromising and the needs of the organisation over the research would be ‘favoured’. This issue is addressed further in section 3.5 Reflexivity, Risk and Insider Research.

The research focuses on the social dynamics pertaining to participants' roles. As such, in the event of secondments and promotions in areas outside of The Product studied, those individuals would no longer participate in the study. The new incumbent (provided they offered their consent) would become a participant. If a secondment or promotion occurred outside of The Product studied, there was an understanding that there may be a ‘discontinuation’ of the data associated with the role. However, this introduced another crucial dimension to the nature of the study because it showed how the manifestation of social dynamics depends on the in-practice nature of decisions within the role.

3.4.3 Observations

The meetings observed were held on Australian premises and within reasonable Australian working hours. Observations occurred five days a week between 8.30 am and 6.30 pm Australian Eastern Standard Time. The total number of participants observed was 30 unique individuals, with no one withdrawing their consent to be observed during the research period.

Regardless of participation in the study, the teams within The Product environment were notified that observations would be conducted as part of the PhD research and that I would hold the dual role of 'researcher' and 'employee' (insider researcher) in the organisation.

As much of the research period occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in the closure of offices, The Organisation's culture switched to a complete video (not just audio) conferencing mode, with observations continuing through digital interactions. Observed activities included conversations, decision points, production/development of outcomes, and interactions between individuals and teams as these related to the responsible use of data.

3.4.4 Interviews

The selection of participants for interviews was based on their active involvement in making or influencing decisions regarding a particular product and the responsible use of data. Nineteen interviews were conducted: six after the first three-month Agile cycle, which coincided with the end of two significant releases (six months), and the remaining thirteen in the cycle thereafter.

Interviews were held at a mutually agreed time that did not interfere with the interviewees' work schedule. At the start of each interview, a reminder of the purpose of the research and clarification of my role as a researcher was delivered. Interviewees were reminded that they could withdraw their consent at any point in the study and that their data would be destroyed. No one withdrew their consent to be interviewed in the research.

The interviews were semi-structured to allow for open-ended dialogue. They were conducted one-on-one in-person or via Microsoft Teams (due to the events of COVID-19 and/or the distant location of some participants). For in-person observations and interviews, The Organisation's COVID-19 safety plan[7] was respected at the specified location where the research was conducted.

All interviews commenced with the question: 'What has been your experience as it relates to [The Product], of the use, management and analysis of data in decision making?' This was followed by a series of probes and requests for greater explication of points made. Each interview lasted between 45-60 minutes. The sessions were recorded to allow a focused conversation with the participant.

The recordings were intended to be converted to audio-only files. Unfortunately, in Microsoft Teams at the time, there was no option to record or extract the audio only, and an additional step was required in transcription.

All participants had an opportunity to review their interview transcripts and remove or amend any material they were uncomfortable with. The original video file was deleted once the interviewee had verified the transcription.

3.4.5 Maintaining field notes and journaling

Field notes were written daily where there were observations/interactions of note and catalogued weekly. The activity of journaling was conducted only by me (as the

[7] Consistent with the evolving government recommendations, The Organisation updated this plan five times between the initial HREC application and November 2021.

researcher) for the collated observations, with no participants being required to maintain a journal for this research. Journaling involved keeping field notes, keeping reflexive journal entries and reviewing the material.

To mitigate bias and ‘contamination’ (specifically, as it related to purposes of data collection and consequent synthesis so that commercial and business information from my professional career was distinct from the academic observations), the journaling occurred in a separate physical notebook to that used in a professional capacity as an employee in the organisation. Both the field and reflexive journal entries were maintained in the same physical notebook but labelled distinctly for differentiation.

At the conclusion of each week, all handwritten material from the notebook was collated and converted into a digital format onto a separate laptop with secure UTS Teams access. Meeting observations, minutes, and emails sent/received were reviewed in conjunction with the weekly collation process. The review of such material would both enrich the understanding of what was written in the daily entries at the time and prompt the inclusion of salient and crucial entries not originally identified during the week. Where entries were included retrospectively, an explicit comment was made in the journal for potential metadata purposes. An example extract is provided in Figure 3.6.

Week end 31/07/2020	All that was required to be done was having the education, awareness and ‘light’ approval for experiments. When I had suggested such an approach to our data governance lead, there was no concerns. I took the task on myself to ‘build’ a process. It took two business days in total to create, gain consensus and publish a form. At the time did not want to entertain concern or frustration – rather find a path forward. It seemed simple – why had others not proposed it? *N.B. Notes are generated retrospectively by looking at calendar, work diary entries and emails of the week.*

Figure 3.6 Journal Extract

Note. Created by the PhD author.

At the end of each week, journal entries were converted to a digital format, reviewed, and polished to ensure that they were sensible for interpretation in the future (i.e., shorthand or heavy use of acronyms was avoided).

3.4.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation

In summary, the research data consisted of:

a. My observation of activities and interactions as researcher, recorded in the researcher's journal over an 18-month period (till data saturation was reached).
b. Reflexive journal entries over the 18-month period.
c. Semi-structured interviews with 19 staff members operating in 'The Product' team.
d. Organisation reports, emails, and other relevant secondary data.

Data analysis followed the process advocated by Gioia et al. (2012). This involved:

- Identifying the five dominant themes emerging from the observational data recorded in the journal entries, field notes, and secondary data (reports, etc.).
- Identifying the 23 units of meaning emerging from interview data and establishing the dominant themes of meaning manifesting across these units of meaning.
- Engaging with my two research supervisors in triangular synthesis and analysis of all data, where independent identification of units of meaning and dominant themes are reconciled through reflexive dialogue regarding their relation to the research question.
- Constructing a table that referenced the research themes against the extant research literature, identifying areas of agreement, dispute, and contradiction (see Appendix C).

As an insider researcher, I had the advantage of having worked in The Organisation for over a year before the data collection process began. This additional 'lived experience' of the phenomena provided invaluable frames of reference regarding insight into the context in which this research was conducted. Furthermore, the significant investment of time in the process of data analysis by my two supervisors ensured that the themes/codes were not 'cherry-picked' (Gioia et al., 2012, p. 18) and that any bias on my part as an 'insider' researcher was mitigated. An example of identified units of meaning derived from journal entries discussed and debated through the triangular analytical process is provided in Figure 3.7.

Analysis Period 4 [Between May 2021 to August 2021]

- 15 entries over 4 months
- 0 entries marked as sensitive
- 5 entries written from reference to emails, meetings etc (i.e. using memory recall)

Units of Meaning

1. Ambiguity of purpose (07/05/2021, 14/05/2021)
2. US vs Australia strategy (14/05/2021, 28/05/2021)
3. Organisational changes – departures/resignations (28/05/2021, 06/08/2021)
4. Disingenuous (04/06/2021)
5. Ethical vs commercial framing (11/06/2021, 09/07/2021)
6. Responsible Use of Data in action (18/06/2021)
7. UK support (25/06/2021, 23/07/2021)
8. Data Trust (23/07/2021)
9. Building out marketing – Data thought of the week (21/05/2021, 02/07/2021)
10. Purpose washing (09/07/2021)
11. Head of Digital ostracised (16/07/2021, 30/07/2021)
12. Data Science Toolkit (13/08/2021, 06/08/2021)

Figure 3.7 Extract of Phase Reflexivity and Raw Units of Meaning Identified

Note. Created by the PhD author.

3.4.7 Analysis of Interview Data

As the researcher, I listened to each interview recording three times: first, for an exploratory understanding of the themes within each interview; second, to identify the 'units of meaning' emerging from the interview; and third, to establish the dominant themes of meaning to emerge from all interviews. Figure 3.8 provides an extract of the process for identifying the dominant themes within an individual interview. Through researcher triangulation, my supervisors provided an 'outsider perspective' developed separately from my initial interpretation. This, in several instances, proved useful with differences in interpretation between my supervisors and myself.

Once all the interviews had been conducted and individually analysed, dominant themes across all interviews were identified (see Gioia et al., 2012). These were then cross-referenced with the dominant themes from the journal data. Each set of data offered insights that enabled a rich understanding of the social dynamics within The Organisation as these related to the nature of decision making within it.

	"What has been your experience, as it relates to PPI, of the use, management and analysis of data in decision making?"	Themes	Actors mentioned

Interview 1:
 	
11th of October 2021
 	
12:00
	- Pivots and uncertainty (new business, new [redacted] structure, no direction)
	- "Data is money" – commodity, but how do you define value
	- Little confidence (not an expert but intuitively listens to the conversations to obtain a sense of confidence from the experts)
	- Data ownership is a new concept which has been started in the Podium Ready Requirements
	- The budget for Digital is perceived as a "rounding error"
	- Revert to what you know in understanding
	  o Gave an example of excel
	  o Forcing people down path to remove "pretty" to focus on revenue
	  o Is however reflective on "how people want to see data"
	  o Two meetings with the new template
	- Every man/dog pipeline meeting, now quite small
	- Democratise decision – each region with a product
	  o Used to be a meeting for '[redacted]'
	  o Did not put the heat on
	- Merged Investment Committee with BD Board
	- Ownership and Accountability of information – must be an individual not a team
	  o Do they understand? Yes as their name is in the box
	- Next steps are to get real metrics and bring in investments
	- [redacted] likes the central pipeline, [redacted] has been shown how the 65 opportunities have really been brought down to three
	- No reuse of work, human nature of new executives like [redacted] with his 'reset strategy
	- Intent and purpose gets lost
	- Not transparent on movement example 'refine' is later seen as 'continued to refine'
	- Never comes out why it has 'taken longer'
		- Uncertainty
		- Pivots
		- No direction
		- Lack of leadership
		- Lack of re-use
		- Reflexive processes	

Figure 3.8 An Extract of the Preliminary Interview Analysis

Note. Created by the PhD author.

The observations and interviews worked to provide a balance in mitigating bias but, more importantly, to enhance the understanding of the environmental factors manifesting within an organisational setting.

In summary, the process of data analysis involved:

1. Identifying the dominant themes of meaning emerging from the observational data recorded in the journal entries, field notes, and secondary data (reports, etc.).
2. Identifying the units of meaning emerging from interview data and, thereafter, establishing the dominant themes of meaning manifesting across the interviews.
3. Engaging with my two research supervisors in triangular synthesis and analysis of all data, where independent identification of units of meaning and dominant themes was reconciled, in relation to the research question, through reflexive dialogue.
4. Constructing a cross-reference of the research themes against the extant research literature, identifying areas of agreement, dispute, and contradiction.

3.5 Reflexivity, Risk, and Insider Research

Research involves ethical decision making (Nielsen, 2016). It requires the 'researcher to actively reflect on and take responsibility for their ethical practices and their research goals, and to situate their practices and reflexivity within a broader collective process of scholarly inquiry' (Izlam & Greenwood, 2022, p. 4). As such, it is necessary to 'embrace the reflexivity of the researcher with regard to their own positionality (and privilege) and with regard to the purpose of research, treating ethics as central to the entire research endeavor' (Izlam & Greenwood, 2022, p. 4).

Ruby (1980, p. 154) states that researchers have “ethical, aesthetic, and scientific obligations to be reflexive and self-critical about their work”. As stated in Section 3.3, I have aspired for every stage and aspect of the research to be transparent and open to reflexivity and critique (primarily from my supervisors and through each candidature assessment). As Woolgar (1988) comments, this resulted in the inclusion of moments of ‘benign introspection’ in the constant evaluation of myself as a researcher and the biases I bring to the data collection and analysis. This has led to the conscious seeking of critique throughout each candidature stage. Using a methodical way to engage reflexively was offered by Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009, p.273). This not only alerted me to certain risks prior to data collection, such as potential confusion among participants regarding the purpose of the research given this researcher's dual role, but also key points at which reflexivity should occur, presented in Table 3.1.

Level	Focus
Interaction with empirical material	Accounts in interviews, observation of situations, and other empirical materials
Interpretation	Underlying meanings
Critical interpretation	Ideology, power, social reproduction
Reflection on text production and language use	Own text, claims to authority, selectivity of the voices represented in the text

Table 3.1 Levels of Reflexivity

Note. From 'Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research' by M. Alvesson and K. Sköldberg, 2009, p. 273, SAGE Publications.

This alerted me to certain risks prior to data collection, such as potential confusion among participants regarding the purpose of the research, given my dual role. These risks included:

- Dialogue intended to be in confidence or that referenced commercially sensitive material.
- Insecurity about answering questions in a certain way due to pre-existing relationships.
- Potential insecurities based on personal reflections on their ethical decision-making processes.
- Observations that could potentially be considered biased because I am an 'insider'.
- Observing improper conduct in my capacity as the researcher (as detailed in step 5 below).
- Specific information divulged to me beyond my remit as 'insider researcher'.

The following seven steps were taken in response to these risks.

Step 1: All participants reviewed the transcripts for specific dialogue meant in confidence or with references to commercially sensitive material. This provided the opportunity to remove any such details prior to the data analysis. This reduced the risk of exposing any references to commercially sensitive material during the activities/meetings of which I may not have been aware. Observations/interviews that addressed commercially sensitive information would be managed in accordance with The Organisation's nondisclosure deeds and not included in the research data. Activities and meetings that are known to be for the sole purpose of discussing commercially sensitive content would not be used in the research.

Step 2: Any insecurity and/or perceived pressure related to the impact of the research on pre-existing relationships was addressed by all participants receiving verbal and written communication about the research methodology and the intention of the study prior to providing consent. Two strategies were employed to minimise the potential negative effects of my dual researcher and manager role. First, the administrative process of organising the participant recruitment and any decisions to leave the research was coordinated by an independent organisational representative (not involved in the research). This provided for an 'arm's length' recruitment strategy to mitigate potential conflicts of interest and ethical issues. Second, during every interaction in my role as the researcher (not as an employee of the organisation), and particularly for the in-depth interviews, I communicated the intention of my role and reviewed each participant's commitment to continue in the study. This ensured that participation in the research was based throughout the process on informed consent. Participants were also reminded about their obligation to comply with The Organisation's code of conduct and employee agreements, which stipulate that commercially sensitive information should not be divulged during the research process.

Step 3: Regarding potential insecurities among participants, in the briefing sessions, participants were reminded that it was not them as individuals being researched nor their performance or competence in a professional sense but, rather, the social dynamics within The Organisation as these relate to decision making.

Step 4: Participants were informed that to minimise insider researcher bias, the ethnographic data would be independently reviewed and discussed by myself and my supervisors (the 'outsider' investigators). All research data were cross-evaluated with the 'outsider' investigators to mitigate potentially biased interpretations of observational and interview data.

Step 5: Improper conduct could have been observed during the research process. Such improper conduct was defined in two elements and influenced by The Organisations code of conduct and workplace health and safety policies. One was the improper conduct of participants in interviews, such as excessive swearing, or excessively demeaning or threatening language of other employees that exceeded reason. The other was the disclosure in dialogue or observation regarding sensitive commercial/business conduct that was not related to the focus of the study. To manage such issues, a clear boundary had to be maintained between being an employee/manager and a researcher where the priorities of the study were favoured over The Organisation's priorities. In cases of where improper conduct would be experienced or observed, the intention was to raise this with The Organisation's appropriate ethics officer or departmental WHS (Work Health and Safety) representatives. Fortunately, no improper conduct arose during the research, therefore no such action was required.

Step 6: With all modern and cloud-based technology, there is a risk that the data could be accidentally disclosed. Precautions were implemented, including limiting access to the research data to myself and my two supervisors. In compliance with ethics protocols, sensitive information was omitted, and care taken to ensure the responsible use of data in the research process. I was the sole person able to identify research participants (given my contact with the interviewees), and no one else had access to this data. Furthermore, the data removed any attributions that could be made to an individual and complied with the Australian Privacy Principles.[8] The participants' identities were coded by unique number and character assignments for traceability. Frameworks from the Open Data Institute, such as 'Managing Risk of Re-Identification'[9] and 'Anonymisation and Synthetic Data: Towards Trustworthy Data',[10] further protected the participants' identities.

Step 7: All observational data was recorded 'off-network' on a designated notepad and transcribed to a personal research laptop. Once transcribed and de-identified, the data was stored in a secure workspace, with access only to my supervisors and myself.

3.6 Data Management

3.6.1 Data Custodianship

Using the Open Data Institute and Data Management Body of Knowledge principles, I took a similar approach to 'data ownership'. However, my preferred term is 'data custodianship'. The rationale for this approach is that the data source is not wholly 'owned' by me or the participants for insights and analysis. I am not entitled to its use in perpetuity or whatever means I choose. Custodianship implies care is taken for the data from the

[8] https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/australian-privacy-principles
[9] Anonymisation and open data: An introduction to managing the risk of re-identification (report) – The ODI
[10] Anonymisation and synthetic data: Towards trustworthy data – The ODI

‘source’. As such, I am accountable for recognising its origins, maintenance, usage, and responsible analysis. The data of individuals are, and will always be, owned by the participants observed and interviewed.

The organisational data, such as the annual reports, are owned by The Organisation that is the subject of this research. While all efforts were made to ensure that no individual would be identifiable, should The Organisation or an individual request to retract their information, provisions to do so would be permitted. Special exceptions exist if the participants identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, where whole ownership of the data is their own. The theory and generated assessment of the data (i.e., the intellectual property rights) are owned by me (the ‘data manager’) and my supervisors (the ‘data stewards’).

3.6.2 Data Storage and Retention

As per the Australian Standard Research Classification, a minimum five-year retention period will be used. All research material is stored in a secure channel accessible to myself and my supervisors hosted on UTS Microsoft Teams. Access to the raw field notes and data during and after the project can be facilitated with my permission. While Microsoft Teams does not currently have a default link to the Workspace feature in Stash, manual synchronisation of the interview transcripts and field notes would be conducted to provide a simple mechanism for publishing the data later.

3.6.3 Data Responsibilities

Given that human participants were involved in the research, UTS HREC approval (ETH19-4059 – see Appendix D for an extract of the approval letter from the university) has been evaluated and obtained. Outside the appropriate management of data, consent from participants was sought regarding the following:

- The purpose of the research and the methodology used.
- What data will be collected, and how it relates to the research purpose.

- How their data will be de-identified, and that it will not be published or shared in a non-aggregated form.
- How the research data will be stored, preserved, and used long-term.
- How privacy will be maintained (e.g., by de-identifying data and/or restricting access for secondary use to legitimate researchers).
- The conditions under which access to the data may be granted to others.
- Explicit informed consent for data sharing.
- Information that describes any risks related to how the data might be used.

3.7 Chapter Summary

Due to the epistemological and ontological nature of 'ethical decision making' knowledge, this research adopts an ethnographic methodology to examine a defined corporate setting in Australia. The ethos of ethnography, as applied through the techniques described in the Ethnographer's Toolkit (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999), is leveraged for data collection, interpretation, analysis, and synthesis of this study. The actions of design teams in the delivery of a digital product were observed and reflected on, as their actions pertained to the responsible use of data. I had a full-time role within The Organisation and conducted the PhD in a part-time capacity with the extended function of being an 'insider researcher' over a period of 18 months. The research methods adopted include interviews, observations, participant experiences, and access to relevant data (i.e., annual reports and project artefacts) associated with The Organisation. Data synthesis and analysis follow the methods advocated by LeCompte and Schensul (1999) and Gioia et al. (2012). These methods are supported by multi-layered reflexivity and triangulation (i.e., triangulation across data, researcher, and theory prescribed by Denzin, 2017).

Chapter 4: Research Context

4.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter provides background regarding the organisation under study, termed The Organisation (Section 4.2), and explores existing ethical norms concerning the responsible use of data (Section 4.3). Section 4.4 reflects on the research instrument, namely me, in more detail. Finally, Section 4.5 concludes with a chapter summary.

4.2 The Organisation

The Organisation has a global presence and is headquartered in Asia-Pacific (APAC). Offices outside of Australia are based in Asia, Europe, and America. The Organisation was founded in the 1960s and has a strong culture that arose from the leadership of its founder. Within the research period between 2019 and 2022, this (now deceased) leader's influence was still strong. He was often quoted, and his perspective was included in induction material for all new starters. While it is a publicly listed company, the entrenched values and reverence for the founder were akin to that often seen towards the patriarch of a privately owned family business. A keystone to The Organisation's culture was the ethos instilled by the founder in his focus on the 'triple bottom line', which was a progressive stance when he introduced it.

At the time of data collection, there were approximately 11,000 employees globally with a wide range of skill sets. The core business was in the construction, development, investment, and asset management of buildings, precincts, and places. In 2016, the introduction of a digital business resulted in a historic event when the IT department shifted from being a service provider to being a business function – one that would build its own digital products. One of these products, referred to as 'The Product', was part of the focus of this study.

A global head was recruited from the US to lead this business. This leader created a new structure within two years, which included bringing colleagues from Silicon Valley to lead the engineering group and take responsibility for all technology architecture, security, and development of digital products. A few existing IT resources, mainly architects, transitioned under this team. This transformation led to the transition to Agile product development with a notable Silicon Valley style. Every release became bound to a three-month cycle referred to and documented as a ‘Commit’. Each Commit required approval from the leadership team as it specified what would be delivered and the requisite resourcing and investment requirements.

Originally, the key technology partners were Amazon Web Services and Salesforce. However, these were dropped quickly, and the focus shifted to Google. Furthermore, the local development partner promptly had their contract ended and was replaced by an India-based firm that was used and invoiced on a pro-rata rather than outcome basis.

A new development centre was introduced in Singapore and expanded to a 70-strong team. The India-based development partner was bolstered to fast-track the digital product development, specifically as hiring was encouraged to occur from Singapore first. At the time of data collection for the research, the US leadership team had met with their Singaporean but not their Australian counterparts. This was partly due to COVID-19 restrictions.

I was recruited into the organisation late in 2019 to build a global data science practice within the Digital Unit. As part of my organisational role, I introduced the ‘responsible use of data’ ethos, which lent itself to the existing ‘triple bottom line’ mantra. The intent was to lead the way for purposeful and transparent data usage, consumption, collection, and analysis. My team and I were initially embedded in one of the digital product offerings (The Product) in The Organisation, which was the early focus of the research. As part of one of the restructures in October 2021, this team's involvement was extended to all product offerings, including the original offering (The Product).

From 2022 until the time of writing, there have been five IT and digital restructures, with one large organisation-wide restructure. By end-2024, all products bar one were halted and made into an external organisation, The Product was absorbed into IT. The data science team was dissolved as part of a series of major restructures, with one remaining team member returning to the original product offering to complete all the work. As of December 2024, they too were no longer in the organisation. Figure 4.1 shows which key 'actors' remain as of December 2024.

