Daniel A. Effron
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The actions people want to take often conflict with their motivation to feel virtuous and to behave appropriately. For example, a contractor may be torn between the temptation to overbill a client and the wish to feel honest; a manager may want to fire a worker who happens to be a racial minority, but worry that doing so could seem prejudiced; or an employee might want to offer advice but feel that it is "not her place" to tell others what to do. I study how people manage tensions between feeling good about themselves and doing what they want. My research investigates how self-image concerns inhibit people from taking desired actions, the psychological processes that allow people to overcome these inhibitions, and the judgments people receive for the resulting behavior.

Situated in the field of behavioral ethics and moral psychology, my research has three lines of inquiry. The **first** examines how people manage their concerns about feeling virtuous in ethically fraught situations. It demonstrates that although such concerns can inhibit ethically questionable behavior, people are remarkably adept at circumventing them and licensing themselves to cheat, lie, or express prejudice. This work also sheds light on why people tend not to act in a consistently ethical manner. My **second** line of inquiry investigates how people judge others whose behavior is not consistently ethical. This work seeks to understand when and why such behavior receives condemnation for hypocrisy. My **third** line examines how people's concerns about the legitimacy or appropriateness of their actions can inhibit both positive and negative behaviors (e.g., protesting an injustice; exhausting a shared resource). This work reveals what gives people the standing to overcome this inhibition and act consistently with their attitudes.

Employing laboratory experiments, multi-organizational surveys, and cross-cultural studies, my research speaks to core psychological and organizational questions, including how to prevent unethical behavior, promote diversity, avoid hypocrisy, and encourage people to speak up. The following sections describe the three streams of my work.

I. MANAGING CONCERNS ABOUT FEELING VIRTUOUS

My first stream of work investigates how people manage concerns about feeling virtuous in ethically fraught situations – such as when they face a temptation to cheat, or want to express a view that could seem prejudiced. This work gives insight into when and why people commit ethically questionable actions. My studies reveal how people's ethical behavior depends in part on (a) the temptations they expect to face later, (b) the opportunities for virtuous behavior they have already faced, (c) constructed evidence of their moral character, (d) the behavior of their group members, and (e) counterfactual events they imagine "could have occurred." Whereas many scholarly and lay theories blame ethically questionable actions on unscrupulous individuals, corrupt organizations, perverse incentives, or poor monitoring, my work traces such actions, in part, to the psychological processes people use to maintain a virtuous self-image.

A. The Allure of the "Last Chance" to Cheat

In business, people often face a known number of opportunities to get away with cheating for financial gain. For example, each of four billing periods may provide consultants with an opportunity to overbill the client before their short-term contract ends. Previous work

suggests people will regulate themselves and seize only some of the available cheating opportunities, because they want to feel virtuous (e.g., Mazar, Amir, & Ariely, 2008). Our research reveals they are most likely to seize the last opportunity (Effron, Bryan, & Murnighan, 2015, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*). For example, we hired 327 research assistants on the Internet, explained that we would pay them based on how long they reported spending on each of several tasks, and surreptitiously measured how long they actually took. Regardless of whether we gave them 7 or 10 tasks to complete, they overbilled us more for their last task than for earlier ones. We documented a similar "cheat-at-the-end effect" in four experiments with over 2,500 people facing more than 25,000 opportunities to cheat undetected. Building on the observation that people want what is scarce, we argue that opportunities for personal gain are most attractive when no future opportunities remain. Our studies show that people anticipate that they would regret passing up a "last chance" for gain more than earlier chances, and that they are willing to cheat to avoid this regret. The results rule out several alternative explanations, such as the idea that people feel particularly depleted, or worry less about getting caught, on the last cheating opportunity. Organizations with limited resources to monitor employees' honesty might be advised to deploy such resources when cheating is most likely: when future cheating opportunities are scarce. In a struggle to balance virtue and temptation over time, temptation is more likely to win at the end.

