Journal of Business Ethics
https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-025-05928-8

ORIGINAL PAPER

Compartmentalization and the Role of Polyphony in Moral Dialogue

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Received: 23 November 2023 / Accepted: 10 January 2025
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Abstract
Existing research on identity compartmentalization highlights concerns about moral (ir)responsibility arising from the incomplete integration of multiple role identities necessary for exercising full moral agency. Our study examines the (non) recognition of otherness by managers in morally ambiguous situations during industry-level changes. We adopt a dialogue-based approach, inspired by Bakhtin, and Ricoeur, to analyze compartmentalization from the perspective of polyphonic dialogue. Through an analysis of 61 interviews across four distinct change contexts, we identify five dialogue dynamics that either hinder or facilitate the recognition of alternative moral perspectives, shaping the formation of moral polyphony. We contribute to current understandings of compartmentalization by emphasizing its dialogical and fluid nature, the generative potential of division, and the role of conflicting moral convictions in change situations, as an ideal context for fostering moral polyphony.

Keywords Moral · Compartmentalization · Bakhtin · Ricoeur · Polyphony · Dialogue · Dialectic

Introduction

Organizations are social entities where morality—defined as the behavioral prescriptions and standards that guide us toward a virtuous life—is ever-present (Moore & Gino, 2013). Research indicates that in situations characterized by high moral ambiguity, individuals often compartmentalize their actions and beliefs (Rozuel, 2010, 2011). Compartmentalization is a psychological process where individuals separate themselves into distinct, mutually exclusive positive and negative categories. This mechanism helps navigate change and ambiguity (McKenna, 2010; Rozuel, 2011), while managing moral dissonance and perceived threats to the self (Rozuel & Kakabadse, 2010).

Moral agency is defined as "the agency exercised by organizational actors in pursuit of ethical practice," encompassing a sense of self and the question, "Who am I as a moral agent?" (Wilcox, 2012, pp. 86–87). Managers in corporate environments are argued to internalize business priorities driven by global capitalism and market logic. These priorities often guide their ethical assessments and suppress their moral agency (ibid.). Reflective and relational spaces are considered essential in organizations, as they enable individuals to develop their morality. Such spaces grant individuals the freedom to critically evaluate societal values and taken-for-granted standards (MacIntyre, 1999). The development of these spaces is thought to be hindered by the phenomenon of compartmentalization. When compartmentalizing, social structures and norms remain separate, leading individuals to act according to the standards and norms of a specific role without critically examining them (MacIntyre, 1999).

In this study, we explore how managers navigate moral perspectives when their business faces challenges such as shifting market dynamics, rapid technological advancements, and growing societal expectations. Specifically, we examine how managers recognize and engage with alternative—and often conflicting—moral perspectives during times of change, using dialogue as a central approach. In the contexts we studied, business model innovations alter value configuration systems, often leading to shifts in moral responsibilities. For example, outsourcing operational services as part of a business model change raises questions about responsibility when

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Published online: 03 February 2025

service delivery fails. Change often evokes uncertainty and triggers a moral alarm, generating reactions that can either strengthen or destabilize societal foundations (Mantere & Whittington, 2021; Suchman, 1995). Emerging values challenge established moral frameworks, and, as such, pose a threat to both collective and individual morality (Budd et al., 2019; Rozuel, 2011; Thompson, 2010). In our empirical context, contrasting moral perspectives included those of consumers, citizens, and more personal viewpoints, such as that of a mother. For instance, a manager who is also a mother might grapple with decisions impacting her roles at work and at home. She may face a moral dilemma when business choices—such as outsourcing labor—conflict with her personal values, including fairness, community impact, or job security. These values may be heightened by her maternal perspective, which prioritizes caring for and protecting vulnerable individuals, such as her children. This kind of empirical observation of contradictions between moral perspectives in managerial discourse was both surprising and intriguing. These observations challenge the argument, grounded in the compartmentalization literature, that managers typically maintain a consistent managerial "voice" within organizational contexts (Rozuel & Kakabadse, 2010; Wilcox, 2012).

Faced with this empirical puzzle (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007), we explored theoretical paths to explain the emergence of multiple moral "voices" in our data. Using abductive reasoning, we continuously revised theoretical insights emerging from the interplay between empirical observations and potential frameworks (e.g., Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007; Saertre & Van, 2021). This abductive process ultimately led us to draw on Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of dialogue (1981, 1984), and Paul Ricoeur's notion of "otherness" (1992), to understand the diverse moral perspectives revealed in the interviews. Bakhtin's concept of dialogue (1981, 1984) frames human interaction as inherently social, contextual, and dialogical (Sultana & Dovchin, 2022). Dialogue emphasizes relationships, their continuity, and how an author (the self) (re)constructs these connections with others (Gardiner, 2003). Central to this perspective is the concept of polyphony, which captures the coexistence of multiple "voices," enabling varied perspectives to intersect and interact (Belova et al., 2008). A Bakhtinian approach suggests no "full authoring" of "I"/oneself exists without the perspective of the other, imagining the feelings of the other (Bakhtin, 1984). Acting ethically thus requires a distance between "I" and the "other." Ricoeur's (1992) work complements Bakhtin's ideas on how such difference and otherness can be recognized in the (moral) self through a detour of reflection, which means engaging in a process of distancing oneself from immediate self-understanding to consider the perspective of the other. This involves the dialectic of selfhood and sameness, indicating the tension between maintaining your identity while recognizing the influence of external views, and the dialectic of selfhood and otherness, which is the interplay between affirming one's sense of self and integrating the ethical responsibilities owed to the other. By integrating Bakhtin (1981, 1984) and Ricoeur (1992), this paper aims to explain how managers recognize other moral perspectives through dialogue when assessing emerging industry changes.

Our contribution to the discussion on compartmentalization is twofold. First, we theorize compartmentalization as a potentially momentary phenomenon occurring within an ongoing dialogue (Bakhtin, 1986; Glozer et al., 2019; Shotter, 2006), through which moral perspectives are tested (Wright, 2021). We identify and theorize moments of conflicting moral conviction, grounded in dialogue and the dialectic between the "self" and "self as another" (Ricoeur, 1992), which enables a continuous unfolding of moral dialogue (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984). In line with previous studies on compartmentalization (Rozuel & Kakabadse, 2010; Wilcox, 2012), we recognize the managerial self as an archetype that acts as a moral buffer, adhering to organizational moral scripts that suppress polyphonic dialogue. We argue that true moral agency requires critically scrutinizing taken-for-granted business standards through such moments of conflicting moral convictions. This process unravels dialogue spaces between the self—situated within business contexts and priorities—and the self as another. Second, we challenge studies that conceptualize identity compartmentalization (e.g., Burton & Vu, 2021; Rozuel, 2010, 2011) as solely negative for both individuals and organizations. We extend the discussion by exploring the potential benefits of momentary role division. We demonstrate that compartmentalization can facilitate the emergence of conflicting moral convictions, creating opportunities for self-reflection and self-discovery (Goby & Karimova, 2024).

Theoretical Background

Our study design is grounded in abductive reasoning (Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013). Data collection began prior to engaging with the theoretical perspectives of Bakhtin (1981, 1984) and Ricoeur (1992). In this section, we briefly outline Bakhtin's (1981, 1984) perspective, supplemented by Ricoeur's (1992) views on the sense of oneself as a moral agent (Wilcox, 2012). This theoretical foundation underpins the methods and findings that we present in subsequent sections.

Dialogue represents the constant relationship between entities that constitutes our existence and co-being in the world (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984). From a dialogical perspective, different consciousnesses shape each other, setting the stage for ongoing self-awareness and the continuous process of becoming (Bakhtin, 1984). Bakhtin's (1981, 1984) conceptualization of polyphony, as the coexistence

of multiple voices or consciousnesses, originates from the novel as a literary genre. In this context, the "author" ("I" or "self") and "characters" (others) are continuously present and interacting (Hirschkop, 2021). Voice, in Bakhtinian terms, is defined by its ideological position, with authorial and other voices always engaging in conversation. These voices attempt to justify their perspectives, constantly challenging and being challenged by others (ibid.). In Ricoeur's (1992) work, the concept of the "other" is central to the definition of identity and the formation of a moral self. Ricoeur identifies three key features of the hermeneutics of the self: "the detour of reflection by way of analysis, the dialectic of selfhood and sameness, and finally the dialectic of selfhood and otherness" (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 16). His argument suggests that understanding ourselves is not solely about introspection but also how we relate to others. The process begins with reflection through analysis, followed by navigating the balance between selfhood (remaining the same person over time) and sameness (maintaining consistency). Finally, identity is shaped by the interplay between selfhood and otherness—where our definition of self is influenced both by how we see ourselves and by our relationships with those around us.

In relation to the development of morality and ethical consciousness, the Bakhtinian (1981, 1984) approach suggests that a moral self evolves over time through the authorship of oneself. This process is shaped by the words of others and the dialogues encountered in diverse social contexts throughout your lived experiences (Tappan, 1999). Internal dialogue, according to Bakhtin, can reflect both harmony and "a struggle with other internally persuasive discourses" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 346). Dialogue operates at the level of language, reflecting a relational exchange where the coexistence of differences is central (ibid.). A central aspect of dialogue is the utterance, a speech act occurring in a specific context that embodies the relationship between the self, the other, and the content being communicated. Utterances provide momentary evaluations of a situation, and are always connected to preceding utterances. For Bakhtin (1981, 1984), language and discourse are inherently double-voiced: they are simultaneously speech acts and responses. Continuous dialogue enables a transient perception of the self, shaped by the categories of the other at a specific moment in time (Holquist, 2003). This perspective is only possible when one adopts the viewpoint of the other, imagining oneself "into scenarios of the kind I see others enacting," including their values (ibid.). Ricoeur (1992), on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of meaning and intention in utterances, distinguishing them from mere language or text. Ricoeur argues that an utterance is an act that transcends language, entering the plane of being. Through the act of utterance, a person transforms abstract thought into a sign or word, representing the intended meaning to the other (Ricoeur, 1992). Thus, an utterance is an event that brings both the author (the speaker) and the other (the listener) closer to deeper understanding.