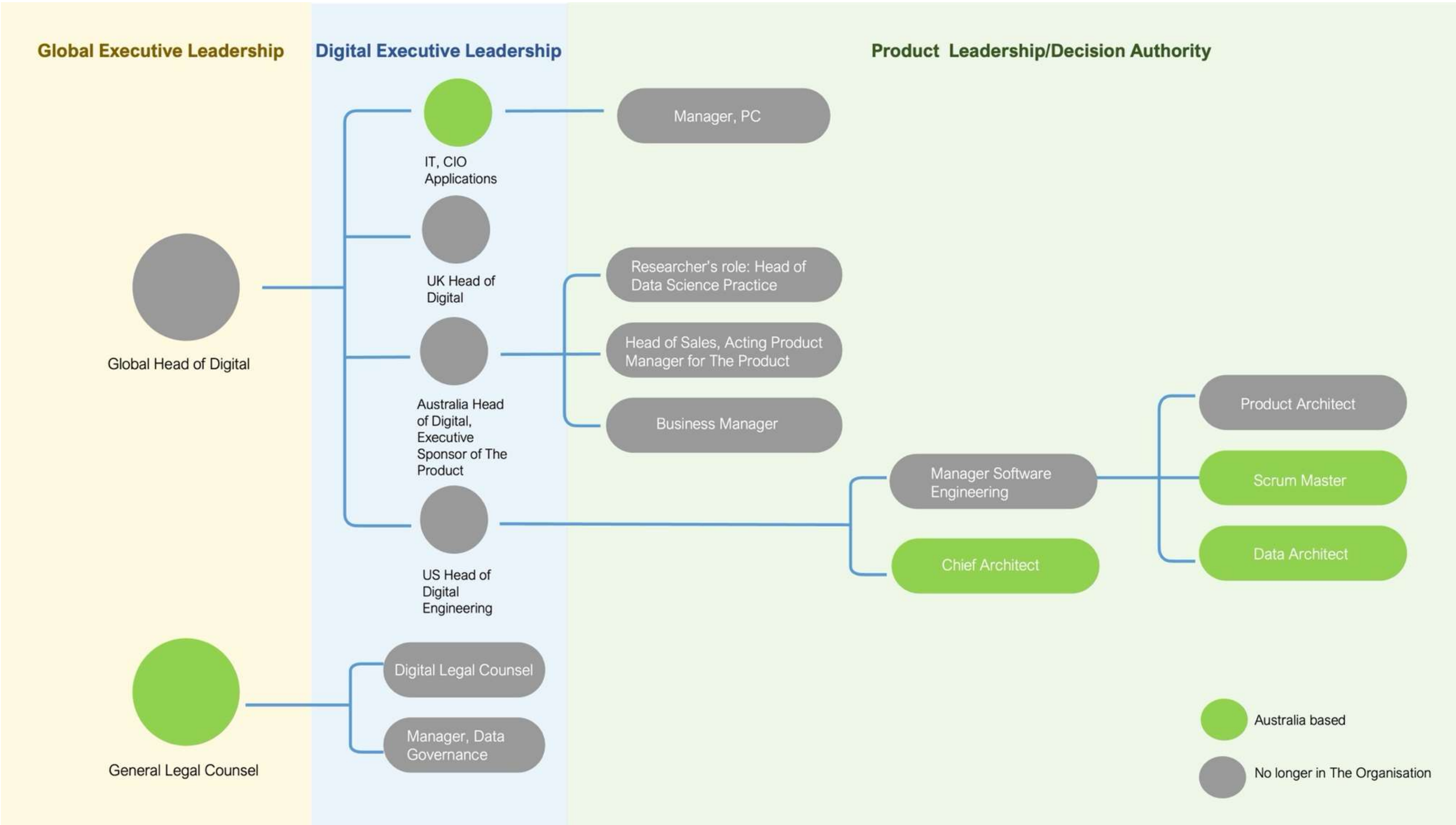

Table 4.1 Actors who Left Digital or The Organisation During the Research Process

Note. Created by the PhD author.

4.3 Ethical Norms in the Context of The Organisation: What Constitutes Responsible Use of Data for the Participants?

The community in the context of this research comprises those who built and used the digital product and would have insights/decisions from the digital product applied to them. In this instance, the digital product would change the experience for those who work in and interact with commercial buildings. The interview questions did not explicitly ask what participants deemed ethical or responsible data use. Rather, the interviewees' perspectives on these issues were extrapolated from the interview data and that gained from participant observation. The experience gained from building and using the product generated insights and perspectives harvested through the data collection processes.

The norm regarding ethical data use had some precedent in The Organisation. For example, the marketing team honoured this norm in their customer interactions. Without being explicitly aware of the notion of ‘data ethics’, they refused to collect information if it had no known purpose, such as how The Organisation could tailor products for the benefit of their customers. Furthermore, in residential buildings, they did not collect salary or budget data but focused on understanding how their customers were experiencing The Product within the precinct.

In another ‘built world environment’ focused on retirement living, they developed a benchmark for evaluating experience and services in these retirement villages. They shared their results with the view to improving the amenities and, thereby, the health and safety of residents.

In an instance related to The Product, a large and well-recognised organisation in Australia did not want data extracted from their buildings and made these concerns known. They were worried about how the data could be interpreted outside the lens of its original purpose of collection. This stalled the development of the pilot phases of The Product until certain guarantees were put in place and the customer was reassured of the appropriate handling of their data.

Furthermore, European senior leaders, concerned about the potential misuse of data and technology, did not want to proceed with offering, let alone piloting, any digital products until The Organisation clarified its position on data security.

The *responsible use of data* approach introduced by myself in my primary role had three key pillars: (1) understanding and having a clear purpose for the data; (2) building value across all parties, including engagement and co-creation with the affected community; and (3) ensuring appropriate advocacy, ownership, custodianship, and processes to manage the data across the entire lifecycle of the Product. The examples provided in terms of the norms aligned with these key principles of *responsible use of data*, specifically being purpose-laden regarding the collection, use, and analysis of the data.

These principles and tenets of *responsible use of data* were used as a guiding framework that was socialised with the Executive Leadership Team of the Digital department, Global Legal Counsel, managers of The Product, and various other related stakeholders. Apart from minor clarifications of understanding regarding the intent of some principles and the changing of the original name from ‘ethical’ to ‘responsible’, the overall approach and content were supported. The framework was presented to a committee focused on information privacy, governance, and security; the membership comprised business, digital, and compliance executive leaders across the company. It was ratified and endorsed by the committee.

Furthermore, five months after the *responsible use of data* framework was released, the focus of the company strategy and mission statement shifted from ‘building better places’ to ‘creating value to build communities that thrive’. This revision of the global strategy aligned it with the framework and reiterated the espoused commitment of The Organisation to the *responsible use of data*. The global data governance lead further validated this by proposing that *responsible use of data* principles be used as minimum requirements for KPIs across each region and every role.

Instances where the *responsible use of data* framework and guiding principles were shown in action included:

- EMEA senior leaders were given a presentation regarding the *responsible use of data* approach. They were very much in favour and wanted to communicate this to their customers and bring potential pilots together.
- A global head at The Organisation was going to deliver a significant pitch to a large technology company known to have questionable data ethics at the time. They were worried about potential next steps if this technology company wanted to take part ownership and co-develop with The Organisation. They sought feedback and expertise from the data science manager on whether the early principles were enough to answer questions such as 'Is this right?' and 'Is this what the community expects of us?'.
- The Global Head of Digital presented as a panel member at a property conference, arguing that the responsible use of data is vital for building trust in digital products in the built environment.
- Increasingly, in interactions with external companies and data providers, more digital colleagues asked questions about the *responsible use of data*, including how companies used the data and who owned the IP.

Aspects of legality were very much a consideration in The Organisation for implementation into The Product. One of these was the Privacy Impact Assessment, pertaining to personally identifiable information (PII) and *responsible use of data* principles.

Overall, the principles of responsible use of data, while not explicitly or comprehensively considered, were an espoused 'norm' in The Organisation. The Organisation recognised ethics as being aligned with *responsible use of data* principles and had a history of some areas using data with purpose and care. What was observed and experienced in the research regarding principles in practice constitutes the core of the research (see Chapter 5).

4.4 The Research Instrument

In this ethnographic process, my role can be considered as the research instrument that constructed the research question, located the research in an appropriate research paradigm and methodology, and conducted the data collection processes, data analysis, and data synthesisation to understand the social dynamics that underpin decision making within The Organisation. This utilises my experiences as a professional and researcher to interpret the organic social dynamics and politics of decision making in The Organisation through a human lens. As such, certain influences of the human instrument should be acknowledged and appreciated in this study. The 'research instrument' is a technology leader that partnered with the business to improve and enhance ethical operations to ensure organisational health, longevity, and relevance. My corporate experience includes experience in technology, banking, manufacturing, and government institutions in Australia and Germany. Early in my career, I held technical roles, including systems engineering, network engineering, and architecture, while in the last nine years, I have moved into leadership and consulting positions.

4.5 Chapter Summary

The Organisation was founded in the 1960s, is headquartered in the Asia Pacific, and has a global presence. The core business is focused on the construction and property sector. Its strong 'triple bottom line' culture arose from the founder.

As part of a new Digital Business Unit intended to build new revenue streams, I was recruited into The Organisation in late 2019 to build its data science practice. The role led to the introduction of a 'responsible use of data' framework that fed into and extended the existing 'triple bottom line' mindset. I have nearly 15 years of practical experience in digital technology and a focus on data.

Chapter 5: Research Insights

5.1 Chapter Overview

The Organisation's vision was to build a product (hereafter, The Product) within the new Digital Unit to 'unlock insights' and 'drive actionable insights and recommendations' by being 'data-driven' (referenced from strategy documents). The intention was that The Organisation's sixty years' worth of domain knowledge would make it difficult for competitors or technology companies to enter such an opportunity. The Product was intended to help the property industry make decisions that assisted human occupants in better managing their assets and contributed to their safety and the sustainability of the environment. To do so, data was needed to build this capability, one in which the triple bottom line mentality could be embraced in the digital product.

The findings gained from this study offer insights into the social dynamics that contributed to the failure to realise this vision. As of April 2024, more than two years after the study and data collection had concluded, on the publicly available website, the 'Client page' only listed partners and a reference to a single Case Study from part of The Product that was 'Coming Soon'. Four months later, in August 2024, more redundancies were offered, with Australian functions reduced to less than ten people. A new business was created independent of The Organisation with operations outside of Australia.

During the 18 months over which this ethnographic research was conducted, data gained from observations, field notes, interviews, and relevant organisational collateral was analysed, synthesised, and interpreted via continuous reflexive practices with the view to answering the research question. Ethnographic techniques were leveraged, specifically in data collection and analysis, interpretation, and continuous reflexivity (see Chapter 3, Sections 3.3 and 3.4). To explore the ethical domain of The Organisation, the focus was to observe and understand the practice of ethical or responsible use of data through its creation, analysis, and management of a key product. With this view in mind, the research process identified five dominant themes. These are discussed in detail in this chapter:

- Theme 1: Responsible use of data is not considered a value proposition (Section 5.2)
- Theme 2: Product Managers provide no leadership (Section 5.3)
- Theme 3: External factors are a greater prompt of change (Section 5.4)
- Theme 4: Pretence of formal decision making – mask of formal layers (Section 5.5)
- Theme 5: Infantilising The Organisation (Section 5.6)

Note that any attributions that can identify the individual (e.g., role or seniority) have been removed for the purpose of confidentiality. Extracts from interviews and observations were coded by unique number and character assignments.

5.2 Theme 1: Responsible Use of Data is not Considered a Value Proposition

> *There's strong data that, within companies, the number one reason for ethical violations is the pressure to meet expectations, sometimes unrealistic expectations (Stephen R. Covey 2007).*

Very early on in the development of The Product, the relevant executive committees endorsed and favoured the practices of responsible use of data. Their approval was perceived as a factor of import to all their product workings. What eventuated was the issuance of a brief set of materials with the intent to educate teams on the concept of 'responsible use of data'. However, the research data showed broad lack of clarity on the meaning of this concept, as one participant explains:

> *I haven't really heard too much about ethical use of data. When we get given work, it's just 'do this task'. From our level of when we receive the data, ethical use hasn't really been considered too much –* ***at least, in terms of my position, I've never really been exposed to how I should ethically be using the data that I've been given****. (Interviewee 7 – spiral 4)*

In the first spiral of interviews, there was a distinct, and at times strong, critique of the lack of achieving and delivering 'responsible use of data' in The Product. However, there seemed to be some commitment to exploring why this was occurring and how it could be improved:

> *Yeah, I mean there's probably a correlation with data literacy to some extent. I think some people, maybe on an individual level, have a bit more of a 'I don't care, just get things done', kind of attitude. Which is kind of natural, but it's my role to some extent to push back a little and say, 'no, we need to think about this'. (Interviewee 6 – spiral 4)*
>
> ---
>
> *I haven't actually had a chance to talk to [redacted name] about who is actually using The Product right now. We have delivered it but what's the usage? I really doubt it. Are they trusting the data – I'm not sure. (Interviewee 1 – second spiral)*

This, however, was not perceived to be a dire situation in the first phase of interviews. Aspirations towards the future and curiosity about whether the existing approach was working towards the desired outcome were evident. There were even positive remarks about the progress, albeit tempered by some scepticism of the state of the matter:

> *We have been working really hard to get this process clear. I guess it's getting better but some of the rules and responsibilities are still not clear. (Interviewee 10 – spiral 4)*

Comparatively, in the second interview phase, explanations of The Organisation's ignorance towards the 'responsible use of data' were openly stated. It was clear that it and associated concepts were of little to no value to The Product teams:

> *How much do they care about it is – I don't know, it's questionable? I really don't know from a management perspective how critical is responsible use of data to them. (Interviewee 2 - spiral 5)*
>
> ---
>
> *To be honest, no. In the tribes I've been working with, it's never been talked about. The conversation about data really is, do we have data? What do you want us to*

do with this data? It's never, okay, let's reflect, take a step back, reflect, where are we going to store this data? (Interviewee 7 - spiral 5)

***People are not used to thinking about the responsible use of data** and thinking about the permissions associated with data. I think **we've got a long way to go** to educate people on the use of data. (Interviewee 8 - spiral 5)*

----

*I honestly think that **data has been missing from the conversation**, it's just completely missing from the conversation. They've gone through and printed out a whole load of physical work. But in terms of the actual data, there haven't been robust conversations. (Interviewee 13 - spiral 5)*

One interviewee provided an example associated with building The Product and the ignorance of two decision makers, one on the IT/Digital side and the other on the business side. Even when they were explicitly called into the process to make a decision, what eventuated was no response:

Interviewer: You said you originally went out to ask for permission and you said there was either no response or they just didn't care?

Interviewee 10: No response…

Interviewer: No response?

Interviewee 10: Absolutely nothing. No response. I think I sent it to [name redacted] a couple of times, and [name redacted] and [name redacted], I sent it to [name redacted] and [name redacted], and I got nothing, just absolutely nothing back. No response whatsoever.

Interviewer: Not even can you clarify [name redacted]? Can we meet with…

Interviewee: Nope.

Interviewer: …you [name redacted]?

Interviewee 10: No, nothing. Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

To probe and understand the concept further, the interview questions explored the Customer Readiness (CR) document and process required. The CR was the verification and audit, which included security and operational requisites for a product to be deemed suitable to 'go live' and be released to customers. Of the 100 odd pages of checks, one or two pages were dedicated to the 'responsible use of data'. With this being the final and official check, it would be appropriately assumed that all items needing review and articulated in the document were vital to the value of The Product, the customer, and The Organisation. When asked about this, interviewee responses varied from being unaware of the process to being unaware of the 'responsible use of data' being included. This further confirmed that any perceived value of the 'responsible use of data' may have been reduced during the six months between interview phases (if it had at all existed in the minds of some). Excerpts from two separate interviews with individuals who were members of delivery teams underscore their unawareness of the process or the outcome:

> *It might've happened, but I don't recall it anymore. So, maybe it was a brief. Because I don't recall this at all. (Interviewee 2 - spiral 5)*
>
> ---
>
> *Well, now that you prodded me, right, I don't actually recall seeing it. Maybe I did actually look at it, but it doesn't remind me about it. So I think it needs to be constantly reminded about that, and now that you mention it, did I even see it in that pack with that checklist? (Interviewee 1- spiral 4)*

In one instance, the ownership of the entire process was placed with a single person, not locally based, with the assumption that due to their heavy involvement in other parts of the process, they would also take on such accountability:

> *So, I think that's owned by [Head of Engineering] – you think about the [CR], and we've got sections in there on security and [Head of Security] reports in to Head of Engineering. [Head of Security] is the sign off for the first [CR], he's got team members, [name redacted] and [name redacted] that represent him and make sure that we're being good, from a cyber security perspective. So, I think that's a Head of Engineering thing. (Interviewee 4 - spiral 4)*

The ‘not knowing’ of delivery teams focused on developing The Product resulted from the absence of leadership from Product Managers (see Theme 2). Their direction was constantly changed by ‘strategic pivoting’ and organisational restructuring under the guise and pretence of formal decision making (see Theme 4). Most interviewees (85%) explicitly indicated that Product Managers were accountable for the ‘responsible use of data' (see Table 5.1 which shows wo referenced what roles they thought were responsible). It may have been expected that those who occupied those roles would behave differently to the delivery teams’ perceptions of responsible use of data within the CR process.

		Customer	Product Manager	Product Owner	Data Manager / Leader	Data Team	Engineering/Platform Team	Legal Counsel	COO	Data Governance Manager/ Leader
Phase 2	Interview 1					X				
Phase 1	Interview 1		X							
Phase 1	Interview 1									
Phase 1	Interview 1		X							
Phase 1	Interview 1				X		X			
Phase 1	Interview 1									
Phase 2	Interview 1		X							
Phase 2	Interview 1				X					
Phase 2	Interview 2								X	
Phase 1	Interview 1									
Phase 2	Interview 1		X	X						
Phase 1	Interview 1	X								
Phase 1	Interview 1	X								
Phase 2	Interview 2									X
Phase 2	Interview 2									
Phase 2	Interview 2		X	X	X	X	X	X		
Phase 2	Interview 1		X	X	X	X	X	X		
		2	6	3	4	3	3	2	1	1

Table 5.1 Who is Responsible for Responsible Use of Data' – Interview Matrix

Note. Created by the PhD author.

While a majority indicated that Product Managers were accountable, the delivery teams did not perceive Product Managers as valuing responsible use of data:

> *Interviewer: Do they know the ramifications of inaccurate data?*
>
> *Interviewee 5: I think they do, but they haven't thought that far. So all they want is just to get that [30-building data] in. (spiral 4)*

The Product management team did not respond contrary to what was heard from the delivery teams. The third rendition of The Product management team was interviewed in the second interview phase. In one instance, when asked about the CR process, the reaction was that while they were unaware, those a little more senior than them would be across such matters.

> *It might be more engineering side, but not sure. Look, I'm pretty sure if it was given to [senior product manager name redacted] or [senior product manager name redacted], they would share that, so I believe that that's come up. I don't know if it's been shared with our side. (Interviewee 11 - spiral 5)*

Similar to the Head of Engineering being agreed by all as responsible, it was claimed that abdication thereof by this individual was preferred to participating in and developing the process. When the Senior Product Manager was asked about accountability concerning the responsible use of data, their response indicated it was known to them but 'not clear':

> *The cyber stuff, yes, because that's a real pain and there's a lot of focus that goes into all of that, but the responsible use bits and more ethical bits I guess we haven't really got a clear framework on that in my view. (Interviewee 3 - spiral 5)*

While The Product Managers had recently transitioned and may not have had the full history or knowledge of The Product and development process, the overall stance had not changed from the first phase of interviews. All that was different was the people occupying these roles. The same behaviour was displayed in a first-phase interview with a Product Manager. They indicated while they were not across this information, others involved from The Product management team were likely to be so:

> *Interviewer: Did [product] even go through a CR presentation?*

Interviewee 5: I know [name redacted] used to kind of do that for [product two redacted] but I don't know whether [The Product] went through CR. (spiral 5)

When something is of value, how it is managed, who is responsible, and how it is achieved should be well understood by all and revered. Two slides in a large document do not seem significant in determining importance and indicate the lack of regard for the responsible use of data and, consequently, ethical decision making:

> *It's not a priority because the focus is about pumping out more features. So everyone talks about processes and things like that but at the end of the day, **I feel that it's being treated as a second-class citizen.** That's why no proper focus or effort or resources has been put into that. (Interviewee 4 – spiral 5)*

What was instead valued – revenue – was readily known by those interviewed:

> *What's my driver? Revenue. What do I want? A killer app. It's revenue. I guess that's a symptom of where we're at – [Head of Digital] asked for a huge investment, and he's got to show something for his investment, and **once we're raking in money, then we can start to be a bit more socially conscious and whatever.** (Interviewee 8 – spiral 5)*

This hunger for revenue negatively impacted progress towards responsible use of data:

> *I don't know, [Head of Digital] probably is **sending the wrong signals by focusing on revenue** and then the customer, which I guess has a role to play. (Interviewee 5 – spiral 4)*

> *I don't think anyone would argue that we've knocked it out of the park. I don't know, from my perspective **it feels like we've kind of gone in the wrong direction** because there's still a lot of fundamentals that I don't think we've really got nailed, and now I'm worried that they're going to fall even more by the wayside. (Interviewee 3 – spiral 5)*

I think the purpose was to just ensure we had revenue. We didn't really care what we were building for a customer, as long as someone was going to pay us money, which I think is the whole problem. (Interviewee 5 – spiral 5)

Most did not even consider the ethics and responsible use of data. An unhealthy obsession with making money eclipsed all else. It is perhaps best summarised by a curt response from someone who had been part of the journey from the beginning when asked the explicit question of whether this was of import to The Organisation:

No, no, no, absolutely not, no. (Interviewee 13 – spiral 5)

This theme reflects The Organisation's failure to embed ethical decision making, as a key value proposition, in its practices. As a result, rhetoric substituted for practice, with ethical decision making and the responsible use of data not being deemed a priority or taken seriously within The Organisation.

5.3 Theme 2: Product Managers Provide No Leadership

In these times I don't, in a manner of speaking, know what I want; perhaps I don't want what I know and want what I don't know. (Marsilio Ficino, The Letters of Marsilio Ficino, Vol. 3, 1900).

In Agile methodology, the Product Manager is responsible for delivery and decision making associated with the product being developed, in this instance, a digital product. This role covers a range of activities across the product life cycle, including the product roadmap and its outcomes, stakeholder management, team facilitation, and even user story writing and testing. Being a digital product, a healthy knowledge of the customer domain and technology is crucial. In one online forum, the Product Manager is described as the 'empathetic servant leader'.

In a product (rather than project) oriented and Agile organisation, this role is pivotal to the team's leadership and direction while also being the customer's voice. However, this was far from the case for The Product. Interviewees were very critical of The Product management function and, in particular, the lack of understanding of what the business or customer wanted:

> *[Executive Sponsor] has a good sense of business, but the Product Managers, I'm not sure. Because some of the features we are building they [customer] have not been happy with, that actually reflects,* ***maybe our Product Managers don't really create features that the business really likes****. (Interviewee 9 – spiral 4)*

> *My view is that the product team should have some understanding of software and ideally have some understanding of the domain that they're working in as well.* ***I think that there's a lot of people that are very good at making slide decks.*** *I think there's some knowledge gaps, is the short answer. (Interviewee 6 – spiral 4)*

> *I think at first it was top down. As in the Product Manager was kind of like, this is what I want to do.* ***Based on conversations with customers, I think they were kind of thought bubbles more than anything else****, and it was kind of 'get to work' a little bit at the beginning. (Interviewee 6 – spiral 5)*

One interview participant left The Organisation between the two interview phases. They retrospectively looked at what should have been done and understood there was a complete failure to truly understand the customer:

> *If I were to put myself in a project management role, I know exactly what I need to do and how I'm doing against that. But you are putting someone who has no clue about what product management is and the fundamentals about it, so I don't know what's good and what's bad. So that's my biggest learning, I think – and going back is understanding what the customer really wants. I can't put my hand on heart and say yes, we really figured that out with the customer, and we understood.*
>
> *I think that's the reason we failed multiple times – we haven't had that understanding of what we are building and what is valuable to the customer. We*

have been building something which we think we can build and then trying to force-feed the customer, which hasn't ever worked. (Interviewee 5)

One of The Product Manager's key responsibilities is being the customer's voice and facilitating these conversations. However, interviewees indicated it was not due to the absence of conversations with customers; rather, it was that the conversations being had were ineffective:

It's crazy and embarrassing how many times we've approached the customer and asked them, what insights would you like? I think they've told us multiple times. (Interviewee 8 – spiral 5)

Many interviewees commented that the overarching roadmap and strategy were mostly or wholly absent. Material that was assumed to be useful in enabling their individual autonomy to contribute to The Product development was not there:

The biggest issue is always sitting with the product. Because the product team didn't really have a clear road map and we didn't really plan that well to be honest. I guess that's something, it's not an issue for a specific individual, it's like the issue in the product team as a whole. (Interviewee 4 – spiral 4)

I don't know how it works for those [Commits] but I guess, clearly outline a few Commits so we can actually understand what else of the goals that we want to achieve. I feel like sometimes, they're switching them around. I do understand that there are constraints and sometimes we have blockers that prevent us from achieving certain Commits, but it seems like it's been switched around a lot.