B. Past Virtues Provide a License to Sin

The fear of tarnishing a virtuous self-image often inhibits people from expressing their prejudices and acting on morally questionable impulses. But the ability to point to evidence of past virtue can reduce this fear and make people feel like they have a *moral license* to act freely. Thus, people feel more comfortable committing ethically dubious behavior when they think that a prior action of theirs has demonstrated their virtue (for a review, see Merritt, Effron, & Monin, 2010, *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*).

My colleagues and I have made several contributions to the literature on this moral licensing effect. First, we reveal how real-world political contexts can license people to express potentially prejudiced views. We provided one of the first demonstrations of moral licensing, during the 2008 US Presidential election. After supporters of Barack Obama received a chance to voice this support, they became more likely to express a hiring preference that favored Whites at the expense of Blacks (Effron, Cameron, & Monin, 2009, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*). We argued that participants felt licensed to express such views because they thought that supporting a Black candidate had proven their lack of prejudice. In a more recent demonstration, expressing opposition to Donald Trump's proposed anti-Muslim immigration policy licensed registered US voters to endorse Islamophobic statements. However, immediately after a mass shooting in Orlando, FL, this effect was significantly diminished – perhaps because the salient threat of Islamic terrorism made people willing to express anti-Muslim prejudice even without a moral license (Effron & Lynch, in preparation).

Second, my work clarifies the theoretical underpinnings of moral licensing. We posited and found evidence for two distinct mechanisms (Effron & Monin, 2010, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*; Miller & Effron, 2010, *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*). Virtuous behavior can provide "moral credits" that can be "spent" on a license to commit even a blatant transgression. Through this mechanism, prior good deeds balance out subsequent wrongdoing. This is the most common understanding of licensing effects. But we showed that virtuous behavior can also provide "moral credentials" that attest to a person's

good character and change the way subsequent behavior is construed. Through this mechanism, prior good deeds make morally ambiguous behavior seem as if it did not represent wrongdoing at all. Understanding these different mechanisms improves predictions about when licensing will occur.

Third, I have shown that people feel licensed to commit ethically dubious behavior when they merely contemplate immoral behaviors they have not performed (i.e., counterfactual transgressions). To feel licensed to express racially problematic views, for instance, it is not necessary to actually engage in behaviors that help members of minority groups; merely thinking about how one could have harmed a minority-group member (but did not) is enough. When participants could point to a blatantly prejudiced behavior they had chosen not to perform, they were more likely to endorse an employment policy that favored Whites at the expense of Blacks (Effron, Miller, & Monin, 2012, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Studies 1-3). Reflecting on counterfactual transgressions can similarly license people to relax their pursuit of "virtuous" long-term goals, such as health. In a longitudinal study, dieters who had been induced to imagine how their recent eating behavior "could have been worse" made unhealthier choices during the following week than dieters in a control group (Effron, Monin, & Miller, 2013, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, Study 1). Thus people need not venture far down a virtuous path to feel licensed to stray from it; they need only imagine the sinful roads not taken. These studies demonstrate that it is far easier for people to acquire a moral license than previously appreciated.

C. People Create Evidence of a Virtuous Character

In the studies described above, providing people with salient evidence of their virtue licensed them to act less virtuously. The research described next reveals that people are not content to wait for such evidence to accumulate. Instead, they create evidence of their virtue when they anticipate needing a license in the future – for example, when they expect to make a hiring decision that could seem racist. Thus, my fourth contribution to understanding moral licensing is to demonstrate that people play an active role in constructing their "moral credentials" (for a review and theory development, see Effron & Conway, 2015, *Current Opinion in Psychology*). My research has documented three strategies that people use to create this "proof" of their virtue.

1) People change their behavior to preemptively prove their virtue. A first strategy is to perform actions that reflect positively on one's moral character. In the domain of prejudice, this involves strategically behaving in non-prejudiced ways. For example, when participants expected to pass over a slightly under-qualified Black job candidate (an action that could seem prejudiced), they preemptively sought a license to take this action by expressing greater racial sensitivity (e.g., by condemning a larger number of ambiguous behaviors as "racist;" Merritt, Effron, Fein, Savitsky, Monin, & Tuller, 2012, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*).