Accordingly, managers construct their moral "truths" through internal dialogue (McKenna, 2010). Bakhtin (1981, 1984) emphasizes dialogue as an open, ongoing process where different "voices" coexist without requiring reconciliation, while Ricoeur (1992) highlights a dialectical relationship between the self and the other, requiring the resolution or synthesis of opposing perspectives. In Bakhtin's (1981, 1984) view, multiple voices can coexist distinctly, whereas Ricoeur sees the tension between self and other as something to be resolved through engagement. Integrating Bakhtin's (1981, 1984) concept of continuous dialogue with Ricoeur's (1992) dialectical approach enables the exploration of how different moral perspectives engage with—and at times challenge—each other (Wright, 2021), within specific social contexts (Sultana & Dovchin, 2022).

We propose that the compartmentalization literature would benefit from examining the processual nature of the compartmentalization phenomenon, particularly its dialogical aspects, wherein moral becoming involves continuously testing various moral ends and truths against one another (Bakhtin, 1984; Ricoeur, 1992). Current conceptualizations often frame overcoming compartmentalization as a final outcome, the notion that a dialogical perspective resists (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984). A dialogical perspective highlights linguistic nuances and offers a pathway for continuous moral development (Bakhtin, 1984; Ricoeur, 1992). A dialectic lens, in turn, recognizes a moral perspective as distinct from the current self, distinguishing it by assigning it to the other (Ricoeur, 1992). As such, compartmentalization can sometimes manifest as dialogue when moral truths contradict, making responses to alternative viewpoints explicit.

Adopting a Bakhtinian (1981, 1984) inspired, and Ricoeur (1992) supplemented dialogue lens is crucial to addressing the moral hazards associated with identity compartmentalization (e.g., Rozuel, 2010, 2011; Wilcox, 2012). The compartmentalization literature benefits from exploring how the moral self (e.g., Rozuel, 2010, 2011) develops through a continuous, fluid polyphonic dialogue (Shotter, 2006), where ideologically positioned voices interact and occasionally conflict in their evaluations (Hazen, 1993; Jabri, 2004). A dialogic perspective, therefore, offers a more nuanced understanding of moral selfhood. The concept of selfhood includes Ricoeur's notion of "self as another," where otherness is so deeply embedded that the distinction between "oneself" and "other than self" becomes blurred (Ricoeur, 1992). Selfhood is thus a mode of being and maintaining oneself, encompassing an attitude of responsibility toward others. Ricoeur's (1992) dialectical framework emphasizes an epistemic awareness of the "other" as a subject in the

world, whose presence calls for the moral responsibility of the self. Becoming your true moral self, and acting ethically, involves responding faithfully to this calling by recognizing the suffering of and demonstrating care toward the other (Pierovich, 2011).

While Bakhtin (1981, 1984) would oppose Ricoeur's (1992) dialectical focus and the notion of a momentary unity achieved through resolution, we argue that the two perspectives can complement each other. Ricoeur's (1992) emphasis on moments of conflict and reconciling one's moral standpoint reinforces Bakhtin's (1981, 1984) idea that meaning emerges through ongoing struggle. Conversely, Bakhtin's focus on open-endedness introduces continuous movement, unraveling the ever-changing nature of dialogue and the multiplicity of choices and intentions that invite responses from other viewpoints. This perspective has implications for understanding conviction, which Ricoeur (1992, p. 247) describes as a meditation on the inevitable role of conflict in moral life. Ricoeur places conviction at the center of moral judgment, framing conviction as the culmination of dialectical development and the only available resolution. In contrast, Bakhtin's concept of the "unfinalizable" nature of dialogue suggests that meaning is continuously renewed and perpetually in struggle (Holquist, 2003).

From a Bakhtinian perspective, there are no grand ethical "rules" guiding actions. Instead, morality originates from a "spark" within consciousness that compels one to act morally and pursue what is "right" (Hirschkop, 2021). This spark is experienced only through recognizing the distinction between "I" and "other," which fundamentally enables ethics within the ongoing dialogue. Ricoeur (1992) explicitly complements Bakhtin (1981, 1984) on the concept of conviction, which we conceptualize as the experience and evaluation of conflicting perspectives and beliefs, manifested in the recognition and connection between the self and the other.

In sum, both Bakhtin (1981, 1984) and Ricoeur (1992) agree on the importance of self-discovery (Goby & Karimova, 2024). However, while Ricoeur emphasizes the dialectical tension between the self and the other, and the self-insight that emerges from their interaction, Bakhtin (1981, 1984) conceptualizes dialogue as unfinalizable. Both the dialogical and dialectical perspectives illuminate the possibilities inherent in recognizing difference (Ricoeur, 1992), and how never-ending dialogue can constitute a transformative process (Hazen, 1993) within continuous becoming (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984; Ricoeur, 1992).

Next, we present our research design, including the context and process. We then explore the dialogue dynamics through the interplay between our empirical observations and the previously discussed theory. For clarity, we summarize key constructs in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Central constructs from Bakhtin (1984; 1981) and Ricoeur (1992)

Construct	Definition	Implications for oneself as a moral agent (e.g., Wilcox, 2012)
Dialogue (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984)	The unfinished and ongoing process in which the self and other interlink in different ways, taking on elements from one another Key aspects include - Ongoing interrelationships between multiple voices/perspectives and their societal contexts - No emphasis on synthesis, finalizability, or consensus - An ongoing struggle or contrast between voices/perspectives	Emergence of a moral self through engaging with and taking on aspects of the "other," rooted in different sociocultural contexts
Polyphony (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984)	Simultaneity of many independent and unmerged voices/perspectives, each with its own equally valid moral "truth." Language reflects different worldviews and societal evaluations of particular ideological realities	The moral self includes aspects of multiple others and their "truths," which manifest through polyphony
Dialectic of selfhood (Ricoeur, 1992)	Selfhood refers to "who I am" (ipse), and is a mode of being and maintaining oneself. It embodies an attitude and responsibility one adopts toward others Dialectics emphasize epistemic awareness of the "other" as a subject, and the moral responsibility the self owes to the "other."	Becoming your true moral self, and acting ethically, involves faithfulness to selfhood, recognizing the suffering of the other, and demonstrating care toward them
Dialectic of "otherness" (Ricoeur, 1992)	Otherness refers to "who I am in relation to others" (idem) Through sameness, one sees parts of oneself reflected in others	Recognizing the "other" is essential for the self's moral development

Research Contexts

Our research initially aimed to explore how managers develop strategic responses to emerging industry changes. In the studied contexts, new market entrants introduced alternative methods for consumers to travel, commute, access information about food products, and purchase legal services. During data collection, we encountered recurring empirical contradictions and observed that the evolving business environment exposed managers to both organizational and moral dilemmas. The emerging insights contrasted sharply with existing theoretical understandings of managerial sensemaking during industry change.

Observing moral argumentation in media reports and the initial interviews, we became curious about how managers in incumbent organizations across various industries either justified or raised moral objections to the change. Our initial exploration relied on archival material, including industry reports, newspaper articles, field-level statistics, and company annual reports. To capture the nature of industry change and to understand how managers morally evaluate it, we conducted interviews across various firms and departments, including general management, R&D, sales, operations, and customer service.

We began our study in the hospitality industry, but as the emerging moral debates in the data caught our interest, we expanded the study to include three additional fields. These were anticipated, as reflected in the public media discourse, to experience significant disruption in the coming years. For example, rapid developments in AI were expected to pose moral dilemmas for both producers and consumers of products and services. In all the studied fields, the value constellation systems were evolving, raising moral questions as new methods of delivering value altered the participants' present responsibilities or introduced entirely new actors. In the hospitality industry, emerging service providers sought to revolutionize travel experiences by leveraging housing options provided to travelers by ordinary citizens. This sector has sparked heated moral debates regarding the business models of the novel providers, as cities, municipalities, and established firms have sought to respond to the change.

The second field studied was the mobility industry, undergoing similar transformations. Technological platform providers used advanced data management techniques to connect car owners with car users, bypassing traditional car rental enterprises in both short-term (taxi services) and long-term (vehicle leasing) markets. The third field encompassed companies aiming to disrupt conventional food processing entities by offering greater visibility regarding raw materials' supply routes. These disruptors leveraged technology to unveil supply chains, including transportation routes and primary production locales. The fourth field studied was the legal services sector. Advances in artificial intelligence (AI) and large language models (LLMs) have prompted a reevaluation of traditional methods for legal document creation. Numerous firms emerged across various markets, seeking to automate aspects of document production to enhance efficiency, reduce costs, and democratize access to legal services.

Each field presented a unique blend of ethical considerations and potential disruptions to established practices. During the interviews, managers explored business changes by referencing multiple, varied, and sometimes contrasting moral perspectives as they sought to understand the evolving environment.

A list of informants and their corresponding titles is provided in Appendix I. Table 2 summarizes the cases, data, context descriptions, and moral issues identified through the archival analysis.

Methods

Study Design

Guided by the empirical puzzles described earlier, we relied on an abductive reasoning process (Dubois & Gadde, 2002; Kovács & Spens, 2005), a generative method that begins with empirical observations and iteratively moves between them and plausible theoretical explanations (Saertre & Van de Ven, 2021). This reasoning emerged organically from the research process and was exemplified by the early empirical observation of multiple moral voices within the same interview material, which caught our interest. It led to the generation of both theoretical and empirical hunches, followed by an evaluation of these grounded in compartmentalization and dialogue theory, to explain these observations (Saertre & Van, 2021).

In the interviews, managers from the four different fields, where organizations faced industry-level threats of change, evaluated novel business models against existing practices, such as work contract legislation, fairness of competition, customer safety, free market ideology, and the potential survival of their organization in the face of industry-level disruption. These managers (profiles in Appendix I) were asked to assess the emerging business model innovations identified through our archival analysis (interview themes in Appendix II). In total, we conducted 61 semi-structured interviews.