So, I'd probably say we need more clearly defined Commits and what we really want to achieve for each Commit. I think that would be important. (Interviewee 9 – spiral 4)

The roadmap for all parties, bar The Product management team, was deemed to be confusing, with no noted useful planning sessions. A member of the data team noted that it had culminated to a point where the backlog for features and bugs was so large that an attempt to try to prioritise (due to all the manual interventions and technical issues) through a planning session would be futile as a result would be unattainable. Even when work was being prioritised, the approach (due to lack of technical knowledge from The Product Managers) would result in unnecessary activity:

> *So it's sometimes very hard to talk to people – they think it's so easy, why can't you do it. Like [for example redacted example] – it's a waste of effort. What is the value-add created in there – nothing [laughs]. (Interviewee 9 – spiral 4)*

Almost all interviewees, except for one person who was associated early with The Product, made strong and frequent references to the lack of clarity and direction of The Product. A common complaint was that the Product Managers fuelled continuous and disruptive pivoting amongst the continuous uncertainty (see Theme 3). While The Product was meant to break into the market and be innovative, this level of change was perceived as too chaotic for any progress to be made. Despite the intention to adopt a 'start-up' approach, 'every conversation was different' (Interviewee 6 – spiral 4).

Furthermore, some of the delivery teams were not aware from whom, or which group, direction should be provided and in which forum these decisions for The Product were being made:

> *I don't know who is responsible especially for product side. Sometimes this person looks after only this feature, but another one will be starting to take over another new feature. That's something a little bit weird at [The Organisation], right now. (Interviewee 9 – spiral 4)*

> ---

> *I'm not sure to be honest who is the key person to make the decisions. Before it was [first Product Manager – name redacted] now, it's really confusing. We've got a proper product team for [The Product] but not a clear product road map. That's why I'm not sure who is actually making the product decisions. Maybe [new Executive Sponsor – name redacted], but he's not as aware of the details, so it*

> *must be [new Product Manager – name redacted] or [new Product Manager #2 – name redacted]. (Interviewee 5 – spiral 5)*

With the product management function seemingly absent in providing any clear direction or clarity as to who should provide it, the experts and delivery teams could be expected to supply the missing information to form the steps forward, particularly in developing the Commit process. However, they were excluded in what seemed a secretive process:

> *I do think generally there is not enough consultation when these ideas are formulating. I feel like things make it into the Commit before any detailed conversation has been had about how much effort and time is going to be required to do it, from a technical standpoint. There's stuff in the Commit that I know that I'm the only person who knows how that works and how much is going to be required. They're in the Commit, but nobody spoke to us about it. (Interviewee 6 – spiral 5)*

In an attempt to engage the teams in activity and direction, some of the decisions by The Product team were reactive to customers' wants (or executive leadership direction) and failed to understand the technical implications. Some work was seen as having no value and only to 'tick a box' to appease the powers that be. Product Managers would make promises to customers that were not forward-thinking and often fail to engage with the wider team to provide some 'vision' and progress towards an outcome. Priorities were often unclear and were noted to focus on 'dodgy' workarounds that would warrant heavy retrofitting activity later.

Rather than finding a true value-add for their customers and, consequently, The Product, most Product Managers deemed that this was a far better outcome as it still showed progress. This was highlighted in an example where the building of a demonstration was rushed. When presented to a shrewd customer, they immediately saw the data was incorrect and indicated their distrust in using The Product. This ultimately resulted in frustration and a lack of buy-in:

I think that's their commitment, to actually show that we have data for 30 buildings that we're going to look at. So I think this whole process is just to actually get data in, for now, whether that data is accurate or not is another story. (Interviewee 2 – spiral 4)

It was an interesting time back then, because everyone was scrambling pretty hard to just get things together. ***I certainly didn't have any conversations around whether it worked or not****, they just wanted something. I guess, maybe they just trusted me not to mess it up. But I don't know, we didn't have too many conversations like that really. (Interviewee 6 – spiral 5)*

Priorities that could contribute to a useful product were put in the backlog. There was one extreme example of a feature being requested, both by the customer and delivery teams, on which, at the time of the interview, discussions had been ensuing for more than 15 months. It was discussed and put in the backlog every three months during the Commit cycle. This was far too long, given the initial 'start-up' environment being espoused by the leadership team.

Without a plan, poor decision making occurred as articulated by one interviewee as a very expensive experiment:

I guess there is no specific basis on decisions. There is the business aspiration, but there is nothing to translate to the actual functionality. I think there is a gap in terms of what is actually needed from the feature perspective. So in terms of decision making that one is, to be honest, it is random because there is no, I guess, real interaction with the end users. ***That's why I thought a lot of the stuff is prototyping but in a very expensive way.*** *(Interviewee 4 – spiral 4)*

An individual who had been in the firm for decades and who was visionary in founding the early product ideas was able to provide some insight into both sides of the imbalance and uncertainty:

They were just building absolute bespoke use cases one by one. So, I really realised there was a lack of design. I went 'all right, well that's unfair to you. You can't design a product because we haven't told you what we want. We are going to tell you what we want'. That's when I said to [Product Manager 1] you need to step aside because you've had a year to tell them what you want and you haven't been able to tell them. We are going to get everyone in a room and we are going to tell them what we want. I sort of said to him 'and you need to not talk for the next three days while everyone else tells them what they want because you've had a year of talking and no-one knows what you want'. It was time to let some other people talk, was my view. (Interviewee 3 – spiral 4)

This original Executive Sponsor, who had started to see these cracks, attempted to salvage what had occurred by organising a three-day workshop with all parties involved. The intent was to ensure everyone was clear on expectations:

We did all those workshops to get everyone to own the design and not go 'I don't know what [Executive Sponsor] is talking about or I don't know what [Product Manager] is talking about'. I felt like what we were trying to build there is [name redacted] had one thing in her head and I had another and [name redacted] had another and [name redacted] had another and everyone had something different in their head and because we'd never committed it to writing there was no crystallisation of what everyone wanted. (Interviewee not referenced given potential to identify – spiral 4)

Shortly thereafter, the last and major restructure (during the data collection period) occurred, and a new Executive Sponsor and product management team were installed. For The Product, this role was originally occupied by a single person, then supplemented by a consulting team with strong customer relationships. By the second interview phase, the role was completely changed with new incumbents. It did not matter which rendition of The Product management function it was, the responses from the delivery team on the lack of direction and resulting chaos were similar. The lessons from the behaviour of previous Product Managers were not adhered to. Interviewees indicated that outside of the people occupying the roles, confusion was still present, and change was perceived as negligible:

Oh, you mean the restructuring right now into each of the individual areas? I've yet to see any difference. (Interviewee 1 – spiral 5)

Then since the latest restructures, I'm still quite confused, to be honest, about where the direction is coming from and the directions that I have heard have not filled me with a lot of confidence. The main person that I'd been speaking to in terms of progressing, obviously left, that was a month or so ago, I still don't know who I'm meant to be speaking to about that. (Interviewee 6 – spiral 5)

Uncertainty around product decisions remained, with no understanding of who the decision maker was and how customer engagement would occur. Product Managers' insufficient technical knowledge and the lack of a proper plan and roadmap led to promises being made in desperation to show progress. This uncertainty and change at so many layers within The Product management 'leadership' did not provide an environment for innovation but, rather, one typified by frustration and exhaustion (emotions articulated by the interviewees).

The Organisation was trying to empower Product Managers who were not equipped to fulfil such functions:

It's probably, because [The Organisation] is a construction company so it's probably still evolving and a lot of the employees, especially in the product team, are not really Product Managers. That's probably the reason I can guess. (Interviewee 5 – spiral 4)

I think that's happened because we're not a product management organisation at heart. We're just different people trying to become Product Managers. (Interviewee 4 – spiral 5)

5.4 Theme 3: External Factors are a Greater Prompt of Change

> *When it is obvious that the goals cannot be reached, don't adjust the goals; adjust the action steps. (Confucius, The Doctrine of the Mean, ca. 500 BCE).*

While the uncertainty that The Product Managers brought to the situation was problematic, this was only one of the factors influencing it. Significantly, external factors to The Product were the greatest cause of change. The change did not just occur within The Product. Digital was a new business unit; The Organisation's structure had undergone a long and significant change; a new CEO had been hired, and a new set of Product Managers were appointed to The Product.

Significant strategic decisions that diverted from the existing course, specific to The Product, were also introduced during the process. These included a huge transformation of the core technology stack, substituting software development partners, and introducing a new go-to-market partner. All these changes added to the confusion.

At almost every level of The Product organisation, external factors influenced decisions on the path to be taken. The nature of these changes motivated by such externalities was not perceived as positive to The Product. The data team stated that they felt they were not part of the process of developing and providing input to the 100+ page Commit documents (noting this product was to be focused on insights and data). In field observations, the erstwhile Product Manager also commented that it was an engineering-focused artefact rather than a product one. Without any leadership input, it was perceived as a *software-only* build rather than a *product*. The biggest example of this confusion occurred when the first rendition of The Product was shut down early by the Head of Digital. This occurred with very little consultation and at the close of the first release cycle:

> *It's just one Commit. We did one Commit. We showcase it. When we aim for the second Commit people just say right because of COVID. No one cares anymore. I think at that point we dropped it. (Interviewee 4 – spiral 4)*

At that time, the original Product Manager departed the organisation, leaving teams in limbo until The Organisation transitioned to the new product. Twelve months later, The Organisation started back with the original product. These events created an environment of instability, within which external factors continued to play havoc. The incoming CEO had already started to bring adjustments in.

During this reset period, it was suspected, and later confirmed, that the CEO was not convinced of The Product's value. The team was being forced to focus not on innovation but rather on making money.

> *There's a couple of factors. The first factor is because [new CEO] is focused on making money. I love everything else we do at [The Organisation], but right now, in case you didn't see the half-year numbers, we need to focus on making money. (Interviewee 8 – spiral 5)*

On the technology side, The Product moved away from one major technology stack to another in a relatively short period. Decisions made by the Head of Engineering consequently led to the introduction of a new Development Partner who was no longer locally based in Australia, with key personnel in Singapore, Silicon Valley, India, and Canada. Due to the widespread locations of this partner, statements started to be made that not all people could be on these calls. Therefore, reliance on single resources from each region would be leveraged as the communication conduit. Given the constantly changing environment and numerous meetings, this messaging back to parties was often delayed or missed:

> *If that person fails to communicate down, we're stuffed. So, it very much created a single person dependency without us knowing it. During our wintertime, our daily stand up was around his midnight and he attends almost every single one of them. I don't think it's a sustainable model. (Interviewee 4 – spiral 4)*

The nature of the development company, which was meant to be interim and transitory, had started influencing the work practices in The Organisation:

I think with [old Development Partner], because they're on shore, we were able to do a lot more prototyping, show and tell, whereas with [new development partner], it is almost like a waterfall.

I think that's part of decision making? If we can see things earlier, we can call out some changes, but I don't think we have that process in place with [new Development Partner] to have that early preview session. (Interviewee 3 – spiral 4)

Teams expressed exasperation in the changes in the technology being used, different interactions, and pivoting directions, all inspired by externalised factors without internal input. One interviewee indicated they were not adapting to the changes at all and, even worse, were ignoring them as they lost trust in the leadership:

It's fatigue, because two years later there's nothing that has been complete, because of all these pivots.

There have been massive changes that caused some of these pivots. It's not about pivoting, pivoting is fine, but it's providing people with the context around the pivot and providing the confidence in that decision. So, giving people confidence, that this is the decision we've made and this is why it's been made, and thank you for working super hard, and I need you to keep working this hard in this new direction.

…because the people responsible don't have the level of confidence in it yet.

I've been pausing. The data I've received from the meetings have made me stop and wait for people to finish pivoting. Sometimes you need to slow down. (Interviewee 8 – spiral 5)

In understanding how positive change was historically invoked in The Organisation, each interview participant was asked how this approach could have been used specifically to introduce the responsible use of data. Some offered a similar remark to Theme 1, namely that the approach did not embrace value drivers or highlight a positive outcome:

It's just not seen as important and it's not seen as a risk. (Interview 13 – spiral 4)

It's also about turning it into a positive. (Interview 12 – spiral 5)

In the interviews, the real inspiration for positive change in The Organisation was unwound; external factors ultimately were a key proponent, but largely in historical examples for better outcomes and progress. In one interview, the discussion revealed how turning the messaging into a positive story had precedent and could benefit responsible data aspirations. In the past, a significant and large customer initiated the necessary changes towards the implementation of safety in The Organisation (where the record ten years later was close to zero fatalities):

> *It was ultimately a customer of The Organisation who drove that whole change program because they were insisting they weren't going to work with us anymore unless we got our safety records better. So it was actually an external (which it often is, right?). ... it was an external market factor that caused The Organisation to turn it up and go after that. (Interview 13 – spiral 5)*

In a rare instance for The Product, there was similarly a customer who was a strong champion of positive change in management and usage of the data that pushed the ideals of responsible use of data:

> *I remember [customer] had a concern that we were getting this data. Because of the Royal Commission, the CEO of the company who was based in that office – was concerned, or he claimed that his customer had a concern, about people who had access to that information. He kind of ensured that we didn't use that data. So it wasn't too difficult to get others to take it off because it was requested for – by the customer. (Interviewee 5 – spiral 4)*

Yet this was not enough to spur widespread cultural and permanent change, perhaps due to this customer's economic value being minor compared to the one over a decade prior that demanded safety in The Organisation.

Other factors that resulted in recognised positive change for The Organisation were perceived to originate from the Board, which received their information from external audits:

> *So we always have annual audits. I think that would make everyone panic and aware, make sure they actually follow the process and the framework. I can see that's the number one way that The Organisation has been doing well at.*
>
> *So I'm not sure whether there is an audit for data – but I think that will actually make everyone actually follow the rules in a way.*
>
> *Typically, it is done by being communicated by the Board, if you want everyone to follow the same process. (Interview 1 – spiral 5)*

While strong cases of externalities proved to encourage progressive growth by The Organisation, the climate and dynamics applied to The Product resulted in the reverse.

5.5 Theme 4: Pretense of Formal Decision Making – Mask of Formal Layers

It was espoused that The Product and the Digital Unit would run in an Agile fashion like that of a start-up company. The properties of a start-up, such as flexibility and agility, were applied in The Organisation through the creation of some lightweight yet formal decision-making forums and practices. This thin layer hardly masked what was openly perceived by those interviewed as being ineffective:

> *There is the business aspiration, but there is nothing to translate it into the actual functionality. There is a gap in terms of what is actually needed from the feature perspective. In terms of decision making, that, to be honest, is random. (Interviewee 9 – spiral 4)*

Teams were not prepared for Agile practices that worked towards making informed decisions within product strategy. Examples were the rituals of Retrospectives and User Story Grooming, which were to occur every two weeks. Most teams were not provided ample time to prepare for these, amongst other meetings, and even when the sessions did occur, output was overridden by several vocal participants in the leadership team. Grooming sessions often excluded key participants, which revoked the possibility for decisions to be made. For some in the delivery teams, their exclusion from the decision-making process was interpreted as autocratic behaviour from the product teams:

> *In terms of certain things that come up from The Product that's kind of being dictated in a way that they [Product Management] think that's the right thing to do.*
>
> *The people that cause impact are people outside of that team. So, the people outside of that team, don't get to see how much they're impacting the team, because it's not presented anywhere to them.*
>
> *Then you're taking accountability for something that you didn't do. That's only because it's not being flagged, and they're not using meeting forums and reports to flag why these changes have been made. There is no accountability around the decision as why that change has been made. (Interviewee 2 – spiral 4)*

This behaviour was not confined to a particular role. Theme 2 (Product Managers provide no leadership) indicates that it was decisions not only made by those from product management that were autocratic in nature but also those with assigned formal authority in engineering functions:

> *Most of the decisions were, especially the technical decisions, were made by [name redacted]. Normally it should be a team to be transparent.*
>
> *You can raise freely whatever your technical thoughts, but at The Organisation, I guess it's probably because [name redacted] was in charge too much, we actually can't raise a lot. (Interviewee 9 – spiral 4)*
>
> ---
>
> *I guess the engineering team got their own sprint planning session, but the data team has not been really involved too much. (Interviewee 2 – spiral 4)*

Growing critical feedback and a sense of impending mutiny resulted in the inclusion of SMEs in decision-making forums. However, this was not recognised as effective or well-intended, as, in interviews, SMEs felt that it created an illusion of engagement (observations supported this) instead of supporting empowerment and participation in the decision-making process:

> *Currently I'm seeing the product team starting to say, 'okay we've got a plan, then let the data team explore this or that', but I've got a feeling the data team are not really involved from the beginning. (Interviewee 9 – spiral 5)*

Even those outside of the Product Management function who had indicated that they had some authority and autonomy in decision making felt that their capacity to do so was constrained:

> *I think so if I have – a big if – if I have more time to focus on that, yes, definitely [autonomy in decision making]. Not enough to focus on this important stuff. I guess there is too much important stuff we, as a team needs to do, but I don't think we have enough bandwidth to focus on every single one of them. (Interviewee 4 – spiral 4)*

Even when authority was recognised within The Product, it was not enacted consistently. The few who would make decisions that were complied with were not always consistent in performing their responsibility or even having their authority recognised outside of The Product. There was a prime case of people outside of The Product trying in vain to identify anyone with a form of 'authority' to make decisions regarding compliance and regulation:

> *I spent a huge amount of time working with relatively junior people. Things that are not a great use of my time but there was nobody to escalate that to, or there was no – or as is in one case, I have escalated that to numerous different people as the problem had circulated. (Interviewee 13 – spiral 4)*

Where authority was recognised both within The Product and outside, there were instances of it not being embraced or owned by those who had been 'democratically' nominated to fulfil the duties:

> *I think it's common knowledge, but no one really owns that process. I think now we have to support the team established in [location outside of Australia], but they need to sign up for that responsibility. (Interviewee 4 – spiral 4)*

One interviewee explained the resulting indecision as a fear of responsibility:

If you make them too aware of their responsibilities; if you make them too frightened of their responsibilities, then what's their first response going to be? No. That's – we don't want that either. (Interviewee 3 – spiral 5)

In the absence of certain responsibilities being realised, some individuals attempted unsuccessfully to assume a position of authority. It was unclear if this reflected an aspiration to obtain an esteemed title or a genuine attempt to resolve such issues. Either way, their understanding of what such a responsibility entailed was lacking:

After many conversations, two questions to ask came up. Whose budget is paying for this? Who would be called together in a crisis management team?

I've seen recently two instances where the business owner has been given as the technical lead, and I go back [and say] that can't be right. You're not the person who's negotiating with the person who's giving us this data. You're not the person who's ultimately going to provide budget – and when you ask those two questions, they say 'oh no, no I don't have that'. Okay, so then you know you're not the data owner. (Interviewee 13 – spiral 4)

It was not just in what seemed to be desperate attempts to identify the right authority that a net was cast wide. Data gained from observations and interviews showed that too many people were involved in official decision-making forums for The Product, highlighting the idiom of 'where everyone is responsible, no one is really responsible':

[In hindsight] I guess, clear division on role and responsibilities was needed. I feel like sometimes, it's a bit blurred within [The Product]. I think that would probably be one of the changes I'd make. (Interviewee 5 – spiral 5)

The old monthly reviews where everybody used to attend, and they were 50 pages long and they didn't really outline the risks. They've changed. I've made it very, very hard for them to hide any of the risks. (Interviewee 8 – spiral 5)

It's hard to debate. Is it right or wrong? No one knows. There is no proper process to vet that sort of idea, to say this thing is very – this thing is [unclear]. Everyone is – everything is just an opinion. (Interviewee 4 – spiral 5)

While processes and forums were created, they did not provide a meaningful decision-making platform. In fact, the processes established to facilitate decision making were too relaxed and ineffective:

We might get it recorded in a meeting, but it's not formal. (Interviewee 5 – spiral 4)

It all gets back to that system that we've never put together, which is monitoring… (Interviewee 10 – spiral 5)

Disappeared. Well, there's no one managing that. No one owns that requirement, the business requirement. (Interviewee 4 – spiral 5)

It was not just the sheer number of people involved in a decision or the weak processes that were problematic. Those involved had little knowledge or were not equipped to make informed decisions. At one point, the framework used by The Product and Digital Unit was blamed; this was the start-up style of leveraging Agile and a flexible approach that led to failures in decision making:

Again, Agile drives you to that. You've got ten different people giving you ten sets of ideas and you're trying to create one product. Well, we ended up with nothing. Then you ended up with whoever screamed loudest got their idea built. That's what I felt we were probably guilty of. That's why I think Agile and demos masks a lot of ills of crap software being built in the background. If it looks okay on the surface, it must be good. Well, no. (Interviewee 4 – spiral 4)

The inadequacies of key decision-makers in The Product, as perceived by one of the Executive Sponsors, led them to ultimately take over and make the decisions, further reinforcing the belief that the decisions were being 'dictated'.

You had [original Product Manager] who couldn't design, [key Technical Lead] that couldn't design, [key Technical Lead #2] can't design, so they're all struggling. I was almost half designing it, coming down from the mountain to half design things because nobody else could. Then they brought in [new Product Manager] and he was meant to be holy grail and I think he blew up after about three weeks as well. (Interviewee not referenced given potential to identify from executive role provided)

A perfect structure of equivocation was created, with forums attended by too many, roles and responsibilities unclear, certain roles not fulfilling their responsibility, and those with ideas not being enabled and supported. The veneer of some decision-making structure certainly existed, but beyond the surface, it was a never-ending labyrinth. This all led to a modern version of the 'Phoenix Project'[11] under the guise of a Product and Agile organisation, one aspiring to be innovative in the style of a start-up. In the loose decision-making structure, one key tenet had to be upheld, making the idea of being a start-up with no defined exclusion zone within a 60-year-old enterprise unlikely to work:

This is part of a listed business, as a listed business you have to have those [processes and decision-making forums] in place sooner. You can't operate like a start-up because the fact of the matter is when you're five people and it doesn't work, you can just dissolve it, and everybody's learnt their lessons. Whereas we will have to answer for the decisions that have been made in that process, so they need to be documented, and they need to be understood. (Interviewee 13 – spiral 5)

5.6 Theme 5: Infantilising the Organisation

Opinions expressed in the interviews and across observations repeatedly referenced The Product, Unit or The Organisation as being in its 'infancy' regarding software/product development:

[11] Originating from a book called 'The Phoenix Project' (2013), it has become an IT management fable, representing concepts and scenarios depicting failing companies due to various factors, including an inability to respond to customers and overrunning work programs.

> *So not only is it new in terms of for The Organisation, but it's also because it's a new business and then we also don't have that direction. So all of this is three layers of new. (Interviewee 8 – spiral 4)*

A range of activities observed across 24 months' worth of participant observations and reflections across each phase culminated in what was referred to as the infantilisation of the core business of The Organisation. The term infantilisation is influenced by the readings in Mariana Mazzucato's (2022) *The Big Con* and Lord Agnew's leaked quotation regarding Whitehall being 'infantilised' due to its reliance on expensive management consultants (Dunhill & Syal, 2020). The Organisation's infantilisation occurred through a multistage process similar to Lord Agnew's concerns.

These stages included:

- Treating key people with little regard, simply as 'human capital', and failing to recognise and utilise their capability respectfully. (observations in spiral 2 – 5, interviews in spiral 4 and 5)
- Those who left The Organisation or were forced to leave were often replaced by more than one person without the requisite knowledge or intention of learning. (markedly noted in interviews in spiral 5)
- How business operations were managed resulted in constraints on the ability of the delivery teams. (observations in spiral 3 – 5)
- In conjunction with leadership incompetence, these constraints were used as a basis for blaming delivery teams.(spirals 2 – 5 and interviews in spiral 4 and 5)
- The Organisation set priorities at the Board level globally but provided little support and endorsement for these to be enacted.
- The selection of fickle external partners with no other intent than absorbing the IP of The Organisation.