2) People reinterpret their past behavior as evidence of virtue. A second licensing strategy is to convince yourself that performing a trivial virtue in the past spoke volumes about your moral character. A small donation to charity may seem like better evidence of your generosity when you worry that your future behavior will seem selfish. For instance, after donating $.50 to the Red Cross, participants either learned that they would soon take a difficult test evaluating their ethicality (threat condition), or that they would merely examine another person's score on the test (control condition). The results showed how individuals who are chronically motivated to maintain a moral identity created moral credentials for

themselves. Those in the threat (vs. control) condition were more likely to imagine that their donation would convince an objective observer of their morality (Effron, 2014, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, Studies 5 and 6). To minimize their concerns about seeming immoral in the future, people made a mountain of morality from a mere molehill. This phenomenon may explain why, in previous research, enacting even trivial virtues was sufficient for people to feel licensed to act less ethically. When people anticipate needing a license, such virtues may take on inflated moral significance.

The research just described suggested that, at least when they need a license, people give themselves more credit for their good deeds than others give them. Pushing this finding further, my colleagues and I show that people assume an identical charitable behavior will do more good when they perform it, compared to when others perform it. For example, participants thought their own $100 donations could buy more books for poor children, plant more trees, and save more endangered animals than another person's $100 could (Polman, Effron, & Thomas, invited revision from *Journal of Consumer Research*, Study 3A). One implication is that people may overestimate the moral credit others give them in part because they overestimate the impact of their own good deeds.

3) People invent "immoral roads not taken." A third strategy people use to create evidence of their virtue is to convince themselves that they passed up opportunities to transgress – even if they had no such opportunities in reality. For example, motivating White participants to prove their racial egalitarianism led them to overestimate the number of opportunities they had – and passed up – to make racist judgments while identifying criminal suspects in a previous task (Effron et al., 2012, *JPSP,* Studies 4-6). In a different context, dieters tried to license themselves to eat a plate of freshly baked cookies by exaggerating the unhealthiness of a Snickers bar that they had previously declined to eat (Effron et al., 2013, *JESP,* Study 2). By distorting their memories and evaluations of the road not taken, participants in these studies fabricated evidence of their virtue. Not only are people willing to make mountains of morality out of molehills of virtue – they are willing to invent these molehills.

In summary, my research shows that the anticipation of needing a moral license motivates people to create evidence of past virtue, whether by enacting positive behaviors, inflating the morality of past behaviors, or even inventing bad behaviors that they did not perform. Research on moral licensing began with the observation that doing good can free people to be bad (see Merritt et al., 2010, *PSPC*). My work goes beyond this observation by revealing that doing good is not necessary to feel licensed, that people play an active role in convincing themselves that they have a license, and that people have a concerning amount of flexibility in convincing themselves that they have a license to transgress (Effron, 2016, chapter in *Cheating Corruption, and Concealment*).

D. Coping with Membership in an Unethical Group

Thus far, I have discussed how the ethical decisions people make in the present depend in part on the temptations they expect to face in the future, as well as how virtuously they believe they have acted in the past. In other research, I examine how a group's ethical history can affect its members' ethical decisions.

1) When will people deny vs. redress collective wrongdoing? To maintain a virtuous self-image, people often minimize or deny their group's wrongdoing. Making people feel more secure about their self-image, however, can reduce this defensive reaction. Our three studies show that receiving an opportunity to reflect on a source of personal pride (i.e., a *self-*

affirmation procedure) subsequently allowed Israelis to acknowledge the extent of their nation's mistreatment of Palestinian civilians, and Serbians to acknowledge their society's responsibility for the Srebrenica genocide. Moreover, this acknowledgment led participants to endorse reparations for the victimized outgroups (Čehajić-Clancy, Effron, Halperin, Liberman, & Ross, 2011, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*). These findings demonstrate the importance of considering partisans' self-image concerns when developing strategies to resolve intergroup conflicts.