Data Production

In the interviews, participants were encouraged to assess the necessary adaptations in their respective fields and consider the positioning of their organization should disruption

Table 2 Change contexts, related practices, and details of changes in each field

Group	Business Model Shifts	Data	Examples of Changes in Practices	Generic Discourse (Archival)	Changes	Possible Moral Issues
Context A: Hospitality and tourism	Introduction of a sharing business model	11 interviews, 42 pages of archival data (news articles, company websites, trade union reports, national statistics)	Resource ownership, marketing channels, planning systems, and collaboration	Media reporting many occasions of misuse of the system, including regulatory issues related to new business models	From corporate to collective governance From resource ownership to resource sharing	Potential exploitation of workers due to lack of regulation in a collective governance model Privacy concerns related to resource sharing Unequal distribution of value capture among stakeholders
Context B: Mobility	Introduction of a sharing business model	8 interviews, 83 pages of archival data (news articles, trade union statements, marketing material)	Pricing changes, resource ownership, organizing principles, and data sharing	Overall positive tone related to the sustainability impacts of better resource usage, as well as city-level concerns about infrastructure limits	From corporate to collective governance From resource ownership to resource sharing	Equity issues regarding access to shared resources Potential data privacy breaches in shared data systems Risk of marginalizing lower-income populations in new pricing structures
Context C: Food processing and restaurant trade	Introduction of an open logistics business model	21 interviews, 128 pages of archival data (annual reports, internal documentation, news reports)	New packaging, supply chain tracking practice changes, new sourcing practices, product verification, data handling, reporting, and data management (internal)	Limited evidence on the general societal-level impacts. Some discourse on special instances of food fraud, and the sustainability of logistics that new business models can resolve	From corporate to collective governance From data protection to open data From stakeholder value optimization to returns based on value contribution	Risks related to food safety and consumer health Data privacy concerns with open data systems
Context D: Legal services	Introduction of platform-based transactional law services	13 interviews, 83 pages of archival material (news reports, blog posts, expert interviews)	Remote and mobile working practices, fixed pricing	Limited evidence, critical discussion related to missing person-to-person contacts	From individual service to mass customization	Erosion of personalized client relationships Fairness and transparency issues in fixed pricing models Ethical concerns about data security in remote working environments

materialize on a wider industry scale. The interviews facilitated close interaction with our research participants (Yardley, 2015), and provided windows into their self-reflections. To enhance rigor (Yardley, 2015), we selected informants with direct experience of emerging industry changes, and the ability to evaluate how novel business models might reshape the competitive landscape, as well as their future roles as managers.

Recognizing the potential for contextual influences on the observed phenomena in the hospitality and mobility industries, the study was subsequently extended to food processing, and legal services. This was motivated by the need to explore the boundary conditions of our initial observations and assess their applicability across varied contexts, while remaining sensitive to the studied settings (Yardley, 2015). Additionally, we aimed to enhance the external validity of our findings, ensuring that the conclusions drawn were not limited to the idiosyncrasies of a single industry (ibid.), but offered broader insights for managers to reflect on moral issues during periods of change.

Data Analysis

Our abductive reasoning was guided by a continuous interplay between empirical impressions and theoretical (pre)assumptions, which inspired novel thinking (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007; Saertre & Van de Ven, 2021). Through an iterative process of moving between theory and empirical material during the analysis stage, we sought to develop a reflexive and plausible understanding of the compartmentalization phenomenon (Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013) that contrasted with existing perspectives on managerial morality in the compartmentalization literature.

As we conducted an initial reading of the interview data, we identified nuanced elements within the arguments presented by the managers. For instance, we observed competing ways of framing their discourse: aligning with the (protective) "orthodoxy of strategic management," such as focusing on competition or the trajectory of the industry, or creatively reframing emerging industry change for individual purposes, such as benefiting oneself as a consumer. We began paying particular attention to how managers positioned themselves, others, and society within the broader "change story" (McKenna, 2010), and searched for recurring patterns across the interviews. This first coding round resulted in an initial categorization of arguments based on their tone, distinguishing whether the argumentation supported or opposed the emerging change. This phase of the abductive process was characterized by a combination of uncertainty and belief (Locke et al., 2008), encouraging us to remain imaginative and open to competing explanations.

We engaged in continuous joint discussions on why and how moral "departures" from a manager's central perspective emerged in the interviews. The discussions revolved around the specificities of the data, including detailed contextual descriptions and broader societal perspectives derived from archival data (e.g., news reports, blogs). As researchers, we collaboratively explored various theoretical explanations. For example, we initially turned to the institutional literature to examine how managers' identity work was shaped by their institutional context, and their construction of identities in contrast to industry change. However, we soon realized that our initial categorization encompassed not only normative but also more complex, personal, and experiential aspects of morality that could not be fully explained by our initial theoretical paths. Our attention was drawn to managers expressing empathy toward specific stakeholder groups or departing from a managerial voice by drawing on personal experiences. We then turned to other literatures, including compartmentalization theory, to explain the divided and contradictory dynamics observed in the interviews. We were fascinated by the varied ways in which moral evaluations occurred, and puzzled that some interviews presented multiple perspectives, while in others, a dominant managerial moral assessment aligned with compartmentalization theory (Rozuel, 2010). However, conflicting and alternative moral perspectives remained evident, which the compartmentalization literature alone could not fully explain.

At this stage of the analysis, it became evident that the initial coding framework was insufficient to capture the complexities of the data, a realization that advanced our theorization (Locke et al., 2008). Re-engaging with the transcripts revealed multivocality and "voices" diverging from the socially "expected" managerial discourse (McKenna, 2010), often within a single interview. For instance, an interviewee might initially adopt an "official" managerial stance opposing the changes lobbied for by the "hobbyists," only to shift to a consumer perspective, highlighting the personal benefits of new business models. This observation necessitated an additional round of coding and re-engagement with the literature to better comprehend the managerial arguments, and identify the most plausible theoretical explanations for what we observed (Saertre & Van de Ven, 2021). At this second stage of analysis, the polyphony literature on change (e.g., Jabri, 2004; McKenna, 2010) led us to Bakhtin's (1981, 1984) work to theorize the observed dialogue dynamics. The dialogical perspective we adopted enabled us to explain individual differences in speech, and how certain perspectives were silenced in the interview setting. This aligns with the compartmentalization literature's critique of distinct moral voices (Rozuel, 2010).

Dialogue and Dialectic Analysis

Central to Bakhtin's dialogical analysis (1981, 1984) is a focus on speech, particularly utterances that engage in dialogue with one another, each reflecting a specific consciousness and viewpoint on the self (Bakhtin, 1984). Utterances are never entirely our own; they carry traces of others' views, meanings, and experiences (Jabri et al., 2008), and are inherently value-laden, encompassing both moral and affective qualities that express broader perspectives and worldviews (Gardiner, 2004, p. 36). This perspective offered a provisional explanation for how various moral perspectives could coexist within a single interview. Consequently, we began identifying such utterances across the interview data. We paid particular attention to the manifestation of dialogue at the level of language, emphasizing nuances in speech and treating changes in pronouns or tone as points of contact within the dialogue. While engaging with Bakhtin's literature (1981, 1984), we found through extensive discussions within the author team and interactions with the research community (Saertre & Van de Ven, 2021) that a Bakhtinian perspective has been critiqued for not fully addressing how polyphony leads to ethical insight (Wright, 2021). To address this limitation, we incorporated Ricoeur's (1992) perspective on morality to enhance our theorization.

From a Bakhtinian perspective (1981), language at any given moment reflects words that have "lived" through social and historical contexts, carrying diverse social positions, values, and contradictions. Thus, language also encompasses ideological struggles (Gardiner, 2004; Holquist, 2014), representing a polyphony of social and discursive forces (Holquist, 2014).

In some interviews, we identified moments of conflicting moral conviction (Ricoeur, 1992), where participants shifted from presenting themselves with a managerial or business-oriented focus to expressing concerns associated with the other. In some cases, these conflicts were recognized by participants, while in others, they were identified through our analysis. For instance, an executive might express concern over positive market development and competition, but later (in the same interview), speaking as a father, express worry about their children's safety.

These moments of speech, that is, utterances, capture dialogue, as each utterance incorporates other perspectives, values, and contexts, inviting the moral viewpoint of the other (Sultana & Dovchin, 2022). Utterances emerge as active expressions of meaning, linking to prior statements (Jabri, 2004), and constituting points of "events of co-being" (Holquist, 2014) between self and the other. By identifying moments of conflicting moral conviction, and examining the (non) dual directedness of related utterances, we employed comparative analysis to group these instances into distinct patterns (Grodal et al., 2021), resulting in the identification of various dialogue dynamics presented in our findings section. The third and final stage of the analysis is summarized in Table 3, while additional data descriptions from the first and second coding rounds are provided in Appendix II. The iterative process of theoretical exploration and emerging empirical insights led to saturation, as no new codes surfaced in the data (Urquhart, 2022; Saunders et al., 2018). Ongoing critical discussions on the data, emerging insights, and themes (Saertre & Van de Ven, 2021) served as a form of triangulation, enhancing the consistency, coherence, and validity of our research (Yardley, 2015). This abductive process allowed patterns to emerge naturally, guiding us toward new theoretical pathways that ultimately explained the complex dialogue dynamics observed in the interviews.

To enhance the coherence and transparency of our research, we continuously reflected on our roles as researchers (Yardley, 2015). We acknowledge our role in initiating the dialogue dynamics during the interview process, and recognize that our collaborative analysis inevitably imprinted our own cognition on the interpretation—a process that is both inevitable and generative in theory building (Grodal et al., 2021). In the following section, we present the data alongside theoretical insights to illustrate the moral polyphony and dialogue dynamics demonstrated in our findings.