Behaviour and decision making leading to infantilisation had started in one of the early Commit design sessions. This session was held when precautionary COVID-19 compliance measures were yet to be implemented. However, The Organisation initiated a risk-based approach, which included having teams utilise 50% onsite participation and 50% online attendance. This session was to be facilitated by a seasoned Agile and Innovation lead, with participants onsite selected to represent the different teams. On the day before the workshop, last-minute changes were made. These included the facilitator being replaced by their manager after falling ill and the exclusion of several onsite participants due to a smaller size room being booked. One of the individuals excluded was the Data Science Manager. The observations and journal reflections noted the concern from the Data Science team and other data SMEs of the lack of onsite presence of a data leader or, at the very least, someone who understood the domain. Some referenced the people selected to be in the room as 'talkers', and there were doubts about any progress being made. What eventuated was a very poor dynamic, with the people onsite dominating the conversation and those required to deliver, mostly dialling in remotely, silenced. This was the first hybrid meeting of such size for the participants. No protocol existed to ensure onsite and online participants' audibility and inclusion. The divide was clear: those attending online were not seen or heard. As a result, those attending online were not actively engaged, rebelled, and began building small units of support based on where they thought the source of information should come from rather than the voices heard in the workshop. It was stated by one individual outside of the Data Science team that if the update or direction did not come from the Data Science Manager, they would not take this information onboard:

> *Do not trust the information unless it comes from you. (Quote from participant M from preliminary research observation).*

The workshop did not achieve its goal, and while planned to occur across 1.5 days, it continued for a longer period with the following series of events taking place:

a. The second half-day was extended to a full day.
b. An additional third day was organised under the guise of being a separate 'Minimal Viable Product (MVP) workshop'.
c. As this MVP workshop did not achieve an agreed outcome, a 'to-do' list was distributed via e-mail without discussion.

d. As this list was unclear, a seven-hour workshop continuing from the MVP session concluded that the minimal viable product (MVP) would be a conceptual data model (while an important foundation for The Product, the final product was intended to be digital and data-oriented for a consumer to use).

The outcome of this workshop was contested by members of the team who were willing to stall work until a clear direction was obtained (observations in spiral 1). This saw the Data Science Manager take the initiative to discuss this matter with the Executive Sponsor, as there were no apparent escalations from others regarding their concerns. A confirmation of the intent of the MVP was achieved within this discussion and relayed back to all other parties (bypassing The Product Manager).

In this instance, the 1.5 days became four, with an additional two days of added load from parallel conversations and meetings to overcome the confusion from these sessions. This type of saga was repeated several times throughout the study in other workshops. While there was variability in the combinations of participants in these sessions from large groups to selected teams, there was one consistency – the need for additional sessions. In one instance, a typical ritual in the Agile process, known as the Retrospective, had to be repeated three times. The Retrospective serves the purpose of identifying and reflecting on what worked, what did not, and the reasons why by engaging the team for input. In this instance, the feedback provided by the wider team was contested by the UX Manager and The Product Manager (observation in spiral 1). An outcome of such a Retrospective is to improve teamwork and performance, yet this situation highlighted how this was received with combativeness from parts of the leadership team.

In another instance, the Data Science team was requested to attend fortnightly sessions with the Head of Digital Australia and Executive Sponsor of The Product to ensure 'they understood what they were doing and stop unnecessary work' (quote from an observation within spiral 2). This effectively overrode any direction provided by The Product Manager.

In a third instance, the first Commit approval after the MVP was delivered had to be pushed out by a month (note that the release cycles of the four different products in The

Organisation were intended to be synchronised within three-month periods). Such delays could have a ripple effect on future design, decision making, and planning sessions across each product. The delay was intended to allow the teams more time to refine the approval presentation. Once it was delivered, the approval remarks from the Global Head of Digital hinted that the process rather than the delays or quality of the product were the focus:

> *Budget only to be used for approved cost items and if there were no paying customers then ensure there would be customer advocates. (Quote from participant L observation within spiral 1).*

Finally, in a fourth instance, a separate workshop was organised to solve 'the big rocks' (a phrase used by the Executive Sponsor to denote the complex problems that needed to be resolved). 85% of the delivery and design team for The Product were onsite for these sessions (observation within spiral 3), meaning their focus and time were solely for the workshop. While there would be no active development of The Product during this time, these sessions were expected to resolve fundamental design issues to facilitate future delivery and completion. On the first day (of the two-day workshop), the schedule and agenda were almost completely ignored, resulting in a two-hour delay. Frustrations were noted among the participants but not among the Executive Sponsor or other leadership in attendance (observation within spiral 3).

When delivery teams were engaged in self-directed and related tasks for building The Product (i.e., four-day training on the new technology platform that would host all digital products), the Executive Sponsor remarked with frustration and dismay:

> *Not impressed, the entire team being away will eat into the delivery of The Product. (observation of participant B from an observation in spiral 2).*

At least 15 to 30 parties for delivery, design, and architecture were entangled in almost three business weeks of unnecessary workshops planned to be two to five full-day sessions. The added confusion of changes in approach, outcomes, and apparent forced-upon requirements from executive leaders saw senior delivery parties frustrated and constricted in what they could deliver (observation in spiral 3). When the teams engaged in activities that contributed to product development, such as training, the blame fell upon them for the delays.

Observations throughout the study revealed that most of the delivery team started to give up on the design and sought direction from executive leaders to prevent themselves from being blamed. Their key capabilities (for which they were hired and why they were in these roles) were effectively ignored.

Additionally, there was disingenuity in the regard for talent. At the Board and Executive leadership level, Data Science was identified as a 'mission critical' skill. The group with recognised and accredited Data Science skills in The Organisation was officially under the remit of the Data Science Manager. When seeking clarification on the meaning of 'mission critical', not one person, not even HR, could reply (observations in spiral 5). Wanting to leverage this renewed interest in the team, the Data Science Manager sought to baseline the team's salaries to ensure they were adequately recognised for their work. The new boss to the Data Science Manager, who had only been in The Organisation for seven weeks, stated with absolute certainty that this had already been done and the team were well catered for. None of this information had been circled back to the Data Science Manager or the individuals. Regardless, the baselining exercise was pursued, with the results proving contrary to what the new boss had stated. At least two needed significant pay increases (being well below their bands), and another two warranted an uplift to align with corporate policy regarding performance processes. Even worse were the salary bands of the Data Science team, where the 'mission critical' skill was put in a category lower than the average IT worker. Bringing these newly found facts to the new boss resulted in a response of complete disinterest. When further pursued by the Data Science Manager, the outcome changed from disinterest to deciding 'whether there was budget' to pursue (quote from spiral 5). Such behaviour was the opposite of the expectant treatment of 'mission critical' skills. With teams not provided adequate support, incentives, and respect in their roles, plus the added confusion resulting from the dynamic of external 'partnerships', the slow demise of progress was facilitated.

The worst of these partnerships occurred with one of the 'Big 4' accounting firms, which was not recognised as having digital skills in the products The Organisation was building. Furthermore, they had minimal product experience and minimal domain expertise. The initial due diligence and partnership meetings were held with much secrecy (observations in spiral 4), and the final partnership contracts, such as the executed master services agreement, were only shown in PDF extracts to delivery teams (observations in spirals 4 and 5). This limited the delivery teams' understanding of contractual aspects and the partner's role.

There was no introduction to the key resources, and no RACI[12] or operating model was finalised before the partnership initiation. Patterns of behaviour of the Big 4 partner began to emerge: behaviour obvious to delivery teams but not to those who had orchestrated the partnership. The ‘partner’ was there only to absorb IP and cannibalise The Product for their own purposes, as they had little knowledge of the domain. An example of the lack of true partnership occurred when The Organisation was blindsided by a tactic of the Big 4 partner. They organised a workshop under the guise of an exploratory exercise to understand the existing Data Lifecycle. What eventuated was the development of a RACI within the templates of the Big 4 partner, in a document not shared with The Organisation and with pressure to approve and sign off these discussions within 60 minutes. In this RACI, rather than individuals being assigned, The Organisation names were entered, indicating the true absence of partnership intent. One of the key architects remarked in this session:

> *If this was a true partnership, we should not care which organisation we are in, rather who is doing this work. (Quote from observation in spiral 4).*

Another approach the Big 4 partner took was to start breaking The Organisation apart. For example, meetings occurred with individuals and specific teams separately, almost pitting them against one another as they did not know the other parties' responses and forced more meetings to qualify what was being stated (observations in spiral 4). This

[12] A matrix defining obligations based on four dimensions of possiblity (responsibility, accountability, consulted, informed).

climaxed when the usage of data arose. The Big 4 partner could use data from The Organisation, but in the reverse situation, individual NDAs and EULAs needed to be signed (observations in spirals 4 and 5). Concerns about this were raised early by delivery teams, but these escalations were perceived as further delaying the development process. Effectively, what was invoked was a legal process that stalled the development of The Product for The Organisation.

This systematic approach reduced The Organisation to a weak player in what was meant to be a leading and revolutionary product for the industry. Many key and talented individuals left The Organisation, including a UX designer one year out of a graduate program (observation in spiral 1); the Head of Advisory who was the interface to the business and customers of The Product (observation in spiral 1); and the Acting Product Manager (observation in spiral 2). Furthermore, the Executive Sponsor of The Product was made redundant (observation in spiral 3) as was a Technology Manager in the business, who was a great advocate for and partner to The Product (observation in spiral 4). Finally, the Lead Architect resigned after 20 years of service (observation in spiral 3).

Those who stayed and had capability showed fear and exasperation:

> *I will lose my job over this (in reference to delays caused by seniors, but this individual still having to deliver on time; quote from preliminary research observation).*
>
> ---
>
> *I will leave if this continues. (Observation in spiral 1).*
>
> ---
>
> *I feel thrown under the bus. (Observation in spiral 1).*

Those who remained ignored delivery teams, focusing on the 'partnership' and slowly relinquished more power to the partner. In this series of grossly incompetent events, the best indication of how weak The Organisation had become was embedded in the results published in the *People Engagement Survey* (observation in spiral 5), where the score was the lowest ever experienced in the history of The Organisation. Three key perspectives stood out for the Digital department: change management was poor; there was no autonomy in individual roles; and collaboration was minimal or non-existent.

5.7 Chapter Summary

The decisions and outcomes related to the responsible use of data in The Product provided the foundation and lens for understanding The Organisation's ethical decision making attempts.

This process revealed five dominant themes (summarised in Table 5.2) pertinent to answering the research question: What is the nature of the social dynamics that manifest in attempts to ensure ethical decision making within a defined context?

Theme 1	Responsible use of data is not considered a value proposition
Theme 2	Product Managers provide no leadership
Theme 3	External factors are a greater prompt of change
Theme 4	Pretence of formal decision making – mask of formal layers
Theme 5	Infantilising The Organisation

Table 5.2 Thematic Insights of the Social Dynamics that Manifest in Attempts to Ensure Ethical Decision Making Within The Organisation

Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusions

6.1 Chapter Overview

This study presents a case in which enterprise structure, processes, and procedures were not sufficient to achieve ethical decision making; at best such structural elements are insufficient to always guarantee ethical processes and outcomes. Recognition and the incorporation of the value proposition of ethical decision making, combined with an appropriate cultural context, is vital to support such behaviour. In this study, practices within The Organisation revealed that espoused intentions were disregarded in favour of political and individual interests.

Through the case of a single organisation, this research aimed to explore the impact of social dynamics on the formulation and enactment of decisions that determine the nature of everyday practices within The Organisation. The literature review (Chapter 2) revealed that few studies address the relationship between the social dynamics within an organisation and the ethical nature of the decisions being taken by its members, with almost no case studies that facilitate an understanding of the antecedents of ethical decision making in an organisational context. Responding to calls for a better understanding of the social and political dimensions of decision making (Craft, 2013; O'Fallon & Butterfield, 2005; Treviño, 1986), as an 'insider researcher' I explored through an ethnographic methodology the complex question: What is the nature of the social dynamics that manifest in attempts to ensure ethical decision making within a defined corporate context? This entailed consideration of two further specific areas:

- How organic is decision making in organisations, and within a defined context, what facilitates the development and enactment of an ethical decision?
- Can a qualitative study of the politics and learning associated with ethical decision making in a defined organisational context enrich our theoretical understanding of the ethical decision-making process?

Following Jones' (1991, p.367) definition of ethics, this research views the nature of organisational ethical decision making as that which conforms to what the larger community regards as being 'both legally and morally acceptable' to it. As such, this research aimed to shed light on and enrich our understanding of ethical decision making through the lens of participant experience, observation, and interviews.

In this study, the decisions and outcomes related to the responsible use of data in The Product provided the foundation for understanding the ethical decision-making domain. This understanding was gained through data and insights from participant observation and interviews, which were synthesised to enable the interpretation of themes and the ultimate delivery of an answer to the research question. Further, a cross-reference summary of the key themes from this research and how they relate to the findings conveyed in the extant literature is provided in Appendix C.

This chapter proceeds as follows. Section 6.2 presents the key insights relating to the research question, and Section 6.3 discusses the study's boundaries. Section 6.4 presents the theoretical contributions of this research, and Section 6.5 details the practical implications for organisational management practice. Section 6.6 presents a reflection on learnings as an insider researcher. Finally, Section 6.7 concludes with a discussion of future research directions.

6.2 What is the Nature of the Social Dynamics that Manifest in Attempts to Ensure Ethical Decision Making Within a Defined Context?

The social dynamics identified through the study revealed the interplay of power bases, values, and tacit organisational structures as being key factors in the manifestation of ethical decision making. This section explores the relation of the research insights to the existing body of research.

Individual power bases are a stronger influence than structure. Organisational structure appeared to have little influence on the ethical nature of decisions taken.

Studies in the extant literature are contradictory regarding the role of structure in ethical decision making. Studies such as Desai and Kouchaki (2017) and De Cremer and Moore (2003) reveal that organisational structure has a positive influence on ethical decision making, particularly in the organisation of tasks, while Moore et al. (2012) indicate that organisational hierarchy results in diffused responsibility and an absence of ethical decision making. In this study, the organisational structure had little influence on the ethical nature of decisions taken. Rather, individuals, particularly those with senior roles, wielded power in ways that contradicted the espoused commitment to ethical decision making within The Organisation. While the overt Agile methodology and ‘start-up’ culture were intended to encourage an ecosystem that supported collaboration and ethical decision making, the organisational environment endorsed a culture of individual power play *masked behind a pretence of formal decision making* (Theme 4; see Chapter 5, Section 5.5).

This pretence of a formal structure, where rules, policies, and procedures regarding ethical behaviour are rhetorical and not taken seriously, led to individuals exercising their own judgement and often acting in their own interests (Noval & Stahl, 2015). This was evident in The Organisation, where some individuals did not consider *the responsible use of data as a value proposition* (Theme 1; see Chapter 5, Section 5.2). Instead, their focus was on revenue as the sole value proposition that mattered. This is referred to in the extant literature as the ‘business frame’ rather than the ‘ethical frame’ (see Tenbrunsel & Messick, 1999; Tenbrunsel & Smith-Crowe, 2008). According to Tenbrunsel and colleagues, the business frame often leads to revenue-generating decisions triumphing over ethical decisions. In The Organisation, the business frame was internalised through observed examples of revenue being the primary value sought by those holding powerful positions (Bandura, 1986). With Product Managers and others in key roles endorsing revenue as a key factor in decision making and *responsible use of data not considered a value proposition* (Theme 1; see Chapter 5, Section 5.2), individuals learnt this behaviour and complied with such an approach (Gould & Kaplan, 2011). As social information processing theory and associated theories suggest (see Kish-Gerphart et al., 2010;

Reichers & Schneider, 1990, as cited in Kuenzi et al., 2019), employees are vigilant observers of their environments, searching for information to help them understand what is valued and, therefore, how to behave, particularly in forming perceptions of the organisation's ethical climate. Fuqua and Newman (2006) argue that certain foundational practices need to exist and be taken seriously in an organisation before ethical leadership can manifest. Tenbrunsel et al. (2003) refer to this as a ripe ethical infrastructure. The Organisation lacked such practices, resulting in decisions that *infantilised the organisation* (Theme 5; see Chapter 5, Section 5.6). Ethical blindness, defined by Palazzo et al. (2012, p. 325) as 'the temporary inability of a decision maker to see the ethical dimension of a decision at stake' prevailed within The Organisation.

Within the data team were several 'ethical champions' and a few others interested in the responsible application of data principles. This appeared to endorse the view of MacDougall et al. (2014) that smaller teams are more capable of holding one another accountable for the nature of decisions. As The Product was intended to be data-rich, it could have been expected that the data team would play a pivotal role in decision making. Yet the decision-making power of the data team was curtailed by the politics embedded in the reporting structure. The data team reported to the Australia Head of Digital, who was viewed within The Organisation as a challenger to the Global Head of Digital. The 'business frame' dominated decision making within The Organisation, as all other technical delivery teams reported directly to individuals who were the direct hires of the Global Head of Digital.

Gaining insight into whether teams and other forms of organisational structure could have indeed improved the ethical decision-making process was prevented by constant restructuring events that further *infantilised The Organisation* (Theme 5; see Chapter 5, Section 5.6) by strengthening individual power bases in the governance of The Organisation. The rhetoric of *responsible use of data* was never enacted in practice and, without an ethical infrastructure to support it, was unlikely to be enacted.

Where roles and the values of those who occupy them are unsupportive, an ethical decision-making ecosystem is difficult to build.

In this study, those in executive product decision-making positions and customer-facing roles were insular in their decision-making approach. This contradicts Weber's (1995) idea that those within technical teams are likely to have a narrow perspective and individual locus of analysis. However, there may be an explanation that goes beyond the role and extends Weber's (1995) statements to include belief systems. Most participants, particularly those in very senior and product technical decision-making roles in The Organisation, had started their careers in engineering or IT. Once these individuals were promoted into executive leadership roles, they continued to exercise their strong technical mindset.

A strategy endorsed by MacDougall et al. (2014, p.17) to overcome individual decision making that favoured 'business frame' judgement, or self-interest, is the empowerment of smaller units, such as a team. This, they posit, will facilitate team members holding each other accountable for their actions. This was not evident within The Organisation, where those with Product decision making responsibility in technical and delivery teams failed to hold one another accountable for ethical decision making and for the responsible use of data. As these decisions were not illegal but ethically questionable, they did not attract notice, scrutiny, or any other reaction (Mohliver, 2019). Holding each other accountable for ethical decision making was not regarded as necessary, and there is no evidence that the failure to use data responsibly was ever questioned in The Organisation.

Weber (1995) also postulated that those in customer or boundary-spanning departments would have a more 'cosmopolitan' locus. As is evident in this study, the Product Managers did not display such behaviour, with their prior experience overshadowing the capability to take a broader perspective on issues. In this instance, *Product Managers failed to champion and understand the value sought by customers, providing no clear leadership* (Theme 2; see Chapter 5, Section 5.3). This is not the first time Weber's (1995) original findings have been contradicted. Weber reproduced the research in a different industry and found that it was organisational ethical climate rather than organisational structure that determined ethical decision making (Weber & Seger, 2002). The later study also recognised that differences may exist across industries.

The pretence of a formal structure, where rules, policies and procedures regarding ethical behaviour are rhetorical and not taken seriously, led to individuals exercising their own judgement.

A defined structure, rules and even procedures were not wholly absent from The Organisation, however those that were in place were not effective in countering the dominant business logic that had become entrenched in the culture and beliefs. The business frame assumed was one that originated from the senior leadership team and those with prominent decision-making roles. With their actions being consistent in this behaviour the dominant logic formed had a singular focus on revenue. This resulted in the espoused values that were found in strategic documents and decision-making frameworks differing to those from The Organisation's actions and pursuits.

This behaviour not only exhibited what has been referenced in the extant literature as defiance to ethical decision making (see Tenbrunsel & Messick, 1999; Tenbrunsel & Smith-Crowe, 2008), but it also eventuated in The Organisation being unsuccessful in their means of achieving the strategic goals of The Product.

Ethical codes and a few ethical champions are not sufficient, but large customers can initiate the development of an ethical decision-making ecosystem

The establishment of a code of ethics within The Organisation had little to no effect on decision making. While there was a set of principles to guide the review of product development and release, these were never adopted. Contrary to the findings of McKinney et al. (2010), establishing principles for responsible use of data was ineffective in transforming decision-making behaviour in The Organisation.

The point made by MacDougall et al (2014) that small teams are more capable of holding one another accountable for responsible use of data, was evident to some degree within the data team where there were several 'ethical champions' (i.e. Chen and Trevino 2023, Kish-Gerphart et al., 2009 and Morrison 2014) and a few others who displayed belated interest in the responsible application of data principles. Thus, as The Product was intended to be data rich, it was expected that the data team would play a pivotal decision-making role in its nature. However, such decision-making power was curtailed by the politics emanating from the reporting structure. The data team reported to the Australia Head of Digital, who was viewed within The Organisation as a challenger to the Global Head of Digital.

The study shows, however, that The Organisation did have the ability to adopt the 'ethical frame' when forced to do so (Yuthas et al., 2004). In the absence of regulatory enforcement, it took a large customer to demand an ethical stance by The Organisation. Advocacy for change in this case took the form of education and learning through emotive storytelling, like that referred to by Zhong (2011). Due to the pressure exerted by this large customer, The Organisation ensured that every individual involved, regardless of their role, had their annual corporate goals aligned and measured against the active involvement in maintaining the 'ethical frame' for this customer. Generally, however, a state of 'ethical blindness' prevailed and the focus on revenue and the 'business frame' was fanatically pursued across The Organisation. Ethical blindness, defined by Palazzo et al (2012, p.325) as 'the temporary inability of a decision maker to see the ethical dimension of a decision at stake' ensured that within The Organisation, the rhetoric of the ethical decision making was rarely enacted in practice.

6.2.1 How Organic is Organisational Decision Making in Organisations and, within a Defined Context, is there a Common Ecosystem that Binds the Development and Outcome of an Ethical Decision?

According to the Cambridge English Dictionary (2024), using the term 'organic' in management or business relates to 'the growth in a company, etc., that is achieved without buying other companies'. This seemingly refers to the organisation inventing or innovating the way forward without heavily relying on external influences. In this research, the notion of 'organic' was determined by whether The Organisation's propensity for ethical decision making was established through its unique endeavours and practices and whether it was framed by theoretical principles or a binding foundational architecture, such as an ecosystem.

Ethical decision making may include emotional dimensions rather than relying on templatised processes (Greene et al., 2004; Haidt, 2001; Salvador & Folger, 2009).

Understanding the role played by the social dynamics within The Organisation involved exploring available models of ethical decision making. Regardless of the model adopted, the process is comprised of steps that include recognising the value proposition (Jones, 1991; Rest, 1984), followed by perceiving relevant practices (Hunt & Vitell, 1986), and finally, establishing measures of awareness of enactment through diligent monitoring (Tenbrunsel & Smith-Crowe 2008). Within The Organisation, the crucial first stage was never adopted beyond the data team, who attempted to take on the role of ethical champions (Chen et al., 2020). However, they experienced strong resistance and social isolation in attempting to fulfil this responsibility without a supporting ecosystem. The 'organic' internal social dynamics proved to be a greater influencer than formal decision-making structures.

The *responsible use of data was not valued as a proposition* (Theme 1; see Chapter 5, Section 5.2). Those in decision-making positions showed a lack of interest in acknowledging and learning about this practice, demonstrated in the actions of *Product Managers providing no leadership* (Theme 2; see Chapter 5, Section 5.3) and activities leading to the *infantilisation of The Organisation* (Theme 5; see Chapter 5, Section 5.6). Rather than utilising Agile practices of Retrospectives to provide a forum of convivial disagreement (Kaptein, 2011) and learning, silent acceptance of the status quo was endorsed by those who may have been advocates for valuing the responsible use of data. This behaviour was exacerbated by management's convoluted approach to change management and restructuring, *masked behind a pretence of formal decision making* (Theme 4; see Chapter 5, Section 5.5). Ironically, this 'organic' approach to the responsible use of data was also strongly influenced by US cultural assumptions, whereby *external factors prompted change* (Theme 3; see Chapter 5, Section 5.4) resulting in *Product Managers providing no leadership* (Theme 2; see Chapter 5, Section 5.3).