2) *How do organizations' transgressions affect employees' ethical behavior*? How would the news that VW cheated emissions tests affect its employees' subsequent ethical behavior at home and at work? Previous research makes competing predictions: Employees could follow the norm and act less ethically, or try to compensate for their organization's wrongdoing by acting more ethically. We resolve these competing predictions by examining the role of organizational identification. Findings from three experiments suggest that people whose organizational membership is a strong part of their identity will act more ethically after learning about organizational wrongdoing, whereas those whose membership is less important to them will act less ethically (Hur, Effron, & King, invited revision for *Organization Science*). We argue that high identifiers feel most personally threatened by organizational wrongdoing and thus are most motivated to compensate for it. Our findings reveal how organizational transgressions can affect members' everyday ethical behavior, and suggest that highly identified members could be a valuable resource for an organization striving to overcome an ethical failure.

E. Telling Lies That "Could Have Been True"

The human capacity to imagine the world as it could have been or as it might become allows us to learn from mistakes, plan for the future, write novels, and invent new technologies. My research suggests that this capacity for *mental simulation* also has a darker side. Reflecting on the bad deeds we could have done (but did not do) can license us to sin (Effron et al., 2012, *JPSP*; Effron et al., 2013, *JESP*), and imagining the regret we might feel if we act honestly in the future can encourage us to cheat (Effron et al., 2015, *JPSP*). In more recent work, I examine how a different kind of mental simulation can facilitate dishonesty. Three studies show that the easier it is to imagine that a blatant lie "could have been true," the less dishonest the lie feels and the more likely people are to tell it (Effron & Shu, submitted to *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*). For example, people were more likely to falsely claim they had answered a trivia question correctly when there were multiple right answers versus just one, even though in both cases it was virtually impossible to guess correctly or to get caught lying. The more correct answers, the easier it was for people to imagine they *could have* guessed correctly, and (we find) the less dishonest it felt to lie about having guessed it. Thus, people's ability to imagine counterfactuals can allow them to give into dishonest temptations. Together, my studies on mental simulation reveal that our ability to contemplate alternative pasts (*counterfactual thinking*) and invent possible futures (*pre-factual thinking*) can facilitate unethical behavior. To convince themselves that they can succumb to unethical temptations in good conscience, people appear to use their imaginations.

II. PERCEIVING HYPOCRISY

My first stream of research shows that concerns about being virtuous can inhibit ethically questionable behavior, but that people also use a variety of mental strategies to quiet these concerns. As a result, few people act in a consistently virtuous manner. My second stream

addresses how people judge others whose behavior is not consistently virtuous. When and why do people condemn moral inconsistency as hypocrisy? This question is particularly relevant to organizational life, in which it is not always easy to practice what you preach. For example, bureaucratic barriers may prevent leaders from enacting their espoused ideals, and employees may be required to pay lip service to values they ignore outside of work. Previous work in OB documents negative consequences of failing to practice what you preach (e.g., Simons, Leroy, Collewaert, & Masschelein, 2014). I find that failing to practice what you preach is not necessary to receive condemnation for hypocrisy, and that people are sometimes regarded positively for inconsistencies between what they practice and preach. The following projects examine the social and cultural contexts that shape how people perceive hypocrisy.

A. *Organizational Membership Can Make Others Hypocrites By Association*

Not all employees will act consistently with the values their organization promotes. For example, a manager in a firm that values diversity may tell a racially insensitive joke. In three experiments, we find evidence that, according to observers outside the organization, employees deserve greater condemnation for the same misdeed when it does (vs. does not) transgress values promoted by an organization with which they are associated – a "hypocrisy-by-association" effect (Effron, Lucas, & O'Connor, 2015, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*). For example, participants evaluated a job candidate who once interned at a marketing firm, and who had recently been ticketed for reckless driving. When the firm ran a safe-driving campaign, compared to an unrelated campaign, participants thought his reckless driving was more problematic, found him less moral, said that he deserved a lower starting salary, and were less likely to recommend hiring him. We theorized that even tenuous, past organizational associations are interpreted as endorsements of the values the organization promotes – and thus failing to uphold these values seems hypocritical. Previous theorizing traces hypocrisy aversion to a dislike of inconsistencies between practicing and preaching (e.g., Stone & Fernandez, 2011). We expand these theories by showing that people receive condemnation merely for failing to practice what their organization preaches. Relatedly, follow-up studies show that leaders seem hypocritical when they fail to practice what their predecessors preached – an "intergenerational-hypocrisy effect" (Lucas, O'Connor, & Effron, in preparation). Overall, this work shows that organization members risk censure for hypocrisy in a broader array of situations than previously appreciated.