Findings

Our empirical analysis uncovered complex dialogue dynamics that either enable or hinder the acknowledgment of alternative moral perspectives. Dialogue brings real-life situations to life as scenarios, where one can only understand oneself by adopting the perspective of the other (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984; Ricoeur, 1992). Double-voiced discourse occurs when the voice or perspective of the other coexists alongside that of the speaker (Bakhtin, 1984). This is evident in utterances where the other's presence is passively or actively detectable, often marked by a distinct semantic style. For instance, intonation reveals the presence of the other as one imagines their perspective (Holquist, 2003), while the use of "I" at the semantic level reflects a unique point of being rooted in a specific social and historical context (ibid).

Our empirical data led us to conceptualize these dialogue dynamics as moral apologizing, empathy, and arousal—processes that enable the self to engage in dialogue with the other. Our interviews also highlight moral hypocrisy, a common compartmentalization dynamic that permits polyphony but fails to integrate the perspectives of the moral other. In Ricoeur's (1992) terms, this dynamic represents a form of ascription, where the agent relieves themselves from conviction by adopting one of the considered options, thereby ending the internal debate. Our data also reveal moral

Table 3 Theorized dialogue dynamics and illustrative data (round III of the analysis)

Dialogue dynamic	Explanation of the dynamic	Illustrative quotes	Quote clarification
Moral Hypocrisy (passive)	Paradoxical utterances occur when a managerial discourse conflicts with the perspectives presented by the other within a single interview, reflecting an attempt to take control by isolating or suppressing the voice of the other	Interviews in which the informant first replies from the perspective of a managerial self, explaining how the development of a given business model is "bad" for the society, and how it exposes citizens to danger (e.g., safety issues, responsibility issues, greenwash issues). However, later in the interview, explains private experiences using such services in a very positive light, without referring to the earlier discussion from the standpoint of the manager (managerial voice)	
Moral Escape/Silencing (passive)	Utterances in which the informant aims to steer the discourse toward other members of the organization to avoid moral dialogue, taking control by actively muting or disregarding the other	"I don't know, maybe you should talk to someone smarter than me."[Food]	A manager aiming to direct the discussion on ethical concerns to somewhere else
		"Well it's very difficult for me to talk about this." [Hospitality]	A hotel manager indicating that this is not a topic he wants to discuss
		"I don't want to take any stance on this, it's the people higher up who decide on these issues." [Food]	A manager indicating that something is not within her control, and directing responsibility toward the upper management
Moral Apology (active)	Utterances that are brought up in an apologetic fashion to raise a concern or show support from the perspective other than a manager, by implicit reaction to the other	"…as a matter of fact, actually, it would reduce my burden on that." [Food]	A manager is apologizing because he pushed for certain actions or decisions that would personally make his job easier, but these actions or decisions are contrary to the overall goals or strategies of the company (conflict between personal convenience and organizational objectives)
		"Honestly, technology will bring more possibilities than we recognize here." [Food]	A manager stating that, in general, he (personally) sees things differently than the company
		"It's a decision that you, personally… It's a personal choice that you make as you stand at the front door, deciding whether to become part of that company." [Mobility]	A car rental franchiser explaining how you should sign up for company values, if you choose to work there, but he still has his own views on things (conflict between personal and organizational values)
Moral Arousal (active)	Blunt utterances that raise a concern, supporting or resisting the change, where the "other" is implied through antagonistic expression	"If you have a big family, and you want your grandfather and mother to join you, then of course this offers a cheaper option." [Hospitality]	A hotel manager taking a stance as one being a member of a big family to have budget friendly options to travel
		"Well, we're quite far away from the fact that, for example, child-related cases could be handled with AI." [Law]	A lawyer raising a moral concern related to court cases that involve minorities
		"Have they ever considered elderly people…not necessarily even old, but some have difficulties learning new programs or apps." [Law]	A lawyer explaining how new business models possibly ignore some consumer segments
		"These can have ethical value as well as health-related value. The ethical value is related to the identification of child labor, for example." [Food]	A manager raising child labor detection as a possible opportunity for new technology and related business model development

Table 3 (continued)

Dialogue dynamic	Explanation of the dynamic	Illustrative quotes	Quote clarification
Moral Empathy (active)	Utterances that bring up alternative moral perspectives indicating empathy through anticipating the "other"	"Then, when there is a Brazilian graphic designer coming to work for company X, with curly hair and holding a guitar, and someone asks how about your credit history, he's like (umm). And then he's wondering how to get an electricity contract, and he calls his co-worker and so on. Renting an apartment is difficult." Hospitality	A hotel manager showing empathy toward immigrants who experience difficulties renting apartments, and would benefit from the presented sharing business model
		"…well…after thinking about it, I might not recommend this to a friend…" Law	A lawyer indicating the possible risks of using AI to generate documents that are not checked properly by a lawyer, showing empathy to people not trained in law
		"…let's imagine, for example, there's a mother and two kids, and they'd need a place to stay during renovation, and then their only option would be to go some distance away, and then schools and daycare would change, then maybe this would offer a solution for those people." Hospitality	A hotel manager generally resisting new business models for multiple reasons given, but then recognizing a user group that would benefit from such offerings

escaping as a strategy to silence moral responsibility entirely, evident in the deliberate rejection of moral dialogue.

We begin by presenting compartmentalization (Rozuel, 2011) as a mechanism for dialogically separating moral perspectives, followed by an explanation of dialogue dynamics that, in contrast, foster dialogue and enable moral polyphony. Our findings are summarized in Table 3, while the following sections provide a detailed explanation of the dialogue dynamics, supported by illustrative data and vignettes of conflicting moral convictions. Additional data examples and quotes are available in Appendix II.

Moral Compartmentalization

Compartmentalization, as described by Rozuel (2010, 2011), is a cognitive process where individuals divide themselves into distinct, clear-cut categories to cope with change and uncertainty. This process occurs when individuals experience moral dissonance—an inconsistency between beliefs and behavior (Bandura, 2006; Festinger, 1957)—and attempt to justify their sense of morality (Hauser et al., 2007). Historically, compartmentalization has been viewed as necessary for individuals to perform specific work roles effectively (Zeigler-Hill & Showers, 2007), protecting the social expectations of these roles from external interference (Pajak & Blase, 1984). However, disregarding your true self and excluding alternative perspectives has been argued to carry significant moral implications (Ricoeur, 1992; Rozuel, 2011). The moral dimensions of compartmentalization necessitate a critical examination of norms and values, as the process hinders the development of moral identity (MacIntyre, 1999; Rozuel, 2011).

Ricoeur (1992) emphasizes that living a good life requires an awareness of our unique place in the world, while simultaneously recognizing ourselves in the other (Pierovich, 2011). Our analysis suggests that moral hypocrisy and escape illustrate how moral polyphony is stifled by the dominance of a single authoritative voice or "narrator," such as the managerial "I" (Bakhtin, 1984). We identify the first dialogue dynamic as moral hypocrisy, in relation to compartmentalization, where the voice and worldview of the other fail to be recognized or become internally persuasive to the manager during the interview. Although recognition of the other may occur later, outside the co-narrated interview, we conceptualize this as moral hypocrisy to highlight the absence of polyphony in the dialogue at that specific moment (Morson & Emerson, 1990; Ricoeur, 1992).

Moral Hypocrisy

From a Bakhtinian perspective (1981, 1984), our view of reality emerges through intersections and clashes with the consciousness of others, as we engage in dialogue and

share the contexts and situations others have experienced or are experiencing. In some interviews, although there were instances of recognizing other perspectives, there was no evidence of these alternative moral perspectives engaging in dialogue with each other (Ricoeur, 1992). This dynamic is particularly evident in an interview with a hotel manager.

> Moral Conviction 1: As competition reshapes the hotel industry, the manager's argumentation provides insight into the moral dilemmas frequently encountered by those in managerial roles. In the interview, a hotel manager voiced concerns about emerging business models that depend on less experienced individuals to perform tasks traditionally assigned to seasoned professionals. "The dangers posed by novices executing tasks typically reserved for seasoned professionals cannot be underestimated," she cautioned, framing her concern within the normative standards that govern the industry. Her managerial concerns centered on consumer safety, with potential fire emergencies illustrating the risks involved. "Then who takes responsibility if something happens [to the customers]?" she questioned, highlighting a critical accountability gap in the novel business models. As the interview progressed, a notable shift in perspective emerged. The manager transitioned to a consumer's viewpoint, reminiscing about her own delightful family holidays made possible by the very services she had previously criticized. Surprisingly, she did not reconcile these fond memories with her earlier serious concerns about customer fire safety. The risks that had seemed so pressing in her managerial critique faded into the background during her account of personal, positive experiences as a customer.

This first illustration of conflicting moral convictions portrays a manager caught between two moral truths of novel business models, each rooted in its own reality. The moral reasoning of the other at this moment was expressed in isolation, lacking any dialogical point of contact.

The other becomes detectable in passive double-voiced discourse through utterances that demonstrate opposition or conflict, where the speaker may even exaggerate certain features of the other (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 193). As Bakhtin (1984) explains, "the voices are not only isolated from one another, separated by a distance, but are also hostilely opposed." As shown in the vignette above, posing a question serves as a semantic indication where the perspective of the other is problematized (Bakhtin, 1984).

When confronted with moral perspectives that create internal conflict, individuals rely on lived experiences and ethical reasoning to evaluate the situation (Schön, 2017). For example, the manager initially reflected on fire safety and the potential impacts of new market entrants on customers, but later in the interview this concern faded when she considered herself as a customer. In this situation, the interviewee did not engage in a dialogue of oneself in relation to the other (Ricoeur, 1992). The expressed perspectives remained separate and disconnected, illustrating the moral hazard described in the compartmentalization literature (Rozuel, 2011). According to Bakhtin (1984), dialogue involves revealing oneself through the other, with the help of the other, by adopting aspects of their perspective.

Moral Escape/Silencing

In our analysis, moral escape and silencing represent dialogue dynamics where the voice of the other is actively muted or disregarded. This constitutes a form of ascription used to cut debates short (Ricoeur, 1992). While moral hypocrisy illustrates the coexistence of alternative ideological moral perspectives as separate and opposing utterances, moral escape entirely avoids acknowledging the other's perspective.