6.2.2 How Can a Qualitative Study of the Politics and Learning Associated with Ethical Decision Making in a Defined Organisational Context Contribute to a Theoretical Understanding of the Ethical Decision-Making Process?

One of the conclusions from a recent systematic literature review of a closely related topic is that little attention is given to what the authors called environmental factors, including social, political, and cultural elements (Birkstedt et al., 2023). Furthermore, and as highlighted in the literature review of this research (Chapter 2), there is a marked absence of observations 'in-action' outside of a few studies. For example, Reinecke and Ansari (2015) observe decision making regarding a fair price for sustainable coffee, and Burton et al. (2018) observe Quaker religious organisation decision making. Most studies in this field utilise positivist research methodologies (see Craft, 2013; O'Fallon & Butterfield, 2005). With inappropriate ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning positivist social research, the concepts of organisational politics and learning are typically avoided by such research methodologies on the argument of the subjectivity of data and un-generalisable findings. From literature reviews across a fifteen-year period, only two positivist studies raise the topic of politics. Ford and Richardson (1994) concluded that political factors had no significant impact on organisational practices based on studies by Hegarty and Sims (1978), while the study by Deshpande (2009) in Craft (2013) found that political factors were more likely to induce unethical behaviour. There is also scarce reference generally to training and organisational learning as a factor in ethical decision making. O'Fallon and Butterfield's (2005) literature review identifies only three studies that address these issues across 174 articles. Figure 6.1 provides a list of constructs identified by O'Fallon and Butterfield (2005). The research methodologies used in most of these studies avoid political and other social factors, outside of individual traits, that may influence the phenomenon of ethical decision making in organisations. This leaves wide gaps in explaining the potential influence of social dynamics on these practices (Garrad et al., 2020, p. 390; Castañer & Ketokivi, 2018).

Construct
Individual factors
Age
Awareness
Biases
CMD/Ethical judgment
Conflict
Ed., Emp., Job Sat. and Work Exp.
Gender
Intent
Locus of control
Machiavellianism
Nationality
Need for cognition
Organizational commitment
Other individual effects
Philosophy/value orientation
Professional affiliation
Religion
Significant others
Moral Intensity
Organizational Factors
Business competitiveness
Codes of ethics
Ethical climate/culture
External environment
Industry type
Opportunity
Organizational climate/culture
Organizational Size
Other organizational effects
Rewards and sanctions
Significant others
Subjective norms
Training
Totals*

Figure 6.1 Constructs Utilised in Empirical Organisational Studies

Note. From 'A Review of The Empirical Ethical Decision-Making Literature: 1996–2003' by M. J. O'Fallon and K. D. Butterfield, 2005, Journal of Business Ethics, 59, p. 375. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10551-005-2929-7

An interpretivist approach, and the use of an ethnographic research methodology, provided an opportunity to understand 'what was going on' within the organisational context. Through observations, participatory activities and interviews with relevant individuals, access was gained to their perspectives on the social dynamics being enacted. Probing questions in the interviews provided rich data on these dynamics. When combined with insights gained from vigilant participant observations during the enactment of everyday decision-making practices, this data provided insights into the political context and the social dynamics it fostered. Specifically, these decisions and enactments were understood within the situational and social context of the espoused responsible use of data in developing The Product for The Organisation. Furthermore, the ethnographic data interpretation and analysis used in this study enabled the uncovering of the influence of political and social dynamics on ethical decision making within The Organisation.

This study shows that if ethical decision making is to manifest, frameworks and organisational structure alone are insufficient. It also requires appropriate recognition of the value proposition this practice offers, and a cultural context in which supporting values are nurtured and enacted (O'Fallon & Butterfield, 2005). In The Organisation, rhetoric substituted for practice concerning ethical decision making and the responsible use of data.

The nature of the data collected from the study would not have been possible without the enactment of ethnographic research and the participant observations of an 'insider researcher'. The 'in the context' observations and ethnographic methods of this research uncovered candid moments over an eighteen-month period that would have been difficult to achieve through any other research methodology. The themes from interviews, reflective journal entries, and observations explicitly linked the phenomenon of what was being observed to what was experienced (uncovering the difference between espoused and in-practice organisational conduct). The combination of both enabled the possibility to explore, deeply understand and interpret the dynamics between the participants and the role played by politics in the context of The Organisation.

6.3 Boundaries to this Research

While Chapter 4 provides key context regarding The Organisation ('field site') in which the study was performed, it does not highlight the boundary cuts made to perform the ethnographic study (Suchman as cited in Prior Ch 4 and Ch 9, 2011). The boundary cuts refer to the decisions on where to place the study boundaries. These boundaries define the focus of the study. As such, the knowledge generated from the study is bounded by the following:

1. The ethnographic process was conducted over a period of 18 months within a single organisation in Australia.
2. Interviews focused on a single digital product in a domain traditionally not considered a core function of The Organisation.
3. The selection of people to be observed and interviewed was based on my (the 'insider researcher') perception of them as being accountable or influential in the decision-making process for The Product.

4. As highlighted in Chapter 3, in this ethnographic process, my role is to be considered the research instrument that defined the observation techniques, collected the data, and synthesised it to understand The Organisation's social dynamics. This meant my experiences as a professional and researcher framed my apprehension and, together with my supervisors, the interpretation of the social dynamics and politics manifesting in The Organisation.
5. My role as a participant observer drew on my leadership roles with over ten years of experience in the digital architecture, infrastructure, and data domains.

As the research focused on the social dynamics operating within decision-making domains, these boundaries needed to be adaptive to the prevailing context. For example, the global COVID-19 pandemic resulted in lockdowns and social isolation for most actors based in Australia. These complex prevailing circumstances thus impacted social dynamics. To what extent they impacted these social dynamics is unknown. However, they impacted the data collection process, with interviews being conducted online and observations limited to those gained through video conferencing, online meetings, online communications, and some degree of in-person dialogue.

Furthermore, the constant restructuring of The Organisation led to many key staff leaving during the data collection period and to consequent changes in the social dynamics within and beyond the defined context of the research. Despite these contextual and social phenomena, an attempt was made to maintain the defined boundaries of the study by focusing on understanding and interpreting the social dynamics of ethical decision making within a defined context. This focus on the social dynamics of ethical decision making provided a means to discover and identify what may otherwise have been ‘silenced’ (see Star, 2007, in Balka’s Obituary for Star, 2010). Given these boundaries, the consequent insights do not reflect the entire Organisation or the phenomenon of ethical decision making generally. While the research insights identify important factors influencing this phenomenon, they should not be generalised beyond the defined context of this research.

6.4 Theoretical Contributions

As highlighted in the literature review (Chapter 2), very few existing studies are embedded within an organisation to research the impact of social dynamics on decision making. Most studies on this phenomenon utilise interview- or survey-based approaches. As Buckingham Shum (2015) commented, 'data points in a graph are tiny portholes onto a rich human world, and encapsulates some of the concerns that educators have about the misuse of blunt, blind analytics – proxy indicators that do not do justice to the complexity of real people and the rich forms that learning take'. This ethnographic case study provides an in-context study of decision making within an Australian corporation. It contributes to the theoretical understanding of the phenomenon of ethical decision making in organisations, where people and ideas are 'placed' in this data (Anderson, 2024).

This study endorses the socially constructed nature of the ethical decision-making practice by revealing the influence of social and political dynamics on this practice. Further, the use of an ethnographic research methodology has facilitated the following contributions of this research to our knowledge of the practice of ethical decision making:

- Marking the phenomenon of rhetorically espoused intentions substituting for enacted practices.
- Highlighting the role of social dynamics in the execution of ethical decision making within a defined organisational context.
- Identifying the importance of appropriate values underpinning the ethical decision-making practice.
- Demonstrating the strength and relevance of ethnography in organisational research, specifically, the efficacy of an interpretivist research methodology in identifying the role of political factors in the execution of ethical decision making within a defined organisational context.

6.5 Practical Implications for Organisational Management Practice

The Product was intended to assist The Organisation in decision making. The assumption was that The Organisation's 60 years' worth of domain knowledge would make it difficult for competitors to enter such an opportunity. Data was needed to build this capability through The Product. However, without purpose and knowledge of how and why the data was being used, core principles of responsible use of data were absent, resulting in minimal uptake from customers.

Ignorance of the primary tenets of ethical decision making amongst senior management of The Organisation, led to a well-orchestrated path to failure. Firstly, the concept of responsible use of data was not valued as a proposition (Theme 1), and neither was it viewed with serious interest among those in decision making positions (Theme 2). This was exacerbated by the convoluted and destabilising change management practices and decision making (Themes 4 and 5), and external factors negatively influencing outcomes (Theme 3). Expressed simply, the cultural climate of The Organisation was averse to the practice of ethical decision making. The research insights have several practical implications:

- The research shows that decision making occurs within a socially constructed inter-subjective reality in which there are multiple frames (i.e. ethical and business frames) for viewing the practice. The ethical frame requires the formulation of a value proposition that embraces the concept of mutual benefit to an organisation and its customers and other stakeholders. In this study, practices that embraced ethical decision making and the responsible use of data, were not considered a value proposition and, as such, were not viewed as worthy of resources being invested in their realisation.
- The 'business frame' - specifically a narrow focus on revenue – is a mental model that manifests broadly in corporate settings at the expense of delivering to client and other stakeholder needs. To counter this assumption, the research shows that decision making needs to include critically reflexive practices that counteract the tacit influence of single dominant logics and inappropriate frames on organisational decision making.
- At The Organisation an environment that the literature refers to as an ethical climate, did not exist. and the one that was in place was not conducive to

reflexivity or other processes of learning. This situation was exacerbated by individuals occupying leadership roles who could not, or would not, embrace such practices. The research themes show that climate does not rely on structure, processes and frameworks alone, but is complemented by having individuals in senior positions who are committed to the creation and maintenance of an ethical climate.

- The ability of The Organisation to navigate through the development of a new product intended to transform it into a digital powerhouse offering ethical data-related services to customers, was thwarted by the state of low maturity into which it developed. Such a state was created and maintained within The Organisation by those who were least fit to serve in senior decision-making roles. Random change management practices, inappropriate use of partners and consultants, and tolerance of a weak ethical climate led to the infantilisation of The Organisation. Ensuring that all roles are equipped with the necessary skills and values to embrace the behaviours fit for the creation and sustenance of an ethical climate, is vital for ethical decision making to manifest. The research shows that a key challenge to the enactment of ethical decision making is in political and personal interests trumping such an espoused policy. Scrutiny of the social dynamics through which decisions are made, and data is used, is a key leadership task.

The research themes show that it is not just the concept of the ethical decision that has practical implications for organisations but also that of the responsible, or ethical, use of data. The rise in AI and other related technologies globally, has highlighted the issue of the ethical and responsible use of technology as it pertains to the decisions being made. Bakiner (2023, p.514) warns, through a recent peer review of 223 articles in AI ethics, that while “problem definitions and suggested solutions in the literature are converging, their content and meaning drive considerable variation across disciplines". This study shows that ignorance of the primary tenets of ethical decision making will foster a cultural climate averse to its practice. This is especially relevant in the era of technology-driven approaches to decision making.

6.6 Learnings as an Insider Researcher

The opportunity to undertake 'insider' (i.e. Simmons 2007, Brown 1996) ethnographic research within The Organisation, afforded me the opportunity to learn much about the challenges and opportunities of this research approach. The rare privilege of having twelve months of observational time while working in a professional capacity within The Organisation was experienced before this research commenced. This facilitated a deeper understanding of the environment and the prevailing social dynamics within it. As a result, three key learnings, specifically related to the nature of ethnographic methods in organisations, can be identified from this research:

Leverage the advantages provided by being an 'insider' before the research commences. While there was certainly a delicate process to navigate between insider and researcher, the reflection on the 12-month preliminary observations generated frames of reference that facilitated deeper and richer approaches to the data collection once the research was formally initiated. Furthermore, it meant that I was not too deeply entrenched within the cultural context to significantly impact the objectivity of my observations. Had I not had this experience before the study, my limited understanding of the environment of The Organisation would have made the answering of the research question much more difficult.

At the start of the study, I too remained sceptical on whether being an 'insider' would negatively impact the openness of participants or whether they felt an obligation to take part, in particular those who reported into me. However, with the decision to prioritise the research rather than The Organisation, which was often repeated in conversations particularly during interviews, this had in my opinion a positive and welcoming outcome. It must also be noted that the nature of the participants who reported into me also was likely a contributing factor. They either had a strong internal respect for research and wanted to contribute through this study or had been involved with academic work and understood the importance of foundational generation of knowledge and/or literature.

Based on the insights this research has generated, greater collaboration with ethnographic researchers would facilitate a deeper understanding the role of political and social dynamics in organisational endeavours. Another option is to engage an internal champion, trained in ethnographic principles, to monitor and report on the impact of these dynamics on organisational practices.

Methodologically, be aware of the fine line as an insider researcher between action research and ethnographic approaches.

In this research, a process was established for differentiating data collection as an insider researcher to that required for the organisational role performed by me within The Organisation. This was achieved by using separate notebooks and laptops, to ensure that contamination and breach of data use was avoided. Difficulties arose from the challenges of performing my work role simultaneously with the role of insider researcher, particularly with respect to the desire to intervene and change the course of decisions and actions within The Organisation. This occurred in the first few months, typically after reviewing literature or upon reflecting on observations of potential key inflection points that promised an opportunity towards ethical decision making. To pre-empt such occurrences, mental cues were established to prompt a mental contextual switch and consequently direct actions accordingly. While they were minor actions, they were powerful. They included retaining the title of the research question at the head of each page of observations, and reflection thereon. Purposely signing off any work-related communication when in the role of participant observer by striking out the role title in The Organisation and replacing it with 'insider researcher'. This enabled differentiation of the dual roles being performed and the honouring of the purpose of the study and the necessary boundaries of the research. While some researchers have decided to remain strongly independent as dutiful observers and note-takers, I, as insider researcher, made a distinct commitment (a condition of which all participants were aware and consented to) that where behaviour breaching The Organisation's policies, or was unethical to others and customers, became evident, there would be notification to escalate this through official independent channels.

Recognise that ethnography is a powerful approach to understanding social phenomena, and the analytical process should be performed as a social ritual.

The work of organisations manifests through social and political dynamics and ethnographic research offers a well-suited methodology for interpretation. The use of other researchers, external to The Organisation, (in this case, my two supervisors) to independently analyse the data and identify themes contributed significantly towards richer insights, as it enhanced the triple loop learning experience regarding understanding and synthesising the themes. The literature has already encouraged the use of "insider/outsider" researcher teams (Louis & Bartunek 1992), and in this research my potential biases in interpretation as a participant observer were continually questioned and kept in check by my two supervisors. They assisted in the management of biases regarding what was going on within The Organisation and maintained focus on the rich data collected to interpret and explicate the phenomenon, to provide as much objectivity as possible in the story being told of The Organisation. Thus, a communal academic environment was created in which to understand this social phenomenon. This approach to a social phenomenon within a novel environment, strengthened the validity of the data collection, analysis and interpretation processes.

6.7 Future Research Directions

More case studies of the social dynamics impacting ethical decision making within organisations are required, particularly those using an ethnographic research methodology. This need is evident from the near absence of case studies in the extant literature that adopt qualitative research methodologies to address this important and neglected aspect of organisational theory. One issue deserving of further exploration is the widespread belief that given the heavily embedded decision processes in organisations adopting the 'business frame', ethical decision-making practices would increase the load on organisational decision making.

Another key issue requiring further research is the current global fascination with the use of advanced data techniques, particularly where this capability is viewed as being able to replace human intelligence even in socially constructed domains. A comparative study of a human-only approach with techniques such as generative Artificial Intelligence will identify how social issues are constructed and investigated.

6.8 Concluding Remarks

This research stemmed from a desire to help organisations steer away from unethical decisions, in particular, those with negative widespread impact to communities and the environment. The original intentions for this research were to build a framework or model to facilitate an ethical organisational decision-making approach. Without available data and case studies from the extant literature to reference, the purpose of the research transitioned to address the gap by understanding the ethical decision-making phenomenon more deeply, specifically through an interpretivist paradigm that leveraged 'insider' ethnography.

The themes that emerged from this research show how through one organisation the practice of ethical decision making (i.e., the responsible use of data) was rarely performed, reinforced by a focus on revenue, weak structures and governance. The study has endorsed the socially constructed nature of the practice of ethical decision making by revealing the influence of social and political dynamics upon this practice.

References

Aguilera, R.V., Waldman D.A., & Siegel, D.S. (2022). Responsibility and Organization Science. *Organization Science,* 33(1), 483–494.

Alpaslan, C.M. & Mitroff, I.I. (2021). Exploring the moral foundations of crisis management, *Technological Forecasting Social Change*, 167, 120713.

Alvesson, M., & Einola, K. (2019). Warning for excessive positivity: Authentic leadership and other traps in leadership studies. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 30(4), 383–395.

Alvesson, M., & Sandberg, J. (2011). Generating research questions through problematization. *Academy of Management Review, 36*(2), 247–271. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41318000

Alvesson, M., & Sköldberg, K. (2009). *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research*, Sage.

Amis, J. M., & Silk, M. L. (2007). The Philosophy and Politics of Quality in Qualitative Organizational Research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 11(3), 456–480. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428107300341

Anderson, T. (2024, August, 30). Building responsible AI: Turning ethically reflective data practice into practical action. LX at UTS, University of Technology Sydney. https://lx.uts.edu.au/events/building-responsible-ai-turning-ethically-reflective-data-practice-into-practical-action-30-august/

Aquino, A. C. B., & Pagliarussi, M. S. (2006). A heuristic method for composing a literature review. SSRN. https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.931463

Arciniega, L. M., Stanley, L. J., Puga-Méndez, D., Obregón-Schael, D., & Politi-Salame, I. (2019). The relationship between individual work values and unethical decision-making and behavior at work. *Journal of Business Ethics, 158*(4), 1133–1148. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-017-3764-3

Aramovich, N. P., Lytle, B. L., & Skitka, L. J. (2012). Opposing torture: Moral conviction and resistance to majority influence. *Social Influence*, 7, 21–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/15534510.2011.640199

Arkinstall, D. (1994). Ethics in practice: What is ‘acceptable’ to the buyers of tomorrow? *Purchasing & Supply Management, 10*, 12–13.

Arnaud, A. & Schminke, M. (2012). The ethical climate and context of organizations: A comprehensive model. *Organization Science, 23*(6), 1767–1780.

Ashforth, B. E., & Anand, V. (2003). The normalization of corruption in organizations. *Research in Organizational Behavior, 25*, 1–52.

Ashkanasy, N. M. (2003). Emotions in organizations: A multi-level perspective. In F. Dansereau & F. J. Yammarino (Eds.), *Multi-level issues in organization behavior and strategy* (Vol. 2, pp. 9–54). Emerald Group Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1475-9144(03)02002-2

Ashkanasy, N. M., & Ashton-James, C. E. (2005). Emotion in organizations: A neglected topic in I/O psychology, but with a bright future. In G. P. Hodgkinson & J. K. Ford (Eds.), *International review of industrial and organizational psychology* (Vol. 20, pp. 221–268). John Wiley & Sons.

Ashkanasy, N. M., & Dorris, A. D. (2017). Emotions in the workplace. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 4*(1), 67–90. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032516-113231

Ast, F. (2019). The deliberative test, a new procedural method for ethical decision making in integrative social contracts theory. *Journal of Business Ethics, 155*(1), 207–221. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-017-3481-y

Awad, Edmond et al. (2022). Computational Ethics. Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 26 (5), 388 - 405

Bagozzi, R. P., Verbeke, W. J. M. I., Dietvorst, R. C., Belschak, F. D., van den Berg, W. E., & Rietdijk, W. J. R. (2013). Theory of mind and empathic explanations of Machiavellianism: A neuroscience perspective. *Journal of Management, 39*(7), 1760–1798. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0149206312471393

Bagdasarov, Z., Johnson, J. F., MacDougall, A. E., Steele, L. M., Connelly, S., & Mumford, M. D. (2016). Mental Models and Ethical Decision Making: The Mediating Role of Sensemaking. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 138(1), 133–144. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-2620-6

Bailey, W. & Spicer, A. (2007). When Does National Identity Matter? Convergence and Divergence in International Business Ethics. *The Academy of Management Journal*. 50. 10.5465/AMJ.2007.28225989.

Bakiner, O. (2023). The promises and challenges of addressing artificial intelligence with human rights. *Big Data & Society*, 10(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517231205476Balka, E. (2010). Obituary. Susan Leigh Star (1954-2010). *Social Studies of Science*. 40(4). 647-651.

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory.* Prentice-Hall.

Bang, H. M., Koval, C. Z., & Wade-Benzoni, K. A. 2017. It's the thought that counts overtime: The interplay of intent, outcome, stewardship, and legacy motivations in intergenerational reciprocity. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 73: 197–210.

Banks, G. C., Fischer, T., Gooty, J., & Stock, G. (2020). Ethical leadership: Mapping the terrain for concept cleanup and a future research agenda. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 32(2), 101471. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2020.101471

Bapuji, H., Chrispal, S., Attri, P.S., Ertug, G. & Soundararajan, V. (2024). An integrative review of management research on caste: Broadening our horizons. *Academy of Management Annals*. 18(2)1-44.

Bardhi, F. and Eckhardt, G.M. (2012), "Access-based consumption: the case of car sharing", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39(4). 881-898.

Barnes, C. M., Schaubroeck, J., Huth, M. & Ghumman, S. (2011). Lack of sleep and unethical conduct. *Organizational Behavior of Human Decision Process, 115*(2), 169–180. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2011.01.009

Bazerman, M. H., & Gino, F. (2012). Behavioural ethics: Toward a deeper understanding of moral judgement and dishonesty. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science, 8*(1), 85–104. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-lawsocsci-102811-173815

Becker, W. J., Cropanzano, R., & Sanfey, A. G. (2011). Organizational Neuroscience: Taking Organizational Theory Inside the Neural Black Box. *Journal of Management*, 37(4), 933–961. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206311398955

Berryman, K., Lazar, S. W., & Hohwy, J. (2023). Do contemplative practices make us more moral? *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 27(10), 916–931. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2023.07.005

Beveridge, A. J., & Höllerer, M. A. (2023). Theorizing Organizational Benevolence. *Organization Science*, *34*(5), 1864-1886. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2022.1646

Birkstedt, T., Minkkinen, M., Luukela-Tandon, A. & Mäntymäki, M. (2023). AI governance: themes, knowledge gaps and future agendas. *Internet Research*. 33. 133-167. 10.1108/INTR-01-2022-0042.

Blair, R. J. (2008). The amygdala and ventromedial prefrontal cortex: Functional contributions and dysfunction in psychopathy. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London. Series B, Biological Sciences, 363*(1503), 2557–2565. https://dx.doi.org/10.1098%2Frstb.2008.0027

Blasi, A. (1984). Moral identity: Its role in moral functioning. In W. M. Kurtines & J. J. Gewirtz (Eds.), *Morality, moral behavior and moral development* (pp. 128–139). Wiley.

Bommer, M., Gratto, C., Gravander, J., & Tuttle, M. (1987). A behavioral model of ethical and unethical decision making. *Journal of Business Ethics, 6*, 265–280. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00382936

Borkowski, S. C., & Ugras, Y. J. (1998). Business students and ethics: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Business Ethics, 17*, 1117–1127. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1005748725174

Brass, D. J., Butterfield, K. D., & Skaggs, B. C. (1998). Relationships and unethical behavior: A social networks perspective. *Academy of Management Review, 23*(1), 14–31. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1998.192955

Bregman, R., Peng, D. X., & Chin, W. (2015). The effect of controversial global sourcing practices on the ethical judgements and intentions of U.S. consumers. *Journal of Operations Management, 36*(1), 229–243. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jom.2015.01.001

Brown J. (1996) *Police Research: Some Critical Issues* in Leishman F., Loveday B., Savage S. (eds) Core Issues in Policing. New York: Longman.