B. *Suffering for a Misdeed Can Reduce the Hypocrisy of Advising Against It*

Suppose a manager who once had an affair with a subordinate now advises a colleague to avoid romantic relationships in the office. Would the colleague welcome the advice in light of the manager's previous experience with office romance? Or would the colleague perceive the manager as a hypocrite who has no right to tell others whom to date? The results of six experiments suggest that the answer would depend on whether the manager had been caught and punished for the affair (Effron & Miller, 2015, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*). We find that a history of practicing a misdeed generally makes people seem disentitled to preach against it, because they appear hypocritical. However, the same history can make people seem *more* entitled to preach if they have suffered for the misdeed. This is because suffering makes an advisor's intentions appear righteous rather than self-righteous. In this way, suffering allows people to be judged favorably for inconsistencies between practice and preaching. We show that publicizing how would-be advisors paid a price for a past misdeed can increase their comfort advising against it and can reduce the derogation they receive when they do advise, both of which may help good advice spread.

The results highlight that people's willingness to listen to advice depends not only on the advisor's expertise, but also on perceptions of his or her legitimacy and hypocrisy.

C. When is Inconsistency Heroic Versus Hypocritical?

When a manager is accused of sexual harassment, will a history of doing good deeds help or hurt him? Prior good deeds can earn people a license to sin, but can also make them seem hypocritical. To resolve this apparent paradox, we posited that when the evidence of harassment against the manager is shaky, he is more likely to receive the benefit of the doubt if he has a strong track record of supporting women. If the evidence against him is clear, however, the same track record will make him look like a hypocrite, but a reputation for helping racial minorities will help him get off the hook. This example illustrates two key variables that determine how prior good deeds affect judgments of potential wrongdoing: (a) whether the wrongdoing is in the same domain as the good deeds, and (b) how blatantly unethical the potential wrongdoing is. Three experiments suggest that when an action is *blatantly unethical*, only prior good deeds in a *different domain* avoid the appearance of hypocrisy and mitigate how much observers condemn the actor. But when an action is *ambiguously unethical*, a prior good deed in the *same domain* is more likely to mitigate condemnation (Effron & Monin, 2010, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*). These results reveal when a virtuous reputation can make people seem like heroes instead of hypocrites.

More broadly, "saying one thing but doing another" can have both positive and negative consequences in organizations. On one hand, OB research shows that chronic misalignment between a manager's words and deeds can foster mistrust, demotivate performance, and increase employee dissatisfaction and turnover (Simons et al., 2014). On the other hand, managers can inspire employees by preaching ideals that are not yet practical to implement, and leaders may need to deviate from public commitments in order to adapt to changing circumstances. My colleagues and I recently proposed a process model predicting the consequences of "saying one thing but doing another" (Effron, Leroy, O'Connor, & Lucas, article proposal submitted to *Academy of Management Annals*). We argue that negative consequences are most likely to occur when (a) stakeholders perceive a high degree of inconsistency between an organization member's words and deeds, and (b) they perceive the inconsistency as an attempt to feign virtue. To identify what shapes these two perceptions, we draw on my own research and unite two previously independent literatures: one on word-deed misalignment in OB, and one on hypocrisy in psychology. Our model provides a roadmap that managers can use to navigate misalignment, predicting and minimizing its negative consequences while leveraging its positive consequences.