In passive double-voiced discourse, the speaker controls the other's voice and perspective, often by adopting a particular speaking style (Bakhtin, 1984). This dynamic is evident when respondents align themselves with a managerial or business-oriented perspective, deliberately presenting themselves in a particular light and making these associations explicit (Bakhtin, 1984). This pattern often appeared in statements such as "…it is my responsibility as a manager…," and was particularly evident in interviews with informants from large corporate environments (see Appendix I). These managers operated within specialized areas of expertise and tended to address only questions directly related to their specific domain.

The data revealed several instances where informants were reluctant to discuss change, offering statements such as "I might not be the most qualified person to address this…" or "Perhaps you should consult someone higher up." A recurring pattern involved escape through delegation of responsibility, either upward or horizontally within the organizational hierarchy, with the implicit assumption that decisions regarding change—whether supportive or opposed—would be made by those at higher levels. On several occasions, when we asked informants for recommendations on who else to consult, they pointed us to a superior. However, this often created a circular pattern, as the superiors would then direct us back to the original informants who had referred us to them.

We argue that such moral escape (at least momentarily) silences dialogue through passive double-voiced discourse (Bakhtin, 1984), illustrating how socially defined personas hinder the exploration of "true" selves (Rozuel & Kakabadse, 2010) and their corresponding ethical consciousness through compartmentalization (Rozuel, 2010). In its most

extreme form, compartmentalization as escape hinders the flow of moral consciousness by fostering division (Rozuel & Kakabadse, 2010). The voice of the other is suppressed (Ricoeur, 1992), leading to the loss of moral polyphony (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984).

The ethics literature suggests that professionals, by solely performing the managerial role, are deprived of becoming their true selves (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2008; Rozuel & Kakabadse, 2010), which we argue dialogue enables. Therefore, we now turn to the dialogue dynamics that enable moral polyphony.

Dynamics of Polyphonic Moral Dialogue

A dialogical perspective suggests that multiple moral views coexist in conflict while also sharing "dialogic points of contact with other views" (Tappan, 1999; Wright, 2021). While moral compartmentalization—through moral hypocrisy and escape—shows how points of contact with the other are disregarded or silenced, polyphonic moral dialogue facilitates ideological becoming by granting authority to your own voice and ideological perspective, thus enabling liberation from authoritative discourses (Tappan, 1999). From a Bakhtinian (1981, 1984) perspective, moral selfhood encompasses the integration of various voices and moral truths within oneself (Morson & Emerson, 1990), discovered through ideologically mediated dialogue (Tappan, 1999). In active double-voiced discourse, the other's voice is neither controlled nor used to serve the speaker's own aspirations, as in the passive form. Instead, the speaker considers the other and refers thereto in their speech (Bakhtin, 1984). The words of the other shape the speaker's discourse. This process thus involves the recognition of the other (Ricoeur, 1992).

In several interviews, we identified instances where suppressed others and their moral truths were allowed space, beyond and in addition to the managerial moral perspective. In contrast to moral hypocrisy and escape, such utterances provide points of departure for reflection (Ricoeur, 1992) and gateways into dialogue with the other and their moral perspectives.

While Ricoeur (1992) argues that drawing on lived experiences is key to acting ethically in situations of moral conflict, Bakhtin (1984, 1986) views the point of conflict as an opportunity to test the moral endpoint of a particular voice or consciousness (Wright, 2021).

Next, we explain how these dynamics manifested in our data.

Moral Apology

In our interviews, managers frequently shifted away from a managerial perspective, often accompanied by a tone resembling an apology. These shifts were marked by expressions such as "Actually," "Honestly," or "Personally." These departures were often expressed hesitantly, as if the revelation were somewhat trivial yet essential. This form of active dialogue occurs when the speaker reacts to and anticipates the other, yet the voice of the other remains silent and can only be implied, though its traces have a profound impact. As Bakhtin (1984) explains, "Each present, uttered word responds and reacts with its every fiber to the invisible speaker, pointing to something outside itself, beyond its own limits, to the unspoken words of another person." (p. 197).

The manner in which these apologetic shifts were conveyed varied across the interviews. In some interviews, informants explicitly framed their sentiments with qualifiers such as "I should probably not say this," "to be honest," or "from a personal standpoint." In our analysis, such instances were interpreted as signals that although the perspective diverged from the primary moral perspective of the "voice" (manager), it still warranted acknowledgment. The interviewee allowed the voice of the other—such as a mother or a concerned customer—to be recognized (Ricoeur, 1992) and reflected upon.

> Moral conviction 2: "I view it as a specific risk. Personally, I would not want a will where I had answered questions on some technology-related issue, on the basis of which a will was created without any conversation with a lawyer. I would not feel comfortable signing such a document myself, and I would not recommend it to a friend, either." As technology entered the legal industry, making processes faster, more efficient, and potentially more accurate, the manager of a law firm expressed discomfort with the progress. The managerial speech focused on the efficiency and productivity gains enabled by technology, including the benefits of lower costs for consumer segments unable to afford traditional legal services. However, a more personal viewpoint emerged, with the interviewee acknowledging multiple times a sense of care towards the "other," in this case, a friend: while the technology might be good for the business, he expressed moral concern personally and as a friend.

The above example of contradictory moral convictions illustrates how self-authorship through managerial discourse can conflict with the moral self as another, as indicated by the "friend" in the vignette. In these instances, the managerial moral "truth" is contrasted with the perspective of the other, which is invited into the dialogue, almost like an apology to the managerial voice.

However, not all shifts were overtly articulated. For example, during an interview with an informant in the mobility industry, one interviewee subtly shifted his posture, lowered his voice, and paused thoughtfully before sharing: "My children partake in that, though they no longer reside with me." Earlier, he had discussed how car-sharing was not

a legitimate business, but fostered a grey economy, and was therefore considered morally suspicious.

Through the apologetic utterance, the manager revealed himself as a father, implicating the other (Bakhtin, 1984), and showing how family considerations might influence his moral assessment.

According to Ricoeur (1992), moments of conflict are necessary to challenge moral practices and test "our illusions about ourselves." Combining Bakhtin (1981, 1984) and Ricoeur (1992), such moments of moral conviction create points of contact between a given self (e.g., manager) and the perspective of self as another (e.g., father), representing conflicting moral perspectives. These moments offer the possibility to adopt the perspective of the other by "testing" its moral truth (Wright, 2021). In these situations, interviewees demonstrated conscious orientation as agents capable of recognizing themselves as the subjects of their actions (Ricoeur, 1992), as well as revealing themselves through and for the other (Bakhtin, 1984).

Moral Arousal

Dialogue should not be viewed as a means to arrive at and realize a polyphonic moral truth, but "understood as oriented toward meeting the free modern individual's need to test ultimate moral ends and the virtues that serve them, in order to determine their truth" (Wright, 2021, p. 72). It focuses on characters who "cultivate countervailing (im) moral views," and are allowed to voice them to demonstrate their practical reasoning (Wright, 2021). One's morality is never "complete" but continuously challenged and tested (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984; Ricoeur, 1992). Thus, the ongoing, and at times contentious, dialogue between multiple moral perspectives trains actors in discovering their moral ends and virtues (Wright, 2021). In one interview, this dynamic unfolded when the interviewee revealed her moral concerns:

> Moral conviction 3: The food processing industry has undergone significant changes in recent years, driven by consumers' increasing interest in the sources of raw materials used in processed products. However, the organization represented by our manager had been slow to adopt some of the latest tracing technology for supply chains. Nevertheless, the manager expressed deep concerns about child labor practices in some of the countries where the raw materials were sourced. She strongly expressed that "If there's a dictatorship, and it's known that child labor is rampant, along with other issues, the question I've often asked myself is should we stop buying from there *completely* [emphasis by the interviewee]?"

This illustration of contradicting moral convictions highlights the manager's struggle between their personal values and the organization's practices. It shows how the manager engages in internal dialogue, contrasting their personal perspective with the managerial, referring to "we" instead of "I." Through moral arousal, the concerned, loud, and rebellious others are given a voice, and their ideological positions made visible. This moral conviction illustrates that while she performs her duties as an organizational member and manager, she also invites and acknowledges her private morals and values. In one form of active double-voiced discourse, the other is not explicitly repeated but implied, influencing the speaker's speech, as seen in the "polemic blows" aimed at the implied words of the other. As a result, "the other person's discourse begins to influence authorial discourse from within" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 196), with the other's perspective reflected antagonistically in the speaker's discourse, shaping tone and meaning.

In many cases, though not all, such moral arousal was linked to being a parent or to concerns related to children. This highlights the divide between the managerial perspective and a continuously challenged "other," experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and words of that other while simultaneously interrogating the embodied ideologies of both perspectives, revealing their limits and potential (Hirschkop, 2021; Ricoeur, 1992). Ideological becoming involves claiming authority while engaging with other voices that are internally persuasive (Tappan, 1999).

Moral Empathy

Our final dialogue dynamic, moral empathy, illustrates how moral reasoning emerges from recognizing the relationship between the self and the other, with internal dialogue characterized by both harmony and "a struggle with other internally persuasive discourses" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 346). The recognition of the other, engagement with the other, and co-participation of self and other in everyday life constitute, from a Bakhtinian perspective, true moral selfhood. Bakhtin (1981, 1984) presents an "ethics of personalism," valuing the otherness in everyday interactions and the ongoing events of being that are lived through (Gardiner, 2004). To be fully answerable for our actions, we must be "conscious of and actively respond to their existential and ethical implications" (ibid., p. 32). For Bakhtin (1981, 1984), there are no predefined moral norms (Hirschkop, 2021), and no grand moral philosophy guides actions. Instead, it is the "attunement of rhythms of daily life" through genuine dialogue that creates ethical moments and being (Gardiner, 2004). A moral self emerges through a phenomenology of practical actions in everyday interaction, where recognizing the distinction and coexistence between the self and the

other, and responsibility toward the other, is key (Ricoeur, 1992). This is evident in our data as empathy toward the other.