Brown J. (2022). Group motivation. Noûs. 56: 494–510. https://doi.org/10.1111/nous.12366

Brown, M. E., & Mitchell, M. S. (2010). Ethical and unethical leadership. *Business Ethics Quarterly, 20*(4), 583–616. https://doi.org/10.5840/beq201020439

Brown, M.E., Vogel, R.M. & Akben, M. (2022) Ethical conflict: Conceptualization, measurement, and an examination of consequences. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. 107(7):1130–1149

Buckingham-Shum, S. (2015, February 9). Learning Analytics: On Silver Bullets and White Rabbits. Medium Blog. https://medium.com/age-of-awareness/learning-analytics-on-silver-bullets-and-white-rabbits-a92d202dc7e3

Burrell, G., & Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological paradigms and organisational analysis: Elements of the sociology of corporate life*. Heinemann.

Burris, E. R., McClean, E. J., Detert, J. R., & Quigley, T. J. (2022). The Agency to Implement Voice: How Target Hierarchical Position and Competence Changes the Relationship Between Voice and Individual Performance. *Organization Science*, 34(5), 1695–1715. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2022.1640

Bush, J. T., Welsh, D. T., Baer, M. D., & Waldman, D. (2020). Discouraging unethicality versus encouraging ethicality: Unraveling the differential effects of prevention- and promotion-focused ethical leadership. *Personnel Psychology, 74*(1), 29–54. https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12386

Caprar, D.V., Walker, B.W., & Ashforth, B.E. (2022): The Dark Side of Strong Identification in Organizations: A Conceptual Review. *ANNALS*, 16, 759–805, https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2020.0338

Cardona, P., Lawrence, B. S., & Bentler, P. M. (2004). The Influence of Social and Work Exchange Relationships on Organizational Citizenship Behavior. *Group & Organization Management*, 29(2), 219–247. https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601103257401

Carlson, D. S., Grzywacz, J., & Zivnuska, S. (2009). Is work-family balance more than conflict and enrichment? *Human Relations, 62*(10), 1459–1486. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0018726709336500

Carter, L., Peril, M., Beavis, M., Romuld, G., Browne, B., & Morison, E. (2021, December 9). Quit nukes: The case for Australian superannuation funds to be nuclear weapons free. *The Australia Institute.* https://australiainstitute.org.au/report/quit-nukes/

Castañer, X., & Ketokivi, M. (2018). Toward a Theory of Organizational Integration. *In Advances in strategic management*. 40. 53–80. https://doi.org/10.1108/s0742-332220180000040002

Castro, A., Phillips, N., & Ansari, S. (2020). Corporate corruption: A review and an agenda for future research. *Academy of Management Annals, 14*(2), 935–968. https://journals.aom.org/doi/abs/10.5465/annals.2018.0156

Celuch, K., Saxby, C., & Oeding, J. (2015). The influence of counterfactual thinking and regret on ethical decision making. *Journal of Education for Business, 90*(4), 175–181. https://doi.org/10.1080/08832323.2015.1014455

Chan, R. Y. K., & Lai, J. W. M. (2011). Does ethical ideology affect software privacy attitude and behaviour? An empirical investigation of computer users in China. *European Journal of Information Systems, 20*(2), 659–673. https://doi.org/10.1057/ejis.2011.31

Chang, M. L., & Cheng, C. F. (2014). How balance theory explains high-tech professionals' solutions of enhancing job satisfaction. *Journal of Business Research*, 67, 2008-1018

Chang, C. L.-H., & Chen, J. Q. (2017). The information ethics perception gaps between Chinese and American students: A Chinese guanxi perspective. *Information Technology & People, 30*(2), 473–502. https://doi.org/10.1108/ITP-08-2014-0181

Chang, K., & Smithikrai, C. (2010). Counterproductive behaviour at work: An investigation into reduction strategies. *International Journal of Human Resource Management, 21*(8), 1272–1288. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2010.483852

Chen, A., Treviño, L. K., & Humphrey, S. E. (2020). Ethical champions, emotions, framing, and team ethical decision making. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 105*(3), 245–273. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000437

Chen, A. & Treviño, L. (2023). The Consequences of Ethical Voice Inside the Organization: An Integrative Review. Journal of Applied Psychology. 108. 10.1037/apl0001075.

Chiu, C-M., Tan, C.M., Hsu, J. S-C. & Cheng, H-L. (2021), Employee deviance: the impacts of techno-insecurity and moral disengagement. *Information Technology & People*, 36(1). https://doi.org/10.1108/ITP-03-2021-0198

Chonko, L. B., & Hunt, S. D. (1985). Ethics and marketing management: An empirical examination. *Journal of Business Research, 13*(4), 339–359. https://doi.org/10.1016/0148-2963(85)90006-2

Christopoulos, G. I., Liu, X.-X., & Hong, Y.-Y. (2017). Toward an understanding of dynamic moral decision making: Model-free and model-based learning. *Journal of Business Ethics, 144*, 699–715. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-016-3058-1

Chuah, K., DesJardine, M.R., Goranova, M. & Henisz, W.J (2024): Shareholder Activism Research: A System-Level View. *ANNALS*, 18, 82–120, https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2022.0069

Chui, C., & Grieder, M. (2020). The effects of investigative sanctioning systems on wrongdoing, reporting, and helping: A multiparty perspective. *Organization Science, 31*(5), 1090–1114. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2019.1340

Connelly, S., Helton-Fauth, W., & Mumford, M. D. (2004). A managerial in-basket study of the impact of trait emotions on ethical choice. *Journal of Business Ethics, 51*(3), 245–267. https://doi.org/10.1023/B:BUSI.0000032494.51162.d3

Cooper, B., Cohen, T. R., Huppert, E., Levine, E. E., & Fleeson, W. (2023). Honest Behavior: Truth-Seeking, Belief-Speaking, and Fostering Understanding of the Truth in Others. *Academy of Management Annals*, 17(2), 655–683. https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2021.0209

Coraiola, D. M., Foster, W. M., Mena, S., Foroughi, H., & Rintamäki, J. (2023). Ecologies of Memories: Memory Work Within and Between Organizations and Communities. *Academy of Management Annals*, 17(1), 373–404. https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2021.0088

Craft, J. L. (2013). A review of the empirical ethical decision-making literature: 2004–2011. *Journal of Business Ethics, 117*(2), 221–259. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1518-9

Cropanzano, R. S., Massaro, S., & Becker, W.J. (2017). Deontic justice and organizational neuroscience. *Journal of Business Ethics, 144*(4), 733–754, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-016-3056-3

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process (1st ed.).* Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003115700

Csaszar, F. A., & Steinberger, T. (2022). Organizations as Artificial Intelligences: The Use of Artificial Intelligence Analogies in Organization Theory. *Academy of Management Annal*s, 16(1), 1–37. https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2020.0192

Dane, E., & Pratt, M. G. (2007). Exploring intuition and its role in managerial decision making. *Academy of Management Review, 32*(1), 33–54. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2007.23463682

Damasio, A. R., Tranel, D., & Damasio, H. (1990). Individuals with sociopathic behavior caused by frontal damage fail to respond autonomically to social stimuli. *Behavioral Brain Research, 41*(2), 81–94. https://doi.org/10.1016/0166-4328(90)90144-4.

Davison, R. M., Martinsons, M. G., Ou, C. X. J., Murata, K., Drummond, D., Yuan, L., & Lo, H. W. H. (2009). The ethics of IT professionals in Japan and China. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems, 10(*11), 834–859.

De Cremer, D., Mayer, D. M., & Schminke, M. (2010). Guest editors' introductions: On understanding ethical behaviour and decision making: A behavioral business ethics approach. *Business Ethics Quarterly, 20*(1), 1–6. https://doi.org/10.5840/beq20102012

De Cremer, D., & Moore, C. (2020). Toward a better understanding of behavioral ethics in the workplace. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 7*, 369–393. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-012218-015151

De Cremer, D., & Tenbrunsel, A. E. (Eds.). (2012). *Behavioral business ethics: Shaping an emerging field.* Routledge.

De Cremer, D., & Vandekerckhove, W. (2017). Managing unethical behavior in organizations: The need for a behavioral business ethics approach. *Journal of Management & Organization, 23*(3), 437–455. https://doi.org/10.1017/jmo.2016.4

De Cremer, D., van Dick, R., Tenbrunsel, A. E., Pillutla, M., & Murnighan, J. K. (2011). Understanding ethical behaviour and decision making in management: A behavioural business ethics approach. *British Journal of Management, 22*(1), S1–S4. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8551.2010.00733.x

Deconinck, J. B. (2005). The influence of ethical control systems and moral intensity on sales managers' ethical perceptions and behavioral intentions. *Marketing Management Journal, 15*(2), 123–131.

Denison, D. R. (1996). What IS the difference between organizational culture and organizational climate? A native's point of view on a decade of paradigm wars. *The Academy of Management Review*, 21(3), 619–654. https://doi.org/10.2307/258997

Den Hartog, D.N. (2015). Ethical leadership. A*nnual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 2*(1), 409–434. http://doi.org/1 0.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032414-111237.

Dennehy, D., Fosso Wamba, S. & Katina, M. (2021). Socially responsible information systems development: the role of AI and business analytics. *Information Technology & People*. 34. 10.1108/ITP-10-2021-871.

Denzin, N. K. (2017), Critical qualitative inquiry, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 23(1), 8-16.

Desai, S. D., & Kouchaki, M. (2017). Moral symbols: A necklace of garlic against unethical requests. *Academy of Management Journal, 60*, 7–28. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2015.0008

Deshpande, S. P. (2009). A study of ethical decision making by physicians and nurses in hospitals. *Journal of Business Ethics, 90*, Article 387. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-009-0049-5

Devereux, G. (with La Barre, W.). (1967). *From anxiety to method in the behavioral sciences.* Mouton & Co. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111667317

Diebel, W., Gualandris, J., & Klassen, R. D. (2024). How do suppliers respond to institutional complexity? Examining voluntary public environmental disclosure in a global manufacturing supply network. *Journal of Operations Management*, 70(2), 285–315. https://doi.org/10.1002/joom.1293

Dillion, D., Tandon, N., Gu, Y. & Gray, K. (2023). Can AI language models replace human participants?, *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 27(7). 597-600, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2023.04.008.

Dong, H., & Hussain, F. K. (2011). Focused crawling for automatic service discovery, annotation, and classification in industrial digital ecosystems. *IEEE Transactions on Industrial Electronics, 58*(6), 2106–2116. https://doi.org/10.1109/TIE.2010.2050754

Dunhill, L., & Syal, R. (2020). Whitehall 'infantilised' by reliance on consultants, minister claims. *The Guardian.* https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/sep/29/whitehall-infantilised-by-reliance-on-consultants-minister-claims

Dwork, C., Hardt, M., Pitassi, T., Reingold, O., & Zemel, R. (2012). Fairness through awareness. *Proceedings of the Innovations in Theoretical Computer Science Conference*, 214–226. https://doi.org/10.1145/2090236.2090255

Eisenberg, N. (2000). Emotion, regulation, and moral development. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 51(1), 665-697.

Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of Management Review, 14*(4), 532–550. https://doi.org/10.2307/258557

Eres, R., Louis, W. R., & Molenberghs, P. (2017). Why do people pirate? A neuroimaging investigation. *Social Neuroscience, 12*(4), 366–378. https://doi.org/10.1080/17470919.2016.1179671

Evans, J. S. B. (2008). Dual-processing accounts of reasoning, judgement, and social cognition. *Annual Review of Psychology, 59,* 255–278. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.59.103006.093629

Evered, R.D., & Louis, M.R. (1981). Alternative Perspectives in the Organizational Sciences: "Inquiry from the Inside" and "Inquiry from the Outside". *Academy of Management Review*, 6, 385-395.

Ferrell, O., & Gresham, L. G. (1985). A contingency framework for understanding ethical decision making in marketing. *Journal of Marketing, 49*(3), 87–96. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1251618

Ferrell, O. C., & Skinner, S. J. (1988). Ethical behavior and bureaucratic structure in marketing research organizations. *Journal of Marketing Research, 25*(1), 103–109. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F002224378802500111

Fetterman, D. M. (1989). *Ethnography: Step by step*. SAGE Publications.

Fjeld, J., Achten, N., Hilligoss, H., Nagy, A., & Srikumar, M. (2020). *Principled artificial intelligence: Mapping consensus in ethical and rights-based approaches to principles for AI.* Berkman Klein Center Research Publication No. 2020–1. http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3518482

Fleming, P., & Spicer, A. (2005). How Objects Believe for Us: Applications in Organizational Analysis. *Culture and Organization*, 11(3), 181–193. https://doi.org/10.1080/14759550500203094

Ford, R. C., & Richardson, W. D. (1994). Ethical decision making: A review of the empirical literature. *Journal Business Ethics, 13*, 205–221. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02074820

Franke, G. R., Crown, D. F., & Spake, D. F. (1997). Gender differences in ethical perceptions of business practices: A social role theory perspective. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 82*(6), 920–934. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0021-9010.82.6.920

Frederickson, H. G., & Ghere, R. K. (2005). *Ethics in public management (1st ed.).* Routledge.

Fuqua, D. R., & Newman, J. L. (2006). Moral and ethical issues in human systems. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 58*(4), 206–215. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/1065-9293.58.4.206

Fuster, J. M. (2001). The prefrontal cortex – an update: Time is of the essence. *Neuron, 30*(2), 319–333. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0896-6273(01)00285-9

Garrad, L. & Hyland, P. (2020). Employee Survey Research: A Critical Review of Theory and Practice. n William H. Macey, and Alexis A. Fink (eds), *Employee Surveys and Sensing: Challenges and Opportunities* (New York, 2020; online edn, Oxford Academic, 21 May 2020), https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190939717.003.0023.

Gaudine, A., & Thorne, L. (2001). Emotion and ethical decision-making in organizations. *Journal of Business Ethics, 31*(2), 175–187. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1010711413444

Gephart, R. P., Jr. (2004). Qualitative Research and the Academy of Management Journal [Editorial]. *Academy of Management Journal*, 47(4), 454–462. https://doi.org/10.5465/AMJ.2004.14438580

Giattino, C., Kwong, L., Rafetto, C. & Farahany, N.(2019). The Seductive Allure of Artificial Intelligence-Powered Neurotechnology. In Proceedings of the 2019 AAAI/ACM Conference on AI, Ethics, and Society (pp. 397–402). *Association for Computing Machinery.*

Gibson, C., Thomason, B., Margolis, J., Groves, K., Gibson, S., & Franczak, J. (2023). Dignity Inherent and Earned: The Experience of Dignity at Work. *Academy of Management Annals*, 17(1), 218–267. https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2021.0059

Giddens, A. (1976). *New rules of sociological method*. Hutchinson.

Giddens, A. (1979). *Central problems of social theory.* Macmillan.

Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society*. Polity.

Gino, F., Krupka, E. L., & Weber, R. A. (2013). License to cheat: Voluntary regulation and ethical behavior. *Management Science, 59*(10), 2187–2203. https://pubsonline.informs.org/doi/abs/10.1287/mnsc.1120.1699

Gino, F., & Pierce, L. (2010). Robin Hood under the hood: Wealth-based discrimination in illicit customer help. *Organization Science, 21*(6), 1176–1194. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40926736

Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G., & Hamilton, A. L. (2012). Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research: Notes on the Gioia methodology. *Organizational Research Methods, 16*(1), 15–31. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1094428112452151

Gläscher, J., Daw, N., Dayan, P., & O'Doherty, J. P. (2010). States versus rewards: Dissociable neural prediction error signals underlying model-based and model-free reinforcement learning. *Neuron, 66*(4), 585–595. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuron.2010.04.016

Glaser, B. G. (1978). *Theoretical sensitivity: Advances in the methodology of grounded theory.* Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G. (1998). *Doing grounded theory: Issues and discussions.* Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G. & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research.* Aldine Publishing.

Gneezy, U., & Rustichini, A. (2000). A fine is a price. *Journal of Legal Studies, 29*(1), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1086/468061

Gonsalves, L. (2022). When Do Firms Crack Under Pressure? Legal Professionals, Negative Role Models, and Organizational Misconduct. *Organization Science*, 34(2), 754–776. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2022.1597

Gould, E. D., & Kaplan, T. R. (2011). Learning unethical practices from a co-worker: The peer effect of Jose Canseco. *Labour Economics, 18*(3), 338–348. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2010.10.004

Graffin, S. D., Bundy, J., Porac, J. F., Wade, J. B., & Quinn, D. P. (2013). Falls from grace and the hazards of high status: The 2009 British MP expense scandal and its impact on parliamentary elites. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 58, 313-345. doi:10.1177/0001839213497011

Greene, J., & Haidt, J. (2002). How (and where) does moral judgement work?. *Trends in Cognitive Science, 6*(12), 517–523. https://doi.org/10.1016/s1364-6613(02)02011-9

Greene, J. D., Nystrom, L. E., Engell, A. D., Darley J. M., & Cohen, J. D. (2004). The neural bases of cognitive conflict and control in moral judgement. *Neuron, 44*(2), 389–400. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuron.2004.09.027

Greene, J. D., Sommerville, R. B., Nystrom, L. E., Darley, J. M., & Cohen, J. D. (2001). An fMRI investigation of emotional engagement in moral judgement. *Science, 293*(5537), 2105–2108. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1062872

Grey, A., Bolland, M., Gamble, G., & Avenell, A. (2019). Quality of reports of investigations of research integrity by academic institutions. *Research Integrity and Peer Review, 4,* Article 3. https://doi.org/10.1186/s41073-019-0062-x

Guidice, R. M., Alder, G. S., & Phelan, S. E. (2009). Competitive bluffing: An examination of a common practice and its relationship with performance. *Journal of Business Ethics, 87*(4), 535–553. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-008-9957-z

Guillemin, M., & Gillam, L. (2004). Ethics, reflexivity, and ‘ethically important moments’ in research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 10*(2), 261–280. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1077800403262360

Haase, M., & Raufflet, E. (2017). Ideologies in markets, organizations, and business ethics: Drafting a map: Introduction to the special issue. *Journal of Business Ethics, 142*, 629–639. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-016-3302-8

Haidt, J. (2001). The emotional dog and its rational tail: A social intuitionist approach to moral judgement. *Psychological Review, 108*(4), 814–834. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295x.108.4.814

Haidt, J. (2003). The moral emotions. In R. J. Davidson, K. R. Scherer, & H. H. Goldsmith (Eds.), *Handbook of affective sciences* (pp. 852–870). Oxford University Press.

Hameiri, B., Porat, R., Bar-Tal, D., Bieler, A., & Halperin, E. (2014). Paradoxical thinking as a new avenue of intervention to promote peace. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 11: 10996–11001.

Harrington, S. (1996). The effect of codes of ethics and personal denial of responsibility on computer abuse judgements and intentions. *Codes of Ethics, 20*(3), 257–278. https://doi.org/10.2307/249656.

Healey, M. P, Hodgkinson, G. P., & Massaro, S. (2018). Can brains manage? The brain, emotion, and cognition in organizations. In L. Petitta, C. E. J. Härtel, N. M. Ashkanasy, & W. J. Zerbe (Eds.), *Individual, relational, and contextual dynamics of emotions* (pp. 27–58). Emerald Group Publishing. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1108/S1746-979120180000014009

Hegarty, W. H., & Sims, H. P. (1978). Some determinants of unethical decision behavior: An experiment. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 63*(4), 451–457. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0021-9010.63.4.451

Heimstädt, M., Koljonen, T. & Elmholdt, K.T. (2024). Expertise in Management Research: A Review and Agenda for Future Research. *ANNALS*, 18, 121–156, https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2022.0078

Heyman J., & Ariely, D. (2004). Effort for payment: A tale of two markets. *Psychological Science, 15*(11), 787–793. https://doi.org/10.1111%2Fj.0956-7976.2004.00757.x

Hiekkataipale, M.-M., & Lämsä, A.-M. (2017). What should a manager like me do in a situation like this? Strategies for handling ethical problems from the viewpoint of the logic of appropriateness. *Journal of Business Ethics, 145*, 457–479. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-2911-y

Hill, J. A., Eckerd, S., Wilson, D., & Greer, B. (2008). The effect of unethical behavior on trust in a buyer–supplier relationship: The mediating role of psychological contract violation. *Journal of Operations Management, 27*(4), 281–293. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jom.2008.10.002

Howard, J. A. (1979). Person–situation interaction models. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 5(*2), 191–195. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F014616727900500214

Howard, R. A. (2001). The ethical OR/MS professional. *Interfaces, 31*(6), 69–82. https://www.jstor.org/stable/25062756

Howard, R. A., & Korver, C. D. (2008). *Ethics for the real world: Creating a personal code to guide decisions in work and life.* Harvard Business Press.

Huber, G. P. (1991). Organizational Learning: The Contributing Processes and the Literatures. *Organization Science*, 2(1), 88–115. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2.1.88

Hunt, S. D., & Vitell, S. J. (1986). A general theory of marketing ethics. *Journal of Macromarketing, 6*(1), 5-16. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F027614678600600103

Hunt, S. D., & Vitell, S. J. (2006). The general theory of marketing ethics: A revision and three questions. *Journal of Macromarketing, 26*(2), 143–153. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0276146706290923

Humphrey, S. E., & Aime, F. (2014). Team microdynamics: Toward an organizing approach to teamwork. *The Academy of Management Annals, 8*, 443–503. http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/19416520.2014.904140

Husted, B. W. (2000) The impact of national culture on software piracy. *Journal of Business Ethics, 26(*3), 197–211. http://doi.org/ 10.1023/A:1006250203828

Ibarra, H. (1999). Provisional selves: Experimenting with image and identity in professional adaptation. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 44*(4), 764–791. https://doi.org/10.2307%2F2667055

Israel, M., & Hay, I. (2006). *Research ethics for social scientists.* SAGE Publications.

Islam, Gazi & Greenwood, Michelle (2022). Ethical Research in Business Ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics*. 182 (1).1-5.

Jacobsen, D. H., Stea, D., & Soda, G. (2022). Intraorganizational Network Dynamics: Past Progress, Current Challenges, and New Frontiers. *Academy of Management Annals*, 16(2), 853–897. https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2020.0369

Jap, S., Robertson, D. C., & Hamilton, R. (2011). The dark side of rapport: Agent misbehavior face-to-face and online. *Management Science, 57*(9), 1610–1622. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.1110.1359

Jones, T. M. (1991). Ethical decision making by individuals in organizations: An issue contingent model. Academy of Management Review, 16(2), 366–395. https://doi.org/10.2307/258867

Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, fast and slow*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Kahneman, D. & Tversky, (1979). Prospect theory: An analysis of decision under risk, Econometrica, 47(2), 263-291. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1914185

Kellogg, K. C., Valentine, M. A., & Christin, A. (2019). Algorithms at Work: The New Contested Terrain of Control. *Academy of Management Annals*, 14(1), 366–410. https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2018.0174

Kim, S., & Gal, D. (2014). From Compensatory Consumption to Adaptive Consumption: The Role of Self-Acceptance in Resolving Self-Deficits. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 41(2), 526–542. https://doi.org/10.1086/676681

Kim, J., & Loewenstein, J. (2021). Analogical encoding fosters ethical decision making because improved knowledge of ethical principles increases moral awareness. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 172(2), 307–324. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-020-04457-w

Kish-Gerphart, J. J., Detert, J. R., Treviño, L. K., & Edmondson, A. C. (2009). Silenced by fear: The nature, sources, and consequences of fear at work. *Research in Organizational Behaviour, 29*, 163–193. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.riob.2009.07.002

Kohlberg, L. (1969). Stage and sequence: The cognitive developmental approach to socialization. In D. A. Goslin (Ed.), *Handbook of socialization theory and research* (pp. 347–480). Rand McNally.

Kohlberg, L. (1981). *Essays on moral development: Vol. 1. The philosophy of moral development: Moral stages and the idea of justice*. Harper & Row.

Kohlberg, L. (1984). *Essays on moral development: Vol. 2. The psychology of moral development: The nature and validity of moral stages*. Harper & Row.