D. Judgments of Hypocrisy in Global Context

Management scholars and practitioners maintain that practicing what you preach is one of the more important requirements of effective leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2011; Simons, 2008). However, this advice is based almost entirely on studies in Western cultures. My colleagues and I posited that outside the West, misaligned practicing and preaching could be understood as a natural consequence of individuals' interdependence, because competing demands of different social roles require people to act inconsistently across situations (Effron, Jackman, Markus, Muramoto, & Muluk, submitted to *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*). In four experiments and four multi-organization field surveys with participants from 46 nations, we find less negative reactions to misaligned words and deeds in cultures emphasizing interdependence (e.g., in East Asia and Latin America) than in cultures

emphasizing independence (e.g., in North American and Western Europe). For example, among American (versus Japanese) employees, perceptions that a manager practiced and preached different values better predicted employee distrust, dissatisfaction, complaining behavior, and a reluctance to perform organizational citizenship behavior. We suggest that cultural differences in beliefs about the nature of the self shape the moral premium placed on consistency. Our findings highlight the potential for cultural misunderstandings and conflict surrounding issues of alleged hypocrisy in multinational organizations.

III. MANAGING CONCERNS ABOUT PSYCHOLOGICAL STANDING

Whereas my first stream of work examines how people manage their concerns about being virtuous, and my second examines how people react to others whose behavior is not consistently virtuous, my third stream examines how people manage concerns about their legitimacy, entitlement, or right to take certain actions. We refer to these as concerns about *psychological standing* (Miller & Effron, 2010, *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*; Miller, Effron, & Zak, 2009, chapter in *The Ontario Symposium: The Psychology of Justice and Legitimacy*). My research highlights that predicting behavior requires not only knowing people's attitudes and motivations, but also knowing whether they feel entitled to act. I examine how a lack of standing can inhibit both desirable and undesirable behaviors, from joining a social movement to depleting a scarce resource. What grants and deprives people of psychological standing? Several of my projects address this question.

A. Who Joins a Cause? Moralizing an Issue Increases Comfort Advocating

People often feel it is "not their place" to speak up about social issues that do not directly affect them. For example, prior work suggests that men feel less entitled than women to publicly express their views about abortion. (Ratner & Miller, 2001). We show in four studies, however, that framing an issue as relevant to moral values can make people feel it is "everyone's place" to speak up (Effron & Miller, 2012, *PSPB*). For example, men felt more comfortable advocating their views about abortion when it was linked to moral values, whereas women felt comfortable even without this moralization. Men apparently did not care any less than women about abortion, but men needed the standing afforded by moral values to advocate publically. Invoking moral values may thus help mobilize supporters of a cause – not by changing their hearts and minds, but by granting them standing to publicly express their support.

B. Who Takes the Last Cookie? The Diffusion-of-Entitlement Effect

The more guests there are at a party, the longer the last cookie will remain on the platter. Whereas a great deal of research shows that scarcity (high demand or meager supply) makes commodities more attractive, we find in four experiments that scarcity also reduces people's standing to take commodities for themselves (Effron & Miller, 2011, *JESP*). One consequence is that, paradoxically, the more people who want a limited commodity, the longer it can last because the more people feel that it is "not their place" to take the commodity. For example, when an experimenter asked for one volunteer to watch a comedy video (a desirable opportunity), the more participants in the room, the longer before someone volunteered. This research advances understanding of how groups affect social behavior. Classic work shows that the more people there are present, the longer it takes for someone to do an *undesirable* task (e.g., helping) due to the diffusion of *responsibility*. We show that the more people present, the longer it takes for someone to do something *desirable* due to the

diffusion of *entitlement.* Harnessing this diffusion-of-entitlement effect could support conservation efforts.