> Moral conviction 4: After an hour of conversation, the hotel manager had avoided topics related to justifying the new entrants from a competitive standpoint. We discussed how competition would bring new customer segments, thereby benefiting the industry by expanding the overall market and attracting more "buzz." "Competition is healthy," she stated. As the interview progressed, we began discussing the aggressive stance the union had adopted to limit new entrants' access to the hospitality industry. "Well, if I'm *totally* honest [emphasis by the interviewee] with you … of course, the union comes up with a strategy, and all the big players are involved, so in that sense, it's a big deal… but *truthfully* [emphasis by the interviewee], we're not very active in that [union]."
>
> She was part of the union, which led the manager to articulate a moral stance partly against the change. She added, "I understand what they [the union] are doing; it's their job [unions]."

Moral empathy was demonstrated when informants acknowledged and expressed understanding of divergent moral perceptions. This illustrates another form of active double-voiced discourse, where utterances "react intensely to someone else's words, answer them, and anticipate them," thereby "absorbing the other's replies, intensely reworking them" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 197). In this way, dialogue becomes the "inner scene" of an event, where different perspectives of the event come into focus. The latter interviewee was able to see herself as "another" (Ricoeur, 1992) through the perspective of the other. She described how the union (of which she was a member) was actively lobbying against the business model change, while expressing reservations about the effectiveness of these efforts, yet demonstrated empathy and understanding toward the need to act. Thus, although she was not fully in agreement with the union's actions, she displayed and conveyed empathy toward them by recognizing and acknowledging the disagreeing other in the dialogue, "co-mingling" in the ongoing process of becoming (Gardiner, 2004).

Moral selfhood involves combining many voices and their moral truths, as "one selectively assimilates the words, language, and forms of discourse of others with whom one is in dialogue" (Tappan, 1999, p. 123). In some cases, empathy was directed toward others embodying "otherness" that an informant did not personally reflect, such as "for those who have children" or "perhaps those elderly individuals." As a result, moral empathy dialogue dynamics emerge in relation to perspectives an individual might have, but not fully resonate with morally, or toward others they did

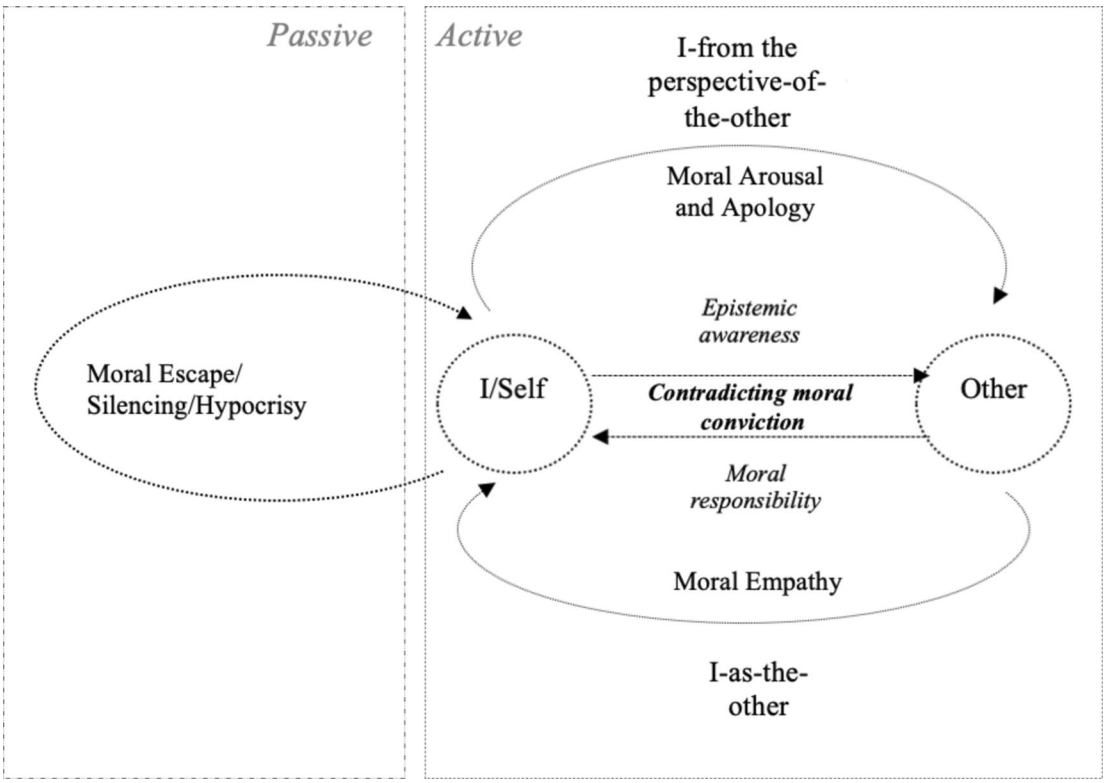


Fig. 1 Compartmentalization, dialogue dynamics, and moral polyphony

not personally identify with yet felt an empathetic moral connection to (e.g., children or minorities). The other is acknowledged as an alternative voice to be recognized and potentially reflected on (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984; Ricoeur, 1992). Figure 1 below summarizes the dialogue dynamics described above, as theorized from our interview data.

Next, we explain how the dialogue dynamics we identified contribute to the compartmentalization literature and the role of polyphony in the emergence of moral dialogue.

Discussion

Dialogue Dynamics Shaping Moral Polyphony

We build on the compartmentalization literature by demonstrating that the division of the self can pose a moral hazard (Rozuel, 2010, 2011). We contribute to this discussion by exploring how dialogue dynamics can either enable or hinder the manifestation of moral polyphony in situations of moral ambiguity during periods of change. Although a polyphonic moral dialogue does not immediately lead to superior moral judgments or full moral agency (Rozuel, 2010, 2011), it does facilitate a polyphony of voices and perspectives on oneself, potentially enriching both internal dialogue and societal conversations. We conceptualize contradicting moral convictions and dialogue as means to establish and uphold such polyphony.

Our analysis reveals dialogue dynamics that inhibit moral polyphony—moral hypocrisy and escape/silencing—as well as dynamics through which the relationship between the self and other is acknowledged (Ricoeur, 1992), namely moral apology, moral empathy, and moral arousal. Next, we elaborate on how these findings contribute to the discussion on compartmentalization.

Moral Compartmentalization from a Dialogic Perspective

A dialogic perspective (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984), combined with a dialectical reflection on the self as another (Ricoeur, 1992), aligns with the concept of multiple roles and corresponding moral dialogue, as discussed in studies on compartmentalization (Rozuel, 2010, 2011). We align with the idea that polyphony is essential to sustaining a moral identity (Bakhtin, 1986), and allowing the flow of alternative moral and ethical considerations into the organization (Rozuel, 2011). We contribute to the compartmentalization literature in two ways. First, we build on studies of identity compartmentalization (e.g., Burton & Vu, 2021; Rozuel, 2010, 2011) by introducing the concept of dialogue and moral polyphony (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984).

Compartmentalization studies suggest that when managers adopt exclusive roles, they behave in accordance with the specific norms of those roles (MacIntyre, 1999; Rozuel, 2010, 2011). This refers to the internal expectations a person has about their behavior, in contrast to the externally derived societal expectations (Anglin et al., 2022; Biddle, 1986). At work, this dividing of the self emphasizes the values and behavior associated with a managerial perspective, in contrast to the more flexible private sphere (Biddle, 1986). Compartmentalization, as a rational activity, upholds a moral identity that serves both individual and collective goals in addressing moral dissonance (Burton & Vu, 2021). This involves cutting short the internal debate and adopting one of the compartmentalized options as your own (Pierovich, 2011; Ricoeur, 1992).

In other words, compartmentalization functions as a cognitive strategy where managers, when faced with conflicting values or moral dilemmas, resolve those tensions by aligning with one particular set of norms or values, often at the expense of another set. This enables them to navigate moral dissonance by adopting a clear stance that aligns with the role they are occupying at the time. However, by introducing the concepts of dialogue and moral polyphony (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984), we argue that managers need not entirely cut short the internal debate. Instead, they can engage with multiple moral perspectives simultaneously, embracing the plurality of voices. This more nuanced approach could foster a more dynamic and ethically responsive managerial identity, capable of negotiating the complexities of emerging industry changes without relying on rigid compartmentalization. Compartmentalization has in itself been viewed as a necessity for organizational effectiveness, but it stems from a bureaucratic and rationalistic perspective on managers, leaving little room for creativity and experimentation in the workplace—managers are "locked in a capitalist organization" (Beadle & Moore, 2006).

A managerial perspective, made explicit in passive dialogue (Bakhtin, 1984), is derived from a collective image (Rozuel, 2010)—how one should behave and what one should be—leaving no room for the other during internal deliberation (Ricoeur, 1992). However, we also observed active dialogic dynamics that allow managers to momentarily depart from the managerial perspective and recognize the other (Ricoeur, 1992). This is crucial, since in cases where compartmentalization is absent, actors are free to express their moral views, including conflicting moral reflections, and can even imprint such values on the organizational environment (Rozuel, 2010). A dialogic perspective, focusing on passive or active double-voiced discourse (Bakhtin, 1984), showcases how dominating institutional contexts downplay the potential for full moral agency (Wilcox, 2012) through speech acts.

It also strengthens the idea that the capacity for moral agency is fluid and shifting, and that how a manager assesses situations or moral aspects of issues depends on the embeddedness of, and relationship between, multiple social positions at a given time.

Whereas compartmentalization scholars (Rozuel, 2010, 2011) have argued that the compartmentalization phenomenon hinders the unification of the self, Bakhtin (1981, 1984) opposed all views of unification, emphasizing the unmerging nature of human consciousness, where voices and perspectives must remain distinct (Eun, 2019). Bakhtin (1981, 1984) emphasized permeability and fluidity in any type of boundary maintenance (Gardiner, 2004). From this standpoint, compartmentalization becomes part of an unfinished dialogue where the contrasting and interanimation between the moral self and others is key, as opposed to merging into one. Thus, we enrich the compartmentalization construct by emphasizing the permeability of what are often conceived as exclusive role categories. Contrary to compartmentalization scholars, a Bakhtin (1981, 1984) approach, supplemented by Ricoeur's ideas (1992), suggests the unification of roles should not be seen as the ultimate goal. Instead, the ongoing process of engagement with and respect for the other fosters ethical qualities, and, ultimately, the discovery of a moral self through self-discovery (Goby & Karimova, 2024).