Kohlberg, L. (1971). *1. Stages of moral development as a basis for moral education*. In University of Toronto Press eBooks (pp. 23–92). https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442656758-004

Koster, R., Balaguer, J., Tacchetti, A., Weinstein, A., Zhu, T., Hauser, O., Williams, D., Campbell-Gillingham, L., Thacker, P., Botvinick, M., & Summerfield, C. (2022). Human-centred mechanism design with Democratic AI. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 6(10), 1398–1407. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-022-01383-x

Kouchaki, M., & Desai, S. D. (2015). Anxious, threatened, and also unethical: How anxiety makes individuals feel threatened and commit unethical acts. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 100*(2), 360–375. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037796

Kouchaki, M., & Smith, I.H. (2020, January 1). Building an Ethical Career. *Harvard Business Review.* https://store.hbr.org/product/building-an-ethical-career/R2001L

Kovacevic, J., & Rahimic, Z. (2018, October 12). *Manipulative leadership, gender and ethical decision-making in organizations* [Paper presentation]. 9th International Conference of the School of Economics and Business, University of Sarajevo, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Kozyrkov, C. (2019, June 25). The first thing great decision makers do. *Harvard Business Review.* https://hbr.org/2019/06/the-first-thing-great-decision-makers-do?mod=article_inline

Kudesia, R. S. (2019). Mindfulness as metacognitive practice. *Academy of Management Review, 44*(2), 405–423. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2015.0333

Kuenzi, M., Mayer, D. M., & Greenbaum, R. L. (2019). Creating an ethical organizational environment: The relationship between ethical leadership, ethical organizational climate, and unethical behavior. *Personnel Psychology, 73*(1), 43–71. https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12356

Kundro, T. G., Croitoru, N., & Helgason, B. A. (2024). Moral or Lawful? When Legal Constraints Reverse the Motivational Benefits of Moral Considerations. *Organization Science*, 35(5), 1849–1865. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2023.17545

Lagace, R. R., Dahlstrom, R., & Gassenheimer. J.B. (1991). The relevance of ethical salesperson behavior on relationship quality: The pharmaceutical industry. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management, 11*(4), 39–47.

Lamberg, J., & Luoma, J. (2020). Ideology in Vicarious Learning–Related Communication. *Organization Science*, 32(3), 708–730. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2020.1378

Lambert, B., Caza, B. B., Trinh, E., & Ashford, S. (2022). Individual-Centered Interventions: Identifying What, How, and Why Interventions Work in Organizational Contexts. *Academy of Management Annals*, 16(2), 508–546. https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2020.0351

LeCompte, M. D., & Schensul, J. J. (1999). *Designing & conducting ethnographic research.* AltaMira Press.

Lee, A. Y., & Aaker, J. L. (2004). Bringing the frame into focus: The influence of regulatory fit on processing fluency and persuasion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 86*(2), 205–218. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0022-3514.86.2.205

Lehnert, K., Craft, J., Singh, N., & Park, Y.-H. (2016). The human experience of ethics: A review of a decade of qualitative ethical decision-making research. *Business Ethics: A European Review, 25*(4), 498–537. https://doi.org/10.1111/beer.12129

Lewis, P. A., & Durrant, S. J. (2011). Overlapping memory replay during sleep builds cognitive schemata. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 15*(8), 343–351. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2011.06.004

Li, H., Chen, Y., & Hildreth, J. a. D. (2023). Powerlessness Also Corrupts: Lower Power Increases Self-Promotional Lying. *Organization Science*, 34(4), 1422–1440. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2022.1630

Lim, J., & Dinges, D. F. (2010). A meta-analysis of the impact of short-term sleep deprivation on cognitive variables. *Psychological Bulletin, 136*(3), 375–389. https://dx.doi.org/10.1037%2Fa0018883

Lindebaum, D. (2013). Pathologizing the healthy but ineffective: Some ethical reflections on using neuroscience in leadership research. *Journal of Management Inquiry, 22*(3), 295–305. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1056492612462766

Louis, M.R. and Bartunek, J.M. (1992), Insider/Outsider research teams: Collaboration across diverse perspectives, *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 1(2), 101-110.

Luetge, C. (2017). The German Ethics Code for Automated and Connected Driving. *Philosophy & Technology*, 30(4), 547–558. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-017-0284-0

MacDougall, A. E., Martin, A. A., Bagdasarov, Z., & Mumford, M. D. (2014). A review of theory progression in ethical decision making in literature. *Journal of Organizational Psychology, 14*(2), 9–19. https://www.proquest.com/openview/aeb4ba7202ec158a44443bc40c581a49/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=1576346

Mackey, J. D, Frieder, R. E., Brees, J. R., & Martinko, M. J. (2015). Abusive supervision: a meta-analysis and empirical review. *Journal of Management, 43*(6), 1940–1965. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0149206315573997

Mah, J., Kolev, K. D., McNamara, G., Pan , L., & Devers, C. E. (2023). Women in the C-suite: A review of predictors, experiences and outcomes. *Academy of Management Annals*, *17*(2). https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2021.0042

Man-Fong Ho, C. (2011). Ethics management for the construction industry: A review of ethical decision-making literature. *Engineering, Construction and Architectural Management, 18*(5), 516–537. https://doi.org/10.1108/09699981111165194.

March, J. G. (1994). *A primer on decision making: How decisions happen*, Free Press.

Martinho A, Herber N, Kroesen M, Chorus C. (2021). Ethical issues in focus by the autonomous vehicles industry. *Transport Reviews*. 41(5):556–77

Martins, L. L., & Sohn, W. (2022). How Does Diversity Affect Team Cognitive Processes? Understanding the Cognitive Pathways Underlying the Diversity Dividend in Teams. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 16, 134-178. https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2019.0109

Mastio, E., Chew, E., & Dovey, K. A. (2020). The learning organization as a context for value co-creation. *Learning Organization, 27*(4), 291–303. https://doi.org/10.1108/TLO-12-2018-0219

Mastio, E. & Dovey, K. (2019), Power dynamics in organizational change: an Australian case, *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 39 (9/10), pp. 796-811. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSSP-07-2019-0142.

Mazzucato, M. & Collington, R. (2023). *The big con: how the consulting industry weakens our businesses, infantilizes our governments and warps our economies*. International Affairs. https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiad260

Mayer, D. M., Kuenzi, M., Greenbaum, R., Bardes, M., & Salvador, R. (2009). How low does ethical leadership flow? Test of a trickle-down model. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 108*(1), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2008.04.002

McCabe, D. L., Treviño, L. K., & Butterfield, K. D. (1997). The influence of collegiate and corporate codes of conduct on ethics-related behavior in the workplace. *Business Ethics Quarterly, 6*(4), 461–476. https://doi.org/10.2307/3857499

McCoy, L. (2006). Keeping the institution in view: Working with interview accounts of everyday experience. In D. E. Smith (Ed.), *Institutional ethnography as practice* (pp. 109–125). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

McKinney, J. A., Emerson, T. L., & Neubert, M. J. (2010). The effects of ethical codes on ethical perceptions of actions toward stakeholders. *Journal of Business Ethics, 97*(4), 505-516. https://doi.org/ 10.1007/s10551-010-0521-2.

McLean, B. (2017, May 31). How Wells Fargo's cutthroat corporate culture allegedly drove bankers to fraud. *Vanity Fair.* https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2017/05/wells-fargo-corporate-culture-fraud

Mena, S., & Rintamäki, J. 2020. Managing the past responsibly: A collective memory perspective on responsibility, sustainability and ethics. In O. Laasch, D. Jamali, R. E. Freeman, & R. Suddaby (Eds.), The research handbook on responsible management: 470–483. Cheltenham, U.K.: Elgar.

Mencl, J., & May, D.R. (2009). The effects of proximity and empathy on ethical decision-making: An exploratory investigation. *Journal of Business Ethics, 85*(2), 201-226. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-008-9765-5.

Metcalfe, J., & Mischel, W. (1999). A hot/cool-system analysis of delay of gratification: Dynamics of willpower. *Psychological Review, 106*(1), 3–19. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0033-295X.106.1.3

Milliken, F. J., Morrison, E. W., & Hewlin, P. F. (2003). An exploratory study of employee silence: Issues that employees don't communicate upward and why. *Journal of*

Management Studies, 40(6), 1453–1476. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6486.00387

Mitchell, M. S., Reynolds, S. J., & Treviño, L. K. (2020). The study of behavioral ethics within organizations: A special issue introduction. *Personnel Psychology, 73*(1), 5–17. https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12381

Mladenovic, R., Martinov-Bennie, N., & Bell, A. (2019). Business students' insights into their development of ethical decision-making. *Journal of Business Ethics, 155*(1), 275–287. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-017-3523-5

Mohliver, A. (2019). How misconduct spreads: Auditors' role in the diffusion of stock-option backdating. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 64*(2), 310–336. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0001839218763595

Moore, C., Detert, J. R., Treviño, L. K., Baker, V. L., & Mayer, D. M. (2012). Why employees do bad things: Moral disengagement and unethical organizational behavior. *Personnel Psychology, 65*(1), 1–48. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2011.01237.x

Moore, C., & Gino, F. (2015). Approach, ability, aftermath: A psychological process framework of unethical behavior at work. *Academy of Management Annals, 9*(1), 235–289. https://doi.org/10.5465/19416520.2015.1011522

Moores, T. T., & Chang, J. C.-J. (2006). Ethical decision making in software piracy: Initial development and test of a four-component model. *MIS Quarterly, 30*(1), 167–180. https://doi.org/10.2307/25148722

Murnighan, J. K. & Wang, L. (2013). The generalist bias. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 120*(1), 47–61. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2012.09.001

Nadel, L., & Moscovitch, M. (1997). Memory consolidation, retrograde amnesia and the hippocampal complex. *Current Opinion in Neurobiology, 7*(2), 217–227. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0959-4388(97)80010-4

Nakanishi, Y. (2022). Politics-based knowledge legitimation model: power exercise in organizational learning. *The Learning Organization*, 30(3), 273–289. https://doi.org/10.1108/tlo-03-2022-0039

Nielsen, R. P. (2016). Action research as an ethics praxis method. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 135(3), 419–428.

Noriega-Campero, A., Bakker, M. A., Garcia-Bulle, B., & Pentland, A. S. (2019). *Active fairness in algorithmic decision making* [Paper presentation]. In *Proceedings of the 2019 AAAI/ACM Conference on AI, Ethics, and Society* (pp. 77–83). Association for Computing Machinery. https://doi.org/10.1145/3306618.3314277

Norstedt, M., & Breimo, J. P. (2016). Moving beyond everyday life in institutional ethnographies: Methodological challenges and ethical dilemmas. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 17*(2). https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-17.2.2539

Noval, L. J., & Stahl, G. K. (2017). Accounting for proscriptive and prescriptive morality in the workplace: The double-edged sword effect of mood on managerial ethical decision making. *Journal of Business Ethics, 142*(10), 589–602. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-2767-1

O'Fallon, M. J., & Butterfield, K. D. (2005). A review of the empirical ethical decision-making literature: 1996–2003. *Journal of Business Ethics, 59*, 375–413. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-005-2929-7

O'Reilly, J., Aquino, K., & Skarlicki, D. (2016). The lives of others: Third parties' responses to others' injustice. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 101*(2), 171–189. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000040

Oç, B., Bashshur, M. R., & Moore, C. (2019). Head above the parapet: How minority subordinates influence group outcomes and the consequences they face for doing so. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 104*(7), 929–945. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000376

Okpara, J. O. (2003). *Can corporate ethical codes of conduct influence behavior? An exploratory study of financial managers in a developing economy.* [Paper presentation]. Academy of Business and Administrative Sciences, Brussels, Belgium.

Orlikowski, W. J., & Baroudi, J. J. (1991). Studying information technology in organizations: Research approaches and assumptions. *Information Systems Research, 2*(1), 1–28. https://doi.org/10.1287/isre.2.1.1

Paik, Y., Lee, J. M., & Pak, Y. S. (2019). Convergence in international business ethics? A comparative study of ethical philosophies, thinking style, and ethical decision-making between US and Korean managers. *Journal of Business Ethics, 156*(3), 839–855. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-017-3629-9

Palazzo, G., Krings, F., & Hoffrage, U. (2012). Ethical blindness. *Journal of Business Ethics, 109*(3), 323–338. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-1130-4

Park, T., Park, S., & Barry, B. (2021). Incentive Effects on Ethics. *Academy of Management Annals*, 16(1), 297–333. https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2020.0251

Parks, C. D., Sanna, L. J., & Posey, D. C. (2003). Retrospection in social dilemmas: How thinking about the past affects future cooperation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*(5), 988–996. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0022-3514.84.5.988

Peterson, D. K. (2002). Computer ethics: The influence of guidelines and universal moral beliefs. *Information Technology & People, 15*(4), 346–361. https://doi.org/10.1108/09593840210453124

Pflugrath, G., Martinov-Bernie, N., & Chen, L. (2007). The impact of codes of ethics and experience on auditor judgements. *Managerial Auditing Journal, 22*(6), 566-589. https://doi.org/10.1108/02686900710759389.

Piaget J. The *psychology of intelligence*.1966. Totowa, NJ Littlefield, Adams & Co Originally published 1947.

Piccolo, R. F., Greenbaum, R., den Hartog, D., & Folger, R. (2010). The relationship between ethical leadership and core job characteristics. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 31*(2-3), 259–278. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.627.

Pimentel, J. R. C., Kuntz, J., & Elenkov, D. (2010). Ethical decision-making: An integrative model for business practice. *European Business Review: (Special Issue) Business Ethics—Through Time and Across Context, 22*(4), 359–376.

Pratt, M. G., & Crosina, E. (2016). The nonconscious at work. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 3*, 321–347. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-041015-062517

Prior, J. (2011). *Everyday practices of agile software developers* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Technology Sydney]. University of Technology Sydney Archive. https://opus.lib.uts.edu.au/bitstream/10453/20388/5/02Whole.pdf

Rabl, T., & Kühlmann, T. M. (2008). Understanding corruption in organizations: Development and empirical assessment of an action model. *Journal of Business Ethics, 82*(2), 477–495. https://www.jstor.org/stable/25482303

Rahman, M. S., Hossain, A., Fattah, F. A. M. A., & Mokter, A. M. I. (2021). Avoidance behaviour towards using pirated software: Testing a seven-component model on SME employees. *Information Technology & People, 35*(10), 316–343.

Rajeev, P. N. (2012). Correlates of ethical intentions: A critical review of empirical literature and suggestions for future research. *Journal of International Business Ethics, 5*(1), 3–17. http://www.cibe.org.cn/uploadfile/otherfile/2012v5.pdf

Reinecke, J., & Ansari, S. (2015). What is a 'fair' price? Ethics as sensemaking. *Organization Science, 26*(3), 867–888. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2015.0968

Reiner, R. (2000). Police research. In R.D. King & K. Wincup (Eds.), *Doing research on crime and justice* (pp. 205-235). Oxford University Press.

Rest, J. R. (1984). The cognitive development approach to morality: The state of the art. *Counseling and Values, 18*, 64–78.

Rest, J. R. (1986). *Moral development: Advances in research and theory*. Praeger.

Rest, J. R., & Narvaez, D. (Eds.). (1994). *Moral development in the professions: Psychology and applied ethics.* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Reynolds, S. (2006). Moral awareness and ethical predispositions: Investigating the role of individual differences in the recognition of moral issues. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 91*(1), 233–243. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0021-9010.91.1.233

Robertson, D. C., Voegtlin, C., & Maak, T. (2017). Business ethics: The promise of neuroscience. *Journal of Business Ethics, 144*(4), 679–697. https://www.jstor.org/stable/45022215

Román, S., & Munuera, J. L. (2005). Determinants and consequences of ethical behaviour: An empirical study of salespeople. *European Journal of Marketing, 39*(5/6), 473–495. https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560510590674

Rosca, E., & Taylor, K. M. (2023). Delivering societal impact through supply chain design: Insights from B corps. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOPM-07-2022-0444

Roulet, T. J., Gill, M. J., Stenger, S., & Gill, D. J. (2017). Reconsidering the value of covert research: The role of ambiguous consent in participant observation. *Organizational Research Methods, 20*(3), 487–517. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1094428117698745

Rowe, M. (2005). Tripping over molehills: Ethics and the ethnography of police work. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 10*(1), 37-48. https://doi.org/1 0.1080/13645570600652792.

Ruby, J. (1980), Exposing yourself: reflexivity, anthropology, and film, *Semiotica*, 30(1-2), pp.153-179.

Ruiz-Alba, J. L., Abou-Foul, M., Nazarian, A., & Foroudi, P. (2021). Digital platforms: customer satisfaction, eWOM and the moderating role of perceived technological innovativeness. *Information Technology and People*, 35(7), 2470–2499. https://doi.org/10.1108/itp-07-2021-0572

Salmon, E., Chavez. J.R. & Murphy, M. (2023). New Perspectives and Critical Insights from Indigenous Peoples' Research: A Systematic Review of Indigenous Management and Organization Literature. *ANNALS*, 17, 439–491, https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2021.0132

Salvador, R., & Folger, R. G. (2009). Business ethics and the brain. *Business Ethics Quarterly, 19*(1), 1–31. https://www.jstor.org/stable/27673261

Sandel, M. J. (2012). *What money can't buy: The moral limits of markets*. London, U.K.: Macmillan.

Savur, S., Provis, C., & Harris, H. (2018). Ethical decision-making in Australian SMEs: A field study. *Small Enterprise Research, 25*(2), 114–136. https://doi.org/10.1080/13215906.2018.1480414

Seeck, H., Sturdy, A., Boncori, A.-L., & Fougère, M. (2020). Ideology in management studies. *International Journal of Management Reviews, 22*(1), 53–74. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12215

Shapiro, R. Y., & Mahajan, H. (1986). Gender differences in policy preferences: A summary of trends from the 1960s to the 1980s. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 50*(1), 42–61. https://doi.org/10.1086/268958

Schminke, M., Caldwell, J., Ambrose, M. L., & McMahon, S. R. (2014). Better than ever? Employee reactions to ethical failures in organizations, and the ethical recovery paradox. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 123*(2), 206-219. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2013.10.002

Schyns, B., & Schilling, J. (2013). How bad are the effects of bad leaders? A meta-analysis of destructive leadership and its outcomes. *Leadership Quarterly, 24*(1), 138–158. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2012.09.001

Schwartz, S. H. (1977). Normative influences on altruism. *In Advances in experimental social psychology.* 10, 221-279.

Shaw, W. H., & Barry, V. E. (2001). *Moral issues in business. (8th ed.).* Wadsworth.

Sheldon, S., Fenerci, C., & Gurguryan, L. (2019). A neurocognitive perspective on the forms and functions of autobiographical memory retrieval. *Frontiers in Systems Neuroscience, 13*, Article 4. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.3389/fnsys.2019.00004

Shulman, D. (2000). Professionals' accounts for work-related deceptions. *Symbolic Interaction, 23*(3), 259–281. https://doi.org/10.1525/si.2000.23.3.259

Sikula, A., Sr., & Costa, A. D. (1994). Are age and ethics related? *Journal of Psychology, 128*(6), 659–665. https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.1994.9921294

Silver, D. (2015). Review of the book Business ethics in the 21st century, by N. E. Bowie. *Business Ethics Quarterly, 25*(2), 279–282. https://doi.org/10.1017/beq.2015.6

Simmons, M. (2007). Insider ethnography: tinker, tailor, researcher or spy?, *Nurse Researcher*, 14(4), 7-17.

Singhapakdi, A., Vitell, S. J., & Franke, G. R. (1999). Antecedents, consequences, and mediating effects of perceived moral intensity and personal moral philosophies. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 27*(1), 19–36. https://doi.org/10.1177/0092070399271002

Smith, D. E. (2005). *Institutional ethnography. A sociology for people.* AltaMira Press.

Smith, G. E., Barnes, K. J., & Harris, C. (2014). A learning approach to the ethical organization. *Learning Organization, 21*(2), 113–125. https://doi.org/10.1108/TLO-07-2011-0043

Sonenshein, S. (2007). The role of construction, intuition, and justification in responding to ethical issues at work: The sensemaking–intuition model. *Academy of Management Review, 32*(4), 1022–1040. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2007.26585677

Spoelma, T. M., Mai, K. M., & Wei, W. (2023). Understanding the effects of cheating configurations on team creative performance: A social impact theory perspective. *Personnel Psychology*, 1–26. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12563

Stahl, B. C. (2021). *Artificial intelligence for a better future: An ecosystem perspective on the ethics of AI and emerging digital technologies.* Springer Nature.

Stanovich, K. E., & West, R. F. (2000). Individual differences in reasoning: Implications for the rationality debate? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 23*(5), 645–665. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X00003435

Star, S.L. & Griesemer, J.R. (1989). Institutional Ecology, 'Translations' and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907-39. *Social Studies of Science*, 19(3). 387-420.

Starcke, K., & Brand, M. (2012). Decision making under stress: A selective review. *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews, 36*(2012), 1228–1248. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neubiorev.2012.02.003

Stead, W. E., Worrell, D. L., & Stead, J. G. (1990). An integrative model for understanding and managing ethical behavior in business organizations. *Journal of Business Ethics, 9*, 233–242. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00382649.

Stouten, J., van Dijke, M., Mayer, D. M., De Cremer, D., & Euwema, M. C. (2013). Can a leader be seen as too ethical? The curvilinear effects of ethical leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly, 24*(5), 680–695. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2013.05.002.

Susser, D. (2019). *Invisible influence: Artificial intelligence and the ethics of adaptive choice architectures* [Paper presentation]. In *Proceedings of 2019 AAAI/ACM Conference on AI, Ethics, and Societ*y (pp. 403–408). Association for Computing Machinery. https://doi.org/10.1145/3306618.3314286

Tajfel, H. (1981). *Human groups and social categories: Studies in social psychology.* Cambridge University Press.

Tan, B. (2002). Understanding consumer ethical decision making with respect to purchase of pirated software. *Journal of Consumer Marketing, 19*(2), 96–111. https://doi.org/10.1108/07363760210420531

Tancredi, L. (2005). *Hardwired behavior: What neuroscience reveals about morality.* Cambridge University Press.

Tenbrunsel, A. E., & Smith-Crowe, K. (2008). Ethical decision making: Where we've been and where we're going. *Academy of Management Annals, 2*(1), 545–607. https://doi.org/10.1080/19416520802211677

Thiel, C. E., Bagdasarov, Z., Harkrider, L., Johnson, J. F., & Mumford, M. D. (2012). Leader ethical decision-making in organizations: Strategies for sensemaking. *Journal of Business Ethics, 107*(1), 49–64. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1299-1

Thiele, L. P., & Young, M. (2016). Practical judgement, narrative experience and wicked problems. *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory, 63*(148), 35–52. https://doi.org/10.3167/th.2016.6314803

Thomason, S., & Brownlee, A. (2018). Ethical decision making and psychological entitlement. *Business and Society Review, 123*(4), 631–659. https://doi.org/10.1111/basr.12158

Titmuss, R. M. (1970). *The gift relationship*. Allen & Unwin.

Tomkinson, S. (2015). Doing fieldwork on state organizations in democratic settings: Ethical issues of research in refugee decision making. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 16*(1). https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-16.1.2201

Tenbrunsel, A. E, Smith-Crowe, K., & Umphress, E.E. (2003). Building houses on rocks: the role of the ethical infrastructure in organizations. *Social Justice Research, 16*, 285–307.https://doi.org/ 0885-7466/03/0900-0285/0

Thatcher, S. M. B., Hymer, C. B., & Arwine, R. P. (2023). Pushing Back Against Power: Using a Multilevel Power Lens to Understand Intersectionality in the Workplace. Academy of Management Annals, 17(2), 710–750. https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2021.0210

Trensbrunsel, A., & Messick, D. (1999). Sanctioning systems, decision frames, and cooperation. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 44*(4), 684-707. https://doi.org/10.2307/2667052.