C. Who Expresses Prejudice? The Effect of Cohesive-Group Membership

Membership in certain groups can give people standing to publically express prejudices that they would otherwise conceal. Specifically, we find that people feel more entitled to express prejudice against racial, ethnic, or religious outgroups when their own group seems like a cohesive, unified entity (i.e., an *entitative* group) rather than like a loosely-knit collection of independent individuals (i.e., a *non-entitative* group. For example, when Christians read a news article describing their religion as a cohesive, well-coordinated group of similar people (i.e., as highly entitative), they became more likely to endorse anti-Muslim statements (Effron & Knowles, 2015, *JPSP*, Study 7). Additional evidence from implicit measures of prejudice suggested that the article did not change how they privately felt towards Muslims, but rather increased their willingness to publicly express the anti-Muslim feelings they already harbored. Why does membership in an entitative group disinhibit prejudiced expressions? We find that people perceive members of entitative groups as having psychological standing to express prejudice. In other words, their group membership makes their prejudice appear less illegitimate. Specifically, entitative-group members' prejudice is more likely to seem motivated by an understandable desire to defend group interests (e.g., "I don't like them because they are taking our jobs"), whereas members of non-entitative groups may seem motivated by irrational hatred (e.g., "I don't like them because they are inferior"). This is because members more clearly have common interests when the group seems like a single entity. Because group entitativity are subjective and malleable, our findings raise concerns that political rhetoric characterizing a group as highly cohesive can increase group members' willingness to voice their biases.

IV. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

I have several goals for future research. First, I plan to test how my previous findings can be leveraged to promote positive social outcomes – for example, how establishing "non-racist credentials" can increase people's comfort interacting across racial lines (Effron, Richeson, & Lynch, in progress), or how insights about psychological standing can be leveraged to increase people's comfort speaking out against injustice.

Second, I plan to investigate how presenting the same organization as more versus less entitative can affect the rights and responsibilities people assign to it. For example, ride-sharing company Uber could claim that its technology coordinates its drivers' behavior, creating a highly cohesive, entitative group of employees – or it could frame its technology as merely providing a marketplace to match consumer with drivers, who form a loosely-knit, non-entitative group of contractors. A current project shows that presenting Uber as entitative leads people to view it more positively and promote its brand, but also makes them blame the organization more for its drivers' wrongdoing (Effron, Kakkar, & Cable, in preparation). Another project (Schaumberg & Effron, in progress) tests the hypothesis that the more a corporation appears to be a unified entity, the more like a person it seems, and the more it may seem to deserve the legal rights of people, such as the right to spend money on political campaigns (cf. *Citizens United v. FEC*). Thus, the appearance of entitativity likely carries both risks and benefits for organizations.

Third, I plan to apply insights from the lab to field experiments in organizations. To pursue this goal, I recently partnered with the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) and a large police

force in the UK to design and test interventions for reducing fraudulent reports of mobile phone theft. I have also worked with Airbnb, a holiday rental company, on experiments related to diversity and discrimination.

V. CONCLUSION

Together, my three lines of research reveal surprising ways in which self-image concerns regulate social behavior. Such concerns can inhibit people from acting how they want to act. For example, concerns about being virtuous can inhibit people from cheating, even when they can get away with it; concerns about psychological standing can inhibit people from engaging in advocacy, even when they care about the cause; and concerns about hypocrisy can prevent people from giving advice, even when the advice is sound. At the same time, people are skilled at circumventing these concerns with a variety of psychological strategies. By shedding light on self-image concerns, how people manage them, and how others judge the resulting behavior, my research thus reveals when and why people are more likely to do what they want.

On one hand, my research paints people in an unflattering light. Despite readily condemning others for hypocrisy, people are disturbingly skilled at allaying their own self-image concerns that would otherwise inhibit them from lying, expressing prejudice, or just breaking a diet. On the other hand, my research also paints a more positive portrait. It shows how allaying self-image concerns can disinhibit people to act on pro-social motives, such as the desire to protest an injustice, to give advice, or to redress wrongdoings. Additionally, my research highlights that people care deeply about morality, as shown by their sensitivity to others' hypocrisy and the mental contortions they perform to preserve their own moral self-image. This concern with a moral self-image not only can inhibit unethical actions, but can also motivate exemplary moral behavior.

The psychological processes I study undoubtedly have negative ethical consequences, but they may ultimately allow people to navigate a complex world in which it is impossible to always behave virtuously. In organizations and in everyday life, people must trade off between competing values, struggle with moral ambiguity, and accept practical limitations on their desire to do good. In situations like these, people's ability to manage their self-image concerns may allow them to engage with ethical issues without becoming paralyzed by guilt or indecision. By examining how people manage their self-image concerns, I hope to shed light on how organizations can facilitate more ethical behavior.

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