Sustaining an ongoing moral dialogue and respecting the other is central, and this develops through acknowledging and continuously engaging with the divergence between the self and the other (Gardiner, 2004; Ricoeur, 1992). Language continuously opens other contexts encountered in social life, reflecting different moral evaluations that challenge the assumed stability of the compartmentalization concept. Compartmentalization studies distinguish between moral conscience, linked to social norms, and ethical conscience, associated with the inner voice of the self (Rozuel, 2010). Moral conscience is constrained by the social expectations of a particular role, while ethical conscience allows for creativity when managers encounter dilemmas unsolvable through established norms (Rozuel, 2010). Similarly, in our findings, ethical conscience revealed itself momentarily when the discourse of the other was active, each embedded in a particular social context (Hirschkop, 2021). The dialogue dynamics we identified allowed for "finding a new path of moral action" (Rozuel, 2010, p. 39). This was evident when the interviewee responded as one "should" reply as a manager (passive double-voiced discourse), yet introduced their perspective as a concerned mother or thrill-seeking tourist to the dialogue (active double-voiced discourse). In both cases, these points of ethical conscience maintained polyphony as an ongoing flow of dialogue. The self does not necessarily take the form of another (sameness) but is reflected upon in the other (Ricoeur, 1992). We theorize that when particular voices become strong enough (Tappan, 1999), moral polyphony is fostered, as you are not bound to a collective image of how you should socially act as a manager (Rozuel, 2010).

Compartmentalization studies further assume that compartmentalization leads to a fragmentation of the self, as spheres and roles are presumed never to intersect (Rozuel, 2011). As such, there is no opportunity to critically "scrutinize oneself and the structure of society from an external standpoint" (MacIntyre, 1999, p. 322). Compartmentalization studies have called for "milieus of critical scrutiny" (MacIntyre, 1999, p. 322) or relational spaces for ethical reflection, which widen the scope to exercise moral agency, where conflicts between roles surface, and roles and norms can intersect and be questioned (Wilcox, 2012). Our analysis reveals conflicts by explicating the active dialogical dynamics of moral apology, empathy, and arousal as means to overcome the compartmentalization process.

Whereas the compartmentalization literature suggests that a unified self is the ultimate outcome of reflective milieus, we argue that such unity does not allow for a comprehensive and continuous testing of moral truths. Thus, we adhere to the idea of a continuously evolving moral self, contrasted through the other (Ricoeur, 1992). We complement previous studies by proposing that internal dialogue creates a relational space for the assessment of alternative moral considerations (Wilcox, 2012), as individuals engage in dialogue with their own feelings and thoughts (Sullivan & McCarthy, 2008), expressed through care and responsibility toward the other (Bakhtin, 1984; Ricoeur, 1992), which might become internally persuasive (Tappan, 1999). An internal micro dialogue thus becomes a space for awareness of alternative moral truths, allowing for a connection with other perspectives, appreciation of difference, and possibly (but not necessarily) the transformation of oneself (cf. Hazen, 1993). A polyphonic dialogue involves allowing others to "speak" and reason, exploring their moral lives and choosing different moral ends (Wright, 2021).

Our polyphonic approach also contributes to identity compartmentalization studies by nuancing the negative and harmful aspects of the phenomenon. Compartmentalization has been conceptualized as a necessity in certain contexts, yet, from a moral standpoint, it is not necessarily beneficial to the individual or the organization (e.g., Rozuel, 2010, 2011). Previous empirical research on compartmentalization has focused on rationalizing processes in terms of a monological voice and force (Burton & Vu, 2021). Our study theorizes moral entry (and exit) to alternative moral truths through the other, which compartmentalization stores away (Rozuel, 2010). Polyphony thus becomes a relational space for a moral self (MacIntyre, 1999; Wilcox, 2012) through interaction and inner tension (MacIntyre, 1999) between perspectives and alternative "socially embodied points of view or modes of

practice" (MacIntyre, 1999, p. 318). Accordingly, in order to allow a polyphonic dialogue between various moral voices to emerge (Bakhtin, 1981), compartmentalization may first be needed—not as an end but as part of the process of becoming (Ricoeur, 1992). Although compartmentalization has been argued to hinder a moral self from being in contact with other perspectives, we suggest that, from a dialogical perspective, the compartmentalization phenomenon constitutes an entry-way into dialogue, offering the potential to recognize the other through a moment of moral conflict (Bakhtin, 1984; Ricoeur, 1992), passing through the ongoing polyphonic dialogue. Discovering moral selves in organizations is an ongoing process, and it is through polyphony that the moral subject emerges (Letiche, 2010). Dialogue leaves discursive traces that stick in the consciousness, making the potential for moral polyphony ever-present in organizations (Rozuel, 2010).

Managerial and Organizational Implications

Studies in management highlight the crucial role of top executives and leaders in instilling desired behaviors and attitudes toward ethical standards (e.g., Trevino & Brown, 2004). In defining yourself within the organization, scholars argue against the bureaucratic organization model, an "impersonal machine" (Ladd, 1970; Metzger & Dalton, 1996) that fosters detachment and enables unethical behaviors. Hiding behind the façade of "organizational beings" might enable individuals to evade responsibility (Ashman, 2005, in Rozuel, 2010). Thus, moral judgment should not be guided by universal norms but personalized ethics (Hirschkop, 2021; Rozuel & Kakabadse, 2010): 'Every man is, in a certain sense, unconsciously a worse man when he is in society than when acting alone; for he is carried by society and to that extent relieved of his individual responsibility." (Jung, 1958, p. 240).

Polyphony becomes a performative force when various voices are allowed to "fascinate, inform, surprise, and enthrall," and an openness to "othering" is embraced (Letiche, 2010). The combination of Bakhtin's (1981, 1984) and Ricoeur's (1992) views on moral identity emphasizes the importance of dialogue, conflict, and utterances, as well as the inherent, never finalizable forces in the interaction between voices (Jabri, 2004) and alternative perspectives in authoring organizational realities (Hazen, 1993). Through language, we enter and exit the moral worlds of others (Ricoeur, 1992). Organizations should therefore recognize the potential for moral growth and empowerment through dialogue (cf. Jabri, 2004). Polyphonic dialogue encompasses "authoritative voices" beyond a bureaucratic managerial self (Hazen, 1993). Thus, there is potential for the development of the manager in (re)creating herself or himself within a polyphonic dialogue (McKenna, 2010), and polyphony also enables alternative moral assessments of change in the organization, "the more intimate sounds of people speaking, singing, or crying out to one another" (Hazen, 1993, p. 16).

In our analysis, moral escaping was mostly identified in formal, bureaucratic organizational structures; however, such structures are not necessarily "bad," as long as individuals within them are occasionally given the freedom to bring their other moral perspectives into play, thus preventing organizations from becoming an impersonal machine (Ladd, 1970; Metzger & Dalton, 1996). In practice, organizations need to actively create spaces for critical reflection on what is considered moral, and how it can be enriched by considering other spheres of being. This includes proactively evoking various roles in everyday organizing. In turn, managers must become connected to themselves and their ethical consciousness (Rozuel, 2010) by thinking and acting polyphonically (Shotter, 2006). Fortunately, such activities do exist in organizations, such as off-site days or strategy days, arranged outside the mundane office spaces. These events could be further developed as "milieus of critical scrutiny" (MacIntyre, 1999, p. 322), or relational spaces where roles and norms can intersect and be questioned (Wilcox, 2012), providing people with opportunities to reflect without role-related expectations.

Conclusions

In this study, we have discussed the benefits of departing from the conceptualization of a unified moral self in organizations, and treating identity compartmentalization as a continuous process rather than an outcome. We argue that compartmentalization research benefits from considering dialogical and processual dynamics, as well as the potential generative force inherent in conflicting moral convictions. By combining the views of Bakhtin and Ricoeur, we have demonstrated how the other can be momentarily recognized in an open-ended dialogue, and how utterances can be approached as points of contact with other moral views. Our study illustrates how moral dialogue can foster compassion and stewardship toward the other. This includes allowing other views of oneself in organizations and adopting traces of such into continuous becoming. We posit that dialogue dynamics can equip actors with a more profound understanding of themselves, and stimulate enhanced moral judgment through more varied ethics, benefiting not only individual agents but also organizations and society as a whole.

Our qualitative study has some limitations, particularly in terms of generalizability. The cases were all embedded in fields that involve specific normative behaviors, which have been momentarily interrupted by novel entrants aiming to change business practices. We posit that our findings could be beneficial in similar contexts (Yardley, 2015) where

emergent moral ambiguity exists, and the testing of moral ends is necessary.

Our study offers avenues for future research. First, it is important to ask how distinct our study's setting is from the professional role expectations in everyday encounters within organizations. Do contemporary organizations genuinely invite managers to engage in dialogue using their full repertoire of alternative points of view? Is there space for discussions, on such as family-related matters, in the workplace? If such discussions are beneficial for inviting moral polyphony, how might they be encouraged and supported? And, importantly, if we compartmentalize, do we act more immorally when given opportunities to outsource morality to the organization and detach ourselves from individual responsibility?

In addition, displays of managerial discourse in the interview setting were particularly (though not exclusively) pronounced in larger organizations, where moral deliberations may have been relegated to specialized entities. Individuals often unconsciously exhibit more unfavorable tendencies in group settings, compared to when they act individually (Rozuel, 2010). Societal influences can sometimes diminish our sense of personal accountability, as confirmed by our findings: when given the chance to avoid personal moral responsibility, many individuals chose to do so.

Our study provides a first step in capturing this dynamic, but further research is needed to verify this preliminary observation. We propose that future research explores these considerations, focusing on how moral polyphony can be managed, invited, supported, and encouraged. This would enable organizations to conduct more holistic moral evaluations and potentially more considerate responses to market and societal change.