Treviño, L. K. (1986). Ethical decision making in organizations: A person–situation interactionist model. *Academy of Management Review, 11*(3), 601–617. https://doi.org/10.2307/258313

Treviño, L. K., Butterfield, K.D. & McCabe, D.L. (1998). The ethical context in organizations: Influences on employee attitudes and behaviors. *Business Ethics Quarterly* 8(3): 447-476.

Treviño, L. K., den Nieuwenboer, N.A. & Kish-Gephart, J.J. (2014). (Un)Ethical Behavior in Organizations. *Annual Review of Psychology.* 65: 635-660.

Treviño, L. K., Weaver, G. R., & Reynolds, S. J. (2006). Behavioral ethics in organizations: A review. *Journal of Management, 32*(6), 951–990. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0149206306294258

Treviño, L. K., & Youngblood, S. A. (1990). Bad apples in bad barrels: A causal analysis of ethical decision-making behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *75*(4), 378–385. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.75.4.378

Umphress, E. E., & Bingham, J. B. (2011). When employees do bad things for good reasons: Examining unethical pro-organizational behaviors. *Organizational Science, 22*(3), 621–640. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1100.0559

Valentine, S., & Barnett, T. (2002). Ethics codes and sales professional's perceptions of their organizations' ethical values, *Journal of Business Ethics, 40*(3), 191-200.https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1020574217618.

Van Maanen, J. (1983). New ethnographies. *Urban Life, 13*(2), 299–302. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0098303984013002010

Van Slooten, J. C., Jahfari, S., Knapen, T., & Theeuwes, J. (2019). How pupil responses track value-based decision-making during and after reinforcement learning. *PLOS Computational Biology, 15*(5), Article e1007031. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.1007031

Vedula, S., York, J. G., Conger, M., & Embry, E. (2022). Green to Gone? Regional Institutional Logics and Firm Survival in Moral Markets. *Organization Science*, 33(6), 2274–2299. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2021.1533

Victor, B., & Cullen, J. B. (1987). A theory and measure of ethical climate in organizations. In W. C. Frederick & L. Preston (Eds.), *Research in corporate social performance and policy* (pp. 51–71). JAL.

Wagner, D. T., Barnes, C. M., Lim, V. K. G., & Ferris, D. L. (2012). Lost sleep and cyberloafing: Evidence from the laboratory and a daylight saving time quasiexperiment. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 97*(5), 1068–1076. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/a0027557

Wang, L., & Murnighan, J.K. (2017). How much does honesty cost? Small bonuses can motivate ethical behavior. *Management Science, 63*(9), 2903-2914. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2016.2480

Warren, D. E., & Smith-Crowe, K. (2008). Deciding what's right: The role of external sanctions and embarrassment in shaping moral judgements in the workplace. *Research in Organizational Behavior, 28*, 81–105. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.riob.2008.04.004

Watley, L. D., & May, D. R. (2004). Enhancing moral intensity: The roles of personal and consequential information in ethical decision-making. *Journal of Business Ethics, 50*(2), 105–126. https://doi.org/10.1023/B:BUSI.0000022147.41538.ba

Watson, T. J. (2012). Making organisational ethnography. *Journal of Organizational Ethnography, 1*(1), 15–22. https://doi.org/10.1108/20466741211220615

Weaver, G. R. (2001). Ethics programs in global businesses: Culture's role in managing ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics, 30*(1), 3-15. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1006475223493

Weaver, G. R., & Treviño, L. K. (1999). Compliance and values oriented ethics programs: Influences on employees' attitudes and behavior. *Business Ethics Quarterly, 9*(2), 315–335. https://doi.org/10.2307/3857477.

Weaver, G. R., Treviño, L. K., & Agle, B. (2005). Somebody I look up to: Ethical role models in organizations. *Organizational Dynamics, 34*(4), 313-330. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2005.08.001

Weber, J. (1995). Influences upon organizational ethical subclimates: A multi-departmental analysis of a single firm. *Organization Science, 6*(5), 509–523. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2634959

Weber, J. & Seger, J. E. (2002), Influences upon organizational ethical subclimates: A replication study of a single firm at two points in time, *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol.41 No.1-2, pp.69 - 84.

Weick, K. E. (1995). *Sensemaking in organizations.* SAGE Publications.

Weick, K. E., Sutcliffe, K. M., & Obstfeld, D. (2005). Organizing and the process of sensemaking, *Organization Science, 16*(4), 409-421. http://doi.org/ 10.1287/orsc.1050.0133

Wicher, M.J. & Frankcus, E. (2023). Research governance for change: funding project-based measures in the field of responsible research and innovation (RRI) and their potential for organisational learning. The learning organisation. 31(5), 738-764.

Winocur, G., & Moscovitch, M. (2011). Memory transformation and systems consolidation. *Journal of the International Neuropsychological Society, 17*(5), 766–780. https://doi.org/10.1017/s1355617711000683

Wittmer, D. P. (2005). Developing a behavioral model for ethical decision making in organizations: Conceptual and empirical research. In G. Frederickson & R. Ghere (Eds.), *Ethics and public administration (2nd ed.)* (pp. 49-69). M.E. Sharpe.

Woiceshyn, J. (2011). A model for ethical decision making in business: Reasoning, intuition, and rational moral principles. *Journal of Business Ethics, 104*(3), 311–323. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41476090

Woolgar, S. (Ed.). (1988), *Knowledge and Reflexivity: New Frontiers in the Sociology of Knowledge*. Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Yuthas, K., Dillard, J. F., & Rogers, R. K. (2004). Beyond agency and structure: Triple-loop learning. *Journal of Business Ethics, 51*(2), 229–243. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-005-0273-6

Zagenczyk, T. J., Gibney, R., Murrel, A. J., & Boss, S. R. (2008). Friends don't make friends good citizens, but advisors do. *Group and Organization Management, 33*(6), 760–780. https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601108326806

Zeni, J. O., & Casatti, L. (2014). The influence of habitat homogenization on the trophic structure of fish fauna in tropical streams. *Hydrobiologia, 726*, 259–270. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10750-013-1772-6

Zeni, T. A., Buckley, M. R., Mumford, M. D., & Griffith, J. A. (2016). Making 'sense' of ethical decision making. *Leadership Quarterly, 27*(6), 838–855. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2016.09.002

Zey-Ferrell, M., & Ferrell, O. C. (1982). Role-set configuration and opportunity as predictors of unethical behavior in organizations. *Human Relations, 35*(7), 587–604. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F001872678203500707

Zey-Ferrell, M., Weaver, K. M., & Ferrell, O. C. (1979). Predicting unethical behavior among marketing practitioners. *Human Relations, 32*(7), 557–569. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F001872677903200702

Zhong, C.-B. (2011). The ethical dangers of deliberative decision making. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 56(*1), 1–25. https://doi.org/10.2189%2Fasqu.2011.56.1.001

Zhong, C.-B., & Liljenquist, K. (2006). Washing away your sins: Threatened morality and physical cleansing. *Science, 313*(5792), 1451–1452. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1130726

Zhong, C.-B., Strejcek, B., & Sivanathan, N. (2010). A clean self can render harsh moral judgement. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 46*(5), 859–862. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2010.04.003

Zhang, Y., Wu, M., YijunTian, G., Zhang, G., & Lu, J. (2021). Ethics and privacy of artificial intelligence: Understandings from bibliometrics. *Knowledge-Based Systems, 222*, 106994. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.knosys.2021.106994.

Zhuang, J., Thomas, S., & Miller, D. L. (2005). Examining culture's effect on whistleblowing and peer reporting. *Business & Society, 44*(4), 462–486. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0007650305281848

Zhu, A., Yang, S., Chen, Y., & Xing, C. (2022). A moral decision-making study of autonomous vehicles: Expertise predicts a preference for algorithms in dilemmas. *Personality and Individual Differences, 186*, 111356.

Zollo, L., Pellegrini, M. M., & Ciappei, C. (2017). What sparks ethical decision making? The interplay between moral intuition and moral reasoning: Lessons from the scholastic doctrine. *Journal of Business Ethics, 145*, 681-700. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-016-3221-8

Appendix A: Preliminary Concept Matrix

Article		Reflective re-reading completed	Ethics	Physiological	Emotions	Data (availability and accuracy for decision - incl. memory)	Neuroscience	Management Theory	Ethnography	Individual decision making	Group/Group dynamics/Collective Intelligence	Leadership influence	Politics/ Ideology	Education and Learning	Approaches	Uncertainty (sense-making)	Dual Systems (Sys1 and Sys2 thinking)	Intuition	Meta-cognition	AI/Data Science Ethics	System or Technology Implementation (Decision Support/Knowledge Based/Group Decision)	PhD - Theory Creation, research questions
How pupil responses track value-based decision-making during and after reinforcement learning.	Van Slooten, Jahfari, Knapen, Theeuwes 2018	X		X																		
A Neurocognitive Perspective on the Forms and Functions of Autobiographical Memory Retrieval	Sheldon, Fenerici, Gurguyan 2019	X			X	X	X															
The hippocampus and related neocortical structures in memory transformation	Sekeres, Winocur, Moscovitch 2018	X					X															
An exemplar of model-based cognitive neuroscience	Palmeri 2014	X				X	X															
Ventromedial prefrontal cortex generates pre-stimulus theta coherence desynchronization: A schema instantiation hypothesis.	Gilboa & Moscovitch 2017	X					X															
Modulating Episodic Memory Alters Risk Preference during Decision-making	St-Amand, Signy & Ross Otto 2018	X				X	X															
Episodic memory and beyond: The hippocampus and neocortex in transformation	Moscovitch, Cabeza, Winocur, & Nadel 2016	X				X	X															
Carrying out consensual Group Decision Making processes under social networks using sentiment analysis over comparative expressions	Morente-Molinera, Kou, Samuylov, Ureña, Herrera-Viedma 2019	X									X				X							

How intermittent breaks in interaction improve collective intelligence.	Bernstein, Shore, & Lazer 2018	X							X	X					
Sociological paradigms and organizational analysis	*Burrell & Morgan 1979*														X
The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process	*Crotty, M. 1998*						X								X
Focused crawling for automatic service discovery, annotation, and classification in industrial digital ecosystems	Dong & Hussain 2011	X												X	
Neuroplasticity Associated with Treated Aphasia Recovery' in book: Neurobiology of Language	Fridriksson & Smith 2016	X	X			X									
Toplantı tutanaklarının ile bir karar destek sistemi (A decision support system by analysis of the meeting reports.)	Gürbüz & Özyirmidokuz 2018	X						X	X					X	
Questions as Interactional Resource in Team Decision making	Halvorsen, K. 2018								X	X	X				
Cognitive flexibility and adaptive decision-making: Evidence from a laboratory study of expert decision makers	Laureiro-Martínez & Brusoni 2018						X	X				X	X		
Perceptual confidence neglects decision-incongruent evidence in the brain	Peters, Thesen, Ko, Maniscalco, Carlson, Davidson, Doyle, Kuzniecky, Devinsky, Halgren, & Lau 2017				X	X					X				
Your brain can only take so much focus	Pillay, S. 2018		X	X				X							
20 years inside the mind of the CEO… What's next?	PwC 2018							X			X				
Redundancy in decision-making systems	Rau, J.G. 1966													X	

Ford hired a furniture maker	2019					X	X				X			
I am but a Team: The Impact of Co-Supervisors on Performance in Shared Supervision Structures.	Adair 2017							X	X		X			
Rethinking the philosophical and theoretical foundations of organizational Neuroscience: A critical realist alternative. Human Relations.	Healey, Hodgkinson 2015			X	X									
Engaged or Vacant	Bartelby													
Removing technology changes human interactions	*Alcott & Bragierill*			X			X							
Developing globally responsible leaders in business schools A vision and transformational practice for the journey ahead.	Muff 2013	X				X				X				
Good Dividends		X				X			X					
Business Ethics: The Promise of Neuroscience',	Robertson, Voegtlin & Maak 2017	X	X		X	X								
Toward an Understanding of Dynamic Moral Decision Making: Model-Free and Model-Based Learning	Christopoulos, Liu & Hong 2017	X				X				X	X		X	
Business Ethics and the Brain	Salvador, Rommel & Folger, Robert. (2009).	X			X	X								
Deontic Justice and Organizational Neuroscience	Russell, Cropanzano, Massaro, Becker 2016	X			X	X								
https://sites.google.com/view/aiethicsworkshop														
The Bitter Lesson	Sutton 2019													X
Making "sense" of ethical decision making'	Zeni, Buckley, Mumford, & Griffith 2016,	X					X					X		

Fairness through Awareness	Dwork, Hardt, Pitassi, Reingold, Zemel 2012	X													X
Shared Moral Foundations of embodied Artificial Intelligence	Cruz, Joe 2019	X													X
Invisible Influence: Artificial Intelligence and the Ethics of Adaptive Choice Architectures	Susser, Daniel 2019	X								X					X
Moving beyond ethical decision-making: a practice-based view to study unethical sales behavior	Ameer & Halinen 2019	X				X	X								
Building an Ethical Career	Kouchaki & Smith 2020	X	X	X			X								
Business Student Insights…	Martinov-Bennie and Mladenovic & Bell 2019	X							X	X					
Convergence in International Ethics	Paik, Lee & Pak 2019	X		X		X							X		
The Deliberative test…	Ast 2019	X				X									
Ethical Decision making in Australia	Savur et. al 2018	X				X		X							
The relationship between individual work values	Arciniega et. al. 2019	X					X	X					X		
Accounting for proscriptive	Noval & Stahl 2017	X		X											
Manipulative Leadership	Kovacevic & Rahimic 20XX	X						X							
The ethical dangers of deliberate decision	Zhong 2011	X	X	X	X										
Ethical decision making and psychological	Thomasan & Brownlee 2018	X		X											
What sparks ethical decision making	Zollo et. Al. 2017	X		X								X	X		
Mindfulness A metacognitive perspective	Kudesia 2019			X		X	X				X		X	X	

A Review of the Empirical Ethical Decision-Making Literature: 2004–2011	Craft 2013	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
CORRELATES OF ETHICAL INTENTIONS: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL LITERATURE AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	Rajeev 2012	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Research Note and Review of the Empirical Ethical Decision-Making Literature: Boundary Conditions and Extensions	Lehnert, Park & Singh 2014	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
An Assessment of Decision Analysis	Howard 1979	X	X			X				
The Ethical OR/MS Professional	Howard 2001	X	X			X				
The origins and conceptualizations of ‘triple-loop’ learning: A critical review	Tosey, Visser & Saunders 2011				X	X				
Learning unethical practices from a co-worker: The peer effect of Jose Caseco	Gould & Kaplan 2010	X				X	X	X	X	
Friends don't make friends good citizens, but advisors do	Zagenczyk, Gibney, Murrell & Boss 2008	X				X	X		X	
Critically Generated Knowledge - the Triple Loop Learning Result	Petrovic 20XX					X	X		X	
Work-based learning, power and subjectivity: creating space for a Foucauldian research ethic	Zemblyas 2006	X				X	X		X	
Beyond Agency and Structure: Triple-Loop Learning	Yuthas, Dillard & Rogers 2004	X				X	X		X	
Ethics management for the construction industry A review of ethical decision-making literature	Man-Fong Ho 2009	X								
The Influence of Counterfactual Thinking and Regret on Ethical Decision Making	Celch, Saxby & Oeding 2015	X	X							

What Should a Manager Like Me Do in a Situation Like This Strategies for Handling Ethical Problems from the Viewpoint of the Logic of Appropriateness	Hiekkataipale & Lamsa 2015	X	X				X		
Ideologies in Markets, Organizations, and Business Ethics: Drafting a Map: Introduction to the Special Issue	Haase & Raufflet 2016	X	X				X	X	
AutoEthnography and the Question of Ethics.	Roth 2009	X		X	X				
Doing Fieldwork on State Organizations in Democratic SettingsEthical Issues of Research in Refugee Decision Making	Tomkinson 2015	X		X				X	
Ideology in Management Studies	Seeck, Sturdy, Boncori & Fougere 2020		X			X	X	X	
Moving Beyond Everyday Life in Institutional Ethnographies: Methodological Challenges and Ethical Dilemmas	Norstedt & Breimo 2016	X		X	X	X	X		
Organizational ethnography and religious organizations: the case of Quaker decision-making	Burton, Koning & Muers 2018	X						X	X
Tripping Over Molehills: Ethics and the Ethnography of Police Work	Rowe 2005	X		X					
Contextual Insight as an Antecedent to Strategic Foresight: Implications for the Open Foresight Process	Mastio & Dovey 2021		X				X	X	

Appendix B: Journal Shortlist

Academy of Management Annals

Administrative Science Quarterly

Annual Review of Clinical Psychology

Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior

Annual Review of Psychology

European Journal of Information Systems

Information Technology & People

Journal of Applied Psychology

Journal of Operations Management

Journal of Organizational Ethnography

Management Science

Manufacturing and Service Operations Management

Nature Human Behavior

Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews

Organization Science

Organizational Research Methods

Personality and Social Psychology Review

Personnel Psychology

Psychological Bulletin

Psychological Methods

Psychological Science in the Public Interest, Supplement

The Learning Organization

Trends in Cognitive Sciences

Appendix C: Summary of Extant Literature Findings Observed in the Study

Literature high-level Topic	Findings observed and endorsed in the research literature	Findings observed but were contrary to the research literature
Structure	The characteristics found in an ethical organisation contrast with those of an unethical organisation, where fragmentation and inconsistencies between espoused and practised values are evident (Diamond & Adams, 1999, as cited in Smith et al., 2014).	Organisations tend to be hierarchical, providing opportunities for the displacement of responsibility; work is often undertaken within teams, providing opportunities for the diffusion of responsibility (Moore et al., 2012, p. 11).
	Tenbrunsel et al. (2003) coined the term 'ethical infrastructures' to refer to the 'organisational elements that contribute to an organisation's ethical effectiveness' (p. 285).	The data also showed that the boundary-spanning departments (those with a customer service focus) tended to assume a cosmopolitan locus of analysis and used a principled ethical criterion when resolving ethical issues at work (Weber, 1995).
	Weber (1995) posited that an explanation for such behaviour was that technical core departments are insulated and can contribute to the narrow ethical decision-making perspective that manifested as an individual locus of analysis.	
Learning	Employees will seek advice from those they believe have useful knowledge and learn from those they admire (Ibarra, 1999).	
	Ease of learning 'unethical behaviour' in the shared experience (e.g., Gould & Kaplan, 2011),	
	Peer effect neutralises unethical behaviour to become socially acceptable (Gould & Kaplan, 2011), as do similar acts by people we admire in attempts to emulate their career path and decisions (unethical as they may be) (Ibarra, 1999).	
Ethics Code of Conduct/Training	Suggested that companies incorporate intuition and emotion into their ethics training (Zhong, 2011).	Where these codes of conduct or monitoring systems have been implemented in a way that ensured punishment or identification of unethical behaviour, the results have been quite mixed in terms of overall effectiveness (Chui & Grieder, 2020).
		Some cases showing these in isolation are more harmful even if an ethical failure had not occurred (Schminke et al., 2014)
Intent, Moral Disengagement, and Ethical Blindness	Guidice et al. (2009) found that strategic decision-makers are more willing to engage in a questionable practice when the target is a competitor rather than a peer or colleague.	

	'Ethical blindness' is defined as 'the temporary inability of a decision maker to see the ethical dimension of a decision at stake' (Palazzo et al., 2012, p. 325) due to a rational incapacity to access moral principles that are naturally innate.	
	The ethical cause of dilemmas that are presented as a lack of governance, volatility of financial markets, and bankers' greed cannot be understood without reference to ideologies and their related values (e.g., Davies & McGoey, 2012, as cited in Haase & Raufflet, 2016; Lusch & Webster, 2011; Padelford & White, 2009).	
	Other studies have found that if punishment for unethical behaviour does not exist and a situation arises where that behaviour becomes profitable, then unethical behaviour will continue (Wang & Murnighan, 2015).	Ethical and unethical behaviours are affected by social influence or social contagion, highlighting the role that the social context has in behaviour (Zagenczyk et al., 2008).
Culture and Dominant Logic	Neubaum et al. (2004, as cited in Savur et al., 2018) suggested that the ethical climate in some organisations takes longer to develop than in others.	
	Cues in the organisational environment have an important role in determining unethical behaviour (Kish-Gerphart et al., 2009)	
	As part of the study, it was found that the negotiations for defining 'fair' occurred through collective social sensemaking process (Reinecke & Ansari, 2015, p. 886).	Social learning theory (Bandura, 1986) suggests that much human behaviour is learnt through the influence of examples and that people do not need to be personally reinforced to learn.
Sensemaking	Individuals adopt either an ethical frame or a traditional business frame when making individual ethical decisions. The ethical frame leads to more ethical decisions, whereas the business frame leads to more unethical decisions (see Tenbrunsel & Messick, 1999; Tenbrunsel & Smith-Crowe, 2008).	
	Conversely, given the diffusion of responsibility, team or group ethical decision making could suffer (MacDougall et al., 2014).	Teams may prove beneficial regarding ethical decision making because individual team members may hold each other accountable for their actions (MacDougall et al., 2014, p. 17).
Co-Workers, Teams, Groups, and Partnerships	Oç et al. (2019) suggest that a single ethical champion may be unable to influence team decisions in an ethical direction and that the ethical champion can expect to face social sanctions from peers.	

Appendix D: UTS HREC Approval Letter

HREC Approval Granted - ETH19-4059

Research.Ethics@uts.edu.au <Research.Ethics@uts.edu.au>

Thu 6/05/2021 10:43 AM

To:Research Ethics <research.ethics@uts.edu.au>;Julia Prior <Julia.Prior@uts.edu.au>;Dorotea Baljevic
<[redacted]@student.uts.edu.au>

1 attachments (290 KB)

Ethics Application.pdf;

Dear Applicant

Re: ETH19-4059 - "Is Ethical Organisational Decision Making more Organic than we think?"

Thank you for your response to the Committee's comments for your project. The Committee agreed that this application now meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) and has been approved on that basis. You are therefore authorised to commence activities as outlined in your application.

You are reminded that this letter constitutes ethics approval only. This research project must also be undertaken in accordance with all UTS policies and guidelines including the Research Management Policy.

Your approval number is UTS HREC REF NO. ETH19-4059.

Approval will be for a period of five (5) years from the date of this correspondence subject to the submission of annual progress reports.

The following standard conditions apply to your approval:

- Your approval number must be included in all participant material and advertisements. Any advertisements on Staff Connect without an approval number will be removed.
- The Principal Investigator will immediately report anything that might warrant review of ethical approval of the project to the Ethics Secretariat (Research.Ethics@uts.edu.au).
- The Principal Investigator will notify the UTS HREC of any event that requires a modification to the protocol or other project documents, and submit any required amendments prior to implementation. Instructions on how to submit an amendment application can be found here.
- The Principal Investigator will promptly report adverse events to the Ethics Secretariat. An adverse event is any event (anticipated or otherwise) that has a negative impact on participants, researchers or the reputation of the University. Adverse events can also include privacy breaches, loss of data and damage to property.
- The Principal Investigator will report to the UTS HREC annually and notify the HREC when the project is completed at all sites. The Principal Investigator will notify the UTS HREC of any plan to extend the duration of the project past the approval period listed above through the progress report.
- The Principal Investigator will obtain any additional approvals or authorisations as required (e.g. from other ethics committees, collaborating institutions, supporting organisations).
- The Principal Investigator will notify the UTS HREC of his or her inability to continue as Principal Investigator including the name of and contact information for a replacement.

This research must be undertaken in compliance with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.
You should consider this your official letter of approval. If you require a hardcopy please contact the Ethics Secretariat.

If you have any queries about your ethics approval, or require any amendments to your research in the future, please don't hesitate to contact the Ethics Secretariat and quote the ethics application number (e.g. ETH20-xxxx) in all correspondence.

Yours sincerely,
The Research Ethics Secretariat

On behalf of the UTS Human Research Ethics Committees
C/- Research Office
University of Technology Sydney
E: Research.Ethics@uts.edu.au

Ref: E38