Appendix I List of Informants

Informant	Position	Industry	Change type
A1	Owner, CEO	Hospitality	Introduction of new business model (A)
A2	Head of Service	Hospitality	Introduction of new business model (A)
A3	Franchise entrepreneur	Hospitality	Introduction of new business model (A)
A4	Franchise entrepreneur	Hospitality	Introduction of new business model (A)
A5	Franchise entrepreneur	Hospitality	Introduction of new business model (A)
A6	CEO, Group	Hospitality	Introduction of new business model (A)
A7	Franchise entrepreneur	Hospitality	Introduction of new business model (A)
A8	Owner, CEO	Hospitality	Introduction of new business model (A)
A9	Head of Unit	Hospitality	Introduction of new business model (A)
A10	Operations Manager	Hospitality	Introduction of new business model (A)
A11	Head of Service	Hospitality	Introduction of new business model (A)
A12	Franchise entrepreneur	Hospitality	Introduction of new business model (A)
A13	Head of Operations	Hospitality	Introduction of new business model (A)
A14	CEO, region	Hospitality	Introduction of new business model (A)
A15	Head of Operations	Hospitality	Introduction of new business model (A)
B1	Franchise entrepreneur	Mobility	Introduction of new business model (B)
B2	Franchise entrepreneur	Mobility	Introduction of new business model (B)
B3	CEO	Mobility	Introduction of new business model (B)
B4	Franchise entrepreneur	Mobility	Introduction of new business model (B)
B5	Franchise entrepreneur	Mobility	Introduction of new business model (B)
B6	Franchise entrepreneur	Mobility	Introduction of new business model (B)
B7	Franchise entrepreneur	Mobility	Introduction of new business model (B)
B8	Head of business unit	Mobility	Introduction of new business model (B)
C1	Enterprise Architect (ICT)	Food processing & restaurant trade	Introduction of new technology

Informant	Position	Industry	Change type
C2	Quality Manager	Food processing & restaurant trade	Introduction of new technology
C3	Head of business unit	Food processing & restaurant trade	Introduction of new technology
C4	Operations Manager	Food processing & restaurant trade	Introduction of new technology
C5	Head of Supply Chain	Food processing & restaurant trade	Introduction of new technology
C6	Marketing Manager	Food processing & restaurant trade	Introduction of new technology
C7	Head of Sourcing	Food processing & restaurant trade	Introduction of new technology
C8	Manager, Sourcing	Food processing & restaurant trade	Introduction of new technology
C9	Head of Development	Food processing & restaurant trade	Introduction of new technology
C10	Head of business unit	Food processing & restaurant trade	Introduction of new technology
C11	Head of Development	Food processing & restaurant trade	Introduction of new technology
C12	Sourcing Manager	Food processing & restaurant trade	Introduction of new technology
C13	Head of Marketing	Food processing & restaurant trade	Introduction of new technology
C14	Head of business unit	Food processing & restaurant trade	Introduction of new technology
C15	Manager, Digitization	Food processing & restaurant trade	Introduction of new technology
C16	Head of Sourcing	Food processing & restaurant trade	Introduction of new technology
C17	Manager, Development	Food processing & restaurant trade	Introduction of new technology
C18	Manager, Business Development	Food processing & restaurant trade	Introduction of new technology
C19	Manager, Data Analytics	Food processing & restaurant trade	Introduction of new technology
C20	Manager, Product Data	Food processing & restaurant trade	Introduction of new technology
C21	Manager, HR	Food processing & restaurant trade	Introduction of new technology
C22	Manager, Sustainability	Food processing & restaurant trade	Introduction of new technology
C23	Marketing Manager	Food processing & restaurant trade	Introduction of new technology
C24	Sourcing Manager	Food processing & restaurant trade	Introduction of new technology
C25	Head of Unit	Food processing & restaurant trade	Introduction of new technology
D1	Partner	Law	Introduction of new technology
D2	Lawyer	Law	Introduction of new technology
D3	Senior Manager	Law	Introduction of new technology
D4	Lawyer	Law	Introduction of new technology
D5	Junior Partner	Law	Introduction of new technology
D6	Partner	Law	Introduction of new technology
D7	Lawyer	Law	Introduction of new technology
D8	Lawyer	Law	Introduction of new technology
D9	Partner	Law	Introduction of new technology
D10	Manager	Law	Introduction of new technology
D11	Lawyer	Law	Introduction of new technology
D12	Lawyer	Law	Introduction of new technology
D13	CEO	Law	Introduction of new technology

Appendix II Data Table (Coding Rounds I and II of the Analysis)

Identified moral selves	Professional	Consumer	Union member	Father	Mother	Daughter/son	Friend
Description	Managerial responses to the envisioned change via their managerial voice	Responses to the envisioned change as a consumer voice	Responses in relation to the professional union as a member or observer	Responses to the envisioned change as a father	Responses to the envisioned change as a mother	Responses to the envisioned change as someone's child	Responses to the envisioned change as someone who belongs to a specific social group
Examples of described benefits of the envisioned change	Increased options for customers, free markets, better utilization of resources, renewal of the industry	More options for specific needs, lower costs, decreased reliance on few, known suppliers	Resisting the unwanted change	More options for the low-income group (students)	Better accessibility to services for low-income consumers, better fit with the younger populations' lifestyle choices	n/a	Better response to the socially driven needs, e.g., being a responsible consumer in the eyes of a social reference group
Examples of described threats of the envisioned change	Inequality, competition, lack of professionalism, decreased customer safety, poorer customer experience, lack of personal interaction	Service failure situations, responsibility avoidance by providers, trust issues	Change of power balances, reputational issues	Enforcing children to get extra income through suspicious means (child labor)	Being exposed to security threats (less control)	Concern of "being left out" of society	Service failure situations
Underlying ethical considerations	Justice, law, regulation, tax, competition	Freedom of choice, service accessibility	Members' benefits, field nurturing	Being a good parent, democratic society	Being a good parent, societal security and responsibility, promises of welfare state	Being caring and respectful of the elderly, societal values	Behaving according to pressing norms, making ethical choices
Linguistic identifiers of convictions	On the other hand, me personally, we together with, as a…, I don't personally agree, I understand, it depends on how you look at it, I had the impression, according to my experience, I could imagine as…that side of the story, I have asked from myself, as a consumer, they are doing, but then, then they						

Identified moral selves	Professional	Consumer	Union member	Father	Mother	Daughter/son	Friend
Illustrative utterances	"Some get benefits that others don't. So many times it's the professionals who suffer when the hobbyists enter." "How would these hobbyists ever make sure all the safety…these matters are very important to our professional field." "What is my private (professional) responsibility, where do you draw the line."	"But then I personally believe that the hotel's identity…how interesting a story are you able to tell (the customer)." "…if customers knew, they'd never accept, there's a relationship of trust"	"They're undertaking these lobbying activities, and I understand it's their job." "I personally think it's ok, that someone makes rules, so that it's clear to everyone."	"How would you know that children will not be working there…" "My children partake in that, though they no longer reside with me." "…then they force their children to drive (taxi)…"	"I believe my daughter's been using this, but then again she is different." "We don't want that for children…" "When I travel with my child, we stay in hotels, but when we travel as a family, then we…"	"But then again, how do the elderly people…I personally don't have any problems with that (novel business practices)." "This is perhaps old-fashioned…but perhaps there's still a use for those people…" "To be stubborn and hold on to some old-fashioned thinking, but then again it's not only them, maybe you'd appreciate it, too…" "People in their forties are quite old-fashioned at the moment, people in their thirties are up for it. Plus, there are professionals, like myself."	"I had a good discussion on this with my friend, we were talking about…" "With that friend of mine, who has that…" "They just want to experience with that group of friends"
# Interviews in which referred	61/61	52/61	22/61	6/61	4/61	5/61	3/61

Appendix III Interview Themes

Theme	Questions	Possible follow up questions
Informant's background	Would you briefly describe your background and current role in the organization?	How long have you been in this sector? What other roles have you had? Has your role changed within the company? How did you end up in this sector?
Industry stage and change	Where do you see positive developments in the industry? What are the biggest challenges currently facing the industry that impact your company's operations? How do you perceive advancements in business models and technology in the industry? What could make the business models and the industry more profitable? Do you believe that the adoption of new business models and technology is essential or will become mandatory in your field, both now and in the future? Assuming that the adoption of new business models and technology will become mandatory in your field: What feelings does this evoke? (Are you comfortable with this?) How is your company preparing for this? Who do you think would be the best entity to develop new business models and technology? How should they evolve?	What tasks take up the most time for professionals in your field? What kind of tool or software do you think is missing from the market? How could the efficiency of professionals' work time be improved?
Strategic responses	What are the key new business models emerging in your industry, and how do you anticipate they will impact traditional operations? How has your company or the industry as a whole adapted its strategic planning to address these new business models? How are emerging business models influencing your industry's approach to innovation and technology adoption? What challenges has your company faced in aligning with these new business models, and how have you overcome them? How do you see the relationship between new business models and customer expectations evolving in your industry? What are the long-term strategic goals for your company or industry in adapting to these new business models? How is your company or the industry preparing its workforce to deal with the changes brought about by new business models?	What specific strategies or initiatives have been implemented to remain competitive in the face of these new business models? In your opinion, what role does collaboration with other industry players or stakeholders play in responding to these new business models? Can you provide an example of a successful response to a new business model within your industry, and what lessons were learned from that experience?

Theme	Questions	Possible follow up questions
To conclude	Is there anything else you would like to mention or discuss? May we contact you if any clarifying questions arise during the course of the research? Would you be willing to participate in a second interview with us if we need to clarify something at a later stage of our research? Would it be possible for you to recommend someone else who might be interested in participating in the study?	

Funding Open Access funding provided by Aalto University.

Data availability The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Declarations

Conflict of interest The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

Research Involving Human and Animal Rights All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the national research committee (Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK guidelines) that Aalto University follows.

Informed Consent Verbal Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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